

# Seniors

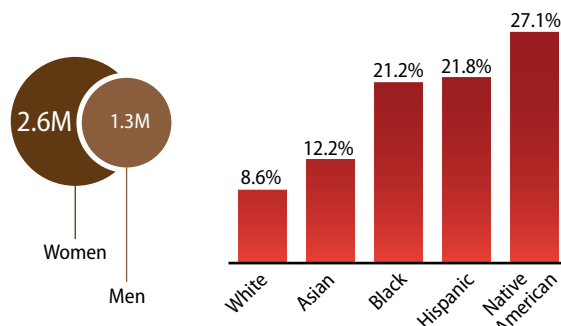
By 2050, one-fifth of the total U.S. population will be 65 or older—up from 12 percent in 2000—with the number of people aged 85 and older growing the fastest over the next few decades. As the aging population continues to rise, several indicators of economic security are projected to be bleak unless we provide proper assistance and support. Today, 15 percent of American seniors—people aged 65 and older—are living in poverty in the United States, a disproportionate number of whom are women and people of color. Furthermore, the number of poor seniors will dramatically increase over the next 10 to 20 years as Baby Boomers age into retirement. They will struggle with economic security, including facing increased homelessness and hunger. Fortunately, Social Security and other government programs keep many seniors out of extreme poverty. Without Social Security, more than half of all seniors would be poor today. There is a lot of progress to be made in ensuring that American seniors are able to participate in the nation’s economic prosperity.

**a** *Senior poverty*  
2012 supplemental poverty rate for people aged 65 and older



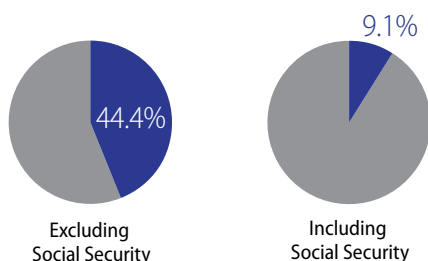
Source: Kathleen Short, "The Research Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2012" (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2013), available at <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p60-247.pdf>.

**b** *Disproportionate poverty*  
Poverty among seniors disproportionately affects women, especially women of color



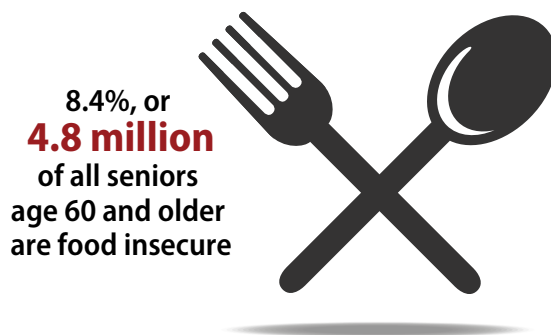
Source: Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Lauren Frohlich, "National Snapshot: Poverty among Women & Families, 2012" (Washington: National Women's Law Center, 2013), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/povertysnapshot2012.pdf>.

**c** *Social Security lifts seniors out of poverty*  
In 2012, Social Security lifted 15.3 million seniors—including 9 million women—above the poverty line



Source: Paul N. Van de Water, Arloc Sherman, and Kathy Ruffing, "Social Security Keeps 22 Million Americans Out of Poverty: A State-by-State Analysis" (Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013), available at <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4037>.

**d** *Senior hunger*  
Seniors that live in a Southern state, are younger, or are Black or Hispanic are more likely to experience food insecurity

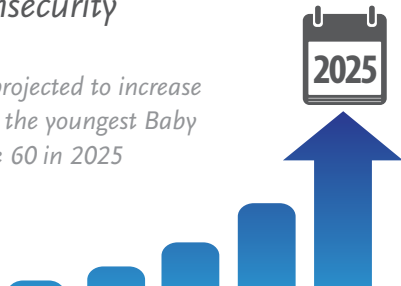


Source: Feeding America, "Senior Hunger," available at <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-facts/senior-hunger.aspx> (last accessed July 2014).

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### Senior food insecurity on the rise

Food insecurity is projected to increase dramatically when the youngest Baby Boomers reach age 60 in 2025

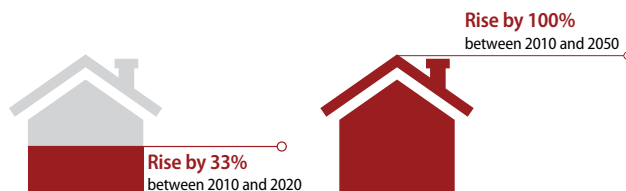


Source: Feeding America, "Senior Hunger," available at <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-facts/senior-hunger.aspx> (last accessed July 2014).

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### Senior homelessness

Homelessness among seniors is projected to rise dramatically



Source: American FactFinder, "Race Alone or in Combination: 2010: 2010 Census Summary File 1, Table QT-P5," available at <http://1.usa.gov/1u2Ce2H> (last accessed June 2014).

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### Seniors are economically vulnerable

Nearly half of all seniors—48 percent—live on income less than two times the supplemental poverty threshold

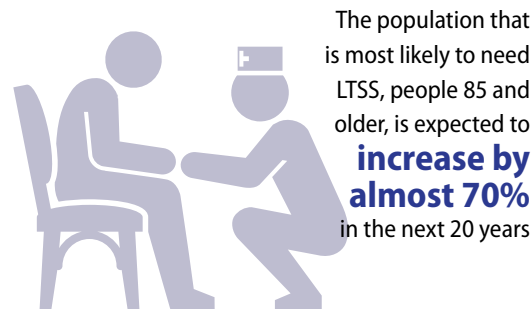


Source: Elise Gould and David Cooper, "Financial Security of Elderly Americans at Risk: Proposed changes to Social Security and Medicare could make a majority of seniors economically vulnerable" (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2013), available at <http://www.epi.org/files/2013/EPI-economic-security-elderly-americans-risk.pdf>.

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### The majority of seniors have long-term care needs

70 percent of Baby Boomers can expect to use some form of long-term care during their lives



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, "Five Key Facts about the Delivery and Financing of Long Term Services And Supports," available at <http://kff.org/medicaid/fact-sheet/five-key-facts-about-the-delivery-and-financing-of-long-term-services-and-supports/> (last accessed July 2014).

We cannot leave our nation's seniors behind. A significant number of Baby Boomers, who have made significant contributions to the nation's economy during their lifetime, will reach the age of 70 with very little in savings or retirement income. Fewer and fewer have traditional pensions and will rely solely on Social Security for their income.

Moving forward, we must strengthen Social Security and other government programs such as the Supplemental Security Income program, housing subsidies, hunger assistance, and caregiver support. Many programs similar to these not only help seniors achieve economic security, but also help millions of adult children, people with disabilities, and many young people. We must also address the nation's current and future long-term care financial crisis so that fewer people have to become poor to become eligible for Medicaid in order to afford much-needed help. These policy solutions will not only help reduce senior poverty, but strengthen our nation's economy for all.