

Older Americans Month: May 2008

A meeting with the National Council of Senior Citizens resulted in President John F. Kennedy designating May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month, encouraging the nation to pay tribute in some way to older people across the country. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter's proclamation changed the name to Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate those 65 and older through ceremonies, events and public recognition.

37.3 million

The number of people 65 and older in the United States on July 1, 2006. This age group accounted for 12 percent of the total population. Between 2005 and 2006, this age group increased by 473,000 people.

Source: [Population estimates](#)

86.7 million

Projected population of people 65 and older in 2050. People in this age group would comprise 21 percent of the total population at that time.

Source: [Population projections](#)

147%

Projected percentage increase in the 65-and-older population between 2000 and 2050. By comparison, the population as a whole would have increased by only 49 percent during the same period.

Source: [Population projections](#)

506 million

Projected 2008 midyear world population 65 and older. Projections indicate the number will increase to 999 million by 2030.

Source: [Population projections](#)

Income and Wealth

\$27,798

Median 2006 income of households with householders 65 and older, up 3.4 percent, in real terms, from the previous year.

Source: [Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006](#)



U.S. Census Bureau

9.4%

Poverty rate for people 65 and older in 2006, down from 10.1 percent in 2005. There were 3.4 million seniors in poverty in 2006, a decline from 3.6 million in 2005.

Source: [Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006](#)

\$190,100

Median net worth for families in 2004 whose head was between 65 and 74. For those whose head was 75 or older, the corresponding figure was \$163,100.

Source: [Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008](#), (Table 699)

Serving Our Nation

9.1 million

Estimated number of people 65 and older who are military veterans.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

Jobs

5.5 million

Number of people 65 and older who were in the labor force in 2006. Projections indicate that by 2016, the number will reach 10.1 million.

Source: [Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008](#)

23%

Percentage of people 65 to 74 in the labor force in 2006, up from 20 percent in 2000.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

Some of the highest rates were found in South Dakota, Nebraska and Washington, D.C., all with about one-third of people in this age group in the labor force. Among the 20 largest metro areas, Washington, D.C., had the highest percentage of people in the labor force in this age group (31.8 percent). Others with high percentages include Boston (28.1 percent), Dallas-Fort Worth (27.9 percent), Minneapolis-St. Paul (27.4 percent) and Houston (26.5 percent), none of which was statistically different from the other.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)



U.S. Census Bureau



U.S. Census Bureau

Education

76%

Proportion of people 65 and older in 2007 with at least a high school diploma.

Source: [Educational Attainment in the United States: 2007](#)

19%

Percentage of the population 65 and older in 2007 who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: [Educational Attainment in the United States: 2007](#)

7.3 million

Number of people 66 and older taking adult education courses, comprising about 8 percent of these students.

Source: [Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008](#)

69,000

Number of people 65 and older enrolled in high school or college in October 2005.

Source: [School Enrollment – Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 2005](#)



U.S. Census Bureau

Marital Status and Living Arrangements

53%

Percentage of people 65 and older who were married in 2006.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

32%

Percentage of people 65 and older in 2006 who were widowed.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

64%

Percentage of people 65 and older in 2006 who lived with relatives. Another 27 percent lived alone, while 5 percent lived in group quarters and 2 percent in a household with nonrelatives. In addition, 6 percent lived in their children's home, and 1 percent lived with unmarried partners.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

1.6 million

Number of people 65 and older who lived in nursing facilities in 2006. These residents comprised 4 percent of all people in this age group.

Source: [2006 American Community Survey](#)

Voting

79%

Percentage of citizens 65 and older registered to vote in the 2004 presidential election. Seventy-one percent of citizens in this age group reported actually casting a ballot.

Source: [Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004](#)

19%

In the 2004 presidential election, the percentage of votes cast by people 65 and older.

Source: [Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004](#)



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Homeownership

81%

Proportion of householders 65 and older in 2006 who owned their homes. This compares with 43 percent for householders at the other end of the age spectrum — younger than 35.

Source: [Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey](#)

Businesses

11%

Percentage of the nation's business owners who are 65 and older.

Source: [Characteristics of Business Owners: 2002](#)

Population Distribution

Nation

72

The number of men 65 and older on July 1, 2006, for every 100 women in this age group. For those 85 and older, it drops to 47 men per 100 women.

Source: [Population estimates](#)

5.3 million

The number of people 85 and older in the United States on July 1, 2006.

Source: [Population estimates](#)



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84,331

Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on Nov. 1, 2007.

Source: [Population estimates](#)

580,605

Projected number of centenarians in the United States in 2040.

Source: [Population projections](#)

States

3.9 million

Number of people 65 and older living in California on July 1, 2006, the highest total of any state. Florida, with 3 million, was the runner-up.

Source: [Population estimates](#)

17%

Percentage of Florida's population 65 and older in 2006, which led the nation. Next to Florida, states with the highest percentages of older people include West Virginia (15.3 percent) and Pennsylvania (15.2 percent).

Source: [Population estimates](#)

31.2%

Percentage of the population of Charlotte County, Fla., that was 65 and older on July 1, 2006, which led the nation. In fact, Florida contributed four of the top 10 counties.

Source: [Population estimates](#)



Courtesy of AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Cars

75%

Percentage of households with a householder 65 and older who owns a motor vehicle. About 3 percent of these households have three or more cars.

Source: [Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008](#), Table 498.

A list of observances covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series in 2007:

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| African-American History Month (February) | Back to School (August) |
| Super Bowl XLII (Feb. 3) | Labor Day (Sept. 1) |
| Valentine's Day (Feb. 14) | Grandparents Day (Sept. 7) |
| Women's History Month (March) | Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15) |
| Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/
St. Patrick's Day (March 17) | Unmarried and Single Americans Week (Sept. 21-27) |
| Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May) | Halloween (Oct. 31) |
| Older Americans Month (May) | American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month
(November) |
| Cinco de Mayo (May 5) | Veterans Day (Nov. 11) |
| Mother's Day (May 11) | Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 27) |
| Hurricane Season Begins (June 1) | The Holiday Season (December) |
| Father's Day (June 15) | |
| The Fourth of July (July 4) | |
| Anniversary of Americans with
Disabilities Act (July 26) | |

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. *Facts for Features* are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3762; or e-mail: pio@census.gov.