



# Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

January 24, 2012

## Pennsylvania's Oldest Baby Boomers Turn 65

PENN STATE HARRISBURG - The future is upon us. The leading edge of the baby boom cohort turned age 65 last January. They are among the first of the nearly 78 million Americans from the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) to reach their golden years. Distinguishable by the dramatic increase in birth rates and prosperity following World War II, the baby boomers are part of one of the largest and perhaps, most celebrated generations in U.S. history.

Its sheer size has always been the hallmark of the baby boom generation. Results from the 2010 Census indicated that Pennsylvania is home to more than 3.3 million baby boomers, accounting for 26.6 percent of the total population.<sup>1</sup> The Commonwealth ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among states in the proportion of baby boomers to the total population (see Table 1). Maine (29.4 percent) leads all states in the percent of boomers, followed by Vermont (29.3 percent) and New Hampshire (29.0 percent). Outside the Northeast, Montana (27.9 percent) had the largest percent of boomers, while Utah (18.7 percent) had the lowest of any state.

**Table 1. Baby Boomers as Percent of the Total Population, 2010**

Rank	State	Total Population	Baby Boomers (ages 46-64)	Baby Boomer, Percent
1	Maine	1,328,361	390,300	29.4%
2	Vermont	625,741	183,048	29.3%
3	New Hampshire	1,316,470	382,083	29.0%
4	Montana	989,415	275,595	27.9%
5	West Virginia	1,852,994	514,519	27.8%
6	Connecticut	3,574,097	960,827	26.9%
7	Wyoming	563,626	149,824	26.6%
<b>8</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>12,702,379</b>	<b>3,374,568</b>	26.6%
9	Michigan	9,883,640	2,617,426	26.5%
10	Rhode Island	1,052,567	276,607	26.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File-1

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Baby Boom Generation were between 46 and 64 years of age in 2010.



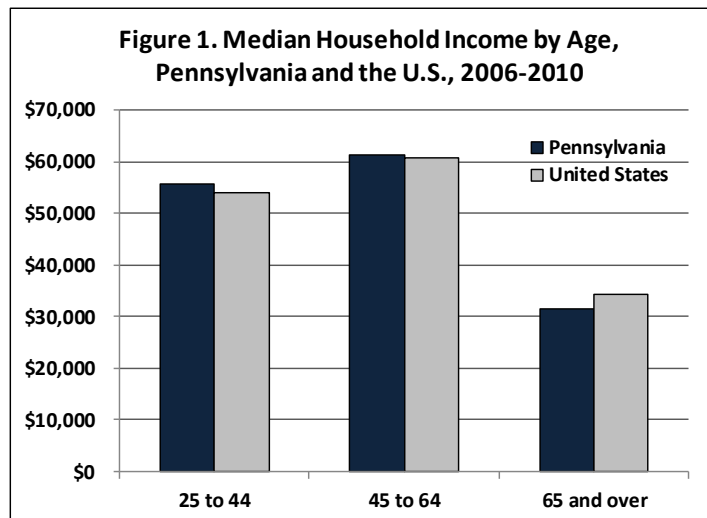
### **Pennsylvania Boomers by Race, and Ethnicity**

Pennsylvanians age 45 to 64 are less diverse than the state's overall population. Boomers were overwhelmingly White (86.8 percent compared to 82.6 percent overall). African-Americans made up 9.1 percent of boomers (10.8 percent overall), while Hispanics accounted for 3.1 percent of boomers and 5.7 percent overall.

### **Income and Poverty**

Boomers in Pennsylvania had a median household income of \$61,185, according to the Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey. That compares with about \$55,726 for adult's ages 25 to 44 and \$31,364 for those ages 65 and older. Nationally, Boomers had a median household income of \$60,683 in 2010 (see Figure 1).

In Pennsylvania, boomers also had lower rates of poverty (9.0 percent compared to 13.4 percent for the overall population) in 2010. Nationally, boomers had a poverty rate of 10.2 percent.



Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### **Other Characteristics of Pennsylvania Boomers**

A larger proportion of boomers earned a high school diploma than the population 18 years and over in Pennsylvania in 2010 (91.2 percent compared to 88.2 percent). Among age cohorts, fewer boomers went on to obtain a bachelor's or advance degree than adults age 25-44 (27.2 percent versus 33.3 percent). However, Pennsylvanians boomers were more likely to have attained a bachelor's degree or higher than Pennsylvanians age 65 and over in 2010 (27.2 percent compared to 17.0 percent.)

Pennsylvania boomers were more likely to be married than boomers nationally (63.2 percent compared to 61.7 percent nationwide) in 2010. Boomers in the Commonwealth were also less likely to be divorced (15.3 percent versus 17.7 percent). However, a higher percentage of Pennsylvania boomers were divorced (15.3 percent) than Pennsylvanians ages 25 to 44 (7.8 percent). The number of Pennsylvania boomers widowed was 128,855 in 2010, 3.6 percent of all boomers.

The baby boomer generation was more likely to remain in the same household in 2010. In Pennsylvania only 4.1 percent of the boomer population moved to a different household in the same county (compared to 8.5 percent for the rest of the population). An even lower rate of Pennsylvania boomers moved to a household in the same state but different county (1.2 percent versus 3.1 percent for the rest of population).

## The Present and Future

The age dependency ratio provides a rough approximation of economic dependency in a population. The old-age dependency ratio, which measures the number of people 65 and older to every 100 people of traditional working ages (20-to-64) in the population, further illustrates the Commonwealth's present age structure. In 2010, the old-age dependency ratio of Pennsylvania's population stood at 25.9%, shrinking from 27.0% in 2000. However, as the rest of the baby boomers attain elderly status over the next two decades, the age-composition of Pennsylvania's population will undergo a significant transition. Pennsylvania's old-age dependency ratio is projected to climb rapidly from 25.9 in 2010 to 42.4 by 2030. As a consequence, there will be relatively fewer people of traditional working age to support an increasing number of older Pennsylvanians. The greying of Pennsylvania will undoubtedly have far-reaching social and economic impacts.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's expert in demographics and Census datasets. To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Detailed Population Projections By age, Gender, Race and Hispanic Origin: Pennsylvania 2000 to 2030.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

**Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.**