

The Dual Challenge: Sacramento County

Senior Population
Senior Population

Health Status
Health Status

Financial Standing
Financial Standing

Service Demand
Service Demand

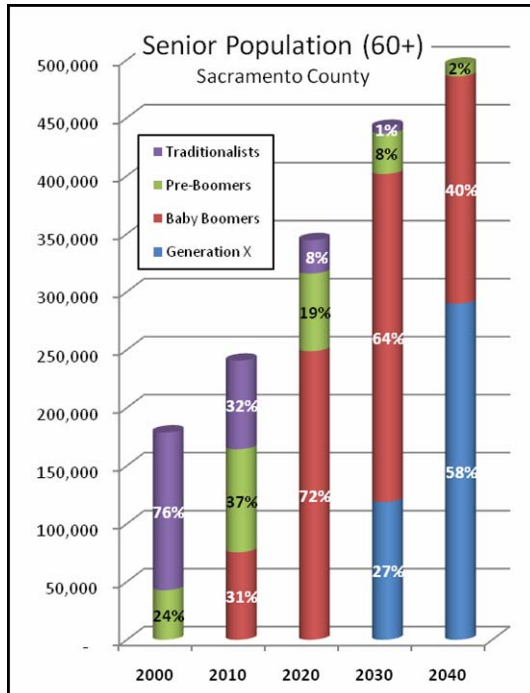
Aging Network
Aging Network

Senior Population

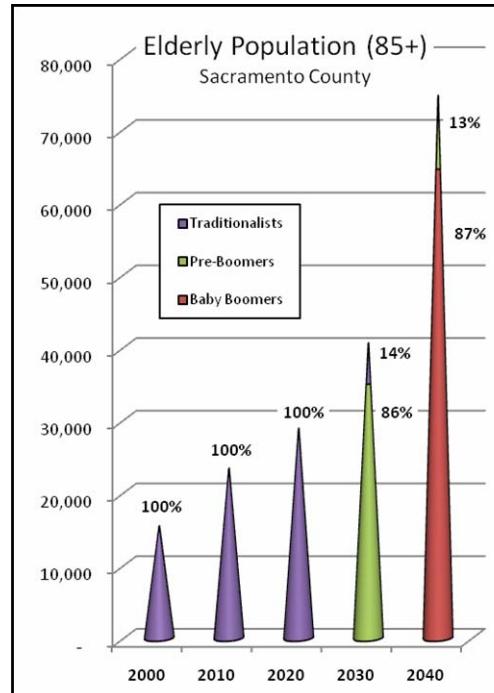
We are witnessing a dramatic and unprecedented increase in senior population, and it is driven largely by the aging of the Baby Boomers (shown in red on the charts below).

By 2040, just under 500,000 people age 60 and older are projected to be living in Sacramento County. That figure is almost three times the number of seniors there were in 2000; it represents a dramatic growth rate of 177% for the forty year period. In comparison, California's expected senior growth rate over those four decades is 170%.

The 85 and older population is of particular concern, for they represent the most frail and vulnerable age group, and they utilize a sizeable share of all elder care services. Here, the situation is even more alarming. The number of elderly people in the county is projected to grow exponentially, resulting in an almost five-fold increase in frail persons (from about 15,000 to almost 75,000) by 2040.

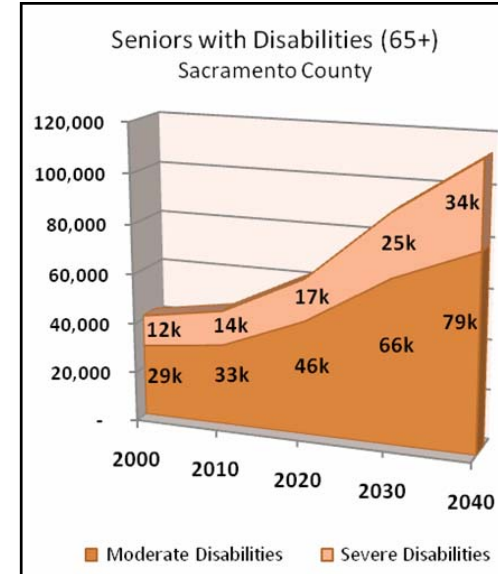


Traditionalists (born 1900-1935); Pre-Boomers (born 1936-1945); Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964); Generation X (born 1965-1980)



Types of Disabilities Among Persons 65+ (2000 Census)	Sacramento County	PSA 4	CA
Any Disability (Persons with 1 or more types of disabilities listed below)	42.8%	41.7%	42.2%
Sensory Disability	14.9%	14.8%	14.5%
Physical Disability	29.5%	28.5%	28.4%
Mental Disability	12.3%	11.7%	12.2%
Self-Care Disability	10.1%	9.2%	9.9%
Difficulty Going Outside the Home Disability	20.5%	19.3%	20.8%

Moderate Disabilities = 1 or 2 Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) or Instrumental ADLs (IADLs)
Severe Disabilities = 3 or more ADLs or IADLs



Health Status

Disability rates in Sacramento County are slightly higher than those in PSA 4 and in California as a whole. Coincidentally, the blue table is exclusive to Traditionalists, and the county total was roughly 130,500. Thus in 2000, almost 56,000 people 65 and older (42.8%) had some type of disability. By definition, older people with a "Self-Care" disability are reliant on others for meeting one or more of their personal needs; this describes over 13,000 seniors in Sacramento County. The "Difficulty Going Outside the Home" category is used to estimate the number of homebound seniors; 20.5% equates to nearly 27,000 older people in the area who must rely on others for transportation.

Experts predict the overall disability rate for older people will decline until 2020, then begin to rise as the Baby Boomers approach their 80th birthdays. The net effect in Sacramento County (shown in the orange chart) will be an increase in the number of older people with physical limitations that accelerates over time. The near tripling of the local senior population from 2000 to 2040 will translate into a near tripling of the number of older persons with functional limitations over that period.

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The federal poverty rate for older adults has fallen fairly steadily since 1959. Many experts have been critical of the official federal measure which is based on the consumer price index and does not account at all for the costs of transportation, housing or health care. Researchers at the Urban Institute have devised an alternate variable, called the Relative Poverty Level, which is indexed to wages. Applying their model, less than 11,000 Sacramento County seniors age 62 and older will officially be in poverty in 2020, but by then over 25,000 seniors will “feel” as though they are living in poverty.

In February 2008, the Insight Center for Community and Economic Development released findings from their California Elder Economic Security Initiative which used a new method to determine how much income older people need to meet their basic living costs. A condensed table for the county is shown below.

Insight utilizes the Elder Standard figures to demonstrate, in actual dollars, that older adults fall well short of the average costs of living when their only source of income is either SSI or standard Social Security benefits. In Sacramento County in 2007, the average elder person received an annual Social Security payment of \$12,065; the average elder couple received \$20,270. Even with this modest budget, seniors must have additional sources of retirement income in order to make ends meet.

Sacramento County, Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index, 2007

Monthly Expenses	Elder Person		Elder Couple	
	Owner with Mortgage	Renter, 1 Bedroom	Owner, No Mortgage	Owner with Mortgage
Housing	\$1,333	\$813	\$412	\$1,333
Food	263	263	486	486
Transportation	202	202	323	323
Health Care (Good Health)	283	283	566	566
Miscellaneous @ 20%	232	232	357	357
Monthly Elder Standard	\$2,313	\$1,793	\$2,144	\$3,064
Annual Elder Standard	\$27,752	\$21,517	\$25,723	\$36,773

(Adapted from the California Elder Economic Security Initiative, Insight, 2007)

Estimated Number of Seniors by Chances of Being Dependent, 2006

Non-institutionalized population 65+ (N = 142,928 persons)

Source: Author's Calculations of American Community Survey data

Low Ability = “self-care disability”
Middle Ability = “physical disability”
High Ability = no disabilities

Assets based on household income:
Low Assets = Less than \$20,000/yr
Middle Assets = \$20,000 – \$45,000/yr
High Assets = \$45,000 or more/yr

		FINANCIAL ASSETS		
		LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH
PHYSICAL ABILITY	LOW	Highest Risk 4,714 (3.3%)	High Risk 5,042 (3.5%)	Moderate Risk 6,252 (4.4%)
	MIDDLE	High Risk 13,417 (9.4%)	Uncertain Risk 14,317 (10.0%)	Low Risk 17,717 (12.4%)
	HIGH	Moderate Risk 12,599 (8.8%)	Low Risk 25,663 (18.0%)	Lowest Risk 43,207 (30.2%)

Service Demand

At the most basic level, individuals who seek home and/or community-based care services generally have a physical limitation, an economic limitation, or both. To illustrate the subtle complexity of this concept, we have developed the Assets-Ability Matrix (see red chart above). Over time, people tend to move toward the highest risk category.

Using a combination of interrelated data sets from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, we have computed estimated numbers of persons 65 and older in Sacramento County in each of the nine Matrix categories. As shown in the chart, about 4,700 local citizens are in the highest risk group (darkest red). More than 18,400 additional seniors are in the high risk categories (red). Another 18,800 are classified as moderate risk (pink corner squares). Some 14,300 individuals have uncertain risk (center). Less than one-third of all people age 65 and older in the county are in the lowest risk box (white), therefore, at least two-thirds of seniors had some risk of dependency in 2006.

Aging Network

How do we revamp programs and services for tomorrow’s elders without compromising vital services for those with the greatest needs today? That is the dual challenge.

Want to help improve services for current and future generations of seniors? Contact the Sacramento County Adult and Aging Commission at: (916) 447-7063 ext. 308