



Fact Sheet

SOCIAL SECURITY

In 2021, an average of 65 million Americans per month will receive a Social Security benefit, totaling over one trillion dollars in benefits paid during the year.

Snapshot of a Month: June 2021 Beneficiary Data

o Retired workers	46.7 million	\$72.7 billion	\$1,555 average monthly benefit
dependents	2.9 million	\$2.34 billion	
o Disabled workers	8.1 million	\$10.3 billion	\$1,280 average monthly benefit
dependents	1.4 million	\$0.6 billion	
o Survivors	5.9 million	\$7.3 billion	

Social Security is the major source of income for most of the elderly.

- o Nearly nine out of ten people age 65 and older were receiving a Social Security benefit as of December 31, 2020.
- o Social Security benefits represent about 30% of the income of the elderly. *
- o Among elderly Social Security beneficiaries, 37% of men and 42% of women receive 50% or more of their income from Social Security. *
- o Among elderly Social Security beneficiaries, 12% of men and 15% of women rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income. *

*This information is from research released in 2021 using 2015 data. See [this link](#) for more information

Social Security provides more than just retirement benefits.

- o Retired workers and their dependents accounted for 75.2% of total benefits paid in 2020.
- o Disabled workers and their dependents accounted for 13.1% of total benefits paid in 2020.
 - About 89 percent of workers aged 21-64 in covered employment in 2020 and their families have protection in the event of a severe and prolonged disability.
 - Just over 1 in 4 of today's 20 year-olds will become disabled before reaching age 67.
 - 67% of the private sector workforce has no long-term disability insurance.
- o Survivors of deceased workers accounted for 11.7% of total benefits paid in 2020.
 - More than one in eight of today's 20-year-olds will die before reaching age 67.
 - About 96% of persons aged 20-49 who worked in covered employment in 2020 have survivors insurance protection for their children under age 18 (and surviving spouses caring for children under age 16).

An estimated 176 million workers will work in OASDI-covered employment in 2021.

- o 45% of the workforce in private industry has no access to private pension coverage.
 - o Two-thirds (66%) of workers report they are currently saving for retirement. Having an employer-sponsored retirement savings plan is a key factor in whether Americans save for retirement. Only 18% of those without access to an employer-sponsored plan said they have any retirement savings.
- **In 1940, the life expectancy of a 65-year-old was almost 14 years; today it is just over 20 years.**
- **The number of Americans 65 and older will increase from about 57 million in 2021 to about 76 million by 2035. ¹**
- **There are currently 2.7 covered workers per each Social Security beneficiary. By 2035, there will be 2.3 covered workers for each beneficiary.**

¹ Note that these values are for the Social Security area population as defined in the Social Security Trustees Report, and not for all Americans. See definition at https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/2021/VI_I_glossary.html#1042403.