

# Fact Sheet



IWPR #D476

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## The Economic Security of Older Women and Men in North Carolina

### **Social Security is a crucial source of income for North Carolina's seniors, and especially so for women.**

- More than 9 of 10 men and women aged 65 or older receive Social Security benefits (Table 2).
- For women, Social Security is the majority of their retirement income (55 percent; Figure 3).

### **Fewer women than men have pension income.**

- Only 1 in 4 North Carolina women receive income from pensions (compared with 40 percent of men).
- For those who have pensions, the typical woman receives less than half as much as the typical man (\$5,755 vs. \$12,312; Table 2). Comparing all women and men (those with and without pensions) women's pension income is only little over one-third of men's (Figure 3).

### **The majority of North Carolina's senior women live alone.**

- 58 percent are not currently married; they are widowed, divorced or never married.
- 57 percent of older white women (247,700) and 64 percent of older African American women (64,000) are not married (Table 1).

### **Many seniors in North Carolina continue to work for pay.**

- 15 percent of older women (83,600) and 22 percent of older men (85,100) in North Carolina work for pay (Table 2).
- Older men outearn older women (\$15,404 for men and \$10,290 for women annually).

### **Women are more likely than men to be poor or disabled.**

- More older women (30,700) than older men (7,600) report that they receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) government assistance.
- Older women are over twice as likely as men to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) government assistance (5.5 percent vs. 2.0 percent; Table 2).

### **Older African American and Hispanic women are the most likely to be poor and the least likely to have income from assets such as savings accounts or stocks and bonds.**

- Almost 1 in 4 older African American women in North Carolina is poor (23 percent), compared with only 1 in 14 older white men (7 percent), as shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.
- Only 25 percent of African American women, compared with 61 percent of white men, have income from assets, and among those who have asset income, the typical African American woman receives less than one-fifth the amount the typical white man receives (\$239 per year vs. \$1,200 per year; Table 2).

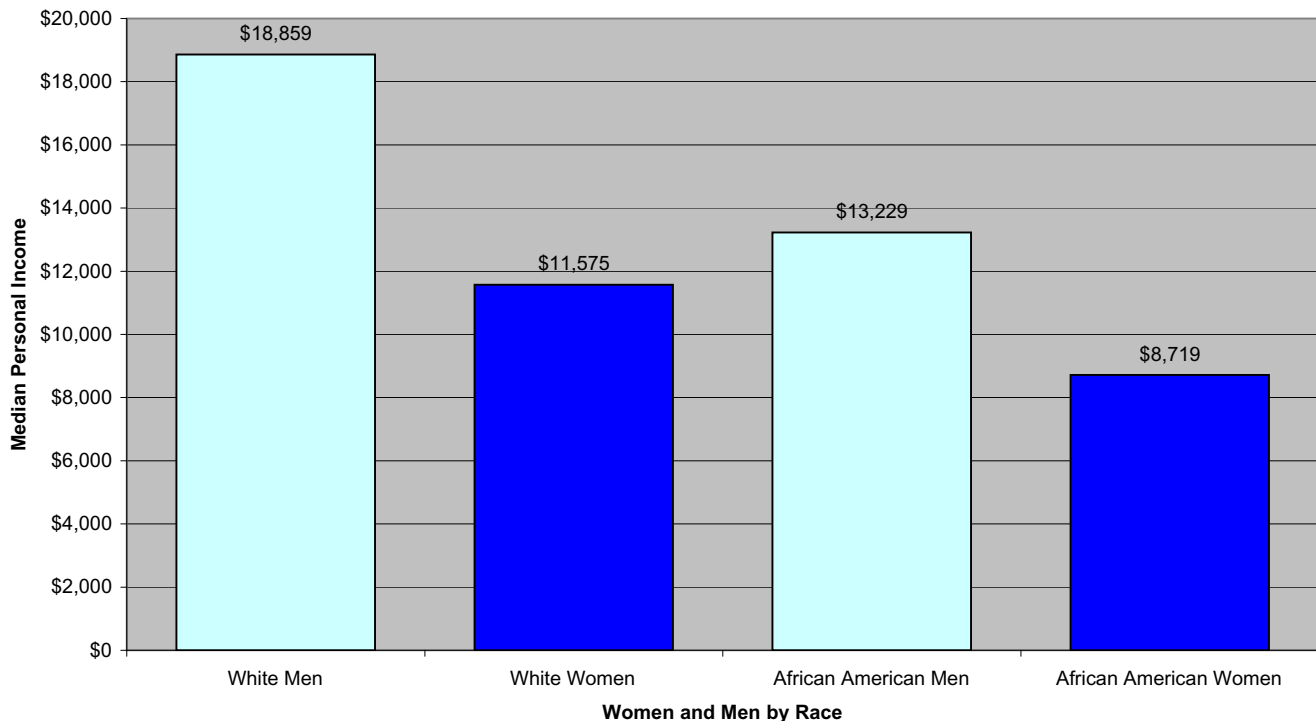
**Table 1. Characteristics of Older Women and Men by Race/Ethnicity  
(Aged 65 and Older) : North Carolina vs. United States**

<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>						
	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian American</b>	<b>All<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Total Population<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>WOMEN</b>						
Racial composition	79.8	17.2	0.8	0.4	100.0	557,486
Percent married	43.5	35.9	n/a <sup>3</sup>	n/a	41.8	233,029
Percent living in poverty	14.8	23.4	n/a	n/a	16.4	91,428
Median personal income <sup>4</sup>	\$11,575	\$8,719	n/a	n/a	\$10,999	
(Sample size)	(682)	(270)	(11)	(6)	(997)	
<b>MEN</b>						
Racial composition	79.7	16.3	0.7	1.3	100.0	381,485
Percent married	77.2	66.1	n/a	n/a	75.1	286,495
Percent living in poverty	7.1	17.0	n/a	n/a	10.4	39,674
Median personal income	\$18,859	\$13,229	n/a	n/a	\$17,057	
(Sample size)	(501)	(187)	(9)	(12)	(732)	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>						
	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian American</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
<b>WOMEN</b>						
Racial composition	81.5	8.7	5.9	2.9	100.0	20,062,666
Percent married	44.7	26.3	39.6	48.1	42.8	8,586,821
Percent living in poverty	10.0	27.2	22.3	11.8	12.3	2,467,708
Median personal income	\$12,407	\$9,350	\$7,703	\$8,604	\$11,671	
<b>MEN</b>						
Racial composition	82.5	7.5	6.0	3.1	100.0	15,146,792
Percent married	75.4	59.0	70.3	78.9	73.8	11,178,333
Percent living in poverty	5.3	17.3	17.6	11.4	7.3	1,105,716
Median personal income	\$21,958	\$13,860	\$12,000	\$14,046	\$20,420	

**Source:** IWPR calculations based on the Census Bureau’s March Current Population Survey, 2002-2005.

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>Statistics for “All” include Native Americans, others, and those with two or more races. <sup>2</sup>“Total Population” refers to population estimates for the population aged 65 and older calculated by IWPR using DataFerrett at the Census Bureau website based on the 2005 March Current Population Survey. <sup>3</sup>N/A indicates a sample size smaller than 30. <sup>4</sup>Income data are for calendar years 2001-2004 in 2004 constant dollars.

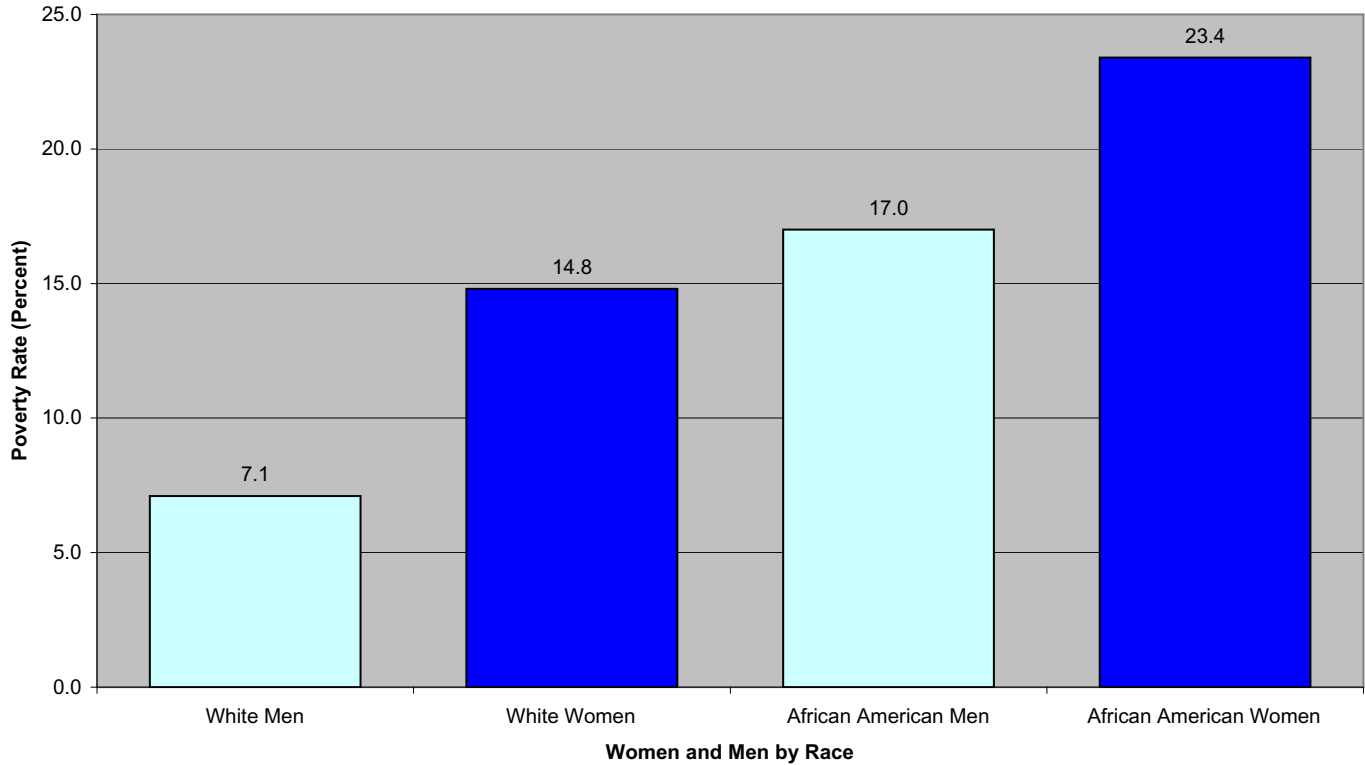
**Figure 1. Median Annual Personal Income in North Carolina for Older Women and Men by Race (Aged 65 and Older)**



**Source:** IWPR calculations based on the Census Bureau’s March Current Population Survey, 2002-2005.

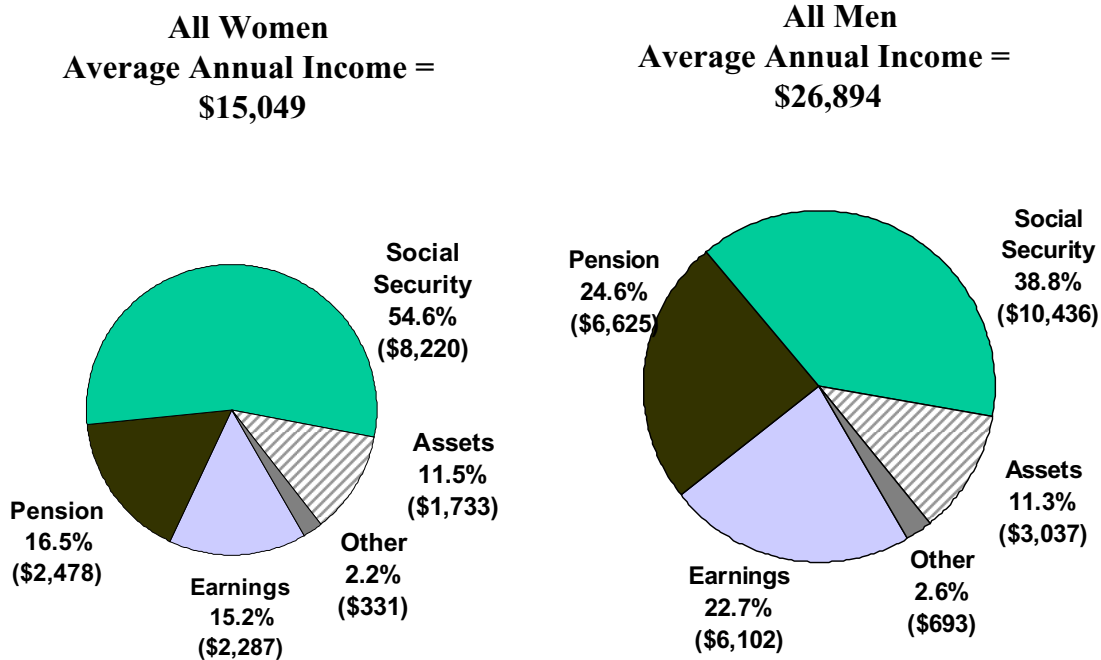
**Note:** Income data are for calendar years 2001-2004 in 2004 constant dollars.

**Figure 2. Poverty Rates in North Carolina for Older Women and Men by Race (Aged 65 and Older)**



Source: IWPR calculations based on the Census Bureau’s March Current Population Survey, 2002-2005.

**Figure 3. North Carolina: Sources of Income for Women and Men Aged 65+**



Source: IWPR calculations based on the March Current Population Survey, 2002-2005.

Note: Benefits, income, and earnings data are for calendar years 2001-2004 in 2004 constant dollars. Percentages are calculated based on average annual incomes for each source including zero values. Average amounts for each source are in parentheses. Average (or mean) amounts are typically higher than median amounts (the amount received by the person in the middle of the income distribution, which are shown elsewhere) because those at the high end of the income distribution often have very high incomes that raise the mean above the median.

**Table 2. North Carolina: Overview of Retirement Income Security by Race (Aged 65 and older)**

<b>WOMEN</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>All<sup>1</sup></b>
Total Population <sup>2</sup>	438,466	99,808	557,486
<b>Social Security</b>			
Percent receiving	92.8	89.5	91.8
Median annual benefit received <sup>3,4</sup>	\$8,743	\$7,308	\$8,323
<b>Pension</b>			
Percent receiving	26.9	23.5	26.1
Median annual pension received	\$5,472	\$6,300	\$5,755
<b>Assets</b>			
Percent receiving	51.8	25.0	46.2
Median annual income received	\$800	\$239	\$720
<b>Earnings</b>			
Percent employed	14.9	17.6	15.0
Median annual earnings received	\$11,286	\$7,800	\$10,290
<b>SSI</b>			
Percent receiving	3.4	14.2	5.5
Median annual benefit received	n/a <sup>5</sup>	\$1,860	\$1,344
<b>MEN</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>All</b>
Total Population	306,069	51,266	381,485
<b>Social Security</b>			
Percent receiving	91.1	90.4	89.8
Median annual benefit received	\$11,815	\$10,067	\$11,524
<b>Pension</b>			
Percent receiving	42.4	36.3	40.2
Median annual pension received	\$12,600	\$12,312	\$12,312
<b>Assets</b>			
Percent receiving	60.7	27.0	53.7
Median annual income received	\$1,200	\$208	\$846
<b>Earnings</b>			
Percent employed	22.9	19.4	22.3
Median annual earnings received	\$16,005	\$12,804	\$15,404
<b>SSI</b>			
Percent receiving	0.9	6.7	2.0
Median annual benefit received	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Source:** IWPR calculations based on the Census Bureau’s March Current Population Survey, 2002-2005

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>Statistics for “All” includes Native Americans, others, and those with two or more races. <sup>2</sup> “Total Population” refers to population estimates for the population aged 65 and older calculated by IWPR using DataFerrett at the Census Bureau website based on the 2005 March Current Population Survey. <sup>3</sup>Benefits, income, and earnings data are for calendar years 2001-2004 in 2004 constant dollars. <sup>4</sup>Median annual amounts are calculated only among people who received income from each source, excluding zero values in the calculation. <sup>5</sup>N/A indicates a sample size smaller than 30.

*This fact sheet is based on research conducted by Sunhwa Lee and was written by Tori Finkle, Heidi Hartmann, Sunhwa Lee and Barbara Gault. IWPR is grateful to the AARP and the Ford Foundation for supporting both the production and dissemination of this research.*

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