

# The Older Population: 2020

## 2020 Census Briefs

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### INTRODUCTION

The older population in the United States grew rapidly this past decade. Between 2010 and 2020, the population 65 years and over saw the largest and fastest growth in any decade since 1880 to 1890, reaching 55.8 million or 16.8 percent of the total population in 2020. This increase was largely driven by the aging of the baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964), the first of whom turned 65 years old in 2011.<sup>1</sup> As the baby boomers continue to age, the older population will make up an increasing share of the total U.S. population.

This report describes the older population of the United States in 2020, with comparisons to the 2000 and 2010 Censuses. It provides information on the age structure of the population 65 years and over at both national and subnational levels. It also provides information on the older population's sex distribution, racial and ethnic makeup, and use of skilled nursing facilities. The data for this report are based on the 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics file.

### AGE QUESTION

Data on the age composition of the United States are derived from the 2020 Census question on age and date of birth (Figure 1).

<sup>1</sup> The baby boom includes people born from mid-1946 to 1964. The baby boom is distinguished by a dramatic increase in birth rates following World War II and is one of the largest generations in U.S. history. For more information, refer to H. Hogan, D. Perez, and W. Bell, "Who (Really) Are the First Baby Boomers?" In Joint Statistical Meetings Proceedings, Social Statistics Section, Alexandria, VA, American Statistical Association, 2008, pp. 1009-1016.

Figure 1.

### Reproduction of the Question on Age and Date of Birth From the 2020 Census

5. What is your age on April 1, 2020, and what is your date of birth? If you don't know the exact age, please estimate. For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.

Print numbers in boxes.

Age on April 1, 2020	Month	Day	Year of birth
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census questionnaire.

The decennial census has collected information on age from respondents since the first census in 1790. The 2020 Census data on age were derived from a two-part question that asked for both age and date of birth. The question asked for age in complete years as well as month, day, and year of birth, and instructed respondents to report babies less than 1 year old as age 0.

### THE 65 YEARS AND OVER POPULATION: A SNAPSHOT

In 2020, the older population accounted for 55.8 million people, 16.8 percent of the total population of the United States. Examining the number and percentage of people in the older population since 1900 (Figure 2), the decade between 2010 to 2020 saw the largest increase in the older population in terms of number of people, share of the population, and rate of growth.

Table 1a.

**Population 65 Years and Over by Sex and Age: 2000, 2010, and 2020**

Sex and age	2000			2010			2020		
	Number	Percent 65 years and over	Percent U.S. total population	Number	Percent 65 years and over	Percent U.S. total population	Number	Percent 65 years and over	Percent U.S. total population
<b>Both sexes, all ages...</b>	<b>281,421,906</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>308,745,538</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>331,449,281</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>100.0</b>
65 and over.....	34,991,753	100.0	12.4	40,267,984	100.0	13.0	55,792,501	100.0	16.8
65 to 74.....	18,390,986	52.6	6.5	21,713,429	53.9	7.0	33,111,965	59.3	10.0
65 to 69.....	9,533,545	27.2	3.4	12,435,263	30.9	4.0	18,288,727	32.8	5.5
70 to 74.....	8,857,441	25.3	3.1	9,278,166	23.0	3.0	14,823,238	26.6	4.5
75 to 84.....	12,361,180	35.3	4.4	13,061,122	32.4	4.2	16,344,101	29.3	4.9
75 to 79.....	7,415,813	21.2	2.6	7,317,795	18.2	2.4	9,955,322	17.8	3.0
80 to 84.....	4,945,367	14.1	1.8	5,743,327	14.3	1.9	6,388,779	11.5	1.9
85 to 94.....	3,902,349	11.2	1.4	5,068,825	12.6	1.6	5,705,470	10.2	1.7
85 to 89.....	2,789,818	8.0	1.0	3,620,459	9.0	1.2	3,829,179	6.9	1.2
90 to 94.....	1,112,531	3.2	0.4	1,448,366	3.6	0.5	1,876,291	3.4	0.6
95 and over.....	337,238	1.0	0.1	424,608	1.1	0.1	630,965	1.1	0.2
95 to 99.....	286,784	0.8	0.1	371,244	0.9	0.1	550,826	1.0	0.2
100 and over.....	50,454	0.1	Z	53,364	0.1	Z	80,139	0.1	Z
<b>Male, all ages.....</b>	<b>138,053,563</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>151,781,326</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>162,685,811</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>49.1</b>
65 and over.....	14,409,625	41.2	5.1	17,362,960	43.1	5.6	24,999,120	44.8	7.5
65 to 74.....	8,303,274	23.7	3.0	10,096,519	25.1	3.3	15,516,471	27.8	4.7
65 to 69.....	4,400,362	12.6	1.6	5,852,547	14.5	1.9	8,634,739	15.5	2.6
70 to 74.....	3,902,912	11.2	1.4	4,243,972	10.5	1.4	6,881,732	12.3	2.1
75 to 84.....	4,879,353	13.9	1.7	5,476,762	13.6	1.8	7,196,612	12.9	2.2
75 to 79.....	3,044,456	8.7	1.1	3,182,388	7.9	1.0	4,475,564	8.0	1.4
80 to 84.....	1,834,897	5.2	0.7	2,294,374	5.7	0.7	2,721,048	4.9	0.8
85 to 94.....	1,158,826	3.3	0.4	1,698,254	4.2	0.6	2,121,268	3.8	0.6
85 to 89.....	876,501	2.5	0.3	1,273,867	3.2	0.4	1,494,421	2.7	0.5
90 to 94.....	282,325	0.8	0.1	424,387	1.1	0.1	626,847	1.1	0.2
95 and over.....	68,172	0.2	Z	91,425	0.2	Z	164,769	0.3	Z
95 to 99.....	58,115	0.2	Z	82,263	0.2	Z	147,792	0.3	Z
100 and over.....	10,057	Z	Z	9,162	Z	Z	16,977	Z	Z
<b>Female, all ages.....</b>	<b>143,368,343</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>156,964,212</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>168,763,470</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>50.9</b>
65 and over.....	20,582,128	58.8	7.3	22,905,024	56.9	7.4	30,793,381	55.2	9.3
65 to 74.....	10,087,712	28.8	3.6	11,616,910	28.8	3.8	17,595,494	31.5	5.3
65 to 69.....	5,133,183	14.7	1.8	6,582,716	16.3	2.1	9,653,988	17.3	2.9
70 to 74.....	4,954,529	14.2	1.8	5,034,194	12.5	1.6	7,941,506	14.2	2.4
75 to 84.....	7,481,827	21.4	2.7	7,584,360	18.8	2.5	9,147,489	16.4	2.8
75 to 79.....	4,371,357	12.5	1.6	4,135,407	10.3	1.3	5,479,758	9.8	1.7
80 to 84.....	3,110,470	8.9	1.1	3,448,953	8.6	1.1	3,667,731	6.6	1.1
85 to 94.....	2,743,523	7.8	1.0	3,370,571	8.4	1.1	3,584,202	6.4	1.1
85 to 89.....	1,913,317	5.5	0.7	2,346,592	5.8	0.8	2,334,758	4.2	0.7
90 to 94.....	830,206	2.4	0.3	1,023,979	2.5	0.3	1,249,444	2.2	0.4
95 and over.....	269,066	0.8	0.1	333,183	0.8	0.1	466,196	0.8	0.1
95 to 99.....	228,669	0.7	0.1	288,981	0.7	0.1	403,034	0.7	0.1
100 and over.....	40,397	0.1	Z	44,202	0.1	Z	63,162	0.1	Z

X Not applicable.

Z Rounds to zero.

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 1, 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Table 1b.

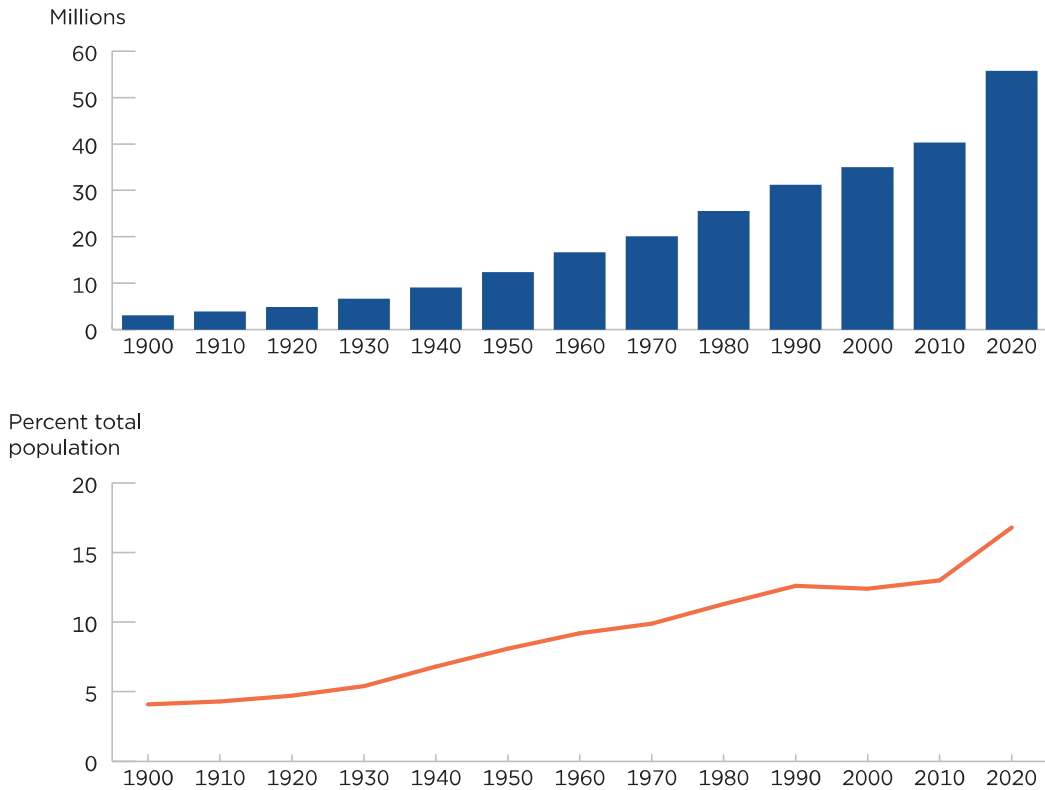
**Change in Population 65 Years and Over by Sex and Age: 2000, 2010, and 2020**

Sex and age	Change, 2000 to 2010		Change, 2010 to 2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Both sexes, all ages. . . . .</b>	<b>27,323,632</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>22,703,743</b>	<b>7.4</b>
65 and over. . . . .	5,276,231	15.1	15,524,517	38.6
65 to 74 . . . . .	3,322,443	18.1	11,398,536	52.5
65 to 69 . . . . .	2,901,718	30.4	5,853,464	47.1
70 to 74 . . . . .	420,725	4.7	5,545,072	59.8
75 to 84 . . . . .	699,942	5.7	3,282,979	25.1
75 to 79 . . . . .	-98,018	-1.3	2,637,527	36.0
80 to 84 . . . . .	797,960	16.1	645,452	11.2
85 to 94 . . . . .	1,166,476	29.9	636,645	12.6
85 to 89 . . . . .	830,641	29.8	208,720	5.8
90 to 94 . . . . .	335,835	30.2	427,925	29.5
95 and over. . . . .	87,370	25.9	206,357	48.6
95 to 99 . . . . .	84,460	29.5	179,582	48.4
100 and over. . . . .	2,910	5.8	26,775	50.2
<b>Male, all ages. . . . .</b>	<b>13,727,763</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>10,904,485</b>	<b>7.2</b>
65 and over. . . . .	2,953,335	20.5	7,636,160	44.0
65 to 74 . . . . .	1,793,245	21.6	5,419,952	53.7
65 to 69 . . . . .	1,452,185	33.0	2,782,192	47.5
70 to 74 . . . . .	341,060	8.7	2,637,760	62.2
75 to 84 . . . . .	597,409	12.2	1,719,850	31.4
75 to 79 . . . . .	137,932	4.5	1,293,176	40.6
80 to 84 . . . . .	459,477	25.0	426,674	18.6
85 to 94 . . . . .	539,428	46.5	423,014	24.9
85 to 89 . . . . .	397,366	45.3	220,554	17.3
90 to 94 . . . . .	142,062	50.3	202,460	47.7
95 and over. . . . .	23,253	34.1	73,344	80.2
95 to 99 . . . . .	24,148	41.6	65,529	79.7
100 and over. . . . .	-895	-8.9	7,815	85.3
<b>Female, all ages. . . . .</b>	<b>13,595,869</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11,799,258</b>	<b>7.5</b>
65 and over. . . . .	2,322,896	11.3	7,888,357	34.4
65 to 74 . . . . .	1,529,198	15.2	5,978,584	51.5
65 to 69 . . . . .	1,449,533	28.2	3,071,272	46.7
70 to 74 . . . . .	79,665	1.6	2,907,312	57.8
75 to 84 . . . . .	102,533	1.4	1,563,129	20.6
75 to 79 . . . . .	-235,950	-5.4	1,344,351	32.5
80 to 84 . . . . .	338,483	10.9	218,778	6.3
85 to 94 . . . . .	627,048	22.9	213,631	6.3
85 to 89 . . . . .	433,275	22.6	-11,834	-0.5
90 to 94 . . . . .	193,773	23.3	225,465	22.0
95 and over. . . . .	64,117	23.8	133,013	39.9
95 to 99 . . . . .	60,312	26.4	114,053	39.5
100 and over. . . . .	3,805	9.4	18,960	42.9

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Figure 2.  
**Population 65 Years and Over by Size and Percentage of Total Population: 1900 to 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 1900 to 2000; 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

This spike in the older population between 2010 and 2020 is due to the baby-boom generation aging into the 65-and-over age group.

Nationally, the number of people aged 65 and over has increased over time. In 1900, there were 3.1 million people aged 65 and over in the United States (Figure 2) and this number has increased steadily across the following decades, reaching 55.8 million in 2020. From 2010 to 2020, the number of people in the older population increased by 15.5 million people, the largest 10-year numeric increase to date. The second-largest 10-year numeric increase was 5.7 million, between 1980 and 1990.

The older population's share of the total population has also been trending upward. The population 65 years and over made up just 4.1 percent of the total

population in 1900, and its share of the population steadily increased across the decades, except for the period between 1990 and 2000. In 2020, the percent of the population aged 65 and over reached 16.8 percent, larger than in any other decennial census.

The aged 65 and over population grew by 38.6 percent, from 40.3 million to 55.8 million, between 2010 and 2020. This is the fastest growth rate of any decade since 1880 to 1890 and is over twice as fast as the previous decade, from 2000 to 2010, when the older population grew by 15.1 percent. The 65 years and over population also grew at a rate five times faster than the total population. Between 2010 and 2020, the older population grew by 38.6 percent while the total population increased by 7.4 percent, from 308.7 million to 331.4 million.

## Population Size and Growth Varied Among Older Age Groups

Population size and growth varied among older age groups. Tables 1a and 1b present data on the age and sex distributions of the population for selected older age groups. Looking at 10-year age groups, the largest group was aged 65 to 74, representing over one-half (33.1 million or 59.3 percent) of the 65-and-over population, followed by the 75-to-84 age group (16.3 million or 29.3 percent), the 85-to-94 age group (5.7 million or 10.2 percent), and the 95-and-over age group (about 631,000 or 1.1 percent). In the decade between 2010 and 2020, the age groups 65 to 74 and 95 and over saw larger growth (52.5 and 48.6 percent, respectively) than the 75-to-84 (25.1 percent) or 85-to-94 (12.6 percent) age groups.

## Fast Growth in the 65-to-74 Age Group Reflects Aging of Baby Boomers

The effect of aging baby boomers on the older population is most apparent when examining 10- and 5-year age groups. The aging baby boomers, aged 56 to 74 in 2020, drove the rapid growth in the 65-to-74 age group. The number of 65- to 74-year-olds grew by 11.4 million (52.5 percent), increasing from 21.7 million in 2010 to 33.1 million in 2020. In 2020, one out of ten Americans was aged 65 to 74. Within this age group, 65- to 69-year-olds increased by 47.1 percent and 70- to 74-year-olds increased by 59.8 percent, which is the fastest growth between 2010 and 2020 of any 5-year age group within the older population (Table 1b).

The population 95 years and over also experienced a large rate of growth (48.6 percent) and increased from about 425,000 in 2010 to about 631,000 in 2020. The 75-to-84 age group grew at about one-half that rate (25.1 percent) but is expected to grow more rapidly in the next decade, as baby boomers age into this age group. The 85-to-94 age group experienced slower growth (12.6 percent) than the other older age groups, increasing from 5.1 million to 5.7 million.

Figure 3 shows age-sex pyramids for the United States in 2010 and 2020. Age-sex pyramids are key tools for illustrating a population's age and sex composition and show the numeric distribution of males (on the left) and females (on the right) by single years of age. The 2010 and 2020 pyramids are shown together so that population shifts in the shape of the pyramid can be more easily assessed. The baby-boom generation is shaded darker for easier identification and a reference line is provided at the age of 65.

There was notable growth in the older ages between 2010 and 2020 for both males and females. The age-sex pyramids are especially useful for visualizing how the aging of the baby-boom generation affected the overall age distribution for the United States. In 2010, the baby-boom population appears as a bulge in the middle of the pyramid at the ages of 46 to 64. In 2020, the bulge is higher up in the pyramid (at the ages of 56 to 74), with about one-half of the baby boomers above the 65 year age line. By 2030, the bulge will have moved completely into the 65 years and over range and the growth in the 65 years and over population is projected to start to slow.

The age-sex pyramid is also a useful tool for examining the sex distribution across age. The bars at the topmost part of the age-sex pyramid display the differences that exist between the number of males and females at the older ages. In both 2010 and 2020, females outnumbered males for every single year of age in the older population. This is apparent by the longer bars at the top of the pyramid for females when compared with males. However, the more symmetrical peak at the top of the pyramid indicates that the two sexes were more similar for older ages in 2020 than they were in 2010. This illustrates one of the main trends for the older population between 2010 and 2020: females continue to outnumber males in the older ages, but that gap is narrowing as males experienced a greater increase in life expectancy relative to females.<sup>2</sup>

### DATA VISUALIZATION

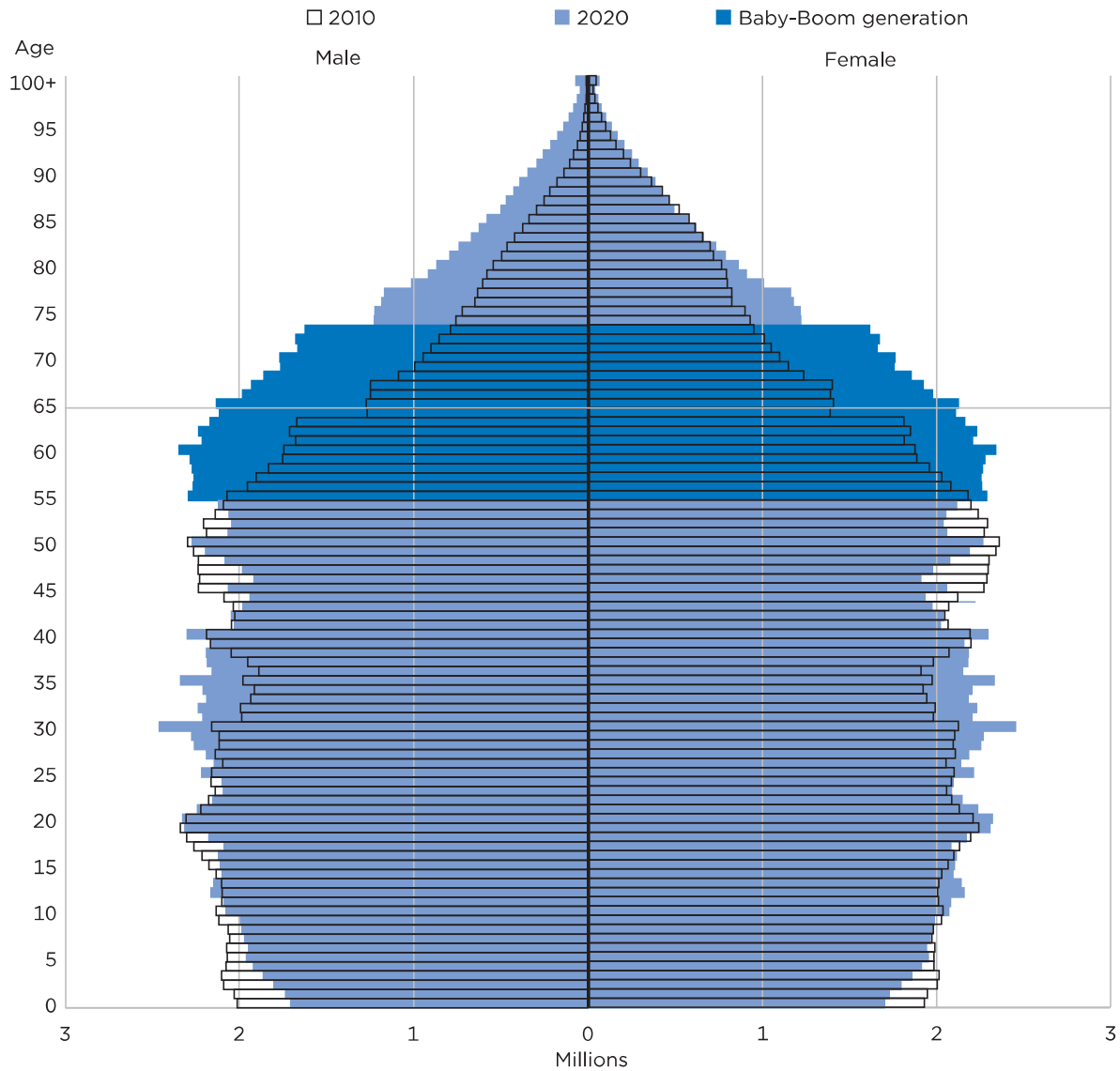
Explore 2020, 2010, and 2000 age-sex pyramids for the nation, states, counties, metropolitan areas, and micropolitan areas at [www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/how-has-our-nations-population-changed.html](http://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/how-has-our-nations-population-changed.html).

## Older Females Outnumbered Older Males and Grew More Numerically

In 2020, there were more females (30.8 million) than males (25.0 million) aged 65 and over (Table 1a), and females outnumbered males in every older age group. The older female population also increased by a larger number than the older male population. Between 2010

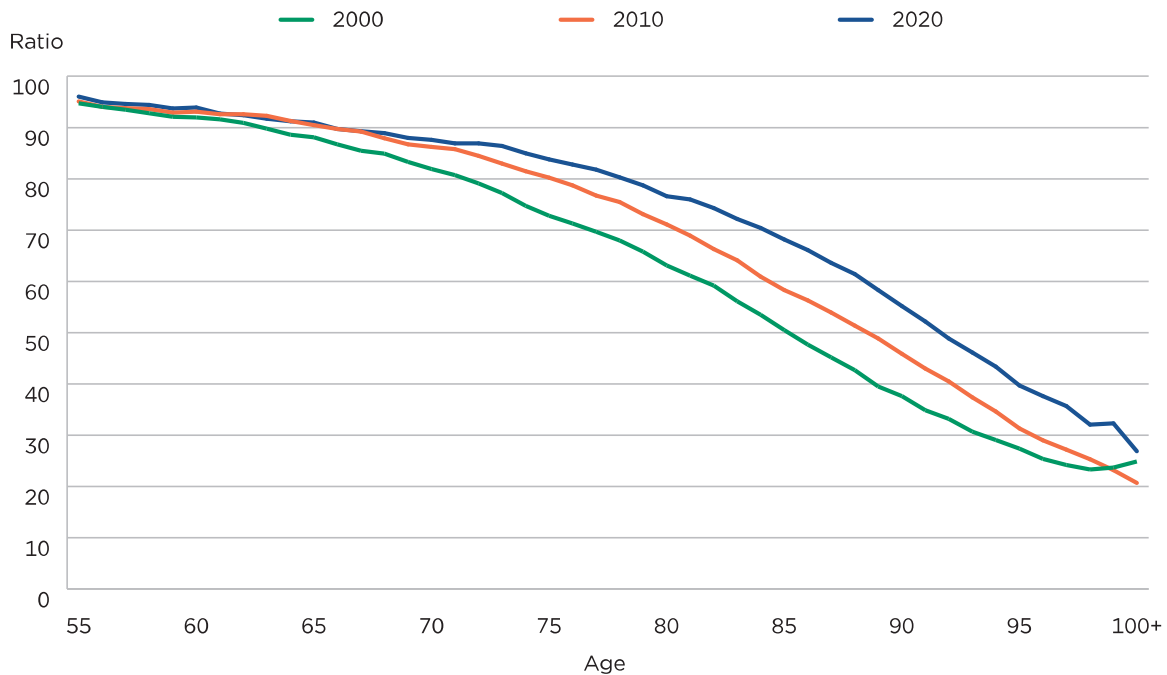
<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Arias, Betzaida Tejada-Vera, Farida Ahmad, and Kenneth D. Kochanek, "Provisional life expectancy estimates for 2020," Vital Statistics Rapid Release, no 15., National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, July 2021, <<https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:107201>>.

Figure 3.  
**Population by Sex and Age: 2010 and 2020**



Note: While generally accurate (refer to “2020 Census Data Quality” at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/planning-management/process/data-quality.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/planning-management/process/data-quality.html)), there was notable age heaping in the 2020 Census. This has been previously identified by demographers at the Census Bureau ([www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2022/04/population-estimates-covid-19-impacts.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2022/04/population-estimates-covid-19-impacts.html)) and more recently ([www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2023/05/age-heaping-2020-census-dhc.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2023/05/age-heaping-2020-census-dhc.html)) and work is under way to investigate modifying future products based on the 2020 Census to address this phenomenon. For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1 and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Figure 4.  
**Sex Ratio by Age: 2000, 2010, and 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

and 2020, the number of females aged 65 and over grew by 7.9 million, while the number of males aged 65 and over grew by 7.6 million.

Females, however, did not outgrow males numerically in every older age group. While females saw larger numeric increases for most 5-year age groups, males increased by larger numbers in the 80-to-84 and 85-to-89 age groups. In fact, the number of females aged 85 to 89 decreased by about 11,800 between 2010 and 2020, the only numeric decrease for a 5-year age group among older ages for either sex.

**Males Experienced More Rapid Growth Than Females in the Older Ages**

While females continued to outnumber males in the older ages, the gap narrowed somewhat over the decade with males increasing at a faster rate than females (Table 1b). The number of males aged 65 and over grew by 44.0 percent from 2010 to 2020, compared to a growth rate of 34.4 percent for females. In fact, males saw larger percent growth than females

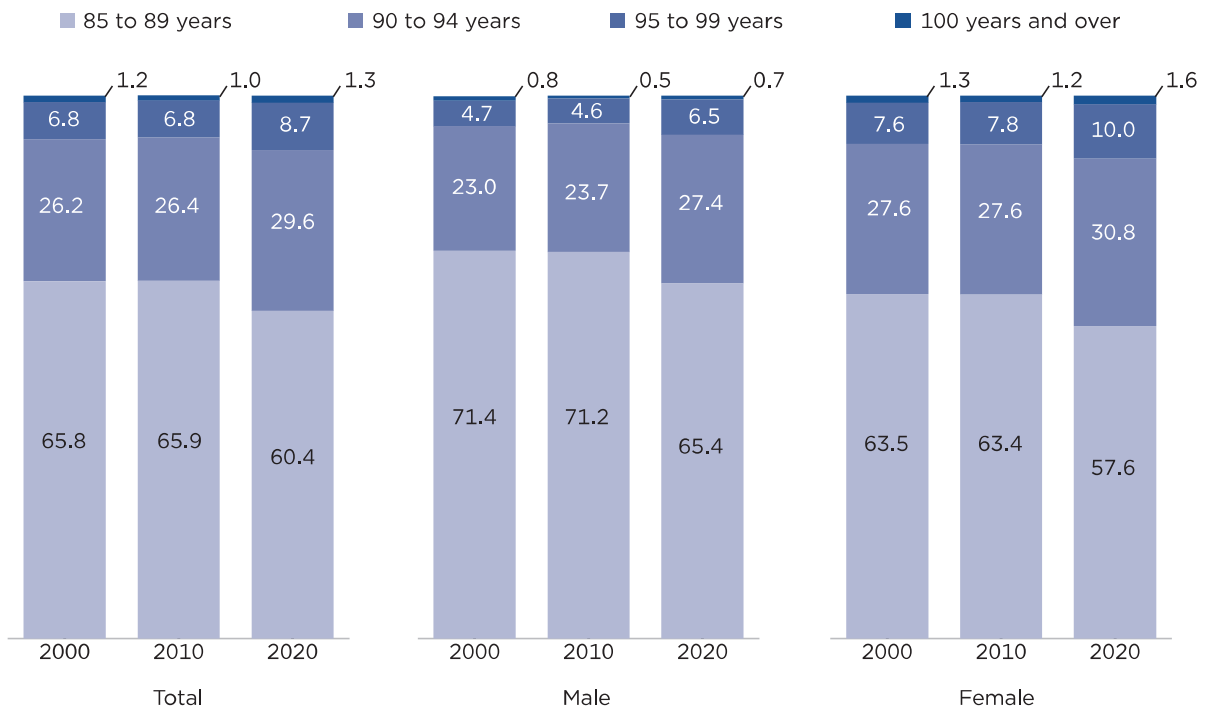
in every 5- and 10-year age category for the 65 years and over population. The largest sex differences in growth rate occurred at the oldest ages, where males aged 100 and over grew by 85.3 percent, while females of the same age grew by 42.9 percent.

Among both males and females, the 10-year age group that experienced the largest percent growth was 65 to 74 (53.7 percent for males and 51.5 percent for females). Among females, the 5-year age group that experienced the largest percent growth was 70 to 74, which grew by 57.8 percent. For males, the 100-and-over age group had the highest growth rate at 85.3 percent.

Another way to examine the sex distribution at older ages is to look at the sex ratio, a common measure used to indicate the balance of males and females in a population. Defined as the number of males per 100 females, a sex ratio of exactly 100 means there were an equal number of males and females. A sex ratio higher than 100 indicates there were more males than

Figure 5.

**Percent Distribution of the Oldest-Old Population by Age: 2000, 2010, and 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

females in a population, whereas a sex ratio under 100 indicates fewer males than females.

In general, the sex ratio for the older population decreased as age increased, meaning that there were fewer males per 100 females at older ages than at younger ages (Figure 4). In 2020, there were 91 males per 100 females at the age of 65, 84 males per 100 females at 75, and 40 males per 100 females at 95. By 92, females outnumbered males two-to-one.

While the sex ratio for those aged 65 and over had increased over the past 2 decades, the increase in sex ratio occurred for older ages between 2010 and 2020 than it had in the earlier decade. The number of males per 100 females increased by at least one for those aged 69 and over between 2010 and 2020, and for those aged 60 to 98 between 2000 and 2010.

**Older Age Groups Made Up Increased Share of Oldest-Old Population**

Figure 5 displays the percent distribution of the population aged 85 and over (the oldest-old) by sex. In 2020, 60.4 percent of the oldest-old were between the ages of 85 to 89, 29.6 percent were 90 to 94, 8.7 percent were 95 to 99, and 1.3 percent were 100 and over.

Comparing the age distribution of the population aged 85 and over by sex, the 85-to-89 age group accounted for a larger share of the male oldest-old population (65.4 percent) than the female oldest-old population (57.6 percent), while the age groups 90 and over accounted for a larger share of the female oldest-old (42.4 percent) than male oldest-old (34.6 percent).



The age distribution of the oldest-old changed more from 2010 to 2020 than in the previous decade. Those aged 90 and over made up 39.6 percent of the oldest-old population in 2020, compared to 34.1 percent in 2010, and 34.2 percent in 2000. Conversely, while the age group of 85 to 89 made up the greatest share of the oldest-old in the past three censuses, its share of the oldest-old population dropped over 5 percentage points in 20 years (from 65.8 percent in 2000 and 65.9 percent in 2010 to 60.4 percent in 2020).

### **The Number of Centenarians<sup>3</sup> Grew by 50 Percent Between 2010 and 2020**

In the 2020 Census, there were 80,139 centenarians, defined as people 100 years and over (Table 1a). This is a 50.2 percent increase from the 2010 Census, which reported 53,364 people who were at least 100 years old (Table 1b). As in all older-age groups, females outnumbered males in the centenarian population. In 2020, there were 63,162 females (78.8 percent) and 16,977 males (21.2 percent) who were 100 years and over.

### **RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN**

Figure 6 examines the racial and ethnic composition of the older (aged 65 and over) and younger (under the age of 65) populations in 2010 and 2020. In 2020, 76.6 percent of the population aged 65 and over identified as White alone, followed by Black or African American alone (9.2 percent), Two or More Races (5.5 percent), Asian alone (4.5 percent), Some Other Race alone (3.4 percent), American Indian and Alaska Native alone (0.7 percent), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone (0.1 percent). The White alone population made up a larger proportion of the older population (76.6 percent) than it did the younger population (58.6 percent). The converse is true for the other race groups, which accounted for larger shares of the younger than the older population. This contrast is most noticeable for the Some Other Race alone group, which made up 9.4 percent of the younger population, and 3.4 percent of the older population.

Between 2010 and 2020, the White alone population's share of the older population declined from 84.8 percent to 76.6 percent.<sup>4</sup> Among the other race

<sup>3</sup> The centenarian population can be affected by data quality issues such as age misreporting by respondents. For more information about data quality at the extreme older ages, refer to <[www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/dec/c2010sr-03.html](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/dec/c2010sr-03.html)>.

<sup>4</sup> Data users should use caution when comparing 2010 Census and 2020 Census race and Hispanic Origin data because of improvements to the question design, data processing, and coding procedures for the 2020 Census.

alone groups, increases were observed, ranging from 0.02 percentage points for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone to 1.8 percentage points for Some Other Race alone. The Multiracial population increased by 4.5 percentage points, from 1.0 percent to 5.5 percent of the older population.

The younger population saw a similar pattern of change to the older population. However, the White alone population saw an even greater decrease in the younger ages (-11.9 percentage points) than the older ages (-8.2 percentage points). While the share who identified as Black or African American alone decreased slightly for the younger population (from 13.2 percent in 2010 to 13.1 percent in 2020), it increased for the older population (from 8.5 percent in 2010 to 9.2 percent in 2020).

In 2020, the Hispanic or Latino population made up 8.8 percent of those aged 65 and over and 20.7 percent of those under the age of 65. However, the Hispanic or Latino population made up an increased share of the older population in 2020 (8.8 percent) compared with 2010 (6.9 percent), a 1.9 percentage-point increase.

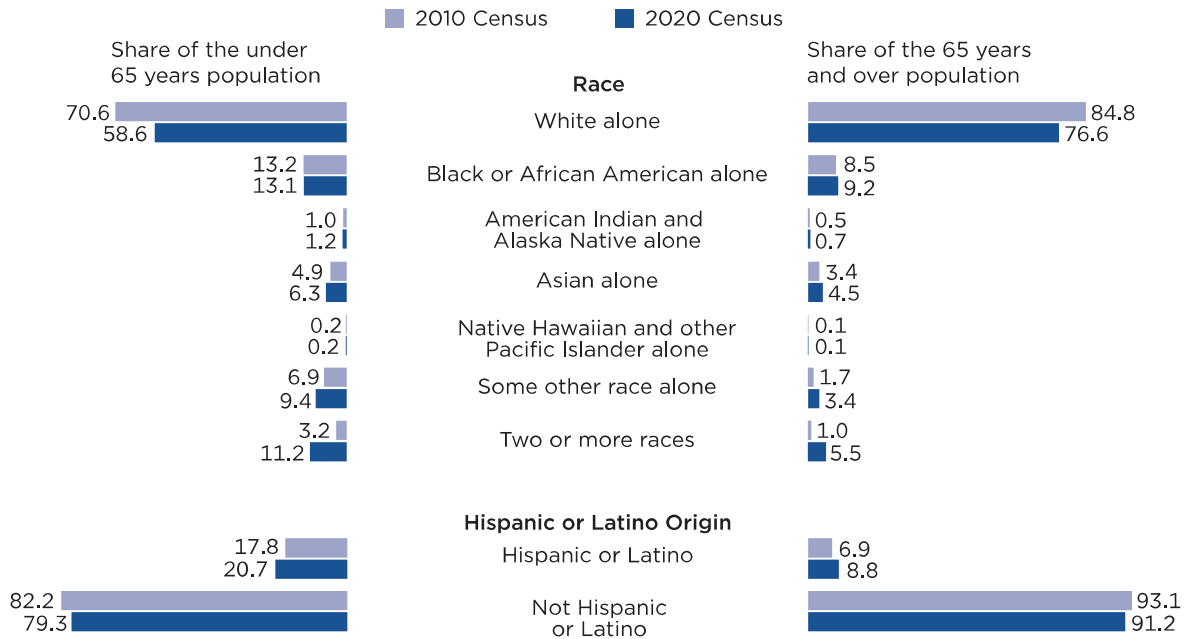
The observed changes in the racial and ethnic population groups could be attributed to several factors, including demographic change since 2010. We expect that they were partially due to the improvements to the design of the two separate questions for race and ethnicity, data processing, and coding, which enabled a more thorough and accurate depiction of how people prefer to self-identify. More information can be found in this America Counts story: "Improved Race and Ethnicity Measures Reveal U.S. Population Is Much More Multiracial" ([census.gov](https://www.census.gov/america/counts/stories/2020-08-11-improved-race-and-ethnicity-measures-reveal-u-s-population-is-much-more-multiracial)).

### **Nursing Facilities<sup>5</sup>**

In 2020, 1.4 million people, or 2.5 percent of the population aged 65 and over lived in nursing facilities/skilled nursing facilities. As age increased, the percentage of people living in nursing facilities increased (Figure 7); 0.9 percent of 65- to 74-year-olds, 2.7 percent of 75- to 84-year-olds, and 10.2 percent of people aged 85 and over lived in nursing facilities.

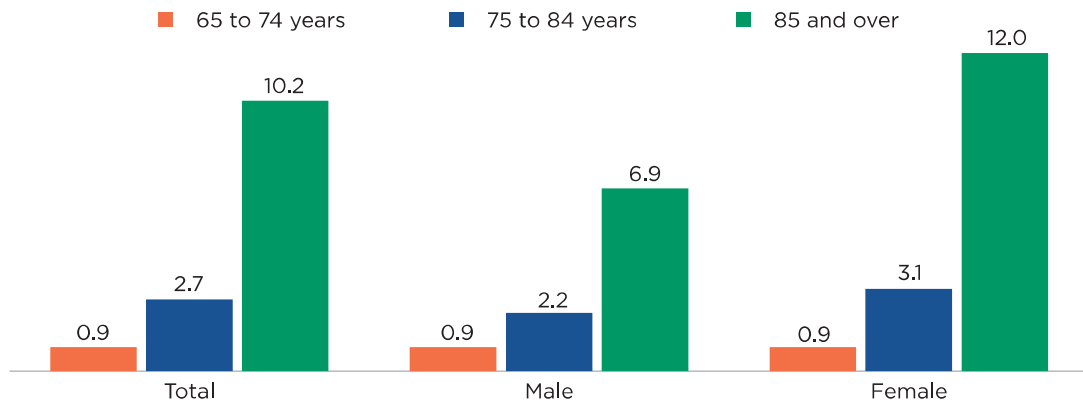
<sup>5</sup> Includes facilities licensed to provide medical care with 7-day, 24-hour coverage for people requiring long-term nonacute care. For more information on how the Census Bureau defines nursing facilities/skilled nursing facilities, refer to pages B10 to B13 at <[https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/summary-file/2020Census\\_PL94\\_171Redistricting\\_StatesTechDoc\\_English.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/summary-file/2020Census_PL94_171Redistricting_StatesTechDoc_English.pdf)>.

Figure 6.  
**Percent Distribution of Race and Hispanic Origin for the Under 65 Years and 65 Years and Over Populations: 2010 and 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: 2010 Census Summary File 1 and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Figure 7.  
**Percentage of Population 65 Years and Over in Nursing Facilities/Skilled Nursing Facilities by Selected Age Groups and Sex: 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Table 2.

**Population 65 Years and Over and Population 85 Years and Over for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: 2010 and 2020**

Area	2010					2020					Percent change, 2010 to 2020		
	Total population	65 years and over		85 years and over		Total population	65 years and over		85 years and over		Total population	65 years and over	85 years and over
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
<b>UNITED STATES</b> . . . . .	<b>308,745,538</b>	<b>40,267,984</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>5,493,433</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>331,449,281</b>	<b>55,792,501</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>6,336,435</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>15.3</b>
<b>Region</b>													
Northeast . . . . .	55,317,240	7,804,833	14.1	1,199,702	2.2	57,609,148	10,197,421	17.7	1,305,784	2.3	4.1	30.7	8.8
Midwest . . . . .	66,927,001	9,022,334	13.5	1,320,640	2.0	68,985,454	11,890,650	17.2	1,417,894	2.1	3.1	31.8	7.4
South . . . . .	114,555,744	14,893,985	13.0	1,821,982	1.6	126,266,107	21,145,925	16.7	2,223,985	1.8	10.2	42.0	22.1
West . . . . .	71,945,553	8,546,832	11.9	1,151,109	1.6	78,588,572	12,558,505	16.0	1,388,772	1.8	9.2	46.9	20.6
<b>State</b>													
Alabama . . . . .	4,779,736	657,792	13.8	75,684	1.6	5,024,279	884,723	17.6	90,745	1.8	5.1	34.5	19.9
Alaska . . . . .	710,231	54,938	7.7	4,711	0.7	733,391	95,185	13.0	6,519	0.9	3.3	73.3	38.4
Arizona . . . . .	6,392,017	881,831	13.8	103,400	1.6	7,151,502	1,339,172	18.7	134,624	1.9	11.9	51.9	30.2
Arkansas . . . . .	2,915,918	419,981	14.4	51,402	1.8	3,011,524	528,867	17.6	54,934	1.8	3.3	25.9	6.9
California . . . . .	37,253,956	4,246,514	11.4	600,968	1.6	39,538,223	6,017,164	15.2	724,578	1.8	6.1	41.7	20.6
Colorado . . . . .	5,029,196	549,625	10.9	69,613	1.4	5,773,714	868,695	15.0	86,770	1.5	14.8	58.1	24.6
Connecticut . . . . .	3,574,097	506,559	14.2	84,898	2.4	3,605,944	647,065	17.9	87,727	2.4	0.9	27.7	3.3
Delaware . . . . .	897,934	129,277	14.4	15,744	1.8	989,948	194,577	19.7	19,432	2.0	10.2	50.5	23.4
District of Columbia . . . . .	601,723	68,809	11.4	10,315	1.7	689,545	86,776	12.6	10,485	1.5	14.6	26.1	1.6
Florida . . . . .	18,801,310	3,259,602	17.3	434,125	2.3	21,538,187	4,568,026	21.2	536,188	2.5	14.6	40.1	23.5
Georgia . . . . .	9,687,653	1,032,035	10.7	113,823	1.2	10,711,908	1,579,289	14.7	147,329	1.4	10.6	53.0	29.4
Hawaii . . . . .	1,360,301	195,138	14.3	30,238	2.2	1,455,271	282,451	19.4	37,839	2.6	7.0	44.7	25.1
Idaho . . . . .	1,567,582	194,668	12.4	25,242	1.6	1,839,106	309,683	16.8	30,977	1.7	17.3	59.1	22.7
Illinois . . . . .	12,830,632	1,609,213	12.5	234,912	1.8	12,812,508	2,093,985	16.3	253,630	2.0	-0.1	30.1	8.0
Indiana . . . . .	6,483,802	841,108	13.0	115,272	1.8	6,785,528	1,118,880	16.5	125,210	1.8	4.7	33.0	8.6
Iowa . . . . .	3,046,355	452,888	14.9	74,658	2.5	3,190,369	574,453	18.0	76,253	2.4	4.7	26.8	2.1
Kansas . . . . .	2,853,118	376,116	13.2	59,318	2.1	2,937,880	490,390	16.7	60,797	2.1	3.0	30.4	2.5
Kentucky . . . . .	4,339,367	578,227	13.3	69,208	1.6	4,505,836	767,159	17.0	76,960	1.7	3.8	32.7	11.2
Louisiana . . . . .	4,533,372	557,857	12.3	65,686	1.4	4,657,757	763,143	16.4	78,148	1.7	2.7	36.8	19.0
Maine . . . . .	1,328,361	211,080	15.9	29,136	2.2	1,362,359	297,029	21.8	33,289	2.4	2.6	40.7	14.3
Maryland . . . . .	5,773,552	707,642	12.3	98,126	1.7	6,177,224	986,315	16.0	112,252	1.8	7.0	39.4	14.4
Massachusetts . . . . .	6,547,629	902,724	13.8	145,199	2.2	7,029,917	1,231,788	17.5	157,291	2.2	7.4	36.5	8.3
Michigan . . . . .	9,883,640	1,361,530	13.8	191,881	1.9	10,077,331	1,805,780	17.9	207,517	2.1	2.0	32.6	8.1
Minnesota . . . . .	5,303,925	683,121	12.9	106,664	2.0	5,706,494	949,293	16.6	116,658	2.0	7.6	39.0	9.4
Mississippi . . . . .	2,967,297	380,407	12.8	44,359	1.5	2,961,279	509,561	17.2	51,854	1.8	-0.2	34.0	16.9
Missouri . . . . .	5,988,927	838,294	14.0	113,779	1.9	6,154,913	1,077,757	17.5	123,460	2.0	2.8	28.6	8.5
Montana . . . . .	989,415	146,742	14.8	20,021	2.0	1,084,225	215,283	19.9	21,883	2.0	9.6	46.7	9.3
Nebraska . . . . .	1,826,341	246,677	13.5	39,308	2.2	1,961,504	321,347	16.4	40,602	2.1	7.4	30.3	3.3
Nevada . . . . .	2,700,551	324,359	12.0	30,187	1.1	3,104,614	508,460	16.4	42,703	1.4	15.0	56.8	41.5
New Hampshire . . . . .	1,316,470	178,268	13.5	24,761	1.9	1,377,529	265,954	19.3	28,594	2.1	4.6	49.2	15.5
New Jersey . . . . .	8,791,894	1,185,993	13.5	179,611	2.0	9,288,994	1,531,299	16.5	196,157	2.1	5.7	29.1	9.2
New Mexico . . . . .	2,059,179	272,255	13.2	31,993	1.6	2,117,522	391,207	18.5	39,361	1.9	2.8	43.7	23.0
New York . . . . .	19,378,102	2,617,943	13.5	390,874	2.0	20,201,249	3,408,466	16.9	441,852	2.2	4.2	30.2	13.0
North Carolina . . . . .	9,535,483	1,234,079	12.9	147,461	1.5	10,439,388	1,789,448	17.1	182,201	1.7	9.5	45.0	23.6
North Dakota . . . . .	672,591	97,477	14.5	16,688	2.5	779,094	123,420	15.8	17,063	2.2	15.8	26.6	2.2
Ohio . . . . .	11,536,504	1,622,015	14.1	230,429	2.0	11,799,448	2,118,737	18.0	249,494	2.1	2.3	30.6	8.3
Oklahoma . . . . .	3,751,351	506,714	13.5	61,912	1.7	3,959,353	653,078	16.5	70,562	1.8	5.5	28.9	14.0
Oregon . . . . .	3,831,074	533,533	13.9	77,872	2.0	4,237,256	795,108	18.8	83,301	2.0	10.6	49.0	7.0
Pennsylvania . . . . .	12,702,379	1,959,307	15.4	305,676	2.4	13,002,700	2,483,054	19.1	319,900	2.5	2.4	26.7	4.7
Rhode Island . . . . .	1,052,567	151,881	14.4	26,750	2.5	1,097,379	200,461	18.3	26,783	2.4	4.3	32.0	0.1
South Carolina . . . . .	4,625,364	631,874	13.7	70,717	1.5	5,118,425	971,951	19.0	90,380	1.8	10.7	53.8	27.8
South Dakota . . . . .	814,180	116,581	14.3	19,226	2.4	886,667	156,591	17.7	20,397	2.3	8.9	34.3	6.1
Tennessee . . . . .	6,346,105	853,462	13.4	99,917	1.6	6,910,840	1,179,571	17.1	116,918	1.7	8.9	38.2	17.0
Texas . . . . .	25,145,561	2,601,886	10.3	305,179	1.2	29,145,505	3,921,135	13.5	397,545	1.4	15.9	50.7	30.3
Utah . . . . .	2,763,885	249,462	9.0	30,991	1.1	3,271,616	381,797	11.7	39,463	1.2	18.4	53.0	27.3
Vermont . . . . .	625,741	91,078	14.6	12,797	2.0	643,077	132,305	20.6	14,191	2.2	2.8	45.3	10.9
Virginia . . . . .	8,001,024	976,937	12.2	122,403	1.5	8,631,393	1,395,291	16.2	150,104	1.7	7.9	42.8	22.6
Washington . . . . .	6,724,540	827,677	12.3	117,271	1.7	7,705,281	1,252,428	16.3	130,958	1.7	14.6	51.3	11.7
West Virginia . . . . .	1,852,994	297,404	16.0	35,921	1.9	1,793,716	367,015	20.5	37,948	2.1	-3.2	23.4	5.6
Wisconsin . . . . .	5,686,986	777,314	13.7	118,505	2.1	5,893,718	1,060,017	18.0	126,813	2.2	3.6	36.4	7.0
Wyoming . . . . .	563,626	70,090	12.4	8,602	1.5	576,851	101,872	17.7	9,796	1.7	2.3	45.3	13.9
<b>Puerto Rico</b> . . . . .	<b>3,725,789</b>	<b>541,998</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>62,596</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3,285,874</b>	<b>731,899</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>85,114</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>-11.8</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>36.0</b>

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1, and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

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## Share of Oldest-Old Living in Nursing Facilities is Almost Twice as Large for Females as for Males

A larger percentage of females (3.0 percent) than males (1.8 percent) aged 65 and over lived in nursing facilities. This is especially apparent for the oldest-old, where 12.0 percent of females and 6.9 percent of males aged 85 and over lived in nursing facilities.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

In addition to providing national-level population statistics, the Census Bureau also provides data for lower levels of geography. The following section contains information on the older population by regions, states, counties, and places with a total population of at least 100,000, as well as urban or rural populations.<sup>6</sup>

## REGION

### The Northeast Had the Largest Percentage of People in Older Ages, Followed by the Midwest

In 2020, the Northeast had the largest percentage of its population 65 years and over (17.7 percent), followed by the Midwest (17.2 percent), the South (16.7 percent), and the West (16.0 percent) (Table 2). The Northeast also contained the largest percentage of its population 85 years and over (2.3 percent), followed by the Midwest (2.1 percent), and the West and South (each with 1.8 percent).

We can also look at the number of older people living in each region in 2020. The South had the largest number of people 65 years and over (21.1 million), followed by the West (12.6 million), the Midwest (11.9 million), and the Northeast (10.2 million). The 85-years-and-older population followed a similar pattern, with the South having the largest number (2.2 million), followed by the Midwest (1.4 million), the West (1.4 million), and the Northeast (1.3 million).

### The South and West Saw Faster Growth Than the Northeast or Midwest in the Older Population

The population 65 years and over saw faster growth this past decade in the West (46.9 percent) and South (42.0 percent) than in the Midwest (31.8 percent) and Northeast (30.7 percent). Similarly, the population aged 85 and over grew faster in the South (22.1 percent) and West (20.6 percent) than in the Northeast (8.8 percent) and Midwest (7.4 percent). This pattern follows the total population growth for the four regions, where the South (10.2 percent) and West (9.2

percent) saw faster growth than the Northeast (4.1 percent) and Midwest (3.1 percent).

## STATE

### Maine Had the Largest Percentage Aged 65 and Over, While Utah Had the Smallest

States varied in what share of their total population was 65 years and over in 2020, from Utah with the smallest share (11.7 percent) to Maine with the largest share (21.8 percent) (Table 2 and Figure 8). In 2020, at least one out of five people were 65 years or over in four states: Maine (21.8 percent), Florida (21.2 percent), Vermont (20.6 percent), and West Virginia (20.5 percent). No states had reached the threshold of 20 percent 65 and over in 2010. In fact, in 2010, the state with the largest percentage 65 years and over was Florida with 17.3 percent; 25 states and Puerto Rico exceeded this percentage in 2020, meaning that about one-half of the states had higher proportions in the older population in 2020 than the state with the highest proportion in 2010.

### Three States Saw Their 65-and-Over Population Increase by More Than 1 Million

All states saw an increase in the number of people in the older population between 2010 and 2020, ranging from about 18,000 for the District of Columbia to about 1,771,000 for California. Three states saw a numeric increase larger than 1,000,000: California (1,770,650), Texas (1,319,249), and Florida (1,308,424). The next largest numeric increase was New York, whose 65 years and over population increased by about 791,000 between 2010 and 2020. Three other states (excluding New York) had increases of 500,000 or more, while 30 other states had increases of at least 100,000.

### Eleven States Saw at Least 50 Percent Growth in Their 65-and-Over Population

While the 65-and-over population increased in all states between 2010 and 2020, the percent change varied. The older population saw the largest percent growth in Alaska, where it grew by 73.3 percent, from 54,938 in 2010 to 95,185 in 2020. Eleven states saw at least a 50 percent growth in the older population between 2010 and 2020, from Delaware with a 50.5 percent increase to Alaska with a 73.3 percent increase. The smallest percent growth in the older population was in West Virginia, which grew by 23.4 percent from 297,404 to 367,015.

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau defines "places" as either incorporated cities, towns, villages, or unincorporated communities.

Those aged 65 and over also made up a larger share of each state's population in 2020 than they did in 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, ten states saw at least a 5 percentage-point increase in the 65 and over shares of their populations. Vermont saw the largest percentage-point increase, from 14.6 percent in 2010 to 20.6 percent in 2020. The District of Columbia and North Dakota had the smallest percentage-point increases, gaining 1.1 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively.

### **Oldest-Old Made Up Largest Share of Population in Hawaii and the Smallest in Alaska**

Like the older population overall, states varied in the share of their population in the oldest-old ages (85 and over), from Alaska with the smallest share (0.9 percent) to Hawaii with the largest share (2.6 percent). Looking at Figure 8, we can determine that states in the Midwest and Northeast generally had 2.0 percent or more of their populations aged 85 and over, while those in the South and West generally had less than 2.0 percent. Florida was an exception to this pattern, with one of the highest percentages (2.5 percent) despite being in the South.

All states saw an increase in the number of people aged 85 and over, although the percent increases varied widely. Rhode Island saw a slight 0.1 percent increase in the number of its residents aged 85 and over, from 26,750 people in 2010 to 26,783 people in 2020. In contrast, Nevada saw the largest percent change with an increase of 41.5 percent (from 30,187 in 2010 to 42,703 in 2020).

While the number of people aged 85 and over grew in all states this past decade, faster growth in younger age groups meant that the 85 and over population's share of the total population decreased in nine states and the District of Columbia. North Dakota saw the largest percentage-point decrease, from 2.5 percent in 2010 to 2.2 percent in 2020. The oldest-old made up a larger share of the total population in 41 states. Hawaii was the state with the largest percentage-point increase (+0.4 percentage points) for the oldest-old, increasing from 2.2 percent in 2010 to 2.6 percent in 2020.

### **Puerto Rico Had a Higher Percentage in Older Ages Than Any State or the District of Columbia**

In 2020, 22.3 percent of Puerto Rico's residents were aged 65 or over, a higher percentage than any of the states or the District of Columbia. Similarly, the

## **DATA VISUALIZATION**

Explore the geographic distribution for older age groups at [www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/exploring-age-groups-in-the-2020-census.html](https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/exploring-age-groups-in-the-2020-census.html).

percentage aged 85 and over was larger in Puerto Rico (2.6 percent) than in all states except for Hawaii. Puerto Rico also saw a larger increase in the share of its population in the older ages. Between 2010 and 2020, Puerto Rico's populations aged 65 and over and 85 and over increased by 35.0 and 36.0 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico's total population declined by 11.8 percent, reflecting increased outmigration from the Commonwealth. Because of this, the older population made up a larger share of Puerto Rico's population in 2020 than it did in 2010. In 2020, those aged 65 and over made up 22.3 percent of Puerto Rico's population, up from 14.5 percent in 2010. Similarly, those aged 85 and over made up 2.6 percent of Puerto Rico's population in 2020, up from 1.7 percent in 2010.

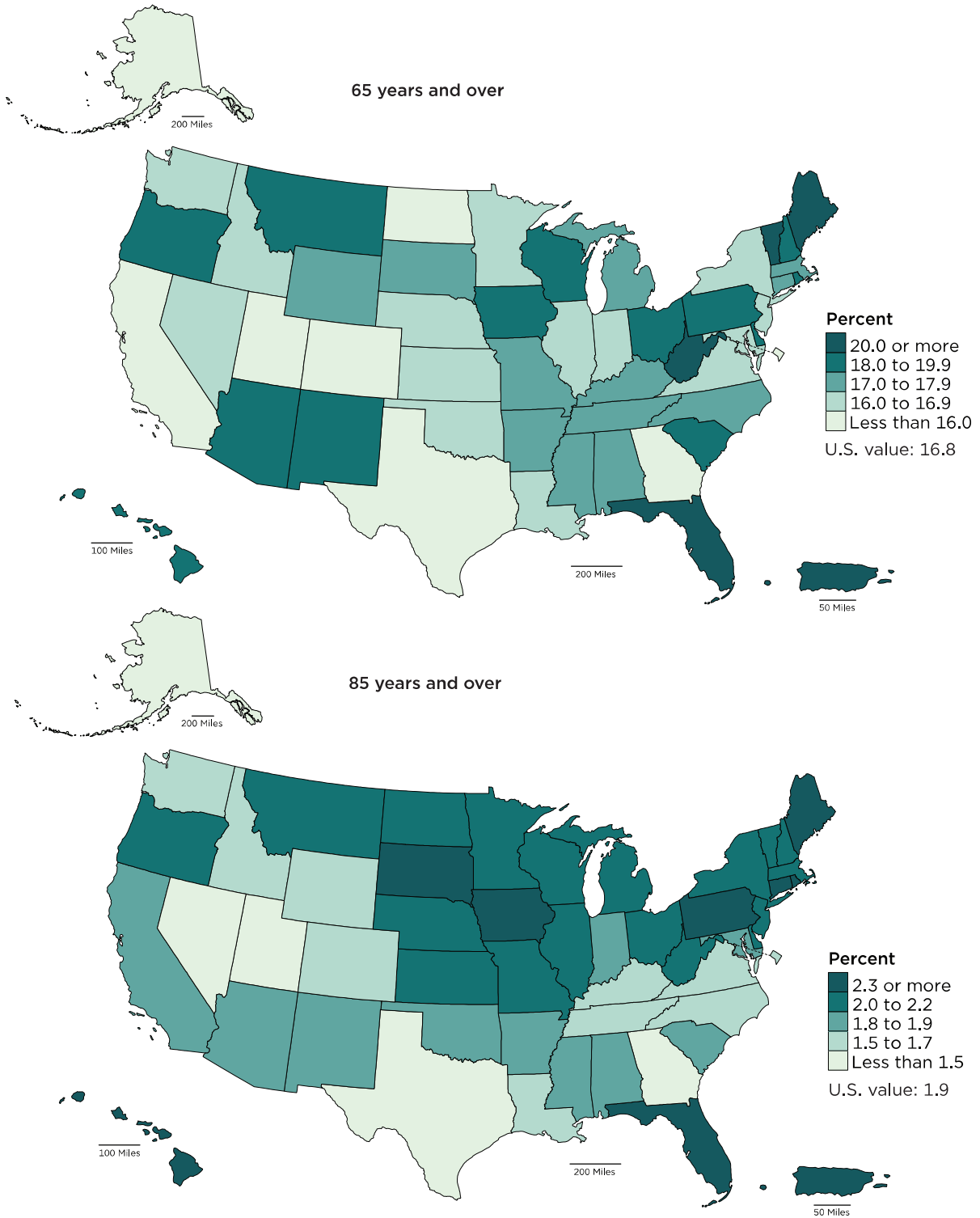
## **COUNTIES**

### **Over One-Half of the Residents of Sumter County, Florida, Were Aged 65 and Over**

Table 3 lists the top counties ranked by the share of their population aged 65 and over in 2020. Sumter County, Florida, had the highest ranking, with over one-half (58.9 percent) of its residents aged 65 and over. The next "oldest" county was Catron County, New Mexico, with 43.3 percent of its population aged 65 and over. Of the ten counties with the highest percentage 65 years and over, four were in Florida, with two each in Virginia and New Mexico, and one each in Washington and South Carolina.

While the counties in the top panel of Table 3 shared a higher proportion of older people, they represented two distinct demographic groups. The four counties in Florida made up the first group and were larger counties whose older population was consistent with growing retirement communities. For example, Sumter County, Florida, had a total population of almost 130,000 and was home to The Villages, a large age-restricted retirement community. In contrast, the counties in New Mexico, Virginia, and South Carolina were small, rural counties whose older population reflected

Figure 8.  
**Percentage of Population 65 Years and Over and 85 Years and Over by State: 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Table 3.

**Ten Counties With the Highest and Lowest Percentage of Their Population 65 Years and Over: 2020**

County	Total population	65 years and over		Rural population	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Highest percentage 65 years and over</b>					
Sumter County, Florida . . . . .	129,752	76,372	58.9	27,997	21.6
Catron County, New Mexico . . . . .	3,579	1,551	43.3	3,579	100.0
Charlotte County, Florida . . . . .	186,847	75,400	40.4	12,145	6.5
Jefferson County, Washington . . . . .	32,977	12,851	39.0	17,563	53.3
Lancaster County, Virginia . . . . .	10,919	4,192	38.4	10,919	100.0
Harding County, New Mexico . . . . .	657	251	38.2	657	100.0
Sarasota County, Florida . . . . .	434,006	163,151	37.6	10,462	2.4
Northumberland County, Virginia . . . . .	11,839	4,448	37.6	11,839	100.0
McCormick County, South Carolina . . . . .	9,526	3,568	37.5	9,526	100.0
Citrus County, Florida . . . . .	153,843	57,403	37.3	38,421	25.0
<b>Lowest percentage 65 years and over</b>					
Utah County, Utah . . . . .	659,399	53,593	8.1	27,887	4.2
Manassas Park city, Virginia . . . . .	17,219	1,343	7.8	0	Z
Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota . . . . .	13,672	1,029	7.5	13,672	100.0
Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska . . . . .	7,793	576	7.4	7,793	100.0
Aleutians East Borough, Alaska . . . . .	3,420	235	6.9	3,420	100.0
Kusilvak Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	8,368	540	6.5	8,368	100.0
Madison County, Idaho . . . . .	52,913	3,238	6.1	11,583	21.9
North Slope Borough, Alaska . . . . .	11,031	675	6.1	11,031	100.0
Aleutians West Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	5,232	303	5.8	5,232	100.0
Chattahoochee County, Georgia . . . . .	9,565	459	4.8	3,834	40.1

Z Rounds to zero.

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

the aging of rural America.<sup>7</sup> For example, Harding County, New Mexico, was a rural county of 657 people, 38.2 percent of whom were aged 65 and over.

On the other side of the distribution were counties with the smallest percentage of their population in the older ages. Chattahoochee County, Georgia, had the lowest ranking, with just 4.8 percent of its residents aged 65 and over. Of the ten counties with the lowest percentage aged 65 and over, five were relatively small, rural counties in Alaska. Some of the counties had smaller 65 and over populations because they housed institutions that tend to have younger populations. For example, Chattahoochee County, Georgia, was home to the Army base Fort Benning, and 23 percent of residents reported residing in military quarters. Brigham Young University was associated with two counties on our bottom ten list: Utah County, Utah, was home to its main campus, while Madison County, Idaho, was home to Brigham Young University-Idaho.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the older population in rural America, refer to <[www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/acs/acs-41.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/acs/acs-41.pdf)>.

### Small, Rural Counties Make Up the Majority of Top and Bottom Ten List for the 85 and Over Population

Similarly, Table 4 provides the counties with the highest and lowest proportion of their residents aged 85 and over. McIntosh County, North Dakota, had the highest ranking, with 8.2 percent of its residents aged 85 and over. Of the ten counties with the highest percentage aged 85 and over, three were in South Dakota, two in North Dakota, two in Montana, and one each in Hawaii, Texas, and New Mexico. All ten of the counties with the highest proportion of residents aged 85 and over were small, rural counties and eight were in the Midwest. In fact, half of the top ten counties had populations smaller than 1,000 while the largest county had just over 3,000 people. All ten had populations that were entirely rural.

Looking at the counties with the smallest proportion of their residents aged 85 and over, Aleutians East Borough, Alaska, had the lowest ranking, with just 0.2 percent of its residents aged 85 and over. Seven of the counties with the smallest percentage of their

Table 4.

**Ten Counties With the Highest and Lowest Percentage of Their Population 85 Years and Over: 2020**

County	Total population	85 years and over		Rural population	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Highest percentage 85 years and over</b>					
McIntosh County, North Dakota . . . . .	2,530	208	8.2	2,530	100.0
Kalawao County, Hawaii . . . . .	82	6	7.3	82	100.0
Petroleum County, Montana . . . . .	496	35	7.1	496	100.0
Kent County, Texas . . . . .	753	46	6.1	753	100.0
Wibaux County, Montana . . . . .	937	56	6.0	937	100.0
McPherson County, South Dakota . . . . .	2,411	143	5.9	2,411	100.0
Hyde County, South Dakota . . . . .	1,262	72	5.7	1,262	100.0
Nelson County, North Dakota . . . . .	3,015	172	5.7	3,015	100.0
Faulk County, South Dakota . . . . .	2,125	121	5.7	2,125	100.0
Harding County, New Mexico . . . . .	657	37	5.6	657	100.0
<b>Lowest percentage 85 years and over</b>					
Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota . . . . .	13,672	66	0.5	13,672	100.0
Lake and Peninsula Borough, Alaska . . . . .	1,476	7	0.5	1,476	100.0
Nome Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	10,046	47	0.5	10,046	100.0
Bethel Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	18,666	84	0.5	13,569	72.7
Kusilvak Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	8,368	36	0.4	8,368	100.0
Ziebach County, South Dakota . . . . .	2,413	10	0.4	2,413	100.0
Aleutians West Census Area, Alaska . . . . .	5,232	19	0.4	5,232	100.0
North Slope Borough, Alaska . . . . .	11,031	39	0.4	11,031	100.0
Summit County, Colorado . . . . .	31,055	97	0.3	5,000	16.1
Aleutians East Borough, Alaska . . . . .	3,420	7	0.2	3,420	100.0

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

population aged 85 and over were small, mostly rural counties in Alaska, while two more were small, rural counties in South Dakota. Summit County, Colorado, which contained four ski resorts, was the only county on the list of lowest percent oldest-old that was not rural and had a population of more than 20,000. Finally, one-half of the counties with the lowest percent aged 85 and over were also on the list of counties with the lowest percent aged 65 and over: Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota, and four counties in Alaska.

### **Alaska Contains the Most Counties With the Lowest Percentages in Older and Oldest-Old Populations**

Five of the counties with the smallest percentages of their populations aged 65 and over, and seven of those with the smallest percentages aged 85 and over were small, largely rural counties in Alaska (four counties were on both lists). In counties like Kusilvak Census Area, Northwest Arctic Borough, and Bethel Census Areas, a proportionally large Alaska Native population with high fertility rates drove the low percentages in older ages.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Aleutians East

<sup>8</sup> For more information on Alaska's population, refer to <<https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/projections/pub/popproj.pdf>>.

Borough and Aleutians West Census area had lower fertility rates but were made up of younger residents involved in the fishing and fish processing industry.

### **Many Counties in the Midwest and Northeast Had Higher Percentages Aged 85 and Over**

Figure 9 maps the percentages aged 85 and over by county, with darker shading for counties with higher percentages. Counties generally followed regional patterns, with higher prevalence for the oldest-old in the Midwest and Northeast. Many counties in the southern states generally had lower proportions aged 85 and over (Florida and Texas were notable exceptions). Counties in Alaska had small percentages of residents aged 85 and over.

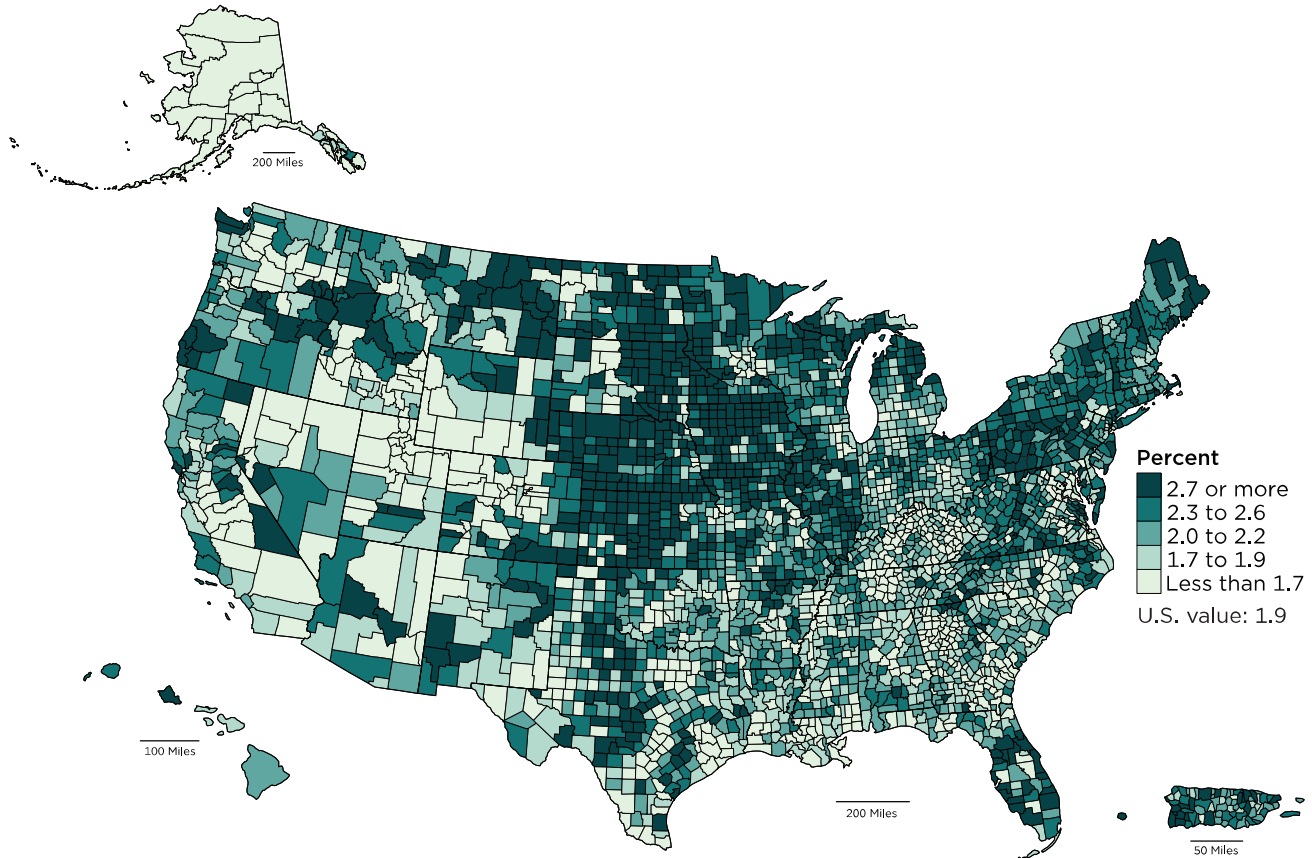
## **PLACES**

### **Among Large Places, Six of Ten With the Highest Percentages in Older Population Were in Florida**

Table 5 lists the ten places (of a population of 100,000 or more) with the largest and smallest percentages of their population aged 65 and over. Six out of the ten places with the largest percentage aged 65 years and over were in Florida. In all ten places with the



Figure 9.  
**Percentage of Population 85 Years and Over by County: 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

highest percentage of their population in older ages, at least one out of five residents was aged 65 and over. Scottsdale, Arizona, had the highest percentage of its population 65 years and over in both 2020 (26.6 percent) and 2010 (20.0 percent). In 2020, over 1 in 4 people in Scottsdale was aged 65 and over, up from 1 in 5 in 2010.

The ten places (of a population of 100,000 or more) with the largest and smallest percentages of their population aged 85 and over are listed in Table 6. Five of the ten places with the highest percentage of their population aged 85 and over were in Florida, and three were in California. Seven places were in both the top ten for the 85-and-over age group and the 65-and-over age group: Urban Honolulu Census Designated Place (CDP), Hawaii; Scottsdale, Arizona; Hialeah, Florida; Thousand Oaks, California; Lakeland,

Florida; Clearwater, Florida; and Pompano Beach city, Florida. The place with the highest percentage of its population in the 85-and-over age group was Urban Honolulu CDP, Hawaii, (3.6 percent), followed by Scottsdale, Arizona, (3.5 percent), and Hialeah, Florida (3.5 percent).

**Six of Ten Large Places With the Lowest Percentages in Older Population Were in Texas**

Six of the ten places (of a population of 100,000 or more) with the lowest percentages aged 65 and over were in Texas (Table 5). In all ten of the places with the lowest percentages aged 65 and over, less than one-tenth of the population was aged 65 and over. Among places with a population of 100,000 or more, College Station, Texas, had the lowest percentage of its population 65 years and over, at 6.5 percent.

Table 5.

**Ten Places With the Highest and Lowest Percentage of Their Population 65 Years and Over: 2020**

Place <sup>1</sup>	Total population	65 years and over	
		Number	Percent
<b>Highest percentage 65 years and over</b>			
Scottsdale city, Arizona .....	241,361	64,175	26.6
Surprise city, Arizona .....	143,148	34,991	24.4
Cape Coral city, Florida .....	194,016	45,275	23.3
Clearwater city, Florida .....	117,292	26,787	22.8
Hialeah city, Florida .....	223,109	48,085	21.6
Lakeland city, Florida .....	112,641	24,270	21.5
Port St. Lucie city, Florida .....	204,851	43,793	21.4
Urban Honolulu CDP, Hawaii .....	350,964	74,386	21.2
Thousand Oaks city, California .....	126,966	26,294	20.7
Pompano Beach city, Florida .....	112,046	22,767	20.3
<b>Lowest percentage 65 years and over</b>			
Edinburg city, Texas .....	100,243	9,465	9.4
Fontana city, California .....	208,393	19,483	9.3
Lewisville city, Texas .....	111,822	10,376	9.3
Frisco city, Texas .....	200,509	18,541	9.2
Clarksville city, Tennessee .....	166,722	15,271	9.2
West Jordan city, Utah .....	116,961	10,367	8.9
Irving city, Texas .....	256,684	21,845	8.5
Killeen city, Texas .....	153,095	12,387	8.1
Provo city, Utah .....	115,162	8,233	7.1
College Station city, Texas .....	120,511	7,816	6.5

<sup>1</sup> Places of 100,000 or more population. The 2020 Census listed 322 places in the United States with a population of 100,000 or more. They included 321 incorporated places (including five consolidated cities) and one census designated place (Urban Honolulu CDP, Hawaii) that was not legally incorporated.

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

While large retirement communities contributed to places with higher proportions in older ages in the top panel of Table 5, the places with lower proportions in older ages were often associated with younger institutions such as universities and military bases, or fast-growing suburbs of larger cities. For example, Killeen, Texas, is the location of Fort Hood military base; College Station, Texas, houses the main campus of Texas A&M university; and Provo, Utah, is home to Brigham-Young University. Fast-growing suburbs of larger cities also show up on our bottom ten list. For example, three places on the list (Irving, Lewisville, and Frisco, Texas) were rapidly growing suburbs in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area.

Four of the ten places (of a population of 100,000 or more) with the lowest percentage aged 85 and over were in Texas (Table 6). The place with the lowest percentage of its population in the 85-and-over age group was Killeen, Texas, followed by West Jordan, Utah, and College Station, Texas (all with 0.6 percent). Six places were in the bottom ten for both aged 85 and over and aged 65 and over: Clarksville, Tennessee; Fontana, California; Frisco, Texas; College Station, Texas; West Jordan, Utah; and Killeen, Texas.

The range of percentages found for those 85 years and over (Table 6) is closer to 2010 than the range for 65 and over (Table 5). In 2010, the percentage aged 65 and over for places with a population of 100,000 or larger ranged from 4.6 percent to 20.0 percent. In 2020, this range was from 6.5 percent to 26.6 percent. In fact, all ten of the places with the highest percentage aged 65 and over in 2020 had a higher percentage than the highest place in 2010 (20.0 percent in Scottsdale, Arizona).

**URBAN AND RURAL AREAS**

A larger proportion of those aged 65 and over (24.0 percent) than the total population (20.0 percent) lived in rural areas. Among the population 65 years and over, the percentage living in rural areas was smaller for older age groups than younger ones (Figure 10). Those living in rural areas accounted for the largest share of the 65-to-74 age group (24.9 percent), followed by the 75-to-84 age group (23.9 percent), the 85-to-94 age group (19.6 percent), and the 95-and-over age group (17.2 percent).

Table 6.

**Ten Places With the Highest and Lowest Percentage of Their Population 85 Years and Over: 2020**

Place <sup>1</sup>	Total population	85 years and over	
		Number	Percent
<b>Highest percentage 85 years and over</b>			
Urban Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	350,964	12,730	3.6
Scottsdale city, Arizona	241,361	8,424	3.5
Hialeah city, Florida	223,109	7,725	3.5
West Palm Beach city, Florida	117,415	3,615	3.1
Pompano Beach city, Florida	112,046	3,372	3.0
Thousand Oaks city, California	126,966	3,811	3.0
Lakeland city, Florida	112,641	3,352	3.0
Torrance city, California	147,067	4,323	2.9
Clearwater city, Florida	117,292	3,438	2.9
Glendale city, California	196,543	5,588	2.8
<b>Lowest percentage 85 years and over</b>			
Clarksville city, Tennessee	166,722	1,406	0.8
North Las Vegas city, Nevada	262,527	2,119	0.8
Grand Prairie city, Texas	196,100	1,553	0.8
Thornton city, Colorado	141,867	1,117	0.8
Fontana city, California	208,393	1,589	0.8
Frisco city, Texas	200,509	1,508	0.8
West Valley City city, Utah	140,230	966	0.7
College Station city, Texas	120,511	734	0.6
West Jordan city, Utah	116,961	711	0.6
Killeen city, Texas	153,095	889	0.6

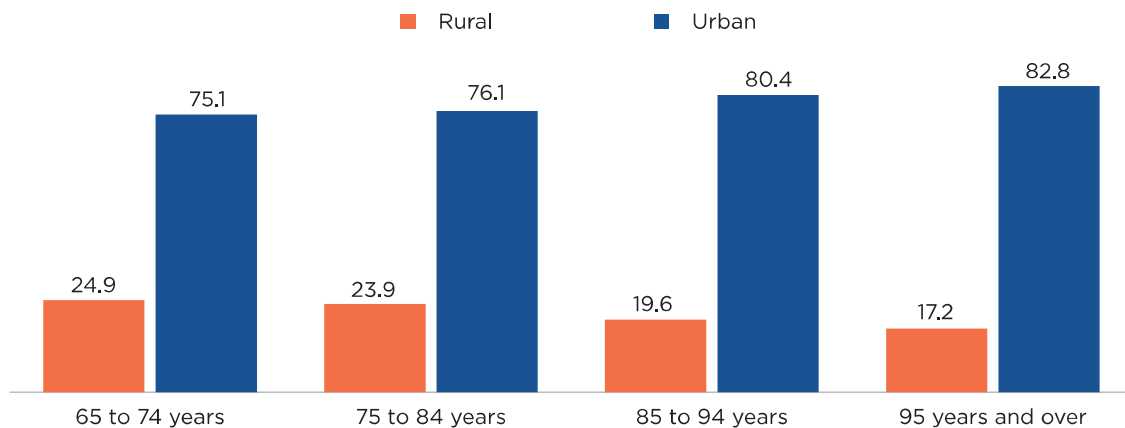
<sup>1</sup> Places of 100,000 or more population. The 2020 Census listed 322 places in the United States with a population of 100,000 or more. They included 321 incorporated places (including five consolidated cities) and one census designated place (Urban Honolulu CDP, Hawaii) that was not legally incorporated.

Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Figure 10.

**Percentage of Population Rural or Urban by Age Group: 2020**



Note: For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

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## ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS

### Why Was the 2020 Census Conducted?

The U.S. Constitution mandates that a census be taken in the United States every 10 years. This is required in order to determine the number of seats each state is to receive in the U.S. House of Representatives. Age data are used to determine the voting age population (aged 18 and over) for use in the legislative redistricting process.

### Why Did the 2020 Census Ask the Question on Age?

The Census Bureau collects data on age to support a variety of legislative and program requirements. These data are also used to aid in the allocation of funds from federal programs, in particular to programs targeting the older population. This includes planning for hospitals, roads, and housing assistance.

For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs uses census data to plan for nursing homes, hospitals, cemeteries, domiciliary services, and veterans benefits; the Department of Health and Human Services uses age data as part of the formula used to allocate funds for services to seniors with low incomes under the Older Americans Act; and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission uses age data to enforce equal employment opportunities. These data are also used to forecast the number of people eligible for Social Security and Medicare benefits.

### How Are Data on Age Beneficial?

Federal, state, and local governments need information on age to implement, evaluate, and aid programs that plan and develop services for older adults. This includes, but is not limited to, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the Older Americans Act, the Nutrition Education Program, the Rehabilitation Act, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Services for Older Americans Program, and the Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program.

Other important uses for census data on age are in the planning and funding of services for the older population, such as health service centers, retirement homes, assisted living or skilled-nursing facilities, transportation availability, Social Security, and Medicare benefits.

Census Bureau data can also be used by the private sector to determine business locations and advertising for goods and services targeting older adults, investment planning, employment opportunities, and specialized consumer needs. Researchers can use age data to project future population trends, assess mortality patterns, evaluate shifts in the geographic distribution of the older population, and plan ways to better serve the needs of a given community.

### How Are Data Collected in the 2020 Census Protected From Disclosure?

To protect respondent confidentiality, data have undergone disclosure avoidance methods that add “statistical noise”—small, random additions or subtractions—to the data so that no one can reliably link the published data to a specific person or household. The Census Bureau encourages data users to aggregate small populations and geographies to improve accuracy and diminish implausible results.

For more information on the statistical methods used to protect confidentiality, refer to [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/planning-management/process/disclosure-avoidance.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/planning-management/process/disclosure-avoidance.html).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the 2020 Census, including data products, contact the Customer Services Center at 1-800-923-8282. Also visit the Census Bureau’s Question and Answer Center at [ask.census.gov](http://ask.census.gov) to submit your questions online.

Data on age and sex from the 2020 Demographic and Housing Characteristics File are available at <https://data.census.gov>.

For information on data collection, confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile/2020census-demographic-and-housing-characteristics-file-and-demographic-profile-techdoc.pdf>.

For questions related to the contents of this report and the accompanying tables and figures, contact Zoe Caplan or Megan A. Rabe.