

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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Older Americans Month: May 2010

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.

38.9 million

The number of people 65 and older in the United States on July 1, 2008. This age group accounted for 13 percent of the total population. Between 2007 and 2008, this age group increased by 927,305 people.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2008-sa.html>>

88.5 million

Projected population of people 65 and older in 2050. People in this age group would comprise 20 percent of the total population at that time.

Source: Population projections
<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>>

520 million

Projected 2009 midyear world population 65 and older. Projections indicate the number will increase to 1.53 billion by 2050. The percentage of the world's population 65 and older would increase from less than 8 percent to 17 percent over the period. By 2050, Europe's rate would be 29 percent.

Source: International Data Base <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/groups.php>>

4

Number of countries with 20 percent or more of their population 65 and older in 2009: Germany, Italy, Japan and Monaco.

Source: International Data Base
<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/international_population/cb09-97.html>

More than 100

Number of countries that could have 20 percent or more of their population 65 and older in 2050.

Source: International Data Base

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/international_population/cb09-97.html>

112 million

The number of people 65 and older in China in 2009, which led the world. China's older population is expected to reach 349 million in 2050.

Source: International Data Base <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/groups.php>>

Income and Wealth

\$29,744

Median 2008 income of households with householders 65 and older, statistically unchanged, in real terms, from the previous year. The corresponding median for all households was \$50,303.

Source: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p60-236.pdf>>

9.7%

Poverty rate for people 65 and older in 2008, statistically unchanged from 2007. There were 3.7 million seniors in poverty in 2008, statistically unchanged from the previous year. The corresponding rate for the population as a whole was 13.2 percent.

Source: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb09-141.html>

\$239,400

Median net worth for families in 2007 whose head was between 65 and 74. The corresponding median for all families was \$120,300.

Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System as cited in the Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>> (Table 705)

Serving Our Nation

9.1 million

Estimated number of people 65 and older who were veterans of the armed forces in 2008.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Jobs

6.2 million

Number of people 65 and older who were in the labor force in 2008. Projections indicate that by 2016, the number will reach 10.1 million.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as cited in the Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>> (Table 575)

16%

Percentage of people 65 and older in the labor force in 2008.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Education

76%

Proportion of people 65 and older in 2008 with at least a high school diploma.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

20%

Percentage of the population 65 and older in 2008 who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

7.3 million

Number of people 66 and older taking adult education courses in 2004-05, comprising about 8 percent of these students.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics as cited in the Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>> (Table 294)

Marital Status and Living Arrangements

56%

Percentage of people 65 and older who were married in 2009.

Source: Families and Living Arrangements

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2009.html>>

29%

Percentage of people 65 and older in 2009 who were widowed.

Source: Families and Living Arrangements

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2009.html>>

68%

Percentage of people 65 and older in households in 2008 who lived with relatives. Twenty-seven percent of all people this age lived alone, while 5 percent lived in group quarters and 2 percent in a household with nonrelatives.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

1.6 million

Number of people 65 and older who lived in nursing/skilled nursing facilities in 2008. These residents comprised 4 percent of all people in this age group.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Voting

70%

Percentage of citizens 65 and older reporting casting a ballot in the 2008 presidential election. Along with those 45 to 64, people 65 and older had the highest turnout rate of any age group.

Source: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008

<<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/voting/cb09-110.html>>

Homeownership

80%

Percentage of householders 65 and older in 2008 who owned their homes.

Source: Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey

<<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/hvs.html>>

Population Distribution

Nation

73

The number of men 65 and older on July 1, 2008, for every 100 women in this age group. For those 85 and older, it drops to 48 men per 100 women.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2008-sa.html>>

5.7 million

The number of people 85 and older in the United States on July 1, 2008.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2008-sa.html>>

104,754

Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on Nov. 1, 2009.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/2008-nat-res.html>>

601,000

Projected number of centenarians in the United States in 2050.

Source: Population projections

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>>

States and Counties

4.1 million

Number of people 65 and older living in California on July 1, 2008, the highest total of any state. Florida, with 3.2 million, and New York, with 2.6 million, were the runners-up.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/SC-EST2008-01.html>>

17%

Percentage of Florida's population 65 and older in 2008, which led the nation. States with the next-highest percentages of older people included West Virginia (16 percent) and Pennsylvania (15 percent).

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb09-76.html>>

34%

Percentage of the population of La Paz County, Ariz., that was 65 and older on July 1, 2008, which led the nation. It was followed by Highlands, Fla. (32 percent), and Lancaster, Va. (32 percent).

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb09-76.html>>

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

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

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>.