

# MINORITY WOMEN AND RETIREMENT INCOME



## Your Future Paycheck<sup>®</sup>

***Earnings, Social Security, Retirement Plans,  
Savings and Investments***

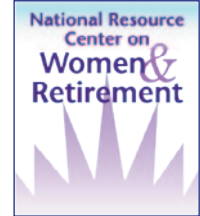
2021



*WISER's mission is to improve the long-term financial security of all women through education and advocacy. WISER supports women's opportunities to secure adequate retirement income through research, workshops, and partnerships.*

## The National Resource Center on Women and Retirement

The National Resource Center on Women & Retirement (the Center) is a cooperative partnership between the Administration on Aging and the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER®). WISER operates the Center as a national clearinghouse of tools and information on retirement planning. The goal of the Center is to provide financial workshops and create a variety of consumer publications that explain in easy-to-understand language the complex issues surrounding Social Security, Medicare, retirement plans, savings, caregiving, divorce and widowhood, health and long-term care, and elder financial abuse.



The Center reaches and assists women and their families – especially moderate and low-income women, women of color and women of limited English-speaking proficiency – to advance their decision-making capacity and improve their economic security later in life. The Center partners with employers, women's organizations, community-based groups, and government agencies that have included the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Treasury.

## Acknowledgements

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*Minority Women & Retirement Income* includes data specific to minority women when the data is available. When data is not available, the report uses data on all women or all members of a race or ethnic group.

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### *Earnings, Social Security, Retirement Plans, Savings and Investments*

INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Challenges for Minority Women – A Higher Risk of Poverty .....	1
MINORITY WOMEN AND THE THREE LEGS OF THE RETIREMENT INCOME STOOL .....	2
A Future Paycheck .....	2
Social Security — The First Leg of the Stool .....	2
Workplace Retirement and Pension Plans — The Second Leg of the Stool .....	3
Individual Savings and Investments — The Third Leg of the Stool .....	5
CONCLUSION.....	7
Financial Education.....	8
Financial Education Reforms.....	9
Policy reforms .....	9
STEPS WOMEN CAN TAKE.....	10
RESOURCES .....	12
Nonprofit Resources .....	12
Government Agencies and Retirement Resources.....	13

## The Story is in the Numbers

Despite the overall decline in poverty rates among older Americans during the last several decades, many older women remain poor.

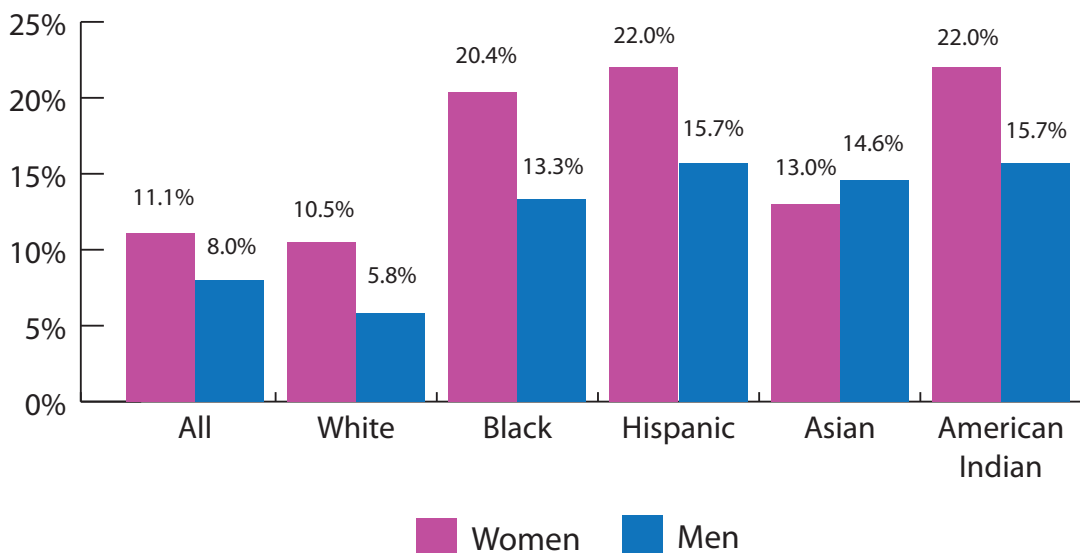
Pay inequity contributes significantly to this outcome.

Figure 1: What Women Earn

Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time Year-Round Workers Age 15 Years and Older by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity, 2019		
Race/Ethnicity	Women	Men
All	\$47,299	\$57,456
White	\$51,324	\$65,208
Black	\$41,098	\$45,644
Asian	\$56,807	\$75,671
Hispanic/Latino	\$36,110	\$41,519

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement 2019.

Figure 2: Poverty Rates Among Minority Women and Men, Age 65+



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement 2018.

# INTRODUCTION

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## The Challenges for Minority Women – A Higher Risk of Poverty

*In 2018 the poverty rate for older Black women living alone was 31.3%, and for Hispanic women it was 43%—a rate more than twice that of the 16.4% for White women.*

Retirement planning is important for everyone, but it's especially important for minority women. Despite the overall decline in poverty rates among older Americans during the last several decades, many older women remain poor. In 2018, the poverty threshold for an individual age 65 and older living alone was \$12,043. More than 11% of women age 65 and older fell below that threshold, in contrast to 8.1% of men the same age.

Even if she is not poor when she first retires, the likelihood of being poor increases with her age. In 2018, 13.2% of women age 75 and older fell below poverty compared to 8.8% of men the same age. The poverty rates for older women of color are even higher. In 2018 the rate for older Black women living alone was 31.3%, and for Hispanic women it was 43%—a rate more than twice that of the 16.4% for White women. In 2018, among women 65 and older who lived alone, Hispanic women were the most likely to live in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

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## Women and Pay Equity

**Women earn 82 cents for every dollar White Males earn.**

**Hispanic Women: 55.4 cents**

**Black Women: 63 cents**

**Women may reach pay equality in 39 years (2059)**

**White women: 2055 (34 years)**

**Black women: 2119 (99 years)**

**Hispanic women: 2224 (204 years)**

*Full-time working women earn less than their male counterparts.*

Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Gender Wage Gap: 2017; Earnings Differences by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity", 2019.

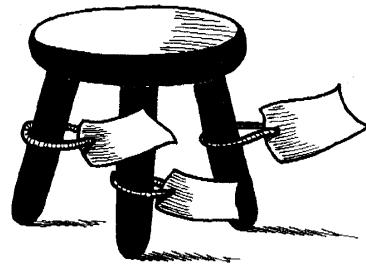
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<sup>1</sup> (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement 2019). POV-01\_100\_1 (6).

# MINORITY WOMEN AND THE THREE LEGS OF THE RETIREMENT INCOME STOOL

## A Future Paycheck

From a practical point of view, all of the income from Social Security benefits, employer retirement savings plans and pensions, and personal savings and investments can be looked at as a “future paycheck.” Experts often refer to these three sources of retirement income as the “three-legged stool.” The idea is that if an individual receives adequate income from each of the three legs of the stool, she will be secure in retirement. If one of the legs of the stool is missing or is not financially sound, the stool wobbles and will be unable to support an adequate retirement.



## Social Security—the First Leg of the Stool

Today, Social Security benefits are the most important source of income for older women, more than 90% of whom receive benefits as a worker, spouse, divorced spouse, survivor, or divorced survivor. Women represent 55% of all Social Security beneficiaries age 62 and older, and approximately 64% of all beneficiaries age 85 and older.<sup>2</sup> The reality is that for many women, Social Security is their main or only source of retirement income. The average monthly Social Security retirement benefit received by women age 62 and older in 2018 was \$1,297, compared to \$1,627 for men.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2: Social Security Keeps Older Americans Out of Poverty by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Above Poverty	Kept Out of Poverty by Social Security	Below Poverty
Black	Male	52.6%	16.2%	31.2%
	Female	47.0%	21.1%	31.9%
Asian	Male	68.2%	12.6%	19.1%
	Female	64.3%	16.1%	19.6%
Hispanic	Male	54.8%	16.2%	29.1%
	Female	52.2%	19.6%	28.3%
White	Male	65.6%	5.3%	29.2%
	Female	54.9%	9.9%	35.1%

Source: AARP tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," March 2015.

2 U.S. Social Security Administration, <http://www.ssa.gov/oact/progdata/byage.html> June 2019.

3 Social Security benefits can be started as early as age 62, however those benefits will be reduced based on the applicants full retirement age.

Social Security comprised nearly half (45%) of the total income of unmarried women, including widows age 65 and older. In contrast, Social Security comprised only 32% of unmarried older men's income and only 27% of older couples' income. In 2017, almost half (48%) of all unmarried females, over age 65 receiving Social Security benefits relied on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.<sup>4</sup>

*In 2017, almost half (48%) of all unmarried females, over age 65 receiving Social Security benefits relied on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.*

Minority women in particular rely on Social Security. For older Black women living in families receiving Social Security, nearly 4 in 10 (37.9%) rely on Social Security for nearly all of their income. Among older Hispanic women in beneficiary families, almost 1 in 3 (31.3%) relies on Social Security for nearly all of their income.<sup>5</sup> While these benefits are modest, they keep many women out of poverty.

Broadly speaking, Social Security is gender neutral. Women and men with identical work histories and earnings can expect to receive the same benefits. But different employment patterns of women and men create a gender gap in benefits. In 2018, the average monthly Social Security benefit for retired women workers was \$1,246 (\$14,952 annually), more than 20% less than the \$1,568 monthly average (\$18,816 annually) received by men.<sup>6</sup> The average Social Security benefits were \$13,426 for Black women, \$12,809 for Asian American-Pacific Islander women and \$12,260 for Hispanic women.

Single women, in general, rely on Social Security benefits more than married women. And, single

minority women, including widowed, divorced, and never married women, receive smaller benefits than comparable White women.<sup>7</sup> Social Security Administration data show the median Social Security benefit for single women age 65 and older is \$1,016 a month. The median benefit for single Black women is \$961, for single Hispanic women \$723, and \$870 for all women.<sup>8</sup>

## Workplace Retirement and Pension Plans—the Second Leg of the Stool

This second leg includes both traditional defined benefit plans that are funded and administered through an employer, and defined contribution plans, such as 401(k)s, and 403(b)s to which employees and often employers contribute. The benefit is dependent upon the amount of contributions and performance of the investments. After Social Security, workplace retirement plans provide the next largest source of retirement income for women. However, less than half (49%) of all working people are covered by a private pension.

A much smaller portion of all women over age 65 than all men of the same age receive any income from a pension when they retire. In 2018, 40% of White women over age 65 received income from a non-government pension or retirement account while only 34% of Black women, 27% of Asian women, and 19% of Hispanic women received income from the same sources.<sup>9</sup> For the less than

4 <http://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/women-alt.pdf>

5 AARP Public Policy Institute: James Palmieri, *Social Security: A Lifeline for Older Women and Minorities*. August 2018

6 U.S. Social Security Administration, Annual Statistical Supplement August 2018.

7 <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2018/08/social-security-a-lifeline-for-older-women-and-minorities.pdf>

8 <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2018/index.html>

9 US Census ASES PINC-09



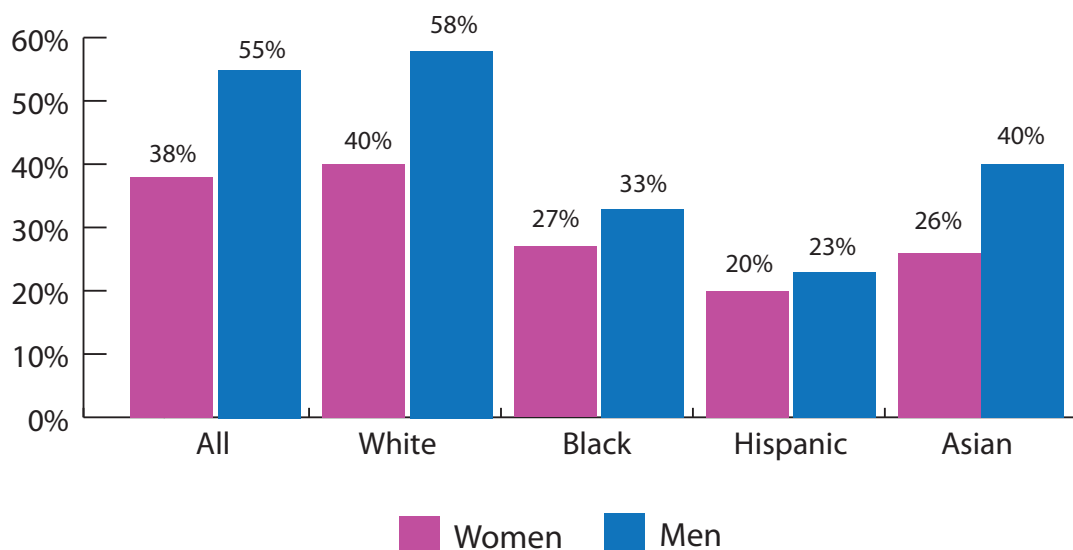
40% of women age 65 and older who receive pension income, the median annual pension amount in 2018 was \$11,522. In contrast 55% of comparable men received an annual income from a pension or retirement account of \$17, 983.<sup>10</sup>

The likelihood of working for an employer who offers a retirement plan increases with jobs paying higher wages, offering full-time work status, or having union membership. Large firms or government entities generally provide those benefits. However, minority workers are less likely to work for an employer that sponsors a retirement plan and are also less likely to participate in a retirement plan when one is offered. Hispanic women workers have a significantly lower pension participation rate than

both White and Black women workers. A 2016 study shows that among women age 25 to 64 who are working full time, 38% of Hispanic, 57% of White, and 50% of Black women participated in workplace retirement retirement plans.<sup>11</sup> Lower average earnings and lower rates of full-time work can account in large part for lower participation rates because these workers have less to contribute to a plan. While, over time, women’s plan participation has improved relative to men’s, women continue to contribute to their defined contribution plans at lower levels.<sup>12</sup>

**Cashing out of a retirement plan when you leave a job.**<sup>13</sup> Close to 45% of workers cash out their retirement plan accounts when they leave a job and those

**Figure 3: Percentage of Men and Women Age 65+ Receiving Income from a Pension or Retirement Savings Account**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement 2018.

10 <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-08.html>

11 [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/86526/hispanic\\_retirement\\_security\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/86526/hispanic_retirement_security_1.pdf)

12 GAO-18-111SP p.50.

13 When an employee with withdrawal rights takes out some or all of the accumulated funds in her pension or retirement plan upon leaving an employer, it is called “cashing out.”



cash outs are disproportionately from lower balance accounts and lower wage earners.<sup>14</sup> While it can be tempting to withdraw the cash and spend it, taking the cash out of a retirement plan when changing jobs or retiring from work can have significant financial consequences—especially for women.<sup>15</sup> Cashing out before age 59½ harms long-term retirement security in several ways. If cash out money is taken directly as a check from the plan, there will be an automatic 20% income tax deduction; plus, there is a 10% early withdrawal penalty when income tax returns are filed. In addition to paying taxes and penalties at the time of cash out, the loss of compound interest can be significant. For example, if an individual cashes out \$5,000 at age 30, the lost compounded value by age 65 could be nearly \$55,000 and by age 85 close to \$95,000.<sup>16</sup> Research shows that gender, race and Hispanic origin are factors in cashing out. As many as 75% of Hispanic women cashed out compared with 38% of White women and 23% of Black women. Additionally, Hispanic women cash out at a much higher rate than Hispanic men (8%) and their White and Black counterparts (4% and less than 1% respectively).<sup>17</sup>

*Women in general have lower earnings over their work lives and Black and Hispanic women in particular earn less over their lifetimes.*

especially minority women to benefit from individual savings and investments.

**Lower Earnings.** Black and Hispanic women report their lower earnings often leave them with few resources to invest. The U.S. Census Bureau found that women in general have lower earnings over their work lives and Black and Hispanic women in particular earn less over their lifetimes. With lower earnings, women have less of an opportunity to save.

**Figure 4: Women’s and Men’s Median Retirement Income<sup>18</sup>**

	Individuals (Living Alone)	Householders*
Men	\$29,665	\$31,527
Women	\$23,114	\$23,975
White (Non-Hispanic) Women	\$24,236	\$30,005
Black Women	\$17,843	\$17,380
Hispanic Women	\$13,409	\$17,705

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “2018 Current Population Survey” HINC-02

\* “Householder” is a category used by Census to mean the person, or one of the people in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented. There are two types of householders: a family householder is a householder living with one or more people related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption; a nonfamily householder is a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only.

## Individual Savings and Investments — the Third Leg of the Stool

Saving for retirement beyond any employer’s pension plan is important—especially for women. However, it remains difficult for women and

14 Hewitt News Release Archive, “Hewitt Study Shows Nearly Half of US Employees Cash Out Their 401(k) Accounts When Leaving Their Jobs.” Oct. 28, 2009.

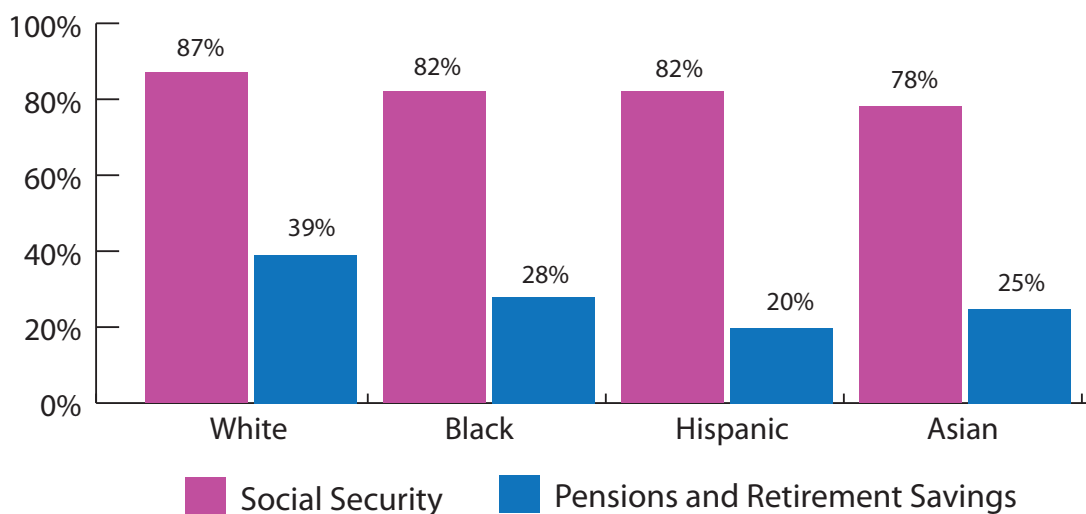
15 Defined benefit plans are less likely to have a cash-out option, while defined contribution plans often do. Individual retirement plans such as IRAs are controlled by the individual and generally can be cashed out.

16 This example from the Hewitt study assumes a 7% return through age 65. Hewitt News Release Archive, “Hewitt Study Shows Nearly Half of US Employees Cash Out Their 401(k) Accounts When Leaving Their Jobs.” Oct. 28, 2009.

17 [https://latinostudies.nd.edu/assets/190590/fullsize/richmansignificance\\_of\\_gender.pdf](https://latinostudies.nd.edu/assets/190590/fullsize/richmansignificance_of_gender.pdf) Table 12.

18 Retirement income includes pension from company or union, federal government retirement, military retirement, state and local retirement, railroad retirement, annuities, and retirement accounts such as 401(k), 403(b), IRA and SEPs.

**Figure 5: Percentage of Women Age 65+ with Income from Social Security, Pensions and Retirement Savings<sup>19</sup>**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement 2018.

**Unbanked or underbanked.** Almost 9 million households in the U.S. are “unbanked.” That is, they do not have a bank account and use other financial services such as check-cashing services, payday loans, or money orders. Additionally, it is estimated that 21 million households are “underbanked.” This means they have a checking or savings account at a financial institution but rely on other financial services in their daily lives. Of the unbanked and underbanked households, minorities are especially prominent. Of Black households, 1 in 5 is unbanked and 1 in 3 is underbanked. In Hispanic households 1 in 6 is unbanked and 3 in 10 are underbanked.<sup>20</sup> Reasons often cited are high fees and excessive costs to maintain the minimum balance required by banking institutions. There is also a general sense of mistrust in and lack of information on community banking services and programs.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** is a federal safety net program.<sup>21</sup> While it is not one of the designated three legs of the stool, it provides much needed income to older adults and people with disabilities who have little or no income or earnings. The maximum monthly federal SSI benefit in 2018 was \$750 and in 2019 was \$771. The average monthly federal benefit for individuals over age 65 in 2018 was \$446 and in 2019 was \$459. Some states and the District of Columbia provide additional cash benefits to supplement the federal benefit amount. In December 2018, the average supplement for those over age 65 was just over \$153. The average supplement amount remained the same in 2019.<sup>22</sup> In 2018, 28% of all SSI recipients were age 65 and older. Of those, 65% were women.<sup>23</sup>

19 Census CPS ASES. 2018, PINC-09

20 <https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/>

21 In general, the income limit for SSI was the federal benefit rate (FBR), which is \$771 per month for an individual and \$1,157 per month for a couple in 2019. Additionally, SSI recipients must have less than \$2,000 in assets, for a single person, and \$3,000 for a couple.

22 [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi\\_monthly/2019-09/table07.html](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_monthly/2019-09/table07.html)

23 [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast\\_facts/2019/fast\\_facts19.html](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2019/fast_facts19.html)

# CONCLUSION

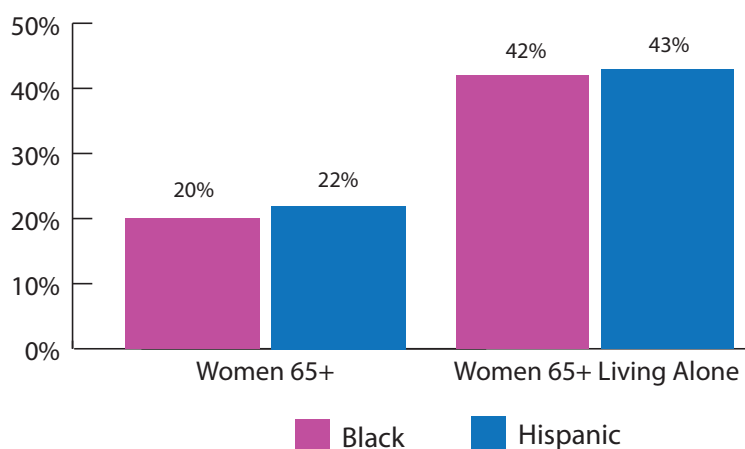
It is difficult to predict what the future holds for minority women retiring in the 21st century. Projections show that the older population is growing, and that minority women will comprise a larger percentage of the older population in the years ahead. In 2018, there were more than 52 million Americans aged 65 and over and more than 6.5 million aged 85 and over. The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to more than double by 2060 to 98 million, and the number of people aged 85 and over is expected to triple to 14.6 million.<sup>24</sup> Among the population age 65 and over, there are 78 men for every 100 women. At age 85, it's almost one man for every two women.<sup>25</sup>

*Unique financial challenges often mean that when women reach retirement, they will have less in income than men and more of them will be poor.*

Women's concern about their ability to maintain financial security in retirement is not unfounded. Their unique financial challenges often mean that when they reach retirement, they will have less in income than men and more of them will be poor. For all Black and Hispanic women 65 and older, the poverty rates are 20% and 22% respectively.

For Black and Hispanic women living alone, the poverty rates double to 42% and 43% respectively.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 6: Poverty Rates of Hispanic and Black Women Age 65+ Those Living Alone are More Likely to be Poor**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2018

Younger minority women who spend many years in the labor force, in jobs with higher pay will be most likely to be able to plan and save for a comfortable and financially secure old age. However, most women, regardless of race or ethnicity, will need to plan carefully just to deal with the risks of living longer which include the high cost of health care and the possibility of outliving what assets they have.

24 Administration for Community Living, "Profile of Older Americans", 2017.

25 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/AGE775218#AGE775218>

26 In contrast, poverty rates were lower at 8% for White, non-Hispanic women 65 and older, and 13% for Asian American women 65 and older. [https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov/pov-01.html#par\\_textimage\\_16](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov/pov-01.html#par_textimage_16) Census CPS ASES. 2018 POV-01

## Financial Education

*A study of high school students who had lessons in personal finance showed they had understanding of basic financial concepts and established good financial habits...*

It is well documented that financial literacy can be linked to retirement planning and wealth accumulation. Unfortunately, even though efforts to promote financial literacy have increased, most Americans fall short when it comes to financial knowledge.<sup>27</sup> A study of high school students who had lessons in personal finance showed they had understanding of basic financial concepts and established good financial habits such as creating a monthly budget and saving rather than spending.<sup>28</sup> Financial education in the workplace covering employment-based retirement plans has also been shown to be useful in helping workers understand how to make the most of these benefits. One study found that low-income workers attending a workplace retirement financial education program were 11.5% more likely to participate in 401(k) plans and save more for retirement than peers who elected not to attend the education initiative.

There is ample evidence that clear direct communication can provide people with the financial knowledge needed to enhance finances and also provide hope. What works is personalized communication and targeted content brought by “trusted messengers” to provide information that is relevant to individuals and serves their needs. One comprehensive study of the effect of financial education shows that many families reach retirement age with little or no assets, but the provision of financial education can dramatically increase both financial and total net worth, particularly for low-income families<sup>29</sup>. The study’s analysis of retirement seminars had this conclusion: attending seminars appears to increase financial wealth of participants by approximately 18%. For the lowest quartile, attending a retirement seminar increases wealth by close to 30%. Seminars affect mostly

### Vickie Elisa’s Story

In 2001, Vickie, a health care advocate for the Dekalb County, GA Board of Health, had a “whopping” amount of debt due to a bad divorce. To avoid slipping into poverty, she decided that the only option to become debt free was to work three jobs. Five years later, she had “retired” her debt and started to save money for her future. “I’d never want to go through that again,” she says.

Vickie wanted to utilize her own harrowing financial experience to make sure that other women, including family and friends, became aware of the impact of the grim statistics on older minority women. She decided to become a community educator and trainer for WISER and began to work with other nonprofit organizations and churches in order to teach more women how eliminating debt and saving could positively affect their future.

27 The FINRA study, “Financial Capability in the United States” reports the percentage of respondents who are able to answer at least 4 of 5 financial literacy quiz questions correctly shows a slight downward trend (from 42% in 2009 to 34% in 2019) despite the fact that Americans’ perceptions of their own financial knowledge have become more positive over the same time period.

28 <https://www.daveramsey.com/research/students-and-money?ictid=QXTGI4631>

29 Lusardi, A. (2008). *Planning and Financial Literacy: How Do Women Fare?* NBER Working Paper 13750

those with less than a high school education, increasing wealth by 27% for those with low education and at the bottom of the wealth distribution.

## Financial Education Reforms

While financial education can be a positive first step, especially for at-risk women, it alone will not solve the problem of older women living in poverty. Some additional actions are to:

- 📌 Provide information on the importance of Social Security and the benefits it offers.
- 📌 Provide information to help minority women understand the positive impact on their retirement of taking a job with a retirement plan.
- 📌 Provide minority women with better education in financial planning. This should include planning for contingencies such as death and divorce; the importance of saving regularly and enough; the importance of not withdrawing money from pension or savings too early; and the value of working as long as possible.

## Policy Reforms

Policymakers have the opportunity to make improvements that will provide low-income minority women with greater retirement income security.

- 📌 **Retirement Security & Savings Act:** Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) introduced the Retirement Security & Savings Act in May 2019. The bill includes two important provisions designed to help moderate-income workers; expansion of the Saver's Credit (short for Retirement Savings Contribution Credit) and the inclusion of millions of long-term part-time employees in their workplace retirement plans.
- 📌 Monitor Social Security legislative reform proposals to ensure that low-income women receive improved retirement benefits that are adequate to keep them out of poverty.
- 📌 Exclude retirement accounts from federal and state asset tests for program eligibility.
- 📌 Reexamine and improve the complicated Saver's Tax Credit and provide education for those who might be eligible.
- 📌 Strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and outreach for eligible persons.
- 📌 Consider the impact of various forms of insurance, including disability and life insurance, on retirement planning.
- 📌 Strengthen the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, as it is critical to disabled and very low-income individuals, including an estimated three million Latinos.
- 📌 Improve access to Older Americans Act program services and support by minorities.
- 📌 Strengthen and expand access to safety net programs, including public assistance and unemployment benefits, particularly during times of recession when needs are especially acute.
- 📌 Make public benefits culturally and linguistically accessible.
- 📌 Include Asian Americans in federal, state, and local equal opportunity programs, including minority contracting programs.
- 📌 Expand affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities for minority families.



# STEPS WOMEN CAN TAKE

## Know What You Have

- ❑ Get an estimate of your future Social Security benefit. Go to [ssa.gov/myaccount](https://ssa.gov/myaccount) to set up an online account and view your benefits statement. Get additional information from the Social Security Administration's website at [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov) and check out the section focused on women at [ssa.gov/women](https://ssa.gov/women). You can also call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 with your individual questions. The Social Security Administration provides interpreter services by telephone. Learn more at [ssa.gov/pgm/reach/htm](https://ssa.gov/pgm/reach/htm).
- ❑ If you've worked where a traditional pension plan was offered, contact the administrator (of current and former employers) to find out what benefit you are eligible to receive. If you are married, also ask your spouse to check.

## Develop a Plan

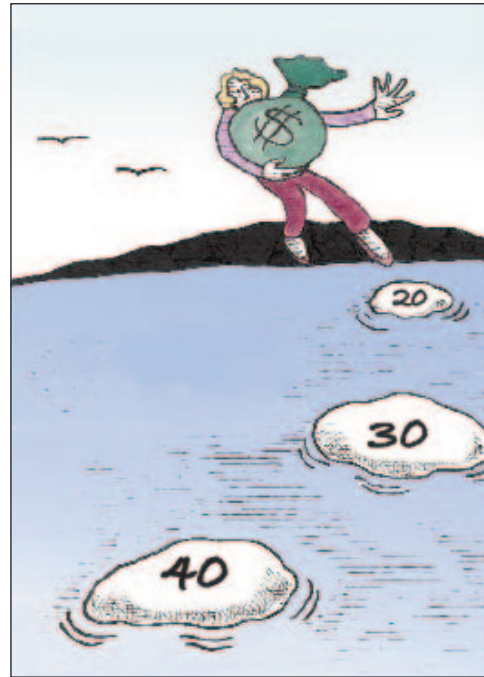
- ❑ Understand how you are spending your income. Develop a budget with a savings plan. Strive to set aside six months' worth of expenses as an emergency fund so unexpected events or health issues will not throw off your budget.
- ❑ Set up an account with a banking entity if you don't have one, and open a savings account; some only require \$5 to open. Then, automatically transfer even a small amount to it on a regular basis.
- ❑ Take control of credit card debt and build a good credit record. If you need help, contact the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) at (800) 388-2227 or en Español at (800) 682-9832. Visit NFCC's website at [nfcc.org](https://nfcc.org)



- ❑ If you have access to a 401(k) or similar retirement savings plan at work, enroll and contribute. If your employer offers a match, contribute at least enough to earn the match.
- ❑ Work toward making a \$20 a month automatic deduction from your paycheck or checking account into a savings account with a credit union, a mutual fund or start small and buy U.S. Savings Bonds – I Bonds. The sooner you start, the better! Investing early pays off because the interest compounds for more years.
- ❑ Set a goal such as building an emergency fund, paying down debt, savings for education, or buying a house. Then take the steps you need to reach your financial goal.

## Be Prepared for Life Events

- ☒ Before you leave a job, ask about the options for taking your retirement benefits with you. You could roll it into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or your new employer's plan and let it grow until retirement. Resist the urge to cash out money.
- ☒ If you are married, stay involved in the family budget and finances: you may be on your own someday and will need to understand how to take care of yourself.
- ☒ If facing divorce, find out about your spouse's pension before the divorce is finalized. You have a right to receive part of a pension earned during the marriage, but you must ask for it during the divorce proceedings.



## Consider Social Security Options

- ☒ Find out more about Social Security benefits before you claim them. Get answers at [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).
- ☒ Make sure you understand what your Social Security benefit will be at various ages and factor this into your decision as to when to retire. For example, if your full retirement age is 67 and you sign up early for Social Security at age 62, you would only get 70% of your full benefit.
- ☒ If you plan to continue working after starting to receive Social Security benefits, know the rules about how that will impact your benefit.
- ☒ Try to hold off on collecting your Social Security benefit as long as possible up to 70 to increase your monthly payment. You can increase the amount you receive by up to 8% each year if you delay taking benefits beyond your full retirement age. The increase applies from full retirement age to age 70.

## Resources for People with Limited Income

- ☒ Find out if you qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Child Tax Credit. Contact the IRS at (800) 829-1040, or go to [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and search for VITA or TCE. For free in-person tax help, locate the IRS website that best fits your situation:
  - VITA site if your income is less than \$50,000 or
  - Tax Counseling for the Elderly site if you are over age 60



# RESOURCES

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## Nonprofit Resources

### **AARP**

601 E St., NW  
Washington, DC 20049  
888.687.2277  
aarp.org

### **Institute for Women's Policy Research**

1200 18th St., NW, Ste. 301  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.785.5100  
iwpr.org  
iwpr@iwpr.org

### **MANA, A National Latina Organization**

1001 Connecticut Ave., NW  
Ste. 730  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.525.5113  
hermana.org  
mananational@hermana.org

### **National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI)**

1200 New Hampshire Ave., NW  
Ste. 830  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.452.8097  
nasi.org

### **National Alliance for Caregiving**

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW Ste.  
812  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.918.1013  
info@caregiving.org  
caregiving.org

### **National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc.**

1220 L St., NW, Ste. 800  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.637.8400  
ncba-aging.org

### **National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare**

10 G St., NE, Ste. 600  
Washington, DC 20002  
800.966.1935  
202.216.0420  
ncpssm.org  
webmaster@ncpssm.org

### **National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)**

A grassroots member organization that promotes access to basic banking services, affordable housing, entrepreneurship, and job creation to foster opportunities to build wealth.  
740 15th St., NW, Ste. 400  
Washington, DC 20306  
202.628.8866  
ncrc.org

### **National Council on Aging**

251 18th St. S, Ste. 500  
Arlington, VA 22202  
571.527.3900  
ncoa.org  
NCOA operates **Benefits Checkup**, a free service to help lower-income individuals see if they are eligible for a variety of benefit programs.  
benefitscheckup.org

### **National Council of Negro Women, Inc.**

633 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
202.737.0120  
ncnw.org  
membership@ncnw.org

### **Operation Hope**

Locations are listed at:  
operationhope.org.  
Call the Hotline:  
1.888.388.HOPE (4673)  
or register for virtual financial recovery coaching "Hope Inside Disaster COVID-19-Response"

### **Pension Help America**

Operates the Pension Counseling & Information Programs that provide free information and legal assistance. For additional information:  
1730 M Street NW, Ste. 1000  
Washington, DC 20036  
1-888-420-6550  
pensionhelp.org

### **Society for Financial Education & Professional Development, Inc. (SFE PD)**

1800 Diagonal Rd., Ste. 600  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703.920.3807  
info@sfepd.org  
sfepd.org

### **UNIDOS – US**

(formerly La Raza)  
Raul Yzaguirre Building  
1126 16th St., NW, Ste. 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.785.1670  
info@unidosus.org  
unidosus.org

## Government Agencies and Retirement Resources



### **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau**

855.411.2372

8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.  
180+ languages available.

Having a problem with a financial product or service? The CFPB helps consumers connect with financial companies to understand issues, fix errors, and get direct responses about problems.

Tell them about your issue and they will forward it to the company and work to get you a response, generally within 15 days.

**Submit a complaint online** to [consumerfinance.gov/complaint](https://consumerfinance.gov/complaint)

### **Mail a complaint**

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
PO Box 2900  
Clinton, IA 52733-2900

### **Mail all other correspondence**

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
1700 G St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20552  
[cfpb.gov](https://cfpb.gov)



### **US Department of Health and Human Services, US Administration on Aging/ Administration on Community Living**

Assists older adults and people with disabilities through services, research and education.

330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20201  
202.401.4634  
[Acl.gov](https://acl.gov) • [aoa.gov](https://aoa.gov)  
[Aclinfo@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:Aclinfo@acl.hhs.gov)



### **Eldercare Locator**

Public service of the US Administration on Aging connecting you to local, trusted services for older adults and their families.

1.800.677.1116  
[Eldercare.acl.gov](https://eldercare.acl.gov)  
[Eldercarelocator@n4a.org](mailto:Eldercarelocator@n4a.org)



### **National Center on Law & Elder Rights (NCLER)**

Provides the legal services and aging and disability communities with the tools and resources they need to serve older adults with the greatest economic and social needs.

<https://ncler.acl.gov/>



### **Social Security Administration**

For all information regarding Social Security

[ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov)  
1.800.772.1213

Create your personal mySocial Security Account where you can receive personalized estimates of future benefits based on your real earnings, see your latest Statement, and review your earnings history at [ssa.gov/myaccount](https://ssa.gov/myaccount)

Social Security Benefit calculator gives you a benefit amount based on your actual Social Security earnings record. [ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/estimator.html](https://ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/estimator.html)



**Employee Benefits  
Security Administration**

***U.S. Department of Labor,  
Employee Benefit Security Administration***

Provides assistance to workers, retirees, and their families covered by private retirement plans, health plans, employee benefit and welfare benefit plans.

200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210  
1.866.487.2365  
[dol.gov/ebsa](http://dol.gov/ebsa)



**Women's Bureau**

***U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau***

Develops policies and conducts inquiries to safeguard the interests of working women.

200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room S3002  
Washington, DC 20210  
1.800.827.5335  
[dol.gov/wb](http://dol.gov/wb)  
[Womens.bureau@dol.gov](mailto:Womens.bureau@dol.gov)



***Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)***

A U.S. Government Agency

PBGC is a federal government agency that protects the pension benefits of workers and retirees in traditional private-sector pension plans.

P.O. Box 151750  
Alexandria, VA 22315  
1.800.400.7242  
202.229.4047  
[pbgc.gov](http://pbgc.gov)

# WISER's Programs & Projects

*At the core of WISER's work is the direct impact we have on women in communities across the country. Every year, WISER reaches tens of thousands of women with our workshops, trainings, and resources.*

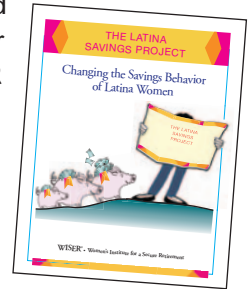
## Portable Benefits for Independent Workers

WISER and its Rural Retirement Project launched the **Benefit U Project** with independent workers and small business owners in West Virginia to help them overcome a major barrier to achieving financial security — a lack of employment-related benefits. The project combined financial education and fintech solutions. Benefit U sheds new light on barriers independent workers face in accessing financial, health and retirement benefits and offers insights into helping this growing sector of the workforce establish long-term financial security.



## Latina Financial Education and Training

For 20+ years, WISER has partnered with MANA – A National Latina Organization to educate Latinas and their families and provide the tools and resources they need to secure their financial futures. Each year, WISER conducts trains hundreds of MANA chapter leaders at MANA's Latina Leadership Institute. Together, WISER and MANA also operate the **Latina Savings Project** which is designed to encourage and facilitate savings among low- and moderate-income Latinas. The program's focus is on helping participants overcome barriers to saving, develop achievable savings goals, and open a savings account.



## WISER's Rural Retirement Project

WISER's West Virginia-based research and demonstration project brings innovative grassroots programs and initiatives to the parts of the U.S. where women have low rates of workforce participation, lower rates of savings and less access to financial education, resources and services. From 2012-2015, the **Rural Retirement Project** conducted the **Appalachian Savings Project** with self-employed childcare workers in Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia. The project showed that low- and moderate-income workers interested in saving can accumulate significant savings, especially when there is a low-dollar, easily accessible savings vehicle, combined with a matched incentive to save.

## iOme Challenge: Engaging College Students in Creating Retirement Solutions

The **iOme Challenge** engages younger generations in the process of finding solutions to the financial and retirement challenges facing all generations. This national student essay competition includes a monetary award to the winning team, as well as an invitation to present at WISER's annual forum to promote intergenerational dialogue.



## Improving Savings for Home Health Care Workers

WISER has developed the **Home Health Care Savings Program** to assist home health care workers in overcoming barriers to saving, develop achievable saving goals, begin the process for the emergency saving with a low-cost option and an incentivized match. WISER is partnering with **Healthcare Workers Rising**, a nonprofit organization working to support home care workers. Their members are mainly minority women earning low wages who lack essential benefits and have not had access to savings accounts.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

JOURNAL REPORTS: WEALTH MANAGEMENT

### When Only One Spouse Wants to Handle the Money

By Glenn Ruffenach, Columnist  
Dec. 15, 2019 10:00 am ET

I also would urge your wife to become familiar with the **Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement**. This Washington-based educational and advocacy group seeks to improve just that: the long-term financial quality of life for women. **Invaluable.**

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-only-one-spouse-wants-to-handle-the-money-11576422002>



Learn more information about WISER's programs & resources at [wiserwomen.org](http://wiserwomen.org)



1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Suite 730

Washington, DC 20036

202-393-5452 • fax: 202-393-5890

[wiserwomen.org](http://wiserwomen.org) • [info@wiserwomen.org](mailto:info@wiserwomen.org)