NC Department of Health and Human Services

North Carolina's Aging Population

Division of Aging
Distributed in 2025
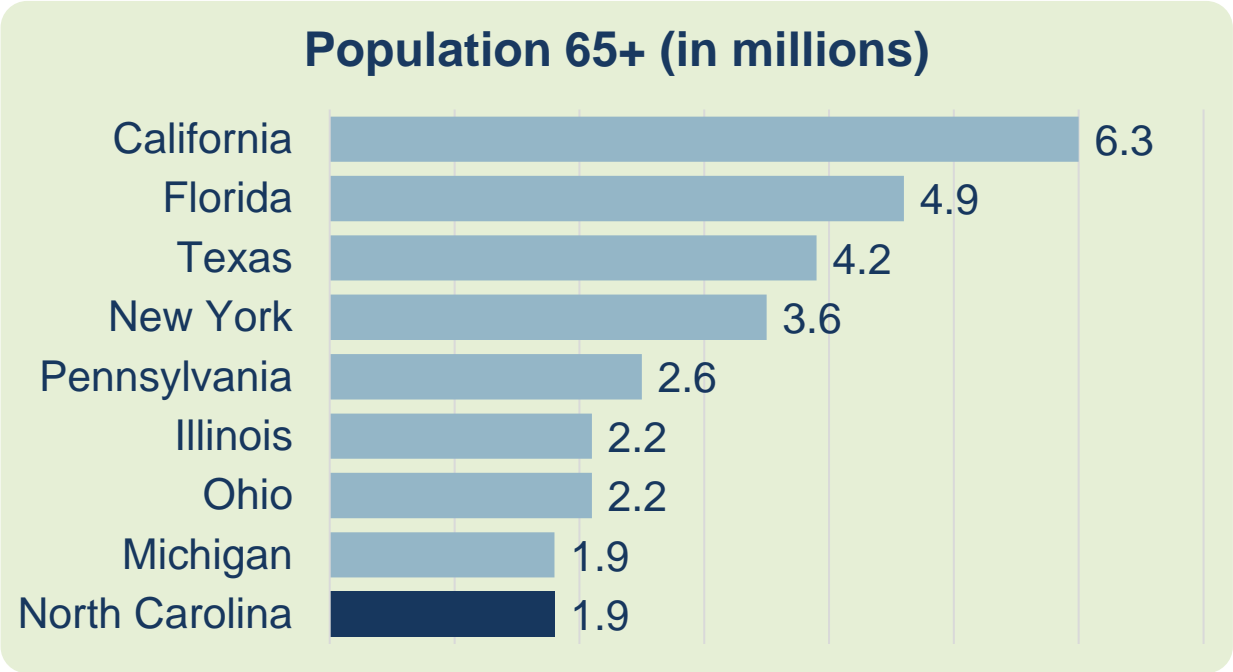
Aging Population in North Carolina

Population Estimates and Projections

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Health and Well-Being

Estimates & Projections

North Carolina's National Rankings

Population 65+ (in millions)

State	Population
California	6.3
Florida	4.9
Texas	4.2
New York	3.6
Pennsylvania	2.6
Illinois	2.2
Ohio	2.2
Michigan	1.9
North Carolina	1.9

9th in total population
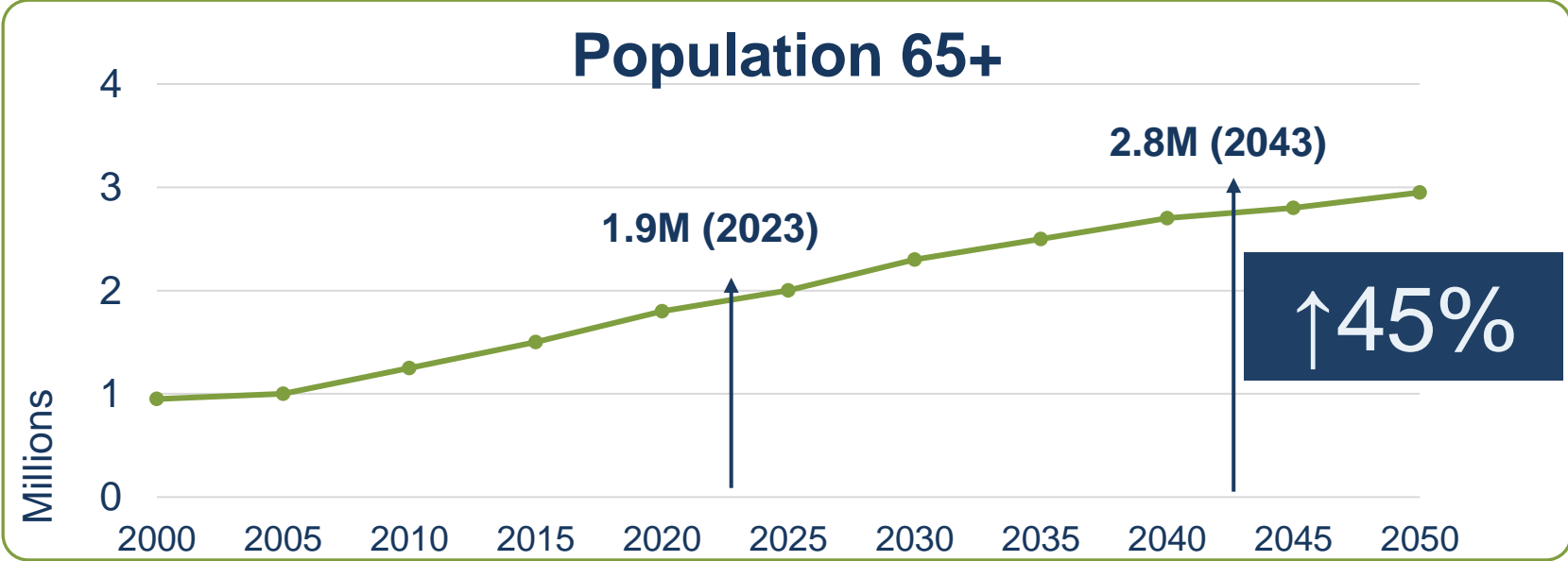
9th in 65+ population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 1-year estimates. Table B01001: Sex by Age.

NC's Projected Population, 2023-2043

Age	2023		2043		% Change
	#	%	#	%	2023-2043
Total	10,846,274		13,327,333		23%
0-17	2,344,036	22%	2,578,122	19%	10%
18-44	3,852,762	36%	4,670,553	35%	21%
45-59	2,044,296	19%	2,538,441	19%	24%
60+	2,605,180	24%	3,540,217	27%	36%
65+	1,914,586	18%	2,784,766	21%	45%
85+	177,340	2%	428,843	3%	142%

Growth of Aging Population

Population 65+

2.8M (2043)

1.9M (2023)

↑**45%**

Millions

2000 2005 2010 2015 2020 2025 2030 2035 2040 2045 2050
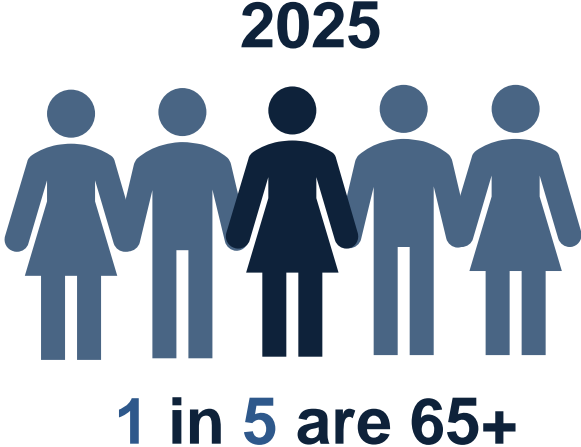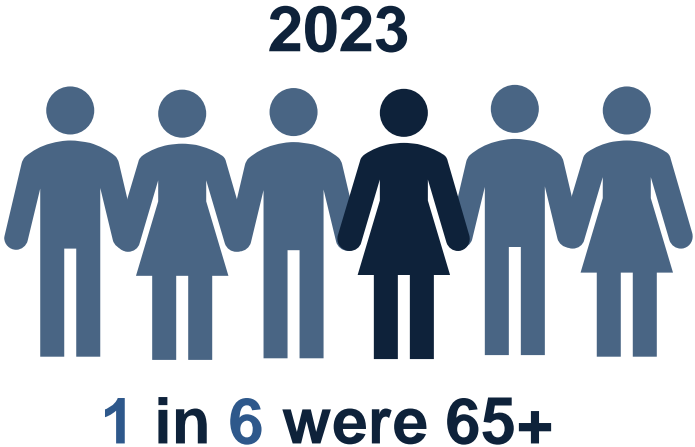
Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2023; Population Projections, Vintage 2024,
www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics

Growth of Aging Population

2023

1 in 6 were 65+

2025

1 in 5 are 65+

By 2032 More **65+** than under 18

Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2023; Population Projections, Vintage 2024, www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics

Causes of Growth in Aging Population

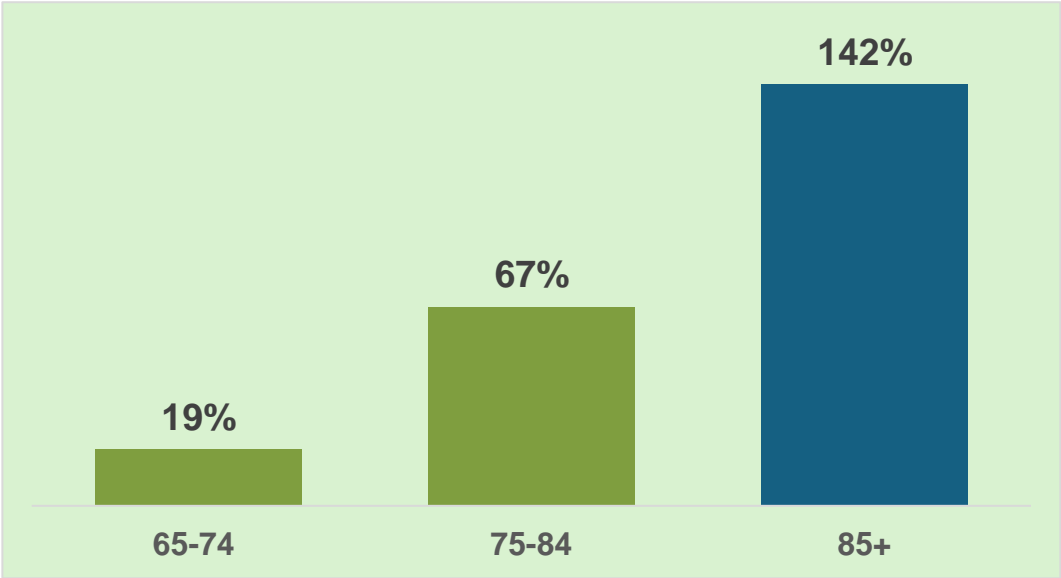|	
Aging baby boomer generation	Low fertility rates
Increased longevity	In-migration

Source: By 2030, all baby boomers will be age 65 and older
https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/12/by-2030-all-baby-boomers-will-be-age-65-or-older.html
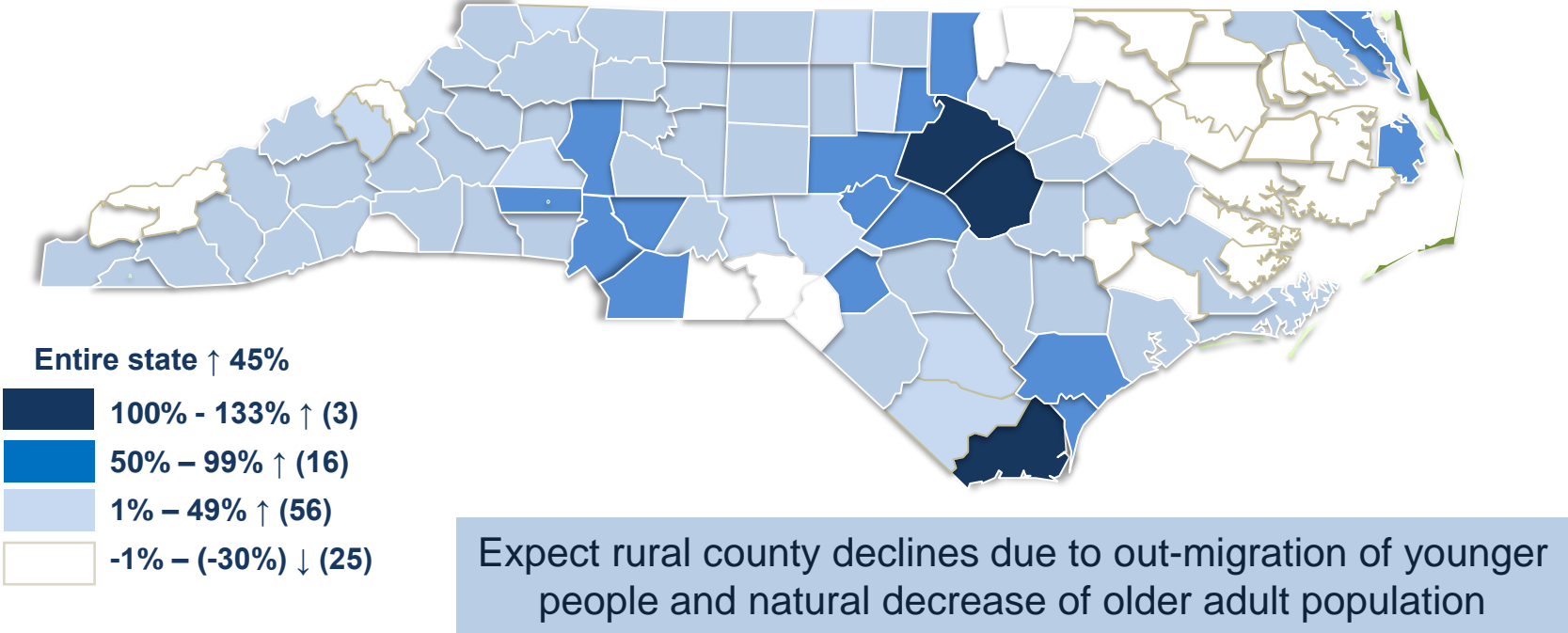
Fastest Growth in Next 20 Years: 85+

Bar chart showing growth percentages by age group:
- 65-74: 19%
- 75-84: 67%
- 85+: 142%

IMPACTS

Increased prevalence of functional limitations, frailty, chronic diseases

More demand for long-term supports and services

Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2023; Population Projections, Vintage 2024, www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics

Projected Change in Population 65+, 2023-2043

Entire state ↑ 45%

■	**100% - 133% ↑ (3)**
■	**50% – 99% ↑ (16)**
■	**1% – 49% ↑ (56)**
□	**-1% – (-30%) ↓ (25)**

Expect rural county declines due to out-migration of younger people and natural decrease of older adult population

Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2023; Population Projections, Vintage 2024
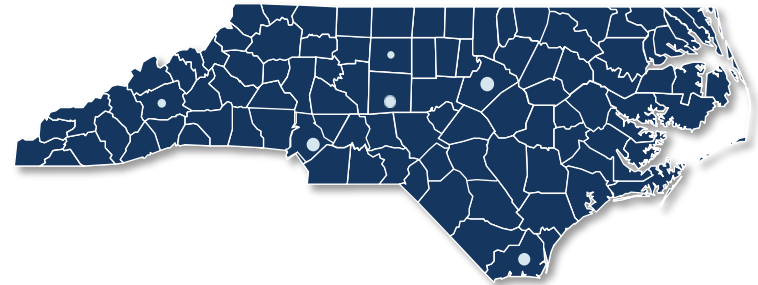www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics
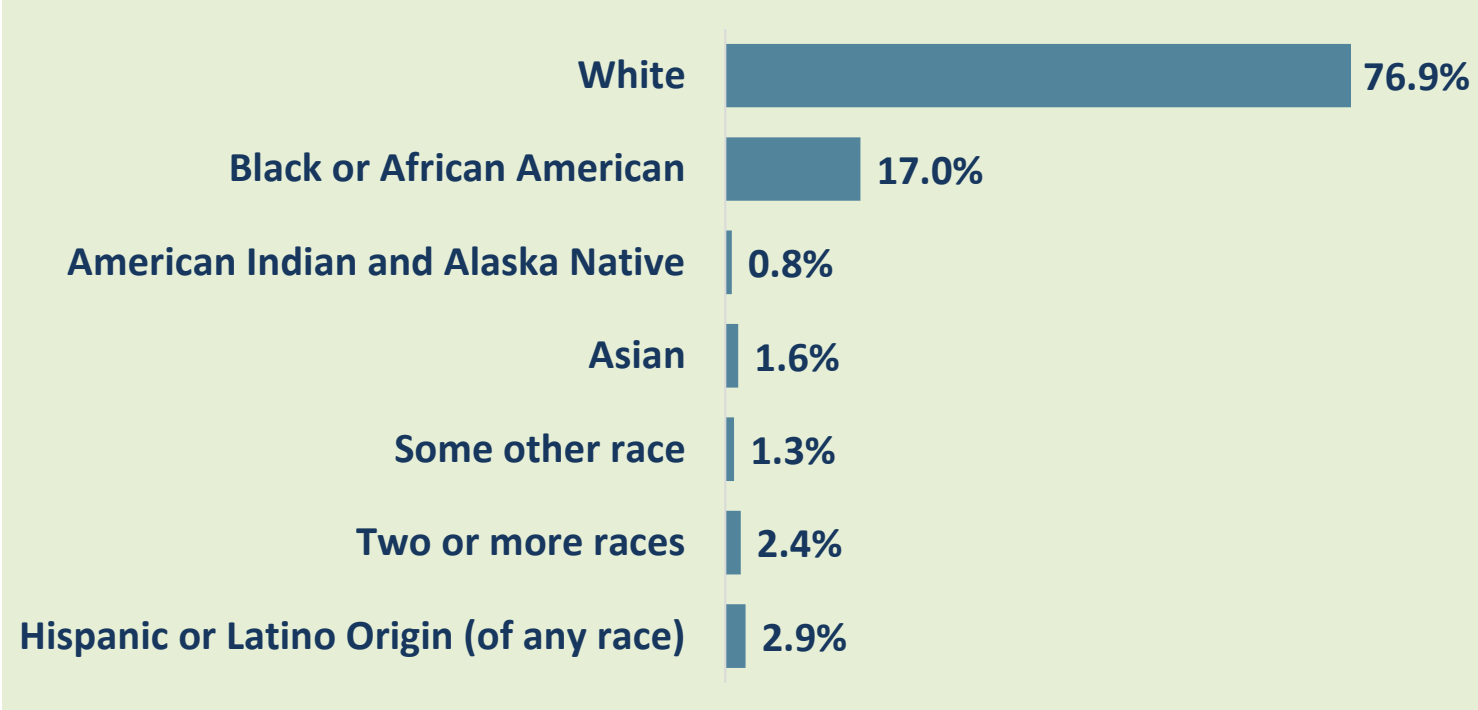
In-Migration of People 60+ to Largest Counties

Destination	From Another State	From Abroad	Total
North Carolina	44,493	5,013	49,506
Mecklenburg	5,107	609	5,716
Wake	4, 356	795	5,151
Brunswick	2,446	61	2,507
Guilford	1,565	189	1,754
Buncombe	1,487	120	1,607
New Hanover	1,531	73	1,604

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Race/Ethnicity, 65+*

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White	76.9%
Black or African American	17.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.8%
Asian	1.6%
Some other race	1.3%
Two or more races	2.4%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S0103: Population 65 and over, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/; *As percentage of population 65 and older

Characteristics of Adults 65+*

| Characteristic	Percentage
Living alone	27%
Veterans	16%
Speak English less than "very well"	3%
Have a disability	33%
Have less than high school education	12%
Have high school education/GED	29%
In labor force	18%
Income below poverty level	10%
Income between 100%-199% poverty level	20%
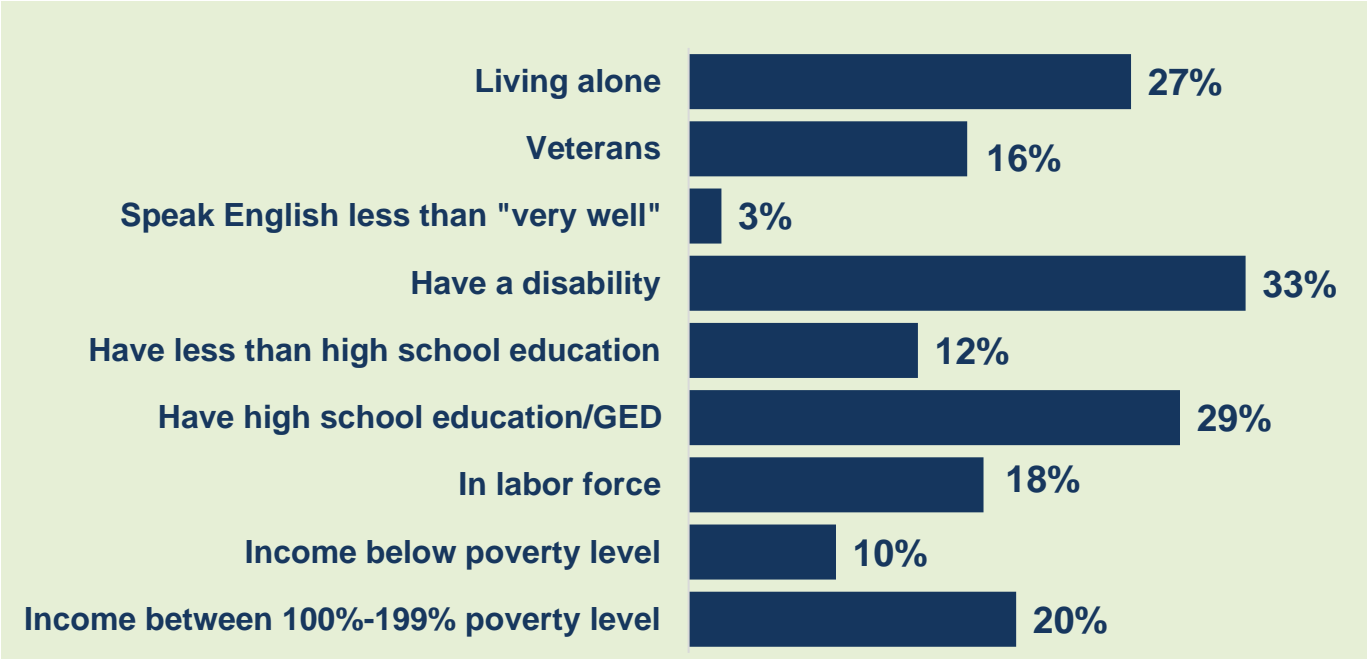
Older adults living alone at risk of **social isolation, loneliness** and **poor health outcomes**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S0103: Population 65 and over; B09020: Relationship by household type (including living alone) for population 65 and over, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/, *As % of population 65 and older. Disability rate is for civilian non-institutionalized population only.

Poverty Levels, 65+*
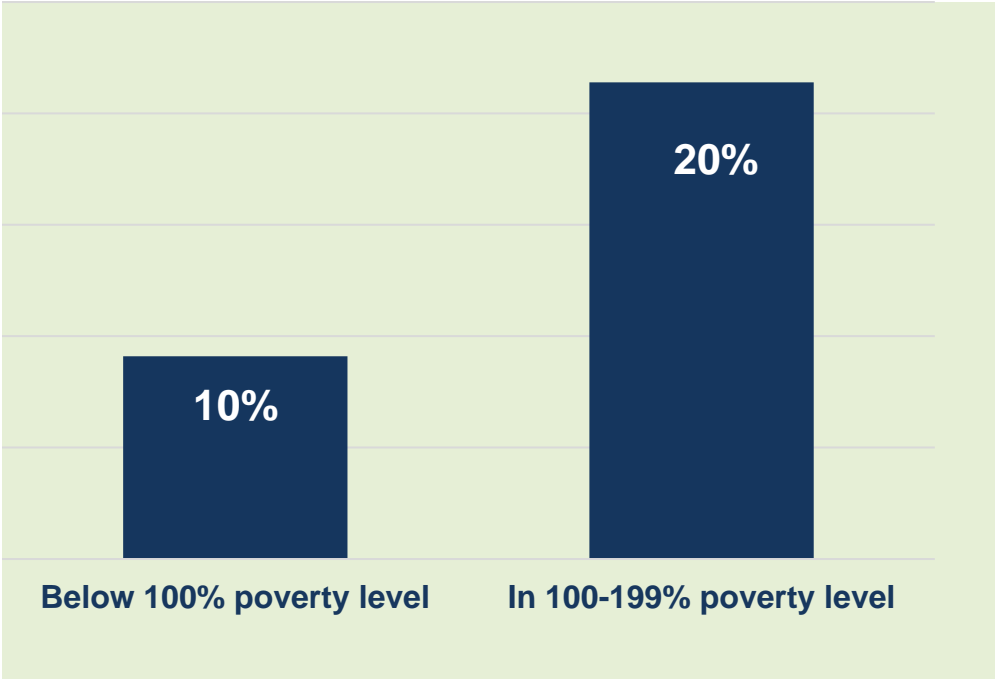
1 in 10 people age 65+ below poverty level

Below 100% poverty level — 10%

In 100-199% poverty level — 20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table B17024: Age by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/. *Based on 2023 census poverty threshold; $14,040 for individuals aged 65+ $17,710 per household of two people with householder aged 65+; *As % of population 65 and older

Poverty Levels by Age Group
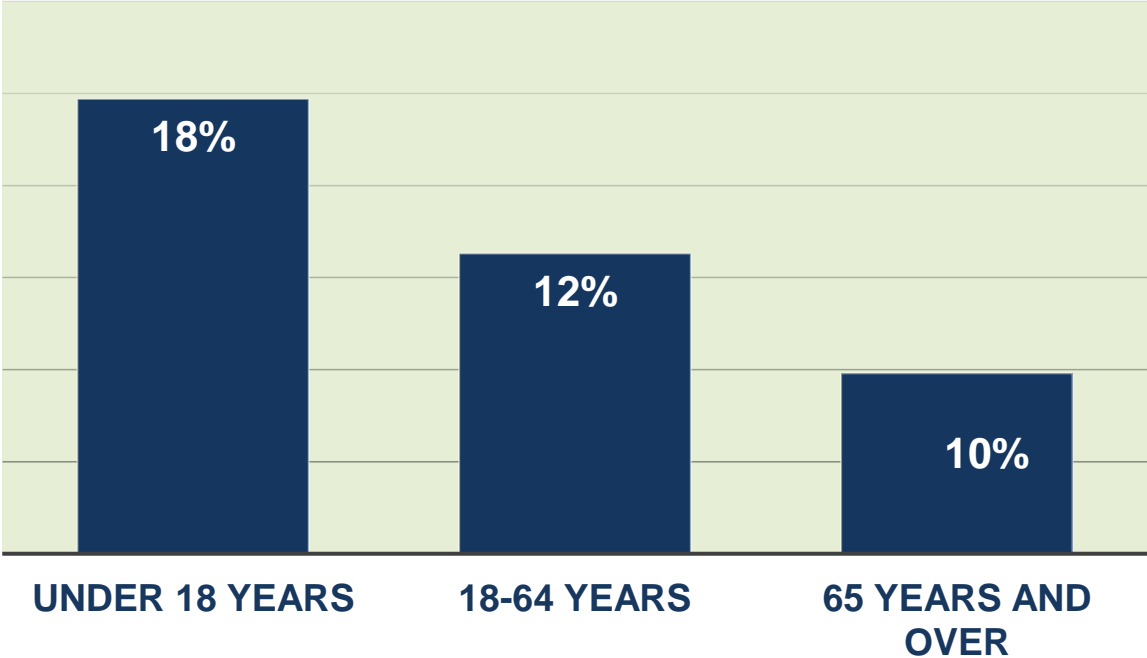
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S1701: Poverty Status in the past 12 months, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/; * As a % of age group
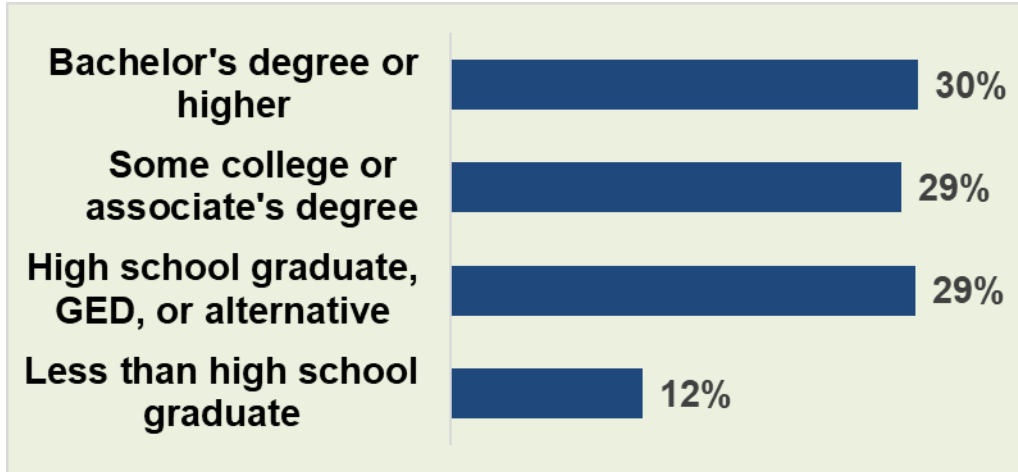
Older Adults and Poverty

Adults 65+ experience lower poverty rates compared to other age groups

Older Americans Act services provide important safety net for older adults below and near poverty and allows them to remain in community

Federal programs such as Medicare, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income critical to enhancing economic security and reducing poverty rates

Source: AARP foundation-For a future without senior poverty, https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/aarp_foundation/pdf/your-guide-to-public-benefits/North_Carolina_AARP_Foundation_Public_Benefits_Guide.pdf

Education Level, 65+

Bachelor's degree or higher — 30%

Some college or associate's degree — 29%

High school graduate, GED, or alternative — 29%
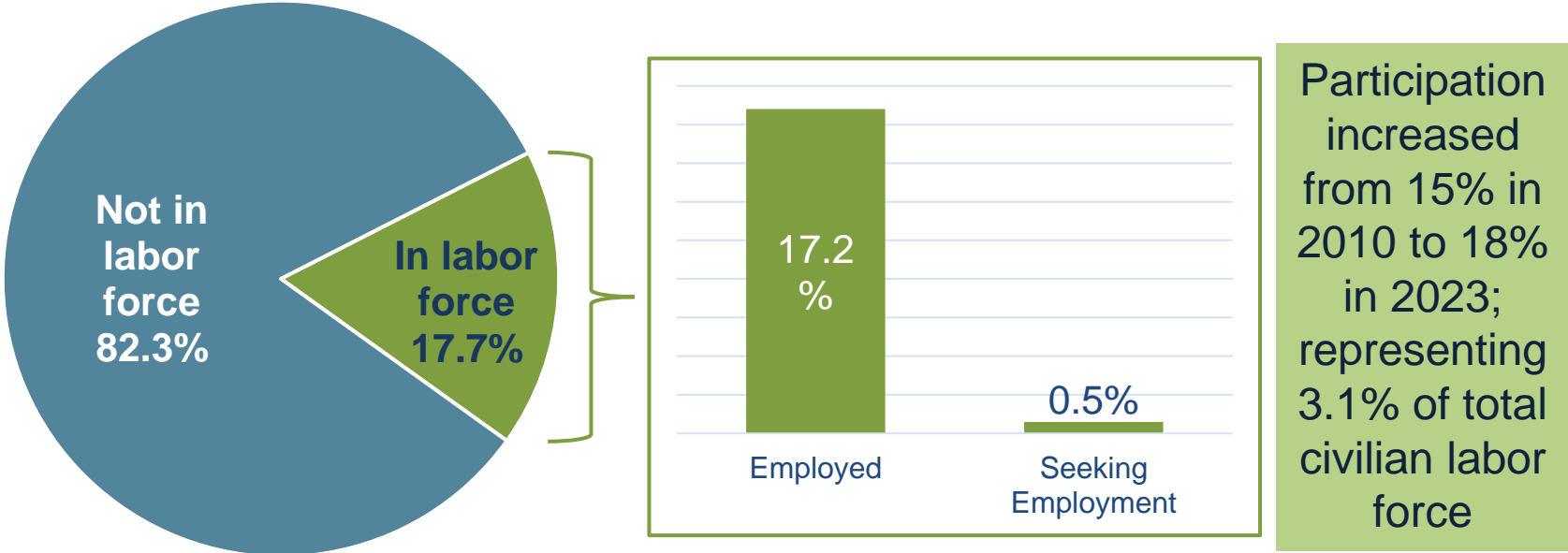
Less than high school graduate — 12%

Educational levels among 65+ increased in past decade

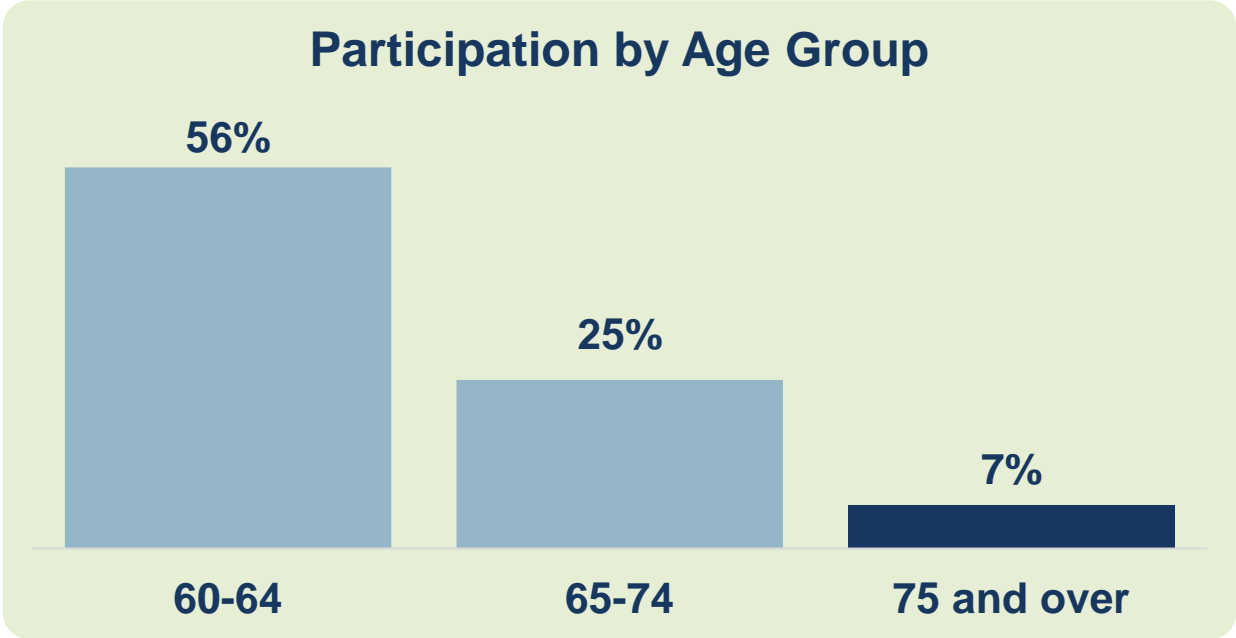Higher educational levels associated with higher incomes and better health outcomes

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S0103: Population 65 and over, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/;
* As % of population 65 and older

Labor Force Participation, 65+

Not in labor force 82.3%

In labor force 17.7%

17.2%

Employed

0.5%

Seeking Employment

Participation increased from 15% in 2010 to 18% in 2023; representing 3.1% of total civilian labor force

Labor Force Participation*

Participation by Age Group

Age Group	Participation
60-64	56%
65-74	25%
75 and over	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S2301: Employment status, https://data.census.gov/cedsci;
  *** As % of age group**

Labor Force Participation, 65+

People are working longer due to:

- Sense of purpose
- Being engaged
- Financial responsibilities
- Living longer
- Healthier

Source: American's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges. www.congress.gov/115/crpt/srpt191/CRPT-115srpt191.pdf
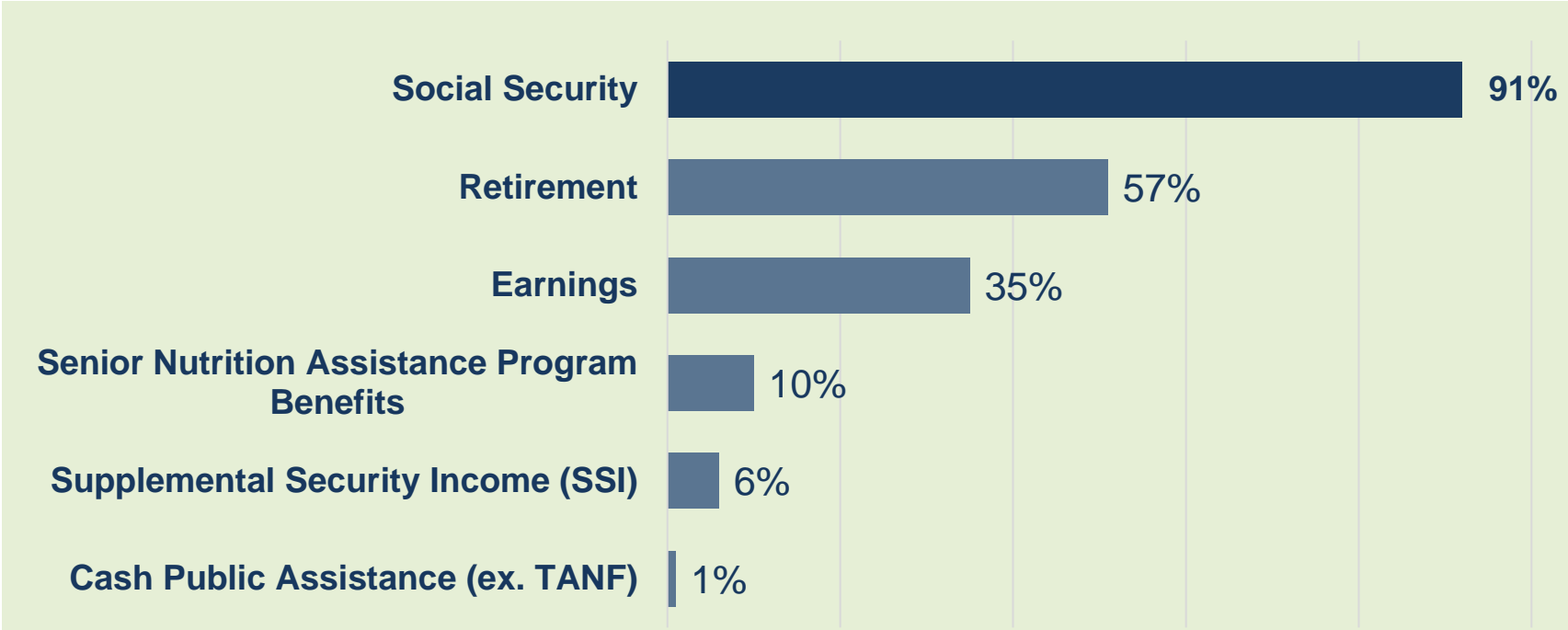
Labor Force Participation

To Keep Older Adults in Workplace

- Change bias and attitude
- Design phased retirement programs
- Provide flexible roles and schedules
- Offer retirement options
- Allow part-time/tele-commuting
- Provide ongoing training
- Invest in wellness programs
- Help balance work and caregiving roles

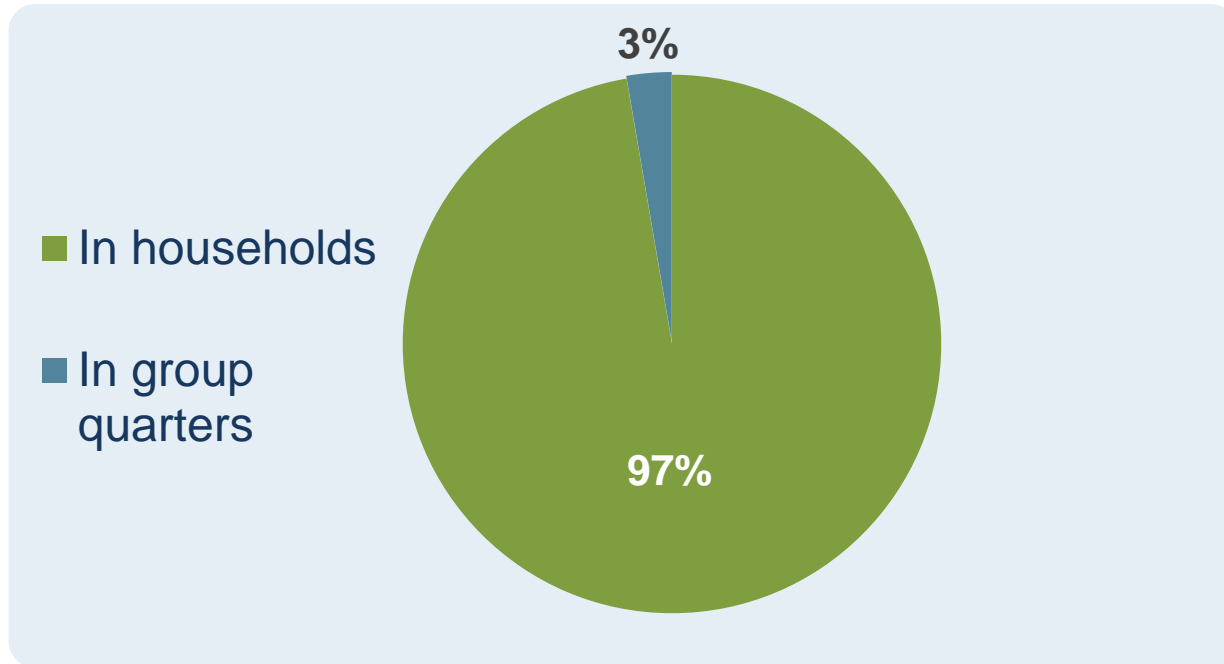**Source: American's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges.** https://www.congress.gov/115/crpt/srpt191/CRPT-115srpt191.pdf

Sources of Income, 65+*

Social Security — 91%
Retirement — 57%
Earnings — 35%
Senior Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits — 10%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) — 6%
Cash Public Assistance (ex. TANF) — 1%

Housing, 65+*

■ In households

■ In group quarters

3%

97%

43% of housing units with people 65+ are single-person

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Tables S0103; B09020: Relationship by household type (including living alone) for population 65 and over, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/, *As % of population 65 and older

Housing, 65+

Aging in place requires livable communities, home modifications, transportation, access to services, health care, and social engagement

Aging population increases demand for home and community-based services

Source: Aging in place: Growing older at home https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place/aging-place-growing-older-home

Women Disproportionately in Group Quarters, 65+*

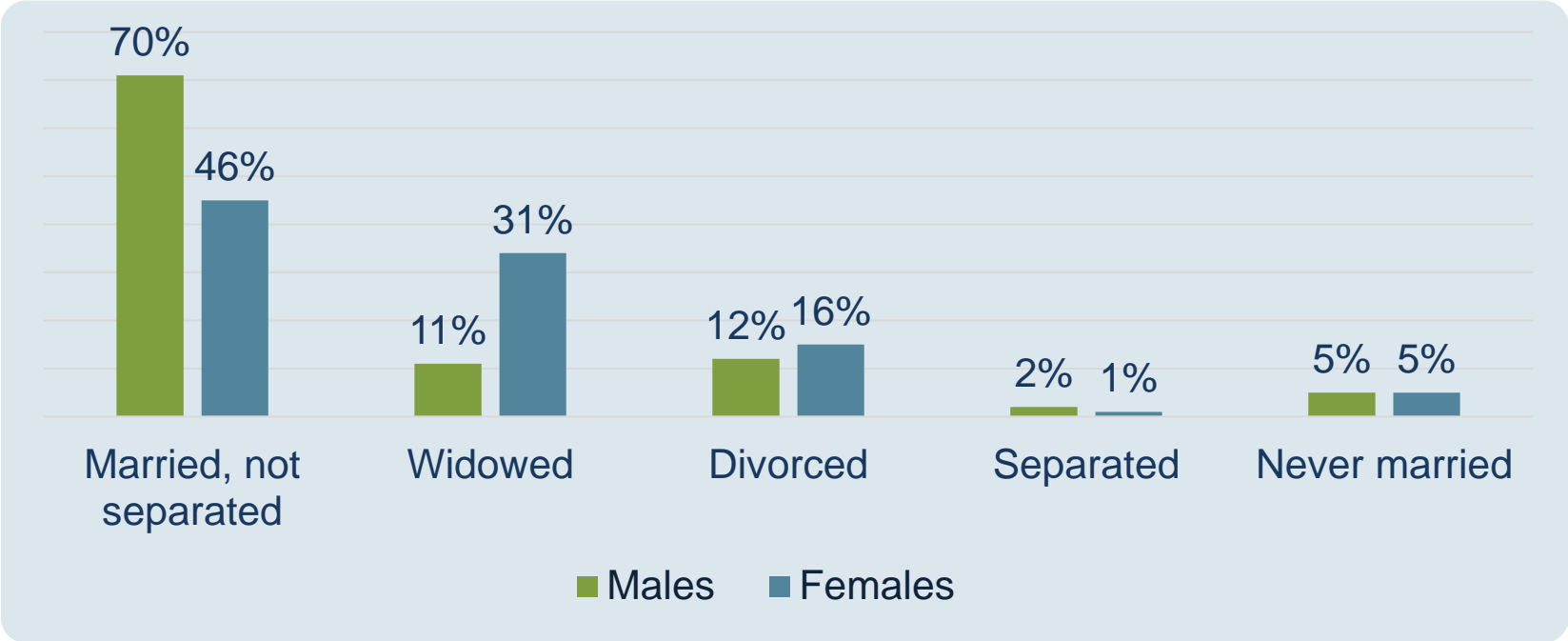|	Total 65+	Institutionalized	Noninstitutionalized
Total	46, 417	41, 031	5,3864
Female	**62%**	**63%**	**51%**

Institutionalized
- Correctional facilities
- Nursing homes
- Psychiatric hospitals
- In-patient hospice facilities, etc.

Non-Institutionalized
- Military quarters
- Group homes
- Shelters for homeless people, etc.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S2601A: Characteristics of group quarters population, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/; *As % of population 65 and older in group quarters

Marital Status, 65+*

Bar chart showing marital status by gender (Males in green, Females in blue):
- Married, not separated: Males 70%, Females 46%
- Widowed: Males 11%, Females 31%
- Divorced: Males 12%, Females 16%
- Separated: Males 2%, Females 1%
- Never married: Males 5%, Females 5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S1201. Marital Status, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/;
***As % of population 65 and over**
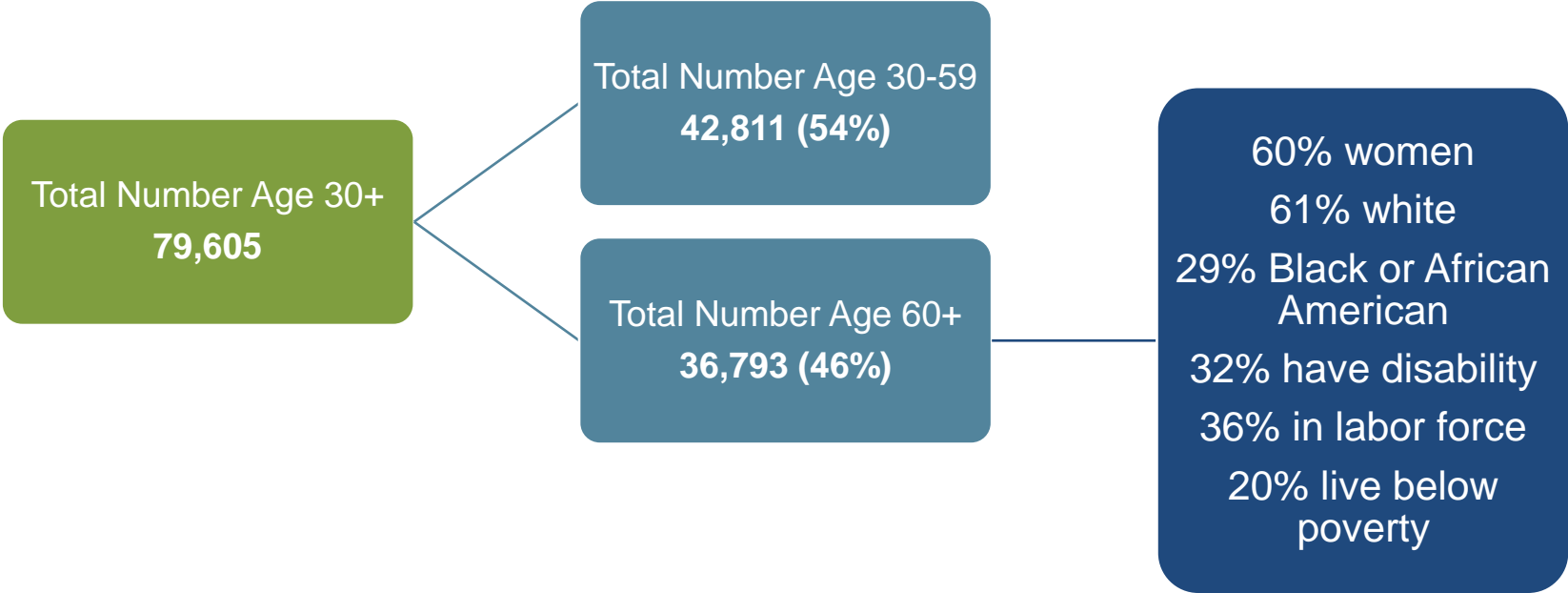
Marital Status, Females, 65+

More likely to be widowed

Less likely to be married

More likely to live alone and face challenges

Source: National Council on Aging: Get the facts on women and aging https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-women-and-aging

Grandparents Responsible for Raising Grandchildren Under 18 Years

Total Number Age 30+
79,605

Total Number Age 30-59
42,811 (54%)

Total Number Age 60+
36,793 (46%)

60% women

61% white

29% Black or African American

32% have disability

36% in labor force

20% live below poverty

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023, 5-year estimates. Table S1002: Grandparents, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/

Health & Well-Being

Health Characteristics, 65+*

33% have disability*	**76%** have one or more chronic diseases	**67%** had adult flu shot/spray in past 12 months
74% ever had pneumonia shot	**71%** exercised in past 30 days	**9%** self-reported poor health

Chronic Diseases and Aging in People 65+*

76% — 1 or more chronic diseases

49% — 2 or more chronic diseases
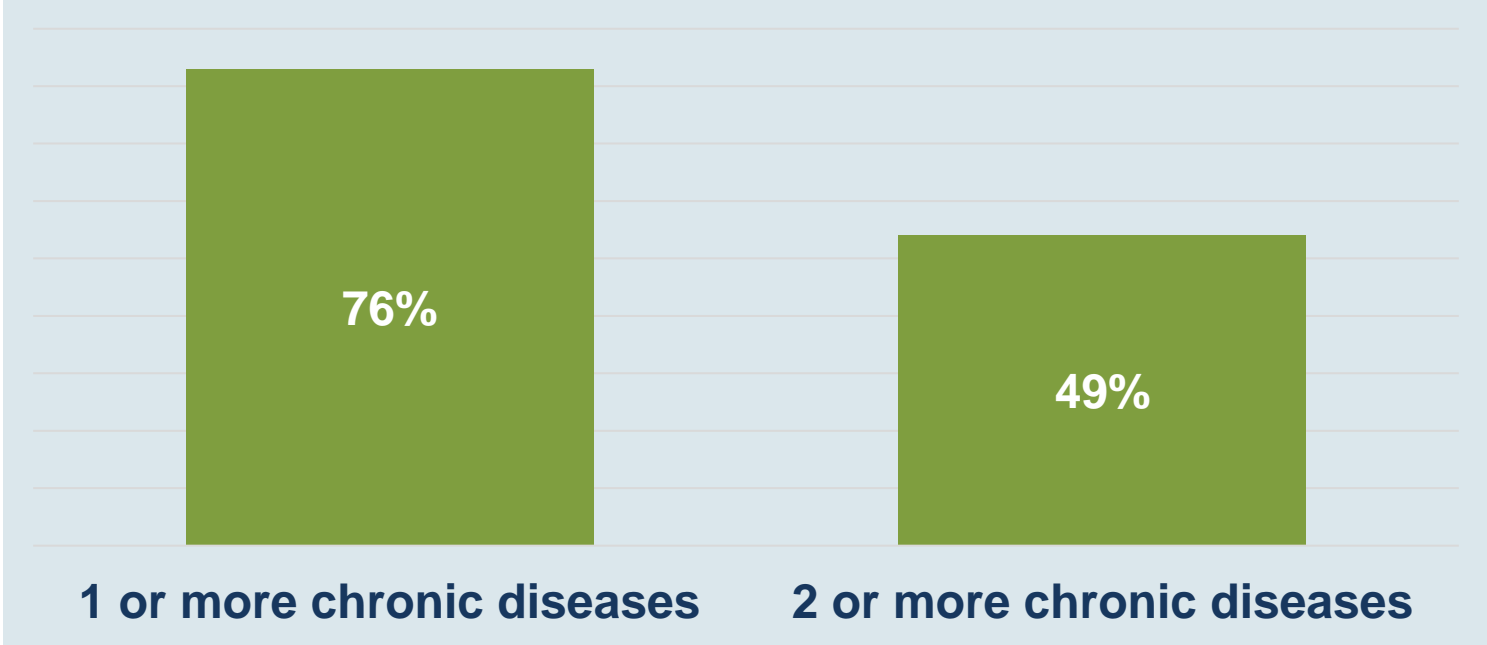
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2023 survey results, https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/brfss/survey.htm; *As % of population 65 and older
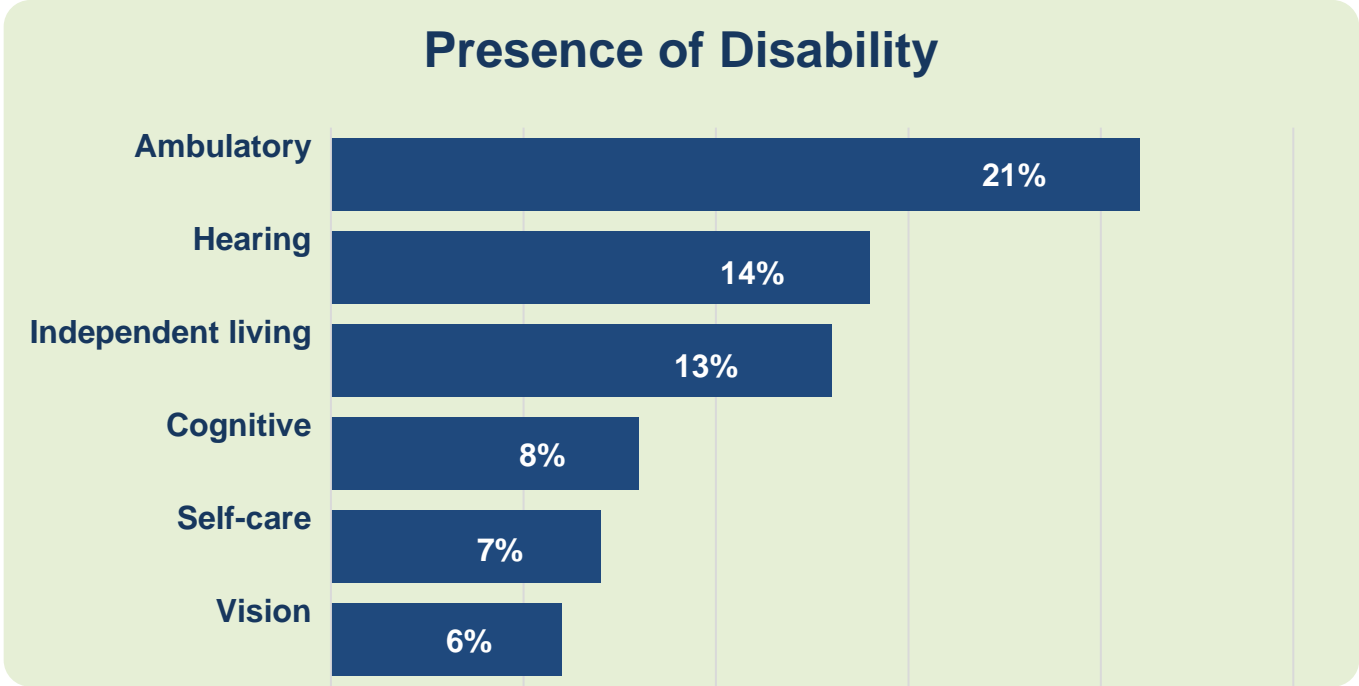
Chronic Diseases and Aging

Risks of chronic diseases increase with old age

Chronic Disease Self-Management Education programs help people better manage chronic conditions

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic Disease Self-Management Program
https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/programs/cdsmp.htm

Disability Status, 65+*

Presence of Disability

Category	Percentage
Ambulatory	21%
Hearing	14%
Independent living	13%
Cognitive	8%
Self-care	7%
Vision	6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 5-year estimates. Table S1810: Disability Characteristics, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/; www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6873710/**; *As % of population 65 and older; civilian non-institutionalized population only.**

NC Caregivers of Alzheimer's Patients (2024)

373,000
Number of caregivers

723 Million
Total hours of unpaid care

$10.9 Billion
Total value of unpaid care

BRFSS Survey Responses of NC Caregivers, 65+

17% provided regular care/assistance to friend/family member with health problem/disability during past 30 days

38% provided care for more than 5 years

48% provided weekly care up to 8 hours and 30% for 40+ hours

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS, NC Caregiver Survey, 2021 According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), NC Caregiver Survey Results 2021

BRFSS Survey Responses of NC Caregivers, 65+

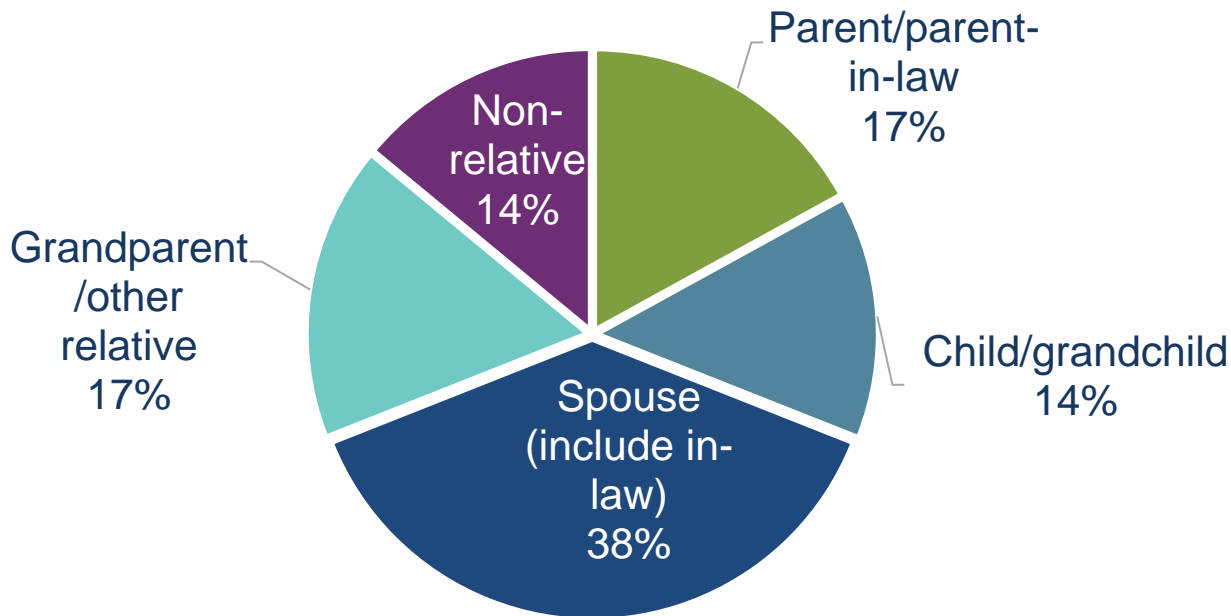**28%** cared for people with disabilities

31% cared for people with hypertension, diabetes and organ failure/disease

16% cared for people with dementia and other cognitive impairment

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS, NC Caregiver Survey, 2021 According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), NC Caregiver Survey Results 2021

BRFSS Survey Responses of NC Caregivers, 65+

Recipients of Care

Parent/parent-in-law 17%

Child/grandchild 14%

Spouse (include in-law) 38%

Grandparent /other relative 17%

Non-relative 14%

79% of care recipients were 65+

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS, NC Caregiver Survey, 2021 According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), NC Caregiver Survey Results 2021

BRFSS Survey Responses of NC Caregivers, 65+

48% managed care recipient's personal care

75% managed personal tasks

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS, NC Caregiver Survey, 2021 According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), NC Caregiver Survey Results 2021

Caregiving in NC (2021)

Need for caregivers significantly increases as population ages

Caregiving is rewarding but caregivers are at risk of increased stress, depression, and poor health outcomes

Family caregiver supports provide needed supports and services to caregivers

| Family Caregiver Support Program | Lifespan Respite | Project CARE | NC Caregiver Platform |

Source: https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/adult-services/family-caregiver-support
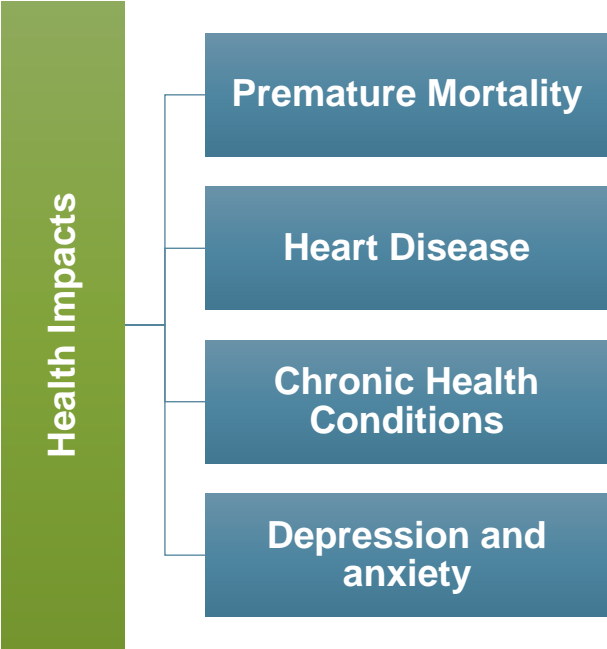
Social Isolation and Loneliness

Associated with poor health outcomes and increased Medicare spending

27% of those 65+ live alone

~43% of those 65+ are unmarried

(widowed, never married or divorced)

Many aging services address isolation and promote well-being

Health Impacts

- **Premature Mortality**
- **Heart Disease**
- **Chronic Health Conditions**
- **Depression and anxiety**

Older Adults and Civic Engagement:
AmeriCorps Seniors Programs(age 55+) in North Carolina, 2023

Members
and
Volunteers

- Prepare students for jobs
- Help those impacted by COVID-19
- Connect veterans to services
- Fight opioid epidemic
- Help seniors live independently
- Rebuild communities after disasters
- Lead conservation and climate change efforts

Formal Volunteering Rate, 60+
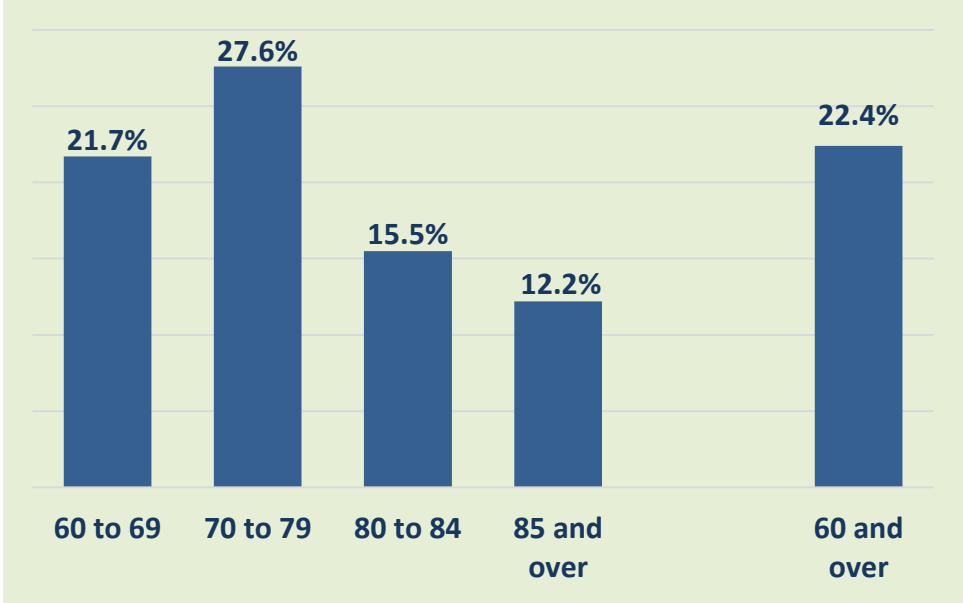
Source: AmeriCorps https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/CEV2023Spotlight_VirtualVolunteering_11012024_508_final.pdf;
*Includes virtual and hybrid volunteering.

Benefits Reported After Year of Volunteering

Decreased anxiety and depression

Decreased loneliness and social isolation

Enhanced physical activity

Higher life satisfaction

Glossary

Disability - A long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering.

Types of disabilities:

- **Ambulatory** – Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
- **Independent living** – Difficulty doing errands alone
- **Hearing** – Deaf or having serious difficulty hearing
- **Cognitive** – Difficulty remembering, concentrating or making decisions
- **Self-care** – Difficulty bathing or dressing
- **Vision** – Blind or serious difficulty seeing even with glasses

Household - A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. Household types are arranged into 2 groups. A *family household* contains at least 2 people, the householder and at least 1 other person related to the householder by birth, marriage or adoption. A *nonfamily household* may contain only one person, the householder or additional people who are not relatives of the householder.

Householder - The person, or one of the people, in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented.

Income - "Total income" is the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other sources of income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony.

Labor force - The labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The Civilian Labor Force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed.

Life expectancy - is the average number of additional years that someone at a given age would be expected to live if current mortality conditions remained constant throughout their lifetime

Marital status - Now Married, Except Separated includes people whose current marriage has not ended through widowhood, divorce, or separation (regardless of previous marital history). The category may also include couples who live together or people in common-law marriages if they consider this category the most appropriate. In certain tabulations, currently married people are further classified as "spouse present" or "spouse absent." In tabulations, unless otherwise specified, "now married" does not include same-sex married people even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Separated Includes people legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse because of marital discord. Those without a final divorce decree are classified as "separated." This category also includes people who have been deserted or who have parted because they no longer want to live together, but who have not obtained a divorce.

Median income - The median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and other having incomes below the median.

Metropolitan Area - A metropolitan area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population. Each metro area consists of one or more counties and includes the counties containing the core urban area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core.

Poverty - The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty. The poverty threshold (2020) for a person 65 and older is $12,413 and for two people (householder aged 65 and older) is $15,644.

Race/Ethnicity - The Census Bureau collects racial data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S Office of Management and Budget. The data is based on self-identification in which residents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. *Hispanic or Latino* refers to an ethnic category, a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

Rural - All territory, population, and housing units located outside of urbanized areas and urban clusters.

Urban - For the 2020 Census, an urban area will comprise a densely settled core of census blocks that meet minimum housing unit density and/or population density requirements. This includes adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,000 housing units or have a population of at least 5,000.

Definitions of other terms in report available in glossary of American Community Survey at: http://www.census.gov/glossary