



North Carolina is Aging!

- ◆ The state's total population has exceeded 10 million!
- ◆ North Carolina ranks 9th nationally in total population and 8th in the number of people 65 and older.
- ◆ In 2020, one in six North Carolinians were 65 and older. By 2031, there will be more people 65 and older than children 0-17.
- ◆ The state has more people 60 and older than under 18 years.
- ◆ In 2020, 85 counties in the state had more people 60 and older than under 18 years. By 2040, this number is expected to increase to 90 counties.
- ◆ In 2020, an estimated 44,660 people 60 and older migrated from other states and abroad to North Carolina.
- ◆ In the next two decades, our 65 and older population will increase from 1.7 to 2.7 million, a projected growth of 52%. The projected growth among the age groups 65-74 (25%), 75-84 (88%) and 85+ (116%) indicates that as the baby boomers continue to age, there will be an increased proportion of older adults in the state creating challenges for long-term services and supports.

NC Population Change 2020-2040

Age	2020		2040		% Change 2020-2040
	#	%	#	%	
Total	10,456,593		12,669,133		21%
0-17	2,259,727	22%	2,525,778	20%	12%
18-44	3,743,024	36%	4,388,693	35%	17%
45-59	2,047,398	20%	2,379,974	19%	16%
60+	2,406,444	23%	3,374,688	27%	40%
65+	1,760,844	17%	2,669,736	21%	52%
85+	193,247	2%	417,112	3%	116%

Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2020 & Projections Vintage 2040

Race and Ethnicity, 2020

Race/Ethnicity, age 65 and older	NC	US
White	78.9%	81.3%
Black or African American	16.8%	9.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.0%	0.6%
Asian	1.5%	4.5%
Some other race	1.0%	2.5%
Two or more races	0.9%	1.9%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	2.1%	8.4%

*As a % population 65 and older Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2016-2020, 5-year estimates

Social and Economic Characteristics of population, 2020

Characteristics, age 65 and older	NC	US
Living alone	26.9%	26.3%
Veterans	17.6%	17.0%
Speak English less than “very well”	2.3%	8.6%
Have a disability	34.5%	34.0%
Have less than high school education	15.1%	14.6%
Have high school, GED/Alternative education	30.4%	31.8%
In labor force	17.4%	18.4%
Income below poverty level	9.2%	9.3%
Income between 100%-199% of poverty level	21.8%	18.1%

*As a % of population 65 and older

Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020, 5-year estimates

- ◆ 43% of housing units with people 65 and older are single person households.
- ◆ Of the estimated 87,329 grandparents responsible for grandchildren under 18, 42% are age 60 and older.

Health Profile

- ◆ According to Alzheimer’s Association Facts and Figures, North Carolina currently (2020) has 180,000 adults 65 and older with **Alzheimer’s disease** and this number is projected to rise to 210,000 by 2025, an increase of 17%. Alzheimer’s disease is the fourth leading cause of death among people age 65 and older.
- ◆ Of the **people 65 and older**, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, 2020:
 - 81% had one or more chronic diseases;
 - 12% reported one fall and 19% reported 2 or more falls;
 - 75% had an adult flu shot/spray in the past 12 months and 73% had a pneumonia shot ever;
 - Only 8% self-reported that their health is poor and 70% reported exercising in the past 30 days.

Rank	Leading causes of death, age 65 and older, 2020	Number of deaths	% of Total deaths
1	Diseases of the heart	15,853	20%
2	Cancer	14,541	18%
3	COVID-19	6,549	8%
4	Cerebrovascular disease	4,884	6%
5	Alzheimer’s disease	4,681	6%
6	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	4,272	6%

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

Type of disability, age 65 and older, 2020	% with a disability
Ambulatory	22%
Independent living	14%
Hearing	14%
Cognitive	9%
Self-care	7%
Vision	7%

Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020, 5-year estimates

Given the potential social and economic impact of this unprecedented growth in the aging population, it is critical that NC focus efforts to improve those social determinants of health shown to have a direct positive effect on the health and well-being of individuals that promote aging within the community and postpone or avoid the necessity for long-term care.

References:

NC Office of State Budget and Management, Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2020; Population Projections, Vintage 2040, <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics>
 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020, one-year experimental data estimates. Table XK20014: Population by Age. [2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data Tables \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/acs/1-year-experimental-data.html)
 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016-2020, 5-year estimates. Tables S0103, B10056, B09029, S1810.
 NC State Center for health Statistics. <https://schs.dph.ncdhs.gov/>

NOTE: Due to pandemic-related data collection disruptions, the Census Bureau revised its methodology to reduce nonresponse bias in 2020, ACS five-year estimates data. With estimates and projections, the state demographer utilized a blended base of information that relies on much of the detailed characteristics data from the 2010 census – while maintaining the population totals reported from the 2020 Census.