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New Report Reveals Boom in State's 65-and-over Population

A new report finds that older adults make up a larger share of New York State's population than ever before, with the 65-and-over population growing by more than 800,000 over the past decade even as the under-65 population shrunk by nearly half a million. The study also reveals an alarming rise in the poverty rate among older New Yorkers.

by the Center for an Urban Future

New Report Reveals Boom in State's 65-and-over Population and Alarming Rise in Poverty Among New York's Older Adults

NY State's 65-and-over Population Increased by 31% in the Past Decade; Under-65 Population Declined by 3%

Rochester, Saratoga County, Syracuse, Queens, Dutchess County, and Orange County Had Fastest Growth in Older Adults

January 25, 2023

January 25, 2023 – A new report published today by the Center for an Urban Future finds that older adults make up a larger share of New York State's population than ever before, with New York's 65-and-over population growing by more than 800,000 over the past decade even as the under-65 population shrunk by nearly half a million. The study also reveals an alarming rise in the poverty rate among older New Yorkers, and it urges Governor Hochul and the Legislature to increase investments in older adult services.

The study, titled Keeping Pace with an Aging New York State, shows that the over-65 population is booming in every corner of the state, with the fastest increases over the past decade occurring in Rochester (+64 percent), Saratoga County (+50 percent), Syracuse (+43 percent), Queens County (+39 percent), Dutchess County (+37 percent), and Orange County (+36 percent). In fact, the growth of New York's older adult population is outpacing overall population growth in every one of the

state's 19 largest counties.

The report finds that Long Island alone has 113,670 more older adults than a decade ago. In Erie County, the number of older adults increased by 32,888. Six other upstate counties all experienced gains of at least 10,000 older adults: Onondaga County (an increase of 19,109 residents ages 65 and over), Saratoga County (an increase of 15,292 residents ages 65 and over), Orange County (+15,258), Dutchess County (+14,959), Albany County (13,283), and Rockland County (+10,173). And in New York City, two boroughs each added more than 100,000 older adults in the past decade: Queens (+113,797) and Brooklyn (+104,507).

Key findings include:

Older adults are driving the state's population growth

- In 2021, 18 percent of all New Yorkers are 65 and older, a larger share of the state's population than ever before—and up from 14 percent a decade ago.
- Over the past decade, from 2011 to 2021, the number of New Yorkers ages 65 and over grew by 31 percent—an increase of 815,166 older adults. During the same period, the state's under-65 population declined by 2.6 percent, or 444,450 people.
- New Yorkers 65-and-over account for a record 20.7 percent of the population in Chautauqua County (up from 16.9 percent a decade ago); 20.4 percent in Niagara County (up from 16.1 percent); 19.3 percent in Saratoga County (up from 13.8 percent), 18.7 percent in Erie County (up from 15.8 percent), and 18.6 percent in Dutchess County (up from 13.6 percent). The cities with the highest share of the population ages 65-plus are Yonkers (17.3 percent), New York City (16.2 percent), and Syracuse (15.6 percent).

In 13 of 19 large counties, the older adult population surged even as the under-65 population actually decreased.

- On Long Island, the 65-plus population increased by 113,670 while the under-65 population declined by 39,457.
- In Niagara County, the number of residents ages 65 and over increased by 8,531 while the under-65 population dropped by 13,055.
- In Dutchess County, the 65-plus population increased by 14,959 while the under-65 population shrunk by 15,329.
- In Albany County, the 65-plus population grew by 13,283 and the under-65 population decreased by 2,600.
- In Rochester, the 65 and over population jumped by 11,679 while the under-65 population fell by 11,230.

Nearly 1 in 8 older New Yorkers is living in poverty

- The number of older New Yorkers living below the poverty line increased by 37.4 percent over the past decade, from 302,987 in 2011 to 416,246 in 2021.
- Concerningly, the total poverty rate among older New Yorkers has increased by 4 percent statewide (or 0.5 percentage points) since 2011—from 11.8 percent in 2011 to 12.3 percent in 2021—reversing years of steady declines.
- Hispanic New Yorkers age 65 and older are experiencing the highest rates of older adult poverty of any population, at 23.5 percent. Asian older adults have the second-highest poverty rate, at 19.1 percent, followed by African American older adults at 16.6 percent, and white older adults at 8.7 percent.

A growing share of the state's older adults are immigrants and people of color

- The number of older immigrants statewide is growing at nearly double the rate of U.S.-born older adults, increasing 42 percent compared to 26.6 percent since 2011.
- Today, 28 percent of the state's older adult population is foreign-born, compared to 26 percent a decade ago.
- During the past decade, the population of older immigrants has almost doubled in Oswego County (85 percent increase), closely followed by Staten Island (+67 percent), Queens County (+60 percent), Albany County (+56 percent), Nassau County (+52 percent), and Rockland County (+51 percent).
- New York's U.S.-born older adults are also increasingly likely to be African American, Hispanic, and/or Asian. Today, one-third (33.4 percent) of U.S.-born older adults in the state are non-white, a share that has increased from 27.6 percent ten years ago.

The report, which was made possible with a grant from AARP, urges Governor Hochul and the Legislature—along with local officials in cities and counties across the state—to take new steps to combat the rise in poverty among older adults, boost support for older adult services, and plan for the aging of the state's population.

"Older adults are driving the population growth in every corner of New York. It's time for state leaders to make investments that keep pace with this new demographic reality and ensure that older New Yorkers are able to live healthy and financially secure lives," said Jonathan Bowles, Executive Director of the Center for an Urban Future.

"These numbers clearly show we must address the needs of the tremendously fast-growing population of older New Yorkers. The data should be a clarion call to the State to ensure older New Yorkers can afford to continue living here by receiving the benefits they qualify for, quality long term care and fairly priced prescription drugs," said AARP New York State Director Beth Finkel.

To read the report, along with data breakdowns for each of the state's major cities and counties, follow the link:Keeping Pace with an Aging New York State

The Center for an Urban Future is an independent think tank focused on creating a stronger and more equitable economy in New York and expanding economic opportunity for all New Yorkers.

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