



HOUSING AMERICA'S OLDER ADULTS 2018

KEY FACTS

65 million households in the US are headed by someone 50 or over

- Households headed by someone 65 or over represent 55 percent of all the nation's households.
- Over the past several years, the most significant growth in older households came from baby boomers aged 65-74. This group expanded by 26 percent from 2011-2016 to over 17 million households.
- The number of households in the 80-and-over age group will more than double by 2037.

Older adults live in diverse arrangements

- Among all households age 65 and over, 44 percent are married/partnered and 43 percent are single-person households. With age, the share of single-person households increases.
- 11 percent of older adults age 65 and over, representing 5.3 million people, live in another person's household. Most of these, 3.4 million, live in the home of a child.
- The number of older people living as roommates with non-relatives is modest but grew more than 70 percent over the past decade, from 1.5 to 2.6 million.
- In 2016 2.4 million older adults lived in group quarters such as skilled nursing facilities.

Older adults have high homeownership rates

- 76.2 percent of households age 50 and over and 78.7 percent of those 65 and over own their homes.
- Homeownership rates vary by race, with 81 percent of white households age 50 and over owning homes compared to 57 percent of black, 60 percent of Hispanic, and 71 percent of Asian/other households.
- Nearly a quarter of older adults age 50 and over rent their housing.

The number of older adults in low-density areas is growing

- The largest increase in the older adult population has been in the lowest density portions of metro areas.
- The number of census tracts where those age 50 and over form a majority has increased from 1,499 in 2000 to 4,764 in 2016.
- Growing shares of older adults are choosing to reside in age-restricted housing.

The income of older adults has risen in recent years, but renters lag far behind homeowners

- In 2017, 8.3 percent of those age 75 and over were employed or actively looking for work, nearly double the share of 30 years ago.
- The number of older households with low-incomes is growing: from 2000-2016, the number of households age 50 and over earning under \$15,000 per year grew by 39 percent to 8.9 million.
- Among those aged 50-64, homeowners had a net worth almost 60 times that of same-age renters.
- In 2016, renters age 50-64 had a median net worth of \$4,990 while owners of the same age had a median net worth of \$292,020 (including housing equity).

50-64 year olds lag behind older cohorts in terms of income and wealth gains

- From 2011-2016, median household income rose 9.6 percent for those 65-79 and 5.2 percent for those age 80 and over. However, gains for those in their 50s and mid-60s were just 2.6 percent.
- From 2013-2016 the net worth of households age 80 and over grew by 41 percent, while that of households aged 50-64 range grew just 15 percent. In real terms, the net worth of 50-64 year-olds was lower than in 2007.
- While the homeownership rates for older adults are currently below their pre-recession levels, the rate for households aged 50-64 has fallen more steeply than for those 65 and over.

Nearly 10 million older adults are burdened by the cost of housing

- In 2016, 9.7 million households age 65 and over – nearly a third of households in this age group – spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing, making them housing cost burdened. About 4.9 million were severely cost burdened, spending at least half their incomes on housing.
- Cost burdens rise with age. In 2016, 36 percent of households age 80 and over faced cost burdens compared to 31 percent of those 65-79 and 29 percent of those 50-64.
- Between 2006 and 2016, Social Security payments rose 6 percent in real terms while the median rent for those age 65 and over rose at twice that rate.
- The number of households age 62 and over with very low incomes who live in severely inadequate housing and/or have severe cost burdens increased from 1.5 million in 2013 to 1.9 million in 2015. Only one in three of these households receive housing assistance.

There is a severe shortage of accessible housing in the US

- In 2016, 26 percent of households age 50 and over included at least one person with a vision, hearing, cognitive, self-care, mobility, or independent living difficulty. The incidence of difficulties increase with age: mobility challenges, for example, rise from 11 percent of those 50-64 to 43 percent of those age 80 and over.
- Very few homes are accessible to people with disabilities: only 3.5 percent of housing units in the US had single-floor living, no-step entry, and extra-wide hallways and doors that can accommodate a wheelchair as of 2011.
- Those receiving housing assistance are more likely to have ramps, no step entries, grab bars, and medical emergency call systems than those of similar incomes living in unsubsidized units.

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters

- More than half the deaths from Hurricane Katrina were among those over age 75 and almost half the deaths from Hurricane Sandy were among people over age 65. A recent study of deaths from Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico found that the median age of those who remained on the island after the hurricane or passed away during or after was 50.
- Disruptions to healthcare due to lack of power, road closures, and closures of health care facilities are significant factors, as are hazards that arise after disasters, such as mold in the home. Older adults may also have more difficulty evacuating before a storm.

Download the **HOUSING AMERICA'S OLDER ADULTS 2018** report + interactive maps at:

www.jchs.harvard.edu/housing-americas-older-adults-2018

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