

Demographics: Connecticut's Senior Population

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Issue

The demographic characteristics of Connecticut's senior population (e.g. residents age 65 years and older) are described below, largely based on the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Summary

Population and County Residence

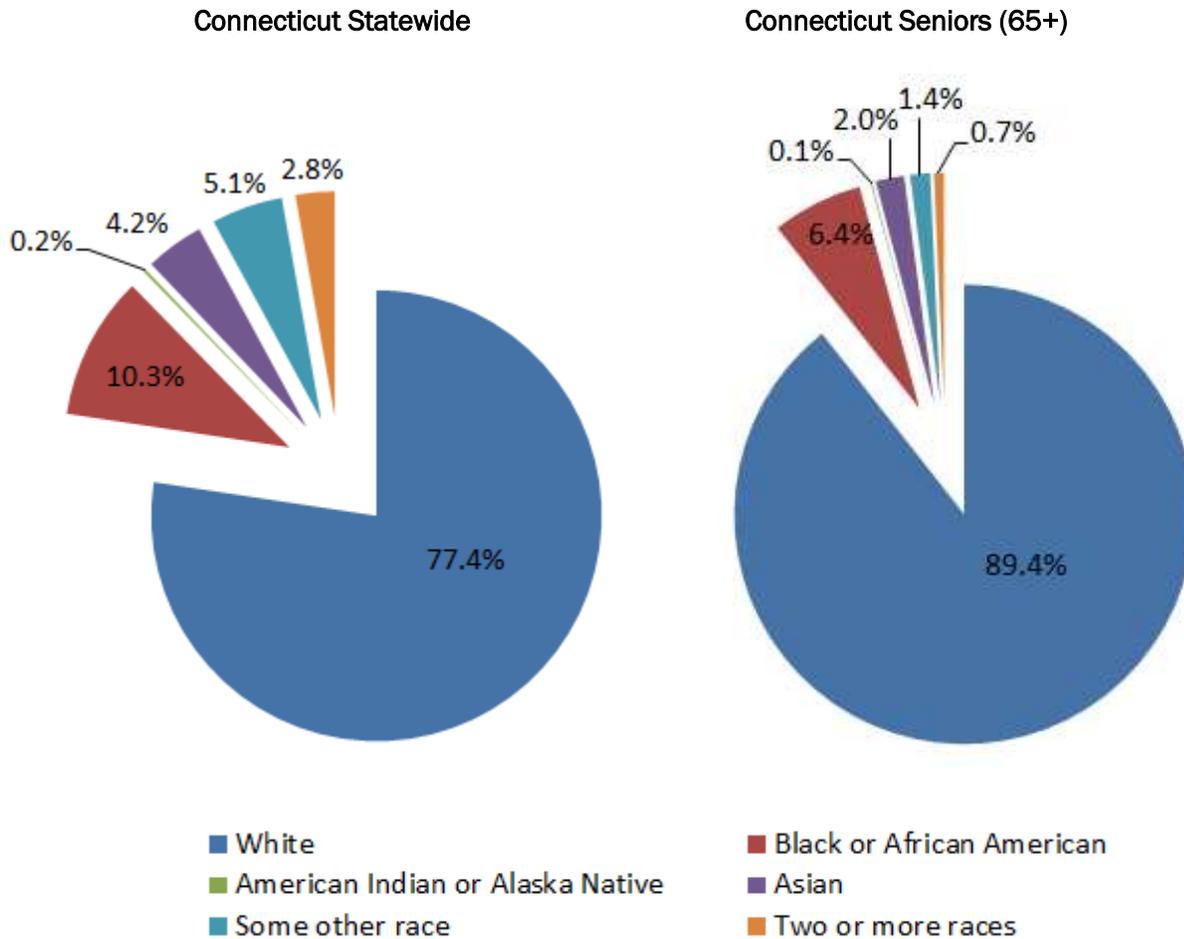
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2016 over 575,000 Connecticut residents were age 65 and older, making up an estimated 16% of the state's total population of 3.6 million. Table 1 shows the senior population as a percentage of each county's population.

Table 1. Senior Share of County Population

Litchfield (19.7%)	Hartford (16.2%)
Middlesex (18.8%)	Windham (15.7%)
New London (17.1%)	Fairfield (14.8%)
New Haven (16.3%)	Tolland (14.8%)

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Connecticut's senior population is less ethnically and racially diverse than the state as a whole, as shown in the chart below.



While the total state population is almost evenly split between male (49%) and female (51%) residents, the senior population has a larger percentage of females (57%) compared to males (43%).

Housing

Of the more than 330,000 senior households, an estimated 76% are homeowners and 24% are renters. This represents higher homeownership rates than the state as a whole (67% of 1.35 million households). For seniors residing in their own homes, the median home value is estimated at

Connecticut seniors are more likely to be veterans (20% vs. 7% of all residents) and more likely to have a disability (32% vs. 11% of residents).

\$263,700 – just below the statewide median estimate of \$270,500. For senior homeowners still owing a mortgage, the median selected owner costs was \$1,768 per month, whereas the median selected owner costs without a mortgage was \$817 per month. In comparison, of the nearly 79,000 senior households who rent, the median gross rent was \$829 per month.

A commonly accepted guideline for housing affordability is a housing cost that does not exceed 30% of a household's gross income. Households paying more than 30% are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Nearly 39% of Connecticut's senior homeowners and 54% of senior renters had annual housing costs at or above this 30% threshold.

Income Sources

Not surprisingly, the most common source of income for Connecticut seniors is Social Security, with an average benefit of \$20,591 per year in 2015. An estimated 90% of senior homeowners and renters receive Social Security benefits. The second most common source (50.7%) is personal retirement income, averaging \$27,240 per year in 2015.

Table 2: Income Sources of Connecticut Senior (Age 65+) Households

<i>Type of Income</i>	<i>65+ Households (n=330,019 homeowners and renters)</i>	<i>Mean Income in Past 12 months (2015 Inflation-Adjusted)</i>
Social Security	90%	\$20,591
Retirement Income	50.7%	\$27,240
Earnings	39.5%	\$65,771
SNAP Benefits	9.4%	N/A
Supplemental Security Income	4.9%	\$9,699
Cash Public Assistance	2.3%	\$3,809

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Poverty Status

Approximately 7% of Connecticut seniors had incomes which fell below the census poverty level, with an additional 8% of seniors having incomes between 100% to 149% of the threshold. Households at or near the poverty level may often qualify for various forms of public assistance. An estimated 5% of senior homeowners and renters received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) averaging approximately \$9,700 per year. It is estimated that in 2015, 9.4% of senior households received SNAP benefits and 2.3% of households received cash assistance of approximately \$3,809 per year.

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