

---

## About This Report

This biennial report presents detailed statistical information on the major sources and amounts of income for people aged 55 or older. The tabulations focus on the major sources of total income by age, sex, marital status, race, and Hispanic origin. Several tables describe the economic situation of the aged with varying levels of Social Security benefits. Their poverty status is presented in terms of the income of the families they live with.

### Source of Data

---

Data for this series are from the March Current Population Survey (CPS) of the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup> The CPS samples a large cross section of households in the United States each year (approximately 100,000 in March 2015). The March Supplement gathers detailed information on income and labor force participation of each person aged 15 or older in the sample

households. For this series, the Social Security Administration (SSA) creates a subsample of persons 55 or older and their families. For aged units, a separate data record is made for each married couple living together—at least one of whom is 55 or older—and for each nonmarried person 55 or older. Married persons living apart are classified as nonmarried persons.

From time to time, changes have been made in the survey. Although the changes have improved the measurement of income and labor force participation, they have reduced the comparability of estimates made in different years.<sup>2</sup> The most recent of these changes was implemented in the March 2015 CPS, which is used in this publication. In an effort to produce better data on income from retirement accounts and other assets, the portion of the questionnaire devoted to these items was modified. The new questionnaire has improved income reporting,

increased response rates, and reduced reporting errors by updating questions on retirement income and taking better advantage of an automated questionnaire environment. Users of this publication have noted the failure of past editions to account for the income from irregular withdrawals from retirement accounts. The recent changes to the CPS should fill the gap left by prior editions. However, users should take into account the changes when making comparisons to past editions. CPS data continues to be the best option for timely, detailed information about the income sources and demographics of the population aged 55 or older.

Users of this publication are encouraged to consult the text in the Glossary, Frequently Asked Questions, and Technical Appendix sections. These sections provide detail about the CPS and how income is measured in this publication.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of the basic CPS sample design, see U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology*, Technical Paper No. 63RV (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2002).

---

<sup>2</sup> These changes are discussed in some detail in U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Reports*, Series P60, various years.