



Fact Sheet on Older Americans

Demographics

The number of Americans age 55 and older will almost double between now and 2030 – from 60 million today (21 percent of the total US population) to 107.6 million (31 percent of the population) – as the baby boomers reach retirement age.

During that same period of time, the number of Americans over 65 will more than double, from 34.8 million in 2000 (12 percent of the population) to 70.3 million in 2030 (20 percent of the total population).

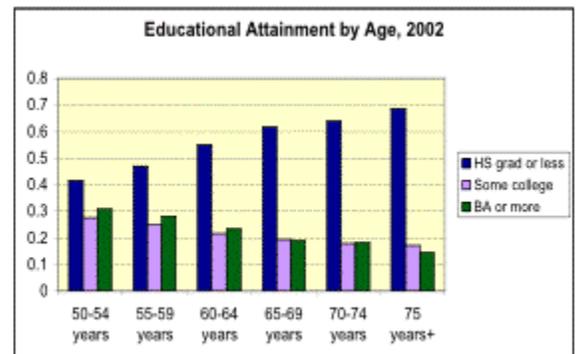
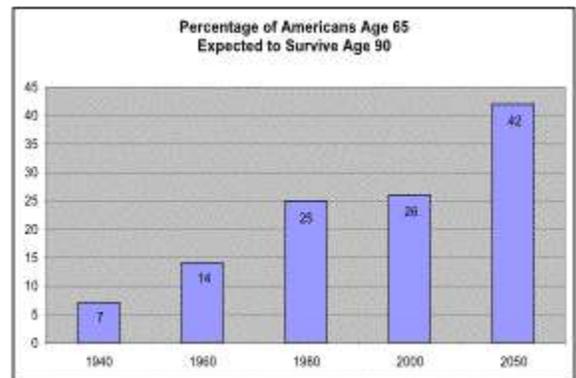
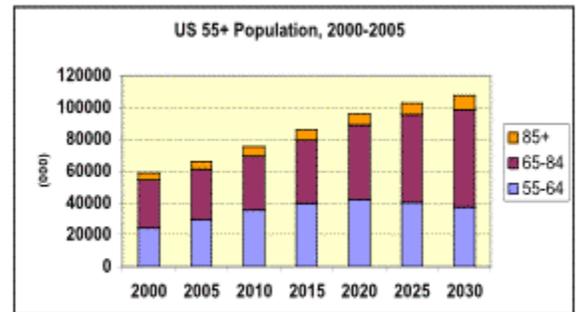
The most rapid growth in numbers is among the "oldest old." According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are currently 66,000 Americans older than 100, which is 20 times the number of centenarians who were alive in 1960. The Bureau estimates that there will be 214,000 centenarians in the U.S. by 2020 and 834,000 by 2050.

The next generation of retirees will be the healthiest, longest lived, best educated, most affluent in history:

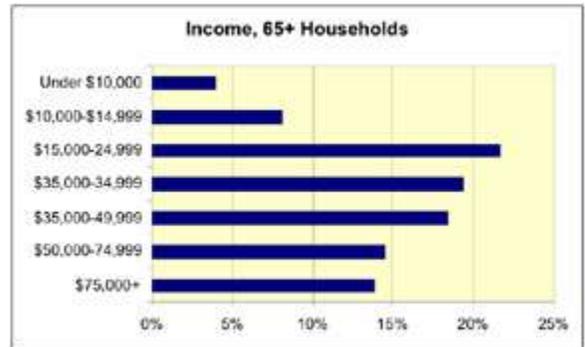
- Americans reaching age 65 today have an average life expectancy of an additional 17.9 years (19.2 years for females and 16.3 years for males).
- The likelihood that an American who reaches the age of 65 will survive to the age of 90 has nearly doubled over the past 40 years – from just 14 percent of 65 year olds in 1960 to 25 percent at present. By 2050, 40 percent of 65 year olds are likely to reach age 90.

Education and Income

The older population is becoming better educated. While less than one-third of today's adults aged 70-74 have at least some college education, that percentage will increase to more than 50 percent by 2015.



Most older Americans today have more financial resources than did previous generations. Households headed by persons age 65 and older reported a median income in 2000 of \$32,854 (\$33,467 for Whites, \$27,952 for African-Americans, and \$24,330 for Hispanics). While one of every eight (12.1 percent) households headed by someone age 65 or older had incomes less than \$15,000, nearly half (49.2 percent) had annual incomes of \$35,000 or more, and nearly three in ten households (29.8 percent) have incomes greater than \$50,000 per year.



Older Volunteers

Nearly half of all Americans age 55 and over volunteered at least once in the past year. Even among those age 75 and older, 43 percent had volunteered at some point in the previous year.

Older Adults as Volunteers

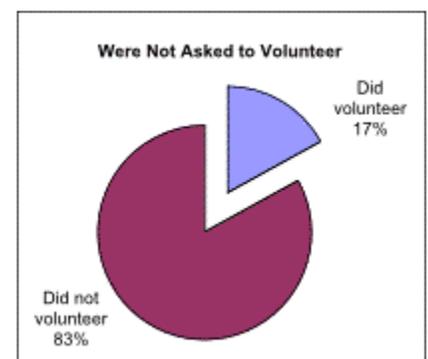
	Age 55 to 64	Age 65 to 74	Age 75+
Percent of age group who volunteer	50.3 percent	46.6 percent	43.0 percent
Total number of volunteers	11.9 million	8.5 million	7.1 million
Avg weekly hours per volunteer	3.3 hours	3.6 hours	3.1 hours
Total time volunteered annually	4.8 billion hours	1.6 billion hours	1.1 billion hours

Source: Independent Sector, America's Senior Volunteers, June 2000

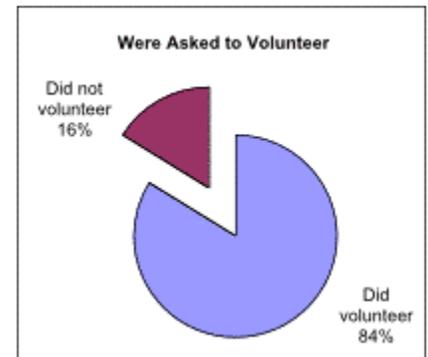
Older volunteers devoted the most time to community activities – almost double the national median for all ages. Compared with the U.S. median commitment of 52 volunteer hours annually, those 65 and over contributed 96 hours. (U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Volunteering in the United States," December 2002).

Participation of seniors in volunteering could be expanded substantially if more were asked to volunteer or were offered an incentive to serve.

- Just 17 percent of adults age 55 and over who were not directly asked to volunteer did volunteer on their own. Among those who were asked, however, 83 percent – or more than four times as many – volunteered.



- According to the 2002 Hart survey sponsored by Civic Ventures, an additional 21 percent of older Americans would commit at least five hours a week to volunteering if they received a small incentive for their service, such as discounts on prescription drugs and/or a \$200/month stipend. Offering such an incentive could double the current older adult volunteer workforce, from 25 percent to 46 percent. Nearly one in three older adults say they would serve 15 hours a week for such an incentive.



Changing Attitudes Toward Retirement and the Emergence of a New "Life Stage"

Older Americans no longer see retirement as an "endless vacation," but increasingly as an active, engaged phase of life that includes work and public service.

- According to a 2002 survey conducted for Civic Ventures, 59 percent of older Americans see retirement as "a time to be active and involved, to start new activities, and to set new goals." Just 24 percent see retirement as "a time to enjoy leisure activities and take a much deserved rest."
- Those who plan to work in their retirement cite the desire to stay active and productive, rather than economic necessity, as the primary reason.
- More than half of the respondents (56 percent) say civic engagement will be at least a fairly important part of retirement (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, "The New Face of Retirement: An Ongoing Survey of American Attitudes on Aging," San Francisco: Civic Ventures, 2002.)
- A 2003 survey conducted for AARP found that many Americans between the ages of 50 and 70 plan to work far into what has traditionally been viewed as their "retirement years,"
- Nearly half of all pre-retirees (45 percent) expect to continue working into their 70s or later. Of this group, 27 percent said they would work until they were in their 70s, and 18 percent said "80 or older," "never stop working," or "as long as they are able to work."
- The most common reasons given by pre-retirees for wanting to continue working in retirement were the desire to stay "mentally active" (87 percent) or "physically active" (85 percent), and the desire "to remain productive or useful" (77 percent). Slightly more than half of the pre-retirees (54 percent) indicated that their motivation was based on "a need for money." (S. Kathi Brown, "Staying Ahead of the Curve 2003: The AARP Working in Retirement Study," Washington, DC: AARP, 2003)

Factors in the Decision to Work in Retirement (%)*

	Pre-retirees who plan to work in retirement	Working retirees	Total
Desire to stay mentally active	87	68	83
Desire to stay physically active	85	61	80
Desire to remain productive or useful	77	73	76
Need health benefits	66	20	56
Desire to help other people	59	44	56
Desire to be around people	58	47	55
Need the money	54	51	53
Desire to learn new things	50	37	48
Desire to pursue a dream	32	20	29

Source: AARP, "Staying Ahead of the Curve 2003"

*Respondents could choose as many factors as apply to them

The result of these demographic trends is the emergence of a new lifestage between adulthood and true old age – which has been called the "third age" or "midcourse" – that encompasses the 50s, 60s and even 70s. How this stage is defined, and what activities it involves, is currently being determined.