



SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

# SENIORS IN SUMMIT COUNTY, 2025



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## POPULATION HEALTH VITAL STATISTICS DATA BRIEF, JANUARY 2025

The *Population Health Vital Statistics Data Brief* series was created to provide regular updates to the Community Health Assessment and to provide the community with additional important information about population health. For more information on the Community Health Assessment and to access other reports in the *Vital Statistics Data Brief* series, please visit [scph.org/assessments-reports](http://scph.org/assessments-reports)



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.







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## SENIORS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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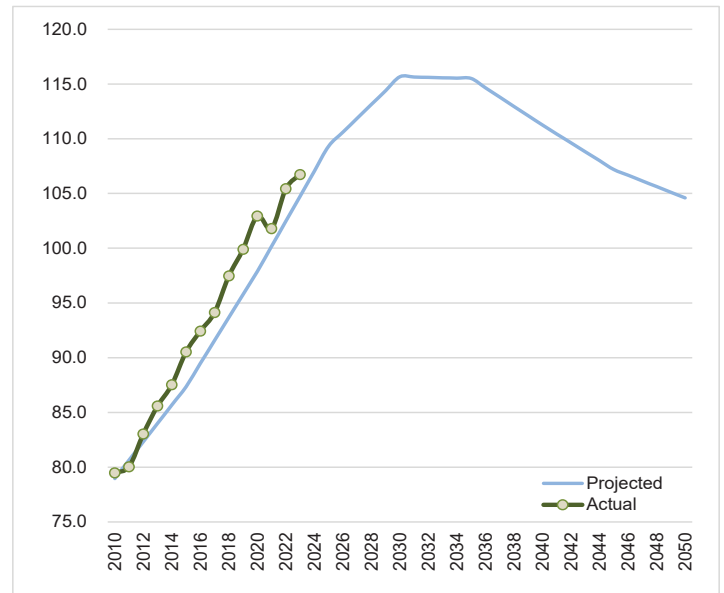
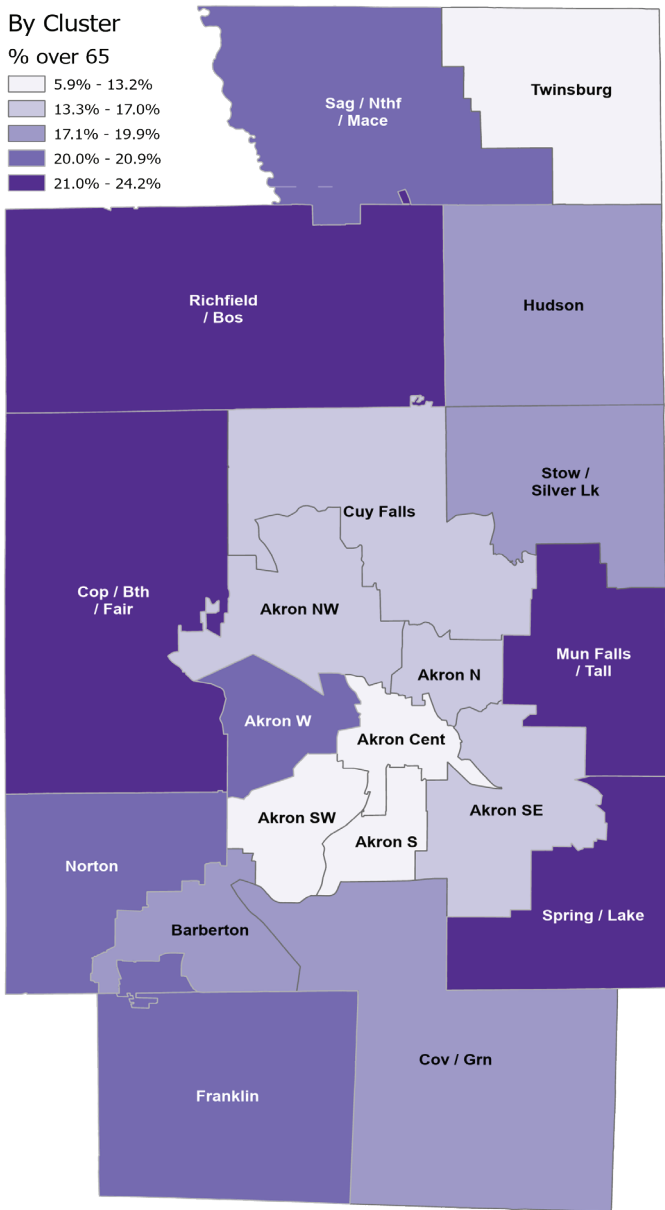
<b>SENIORS IN SUMMIT COUNTY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SENIOR POPULATION PROJECTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SENIOR HEALTH ISSUES</b>	<b>6</b>



# SENIORS IN SUMMIT COUNTY

Summit County was home to approximately 107,000 seniors, defined here as people age 65 or older in 2023. Those 107,000 people accounted for 20% of Summit County's population on average during the past 5 years. Due to the aging of the Baby Boom generation, the percentage of seniors is expected to continue rising sharply in the coming years.

Senior Population Projections -- Estimates of the 65 and older population for all Ohio counties published by the Ohio Development Services Agency projects Summit County's senior population to peak in 2035 at about 22% of the total population; nearly 116,000 people. Summit County's senior population appears to be growing at a faster rate than predicted based on American Community Survey estimates (Figure 2). As of 2023, Summit County's total estimated population age 65+ of 106,733 is nearly 2% higher than the ODSA estimate of 104,754. The decline in the senior population observed from 2020 to 2021 is likely attributable to the impact of COVID-19; in those two years, nearly 1,200 seniors died of COVID-19.



**FIGURE 1: SENIORS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION BY SUMMIT 2020 CLUSTER.**

**FIGURE 2: POPULATION OVER AGE 65 IN SUMMIT COUNTY, IN THOUSANDS, 2010-2050 PROJECTION.**

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year average Table B01003.

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency, 2023 ACS 5-year average

Categories	Age 65+	Categories	Age 65+	Categories	Age 65+
Total population	106,733	RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANDCHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS		INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
SEX AND AGE		Population 30 years and over	106,733	Households	70,302
Male	44.3%	Living with grandchild(ren)	2.8%	With earnings	35.6%
Female	55.7%	Responsible for grandchild(ren)	0.7%	Mean earnings (dollars)	63,427
Median age (years)	73.3	VETERAN STATUS		With Social Security income	87.2%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN		Civilian population 18 years and over	106,733	Mean Social Security income (dollars)	24,576
One race	98.3%	Civilian veteran	10.9%	With Supplemental Security Income	4.9%
White	85.1%	DISABILITY STATUS		Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	10,481
Black or African American	11.0%	Civilian noninstitutionalized population	103,315	With cash public assistance income	2.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	With any disability	31.8%	Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)	1,840
Asian	1.7%	No disability	68.2%	With retirement income	63.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	RESIDENCE 1 YEAR AGO		Mean retirement income (dollars)	32,595
Some other race	0.2%	Population 1 year and over	106,733	With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits	12.2%
Two or more races	1.7%	Same house	94.8%	POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	0.8%	Different house in the United States	4.9%	Population for whom poverty status is determined	103,315
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	84.8%	Same county	3.2%	Below 100 percent of the poverty level	9.8%
RELATIONSHIP		Different county	1.7%	100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	6.7%
Population in households	103,098	Same state	1.3%	At or above 150 percent of the poverty level	83.4%
Householder or spouse	93.40%	Different state	0.4%	Occupied housing units	70,302
Parent	2.7%	Abroad	0.3%	HOUSING TENURE	
Other relatives	2.0%	PLACE OF BIRTH, NATIVITY / CITIZENSHIP / YEAR OF ENTRY		Owner-occupied housing units	79.8%
Nonrelatives	1.9%	Total population	106,733	Renter-occupied housing units	20.2%
Unmarried partner	1.0%	Native	101,605	Average household size of owner-occupied unit	1.76
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		Foreign born	5,128	Average household size of renter-occupied unit	1.36
Households	70,302	Entered 2000 or later	0.0%	SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	
Family households	50.0%	Entered 1990 to 1999	13.8%	No telephone service available	0.6%
Married-couple family	39.2%	Entered before 1990	86.2%	1.01 or more occupants per room	
Female householder, no husband present, family	9.3%	Naturalized U.S. citizen	73.4%	Owner-occupied housing units	56,110
Nonfamily households	50.0%	Not a U.S. citizen	26.6%	SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A % OF HH INCOME	
Householder living alone	47.5%	LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH		Less than 30 percent	75.7%
MARITAL STATUS		Population 5 years and over	106,733	30 percent or more	24.3%
Population 15 years and over	106,733	English only	96.0%	OWNER CHARACTERISTICS	
Now married, except separated	52.6%	Language other than English	4.0%	Median value (dollars)	193,300
Widowed	19.5%	Speak English less than "very well"	1.6%	Median selected monthly owner costs with a mortgage (dollars)	1,227
Divorced	18.2%	EMPLOYMENT STATUS		Median selected monthly owner costs without a mortgage (dollars)	590
Separated	0.8%	Civilian population 16 years and over	106,733	Renter-occupied housing units	14,192
Never married	9.0%	In labor force	18.9%	GROSS RENT AS A % OF HH INCOME	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		Employed	18.1%	Less than 30 percent	47.4%
Population 25 years and over	106,733	Unemployed	0.8%	30 percent or more	52.6%
Less than high school graduate	6.7%	Percent of civilian labor force	4.1%	GROSS RENT	
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	34.0%	Not in labor force	81.1%	Median gross rent (dollars)	867
Some college or associate's degree	27.3%				
Bachelor's degree or higher	32.0%				

FIGURE 3: SENIOR DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, 2023.

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

## Senior Demographic Profile

Figure 3 presents a comprehensive demographic profile of the 65 and older population in Summit County from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS). Details on several indicators can be found below:

- Age, sex, and race -- The median age of seniors in Summit County is 73.3 years; lower than 2008-12 figure of 74.9. This decline was due to the rapid increase in the 65 and older population caused by the aging of the Baby Boom generation. Most seniors are female (56%), which is higher than the total population figure of 51%. A higher percentage of seniors are white (85%) than the total population (74%). Only 11% of seniors are African-American; lower than the percentage of African-Americans in the total population (15%). Asians make up 1.7% of the 65 and older population; about half their proportion in the total population (5%).
- Disability status -- Nearly one-third of seniors (32%) have at least one disability. Of those with a disability, 19% have an ambulatory disability, while 11% have a hearing disability, 8% have a cognitive disability, and 13% have a disability that makes independent living difficult or impossible. Other disabilities include self-care (7%) and vision (5%).
- Housing and households -- Half of seniors (50%) live in a household with at least one spouse or family member, while nearly half (48%) live in a one-person household. More seniors live in owner-occupied housing than the general population (80% and 68%, respectively). Nearly 20% of seniors rent.

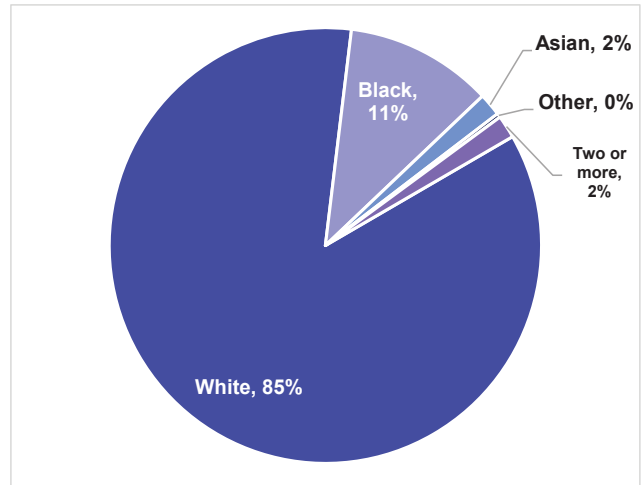


FIGURE 4: SENIORS BY RACE, 2023.

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

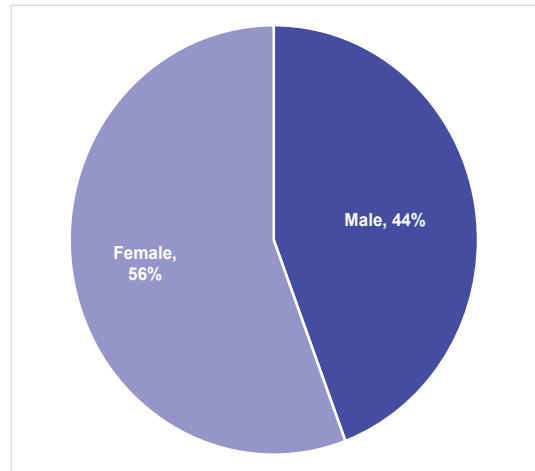


FIGURE 5: SENIORS BY SEX, 2023.

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

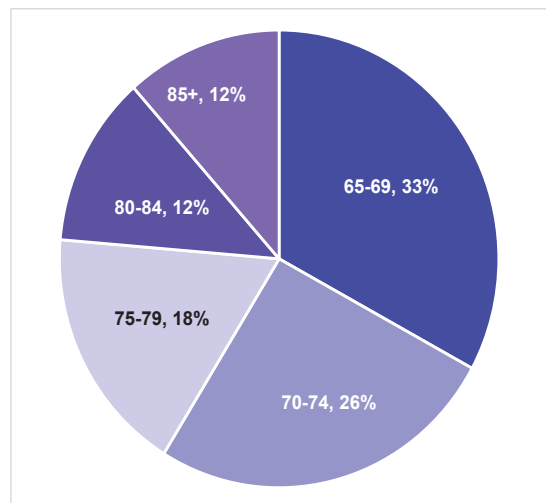


FIGURE 6: SENIORS BY AGE, 2023.

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

## Senior Demographic Profile (continued)

Other important demographic characteristics of seniors in Summit County include:

- Income and poverty** -- Nearly 10% of seniors live below the poverty line in Summit County; about 10,120 in all; lower than the rate for the county as a whole (13%). Most of the difference in poverty rates can be explained by the impact of social safety net programs like Social Security, Medicare, and others that benefit seniors. In fact, a November 2018 study by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities entitled "Social Security Lifts More Americans Above Poverty Than Any Other Program" estimates that the nationwide 2021 poverty rate for seniors would have risen from 10% to over 38% in the absence of Social Security benefits.<sup>1</sup>

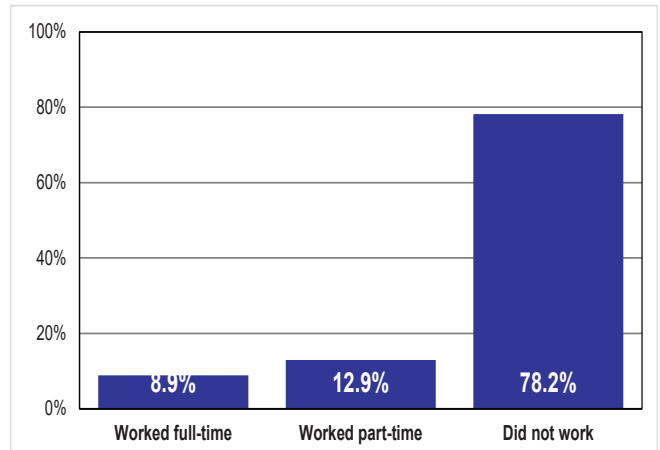
**Sources of income for seniors:** The vast majority of seniors in Summit County receive Social Security income (88%), while 63% receive other forms of retirement income. Social Security benefits averaged \$24,576 per year, while other retirement sources averaged \$32,595. Nearly 36% of seniors receive earned income, while 12% received benefits from the SNAP program. Five percent received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), while 2% got cash assistance.

- Employment** -- Nearly 9% of Summit County seniors worked full-time in the past 12 months, while 13% worked part-time. The vast majority, 78%, did not work at all.

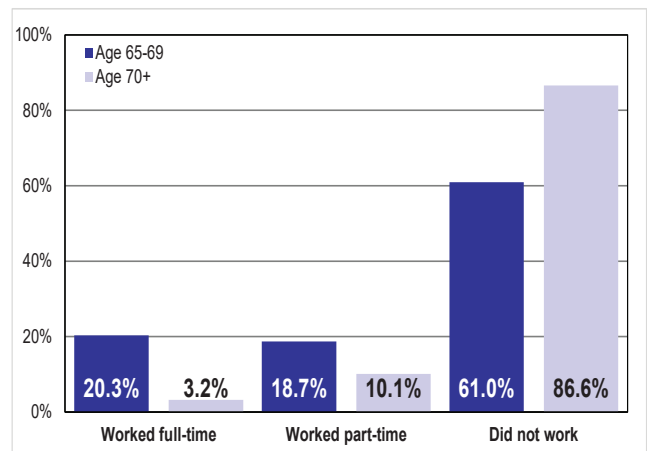
Younger seniors (ages 65-69) worked the most, with 20% working full-time and another 19%

working part-time. Only 3% of those age 70 and older worked full-time while 10% worked part-time.

- Household Income** -- The median household income for all seniors is \$50,504 per year; lower than the \$68,360 for all households.
- Mortgage burden** -- In the years just before retirement (ages 60-64), 57% of owner-occupied homes are mortgaged. That percentage drops to 49% of occupied homes with a mortgage between ages 65 and 74, and again to 29% for those age 75 or older. According to the ACS, the



**FIGURE 7: SENIOR EMPLOYMENT, 2023.**  
Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table B23027.



**FIGURE 8: SENIOR EMPLOYMENT BY AGE GROUP, 2023.**

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table B23027.

**Notes:**

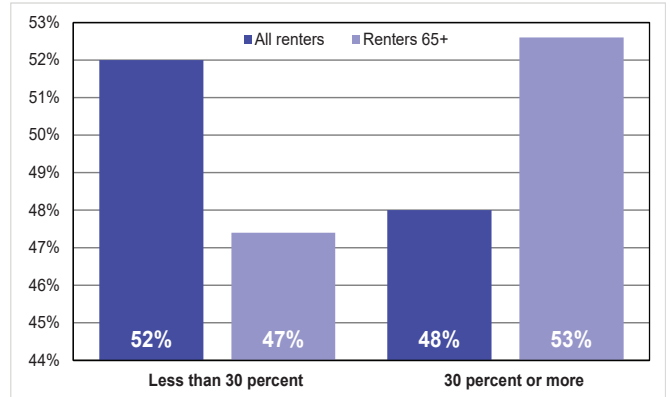
<sup>1</sup> Romig, K. (2018). Social Security Lifts More Americans Above Poverty Than Any Other Program. Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/social-security-lifts-more-americans-above-poverty-than-any-other-program>.

median monthly cost for senior homeowners with a mortgage is \$1,249. Median monthly owner costs for seniors without a mortgage is \$547. Even without a mortgage, homeowner costs for seniors add up to more than \$6,600 annually. One-quarter of seniors who own their homes (25%) pay at least 30% of their income for mortgages and other housing costs.

- **Renter burden** -- Seniors who rent face an even greater housing cost burden. More than 54% of seniors who rent spend at least 30% of their income on rent; well above the rate for all Summit County residents (47%).
- At least part of the difference in the renter burden for seniors can be explained by their change in income. The median household income for those age 45-64 was 92,854 in the 2019-2023 period; the highest of any age group. As noted earlier, the median household income for those 65 and

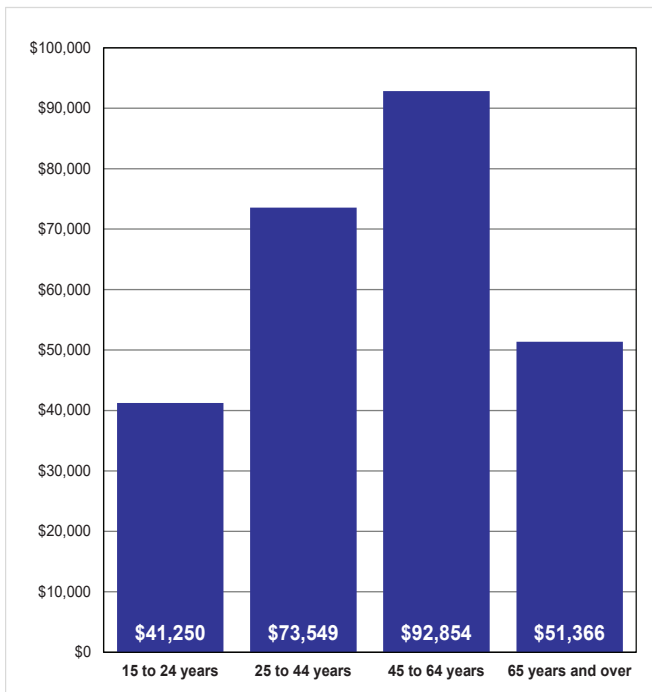
older was just below \$51,366. That's a 42% decline in median income when moving into retirement years.

- Unfortunately, monthly rental costs for seniors don't drop anything like enough to keep pace with their income loss. According to ACS data for 2023, median gross rent for all Summit County residents is \$1,098 vs. \$1,010 for those age 65 and older. That's a decline of only 8% as people move into their retirement years.



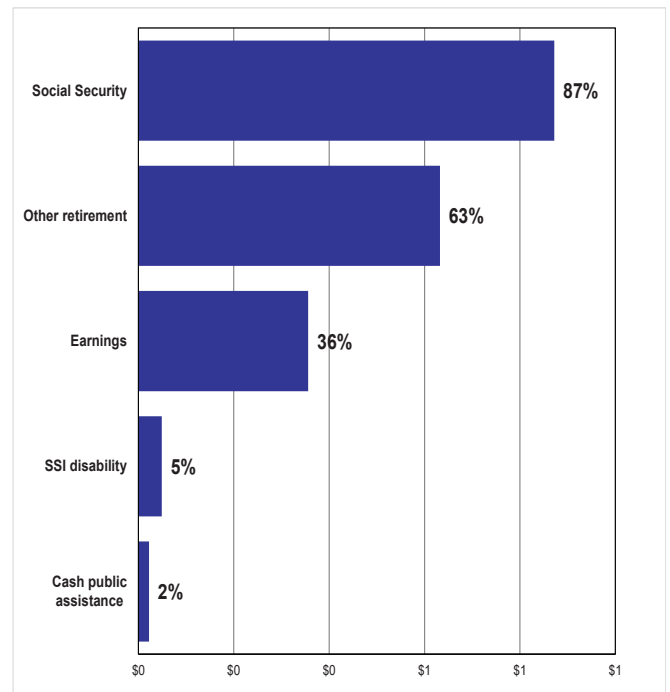
**FIGURE 10: PERCENT OF RENTERS PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME FOR RENT, 2023.**

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.



**FIGURE 9: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE, SUMMIT COUNTY 2023.**

Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S1903.



**FIGURE 11: HOUSEHOLD INCOME SOURCES FOR SENIORS, SUMMIT COUNTY 2023.**

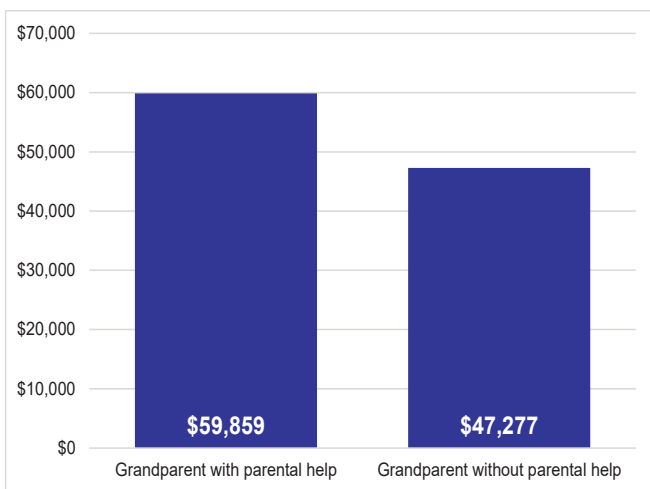
Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.



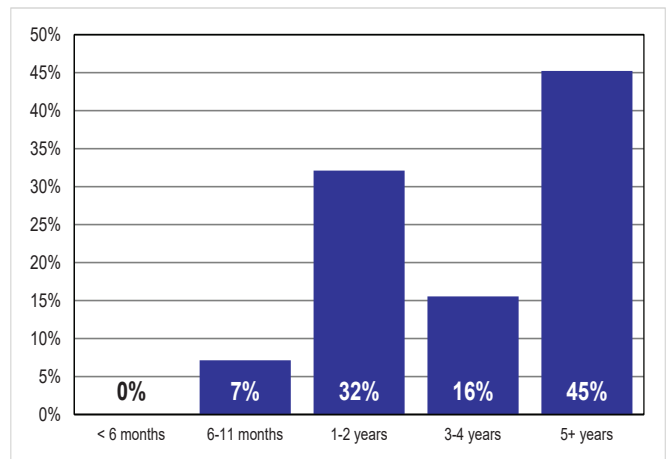
- Grandparents raising grandchildren -- One of the more important social indicators the ACS tracks is grandparents raising their own grandchildren. Here in Summit County, an estimated 7,097 grandparents live in the same household as their grandchildren. Of that total, 1,654 grandparents were responsible for raising those grandchildren. Because unintended pregnancies can happen at very early ages (making people parents and sometimes grandparents early in life), the ACS category for grandparents begins at age 30. Of the 1,654 grandparents raising their grandchildren, just under 68% (1,120) are over age 60.

Among grandparents over age 60 who were raising their own grandchildren, 54% were doing so without the help of the children's parents. The burden of being responsible for raising a child not only puts physical and emotional stress on those seniors who are raising their grandchildren, but significant financial burdens as well. According to the ACS, the median household income of those doing so without the help of the children's parents is much lower than for grandparents who are getting that help.

The amount of time grandparents must commit to raising their own grandchildren can also significantly increase the stress seniors raising their own grandchildren face. According to ACS data, 45% have been responsible for raising their grandchildren for at least 5 years. A much smaller percentage (7%) have been responsible for less than a year.



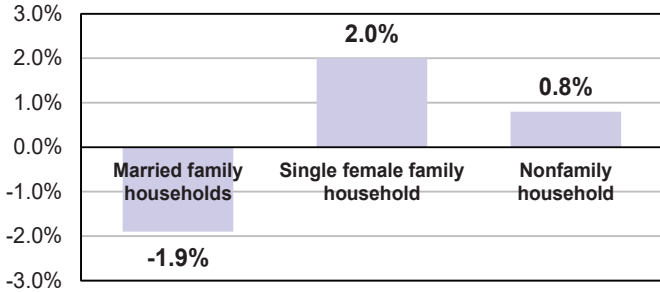
**FIGURE 12:** MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR OWN GRANDCHILDREN, 2023. *Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table B10010.*



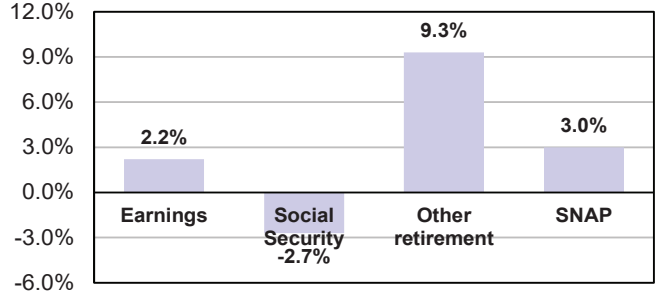
**FIGURE 13:** LENGTH OF TIME THAT GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR OWN GRANDCHILDREN ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM, 2023. *Source: 2023 ACS 1-year estimate Table B10050.*

# Senior Social, Economic, and Demographic Changes, 2014-2023

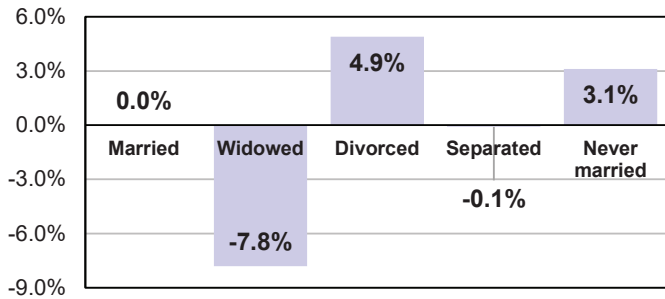
Households -- The number of married senior households dropped and both single and nonfamily households rose.



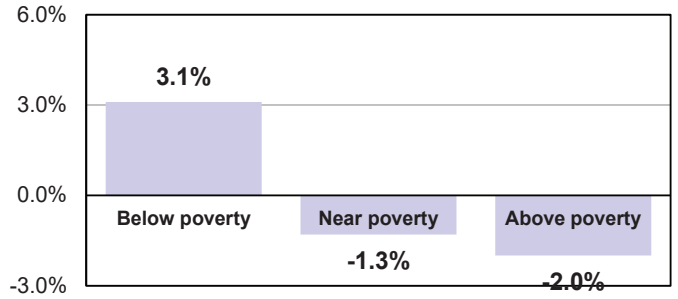
Income -- The number of seniors receiving Social Security is lower, and those with earnings, other retirement income, and food stamps is higher.



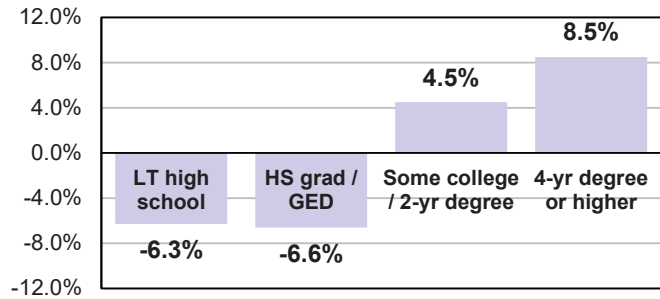
Marital status -- The number of widowed senior households dropped while divorced and never married households rose.



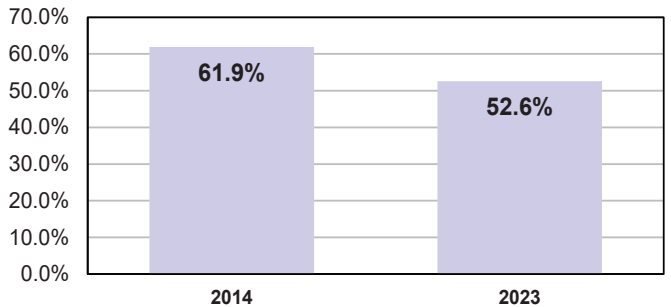
Poverty -- The number of seniors falling into poverty rose as those above and near poverty fell since 2014.



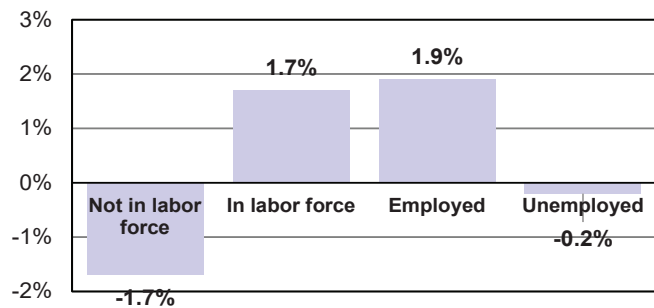
Educational attainment -- The education level of seniors has been rising as younger generations with higher education age into becoming seniors,



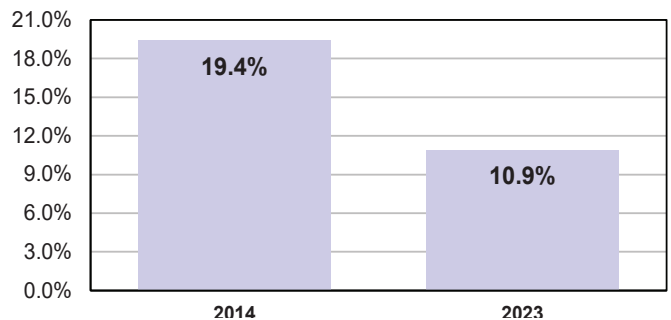
Renter burden -- The percent of senior renters paying 30% or more for their rent dropped since 2014.



Employment -- More seniors are in the labor force and working than in 2014,



Veteran status -- The percent of seniors who are veterans dropped from one-in-five in 2014 to one-in-nine by 2023.



## Health Issues Among Seniors

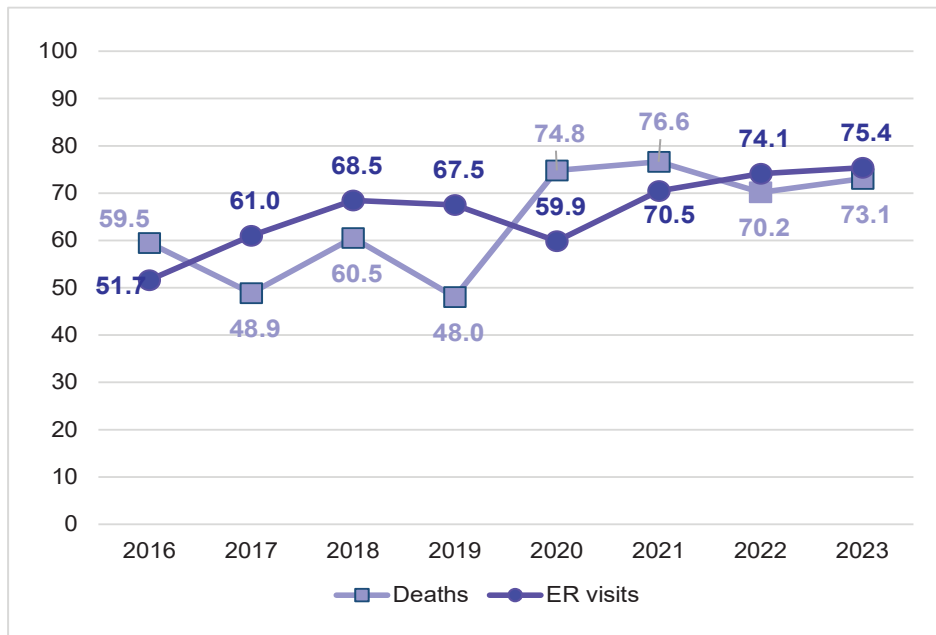
Fall-related injuries -- Summit County seniors averaged nearly 6,700 emergency room (ER) visits per year for a fall-related injury; over 61,000 visits since 2016. Fall-related ER visits rose from just under 52 per 1,000 seniors in 2016 to 75 per 1,000 in 2023,

Of those 61,000 visits, records for 4,500 visits included specific mentions of a head injury associated with the ER visit (which could either be a cause or consequence of the fall). Nearly 900 de-identified individuals, about 14% of the total, visited an ER more than once for a fall-related injury.

Fall-related deaths -- Since 2016, 515 Summit County seniors suffered a fall-related death; about 64 per year. Fall-related deaths hit a low of 48 per 100,000 in 2019, then moved sharply in the opposite direction in 2020, ending that year at 75 per 100,000. Fall-related deaths remained at that elevated level through 2023.

There are two likely explanations for the sharp decline in fall-related ER visits and the sharp growth in fall-related deaths from 2019-2020. First, the lockdowns necessitated by COVID-19 in 2020 may have made many seniors afraid of going to an ER after a fall for fear of being exposed to COVID-19. Not seeking medical assistance after a fall could significantly increase the danger of dying from fall-related injuries. Second, the need for vulnerable seniors to avoid exposure to COVID-19 reduced opportunities for healthy physical activity. Normal activities such as shopping, walking, or participating in exercise classes were all negatively impacted by 2020's movement restrictions.

Age of fall-related incidents -- The average age of fall-related ER visits over age 65 was 80.4 since 2016, while the average age of fall related deaths was 84.8.



**FIGURE 14:** FALL-RELATED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS AND FATALITIES, 2016-2023.

Sources: EpiCenter, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records

Cause	Deaths 2016-2023
Other and unspecified falls	735
Fall on and from stairs and steps	110
Fall involving bed	42
Fall involving wheelchair	21
Fall on same level from slip / trip / stumble	12
Fall involving chair	11

**FIGURE 15:** FALL-RELATED FATALITIES BY SPECIFIED CAUSE, 2016-2023.

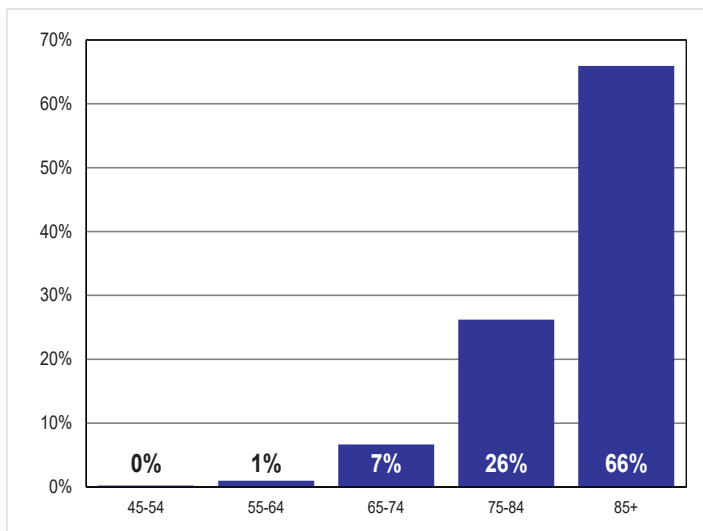
Sources: EpiCenter, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records



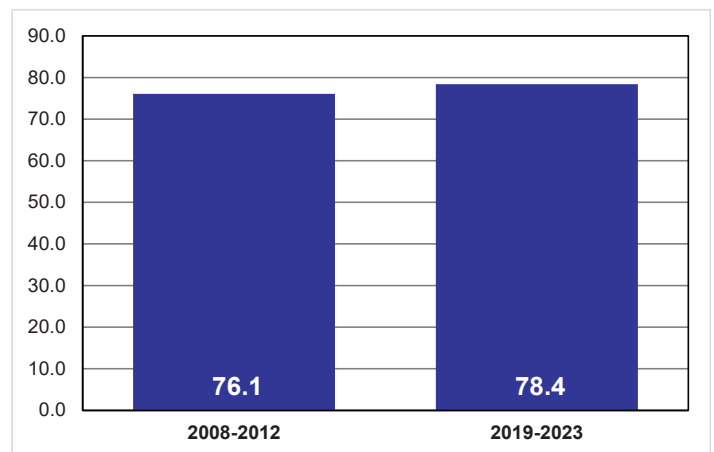
Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia -- Between 2016 and 2026, there were 3,068 Summit County residents who died of either Alzheimer's Disease or dementia. Alzheimer's Disease deaths rose to become a majority of all Alzheimer's / dementia cases in 2018. As of 2023, 60% of these combined cases were Alzheimer's disease. The vast majority of cases, 66%, occurred in the 85 and older population. The youngest victim of either disease was 48, while the oldest was 108.

Age-adjusted death rates for Alzheimer's disease and unspecified dementia grew by about 3% between the 2008-2012 and 2019-2023 time periods.

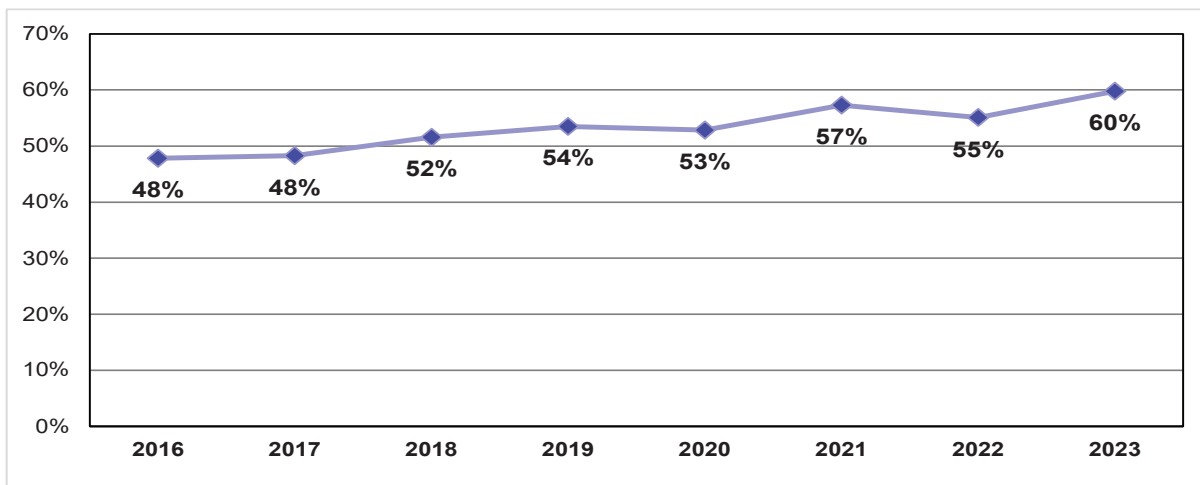
For a more detailed look at Alzheimer's Disease and dementia, please see our data brief entitled "Alzheimer's Disease in Summit County," which can be downloaded at <https://www.scph.org/assessments-reports>.



**FIGURE 16:** ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS BY AGE GROUP, 2023. *Source: Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records*



**FIGURE 17:** AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES FOR ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS - 2010-2023. *Source: ODH death records*



**FIGURE 18:** ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE DEATHS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS - 2016-2023. *Source: ODH death records*

Top 10 Leading Causes of Death

The table below is based on a format originally designed by the CDC. It shows the top 10 leading causes of death for each of nine age groups in Summit County over age 60. Some of the more common causes of death are color-coded so that readers can follow the progression of that disease throughout the age spectrum.

Rank	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85 & over
1	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer	Heart disease	Heart disease
2	Heart disease	Heart disease	Heart disease	Cancer	Alzheimer's disease
3	COVID-19	COVID-19	COVID-19	COVID-19	Cancer
4	Chronic lower respiratory	Chronic lower respiratory	Chronic lower respiratory	Alzheimer's disease	COVID-19
5	Strokes	Strokes	Strokes	Chronic lower respiratory	Strokes
6	Diabetes	Diabetes	Alzheimer's disease	Strokes	Chronic lower respiratory
7	Accidents	Accidents	Diabetes	Diabetes	Accidents
8	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	Kidney disease	Parkinson's disease	Kidney disease	Diabetes
9	Hypertension	Septicemia	Accidents	Accidents	Hypertension
10	Kidney disease	Alzheimer's disease	Kidney disease	Parkinson's disease	Kidney disease
COVID-19 Rank	3	3	3	3	4

**FIGURE 19: TOP 10 LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN SUMMIT COUNTY, 2020-2023, AGE 65+.** *Source: ODH death records*

*Note: Top five causes are color coded to allow for comparison across different age groups.*