



POVERTY AND THE ELDERLY FACT SHEET

- In California, the elderly population is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the total population and this growth will vary by region. The older people become, the more likely they are to become poor according to the University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center.
- As of July 1, 2007, there were 4 million persons over 65 living in California, the highest of any state. A March 2009 Public Policy Institute publication stated that 8% of these elderly California residents are living in poverty.
- According to the AARP Public Policy Institute, the elderly poor are both income and assets poor.
- More elderly poor are women and the very elderly women have higher poverty rates. In fact, women ages 75 and older are over three times likely to be in poverty than men of the same age. This may be due to the fact that females have longer life expectancy and outlive their spouses so are left without additional economic support.
- The elderly may have medical and physical conditions that limit their ability to work. Still others face ageism in the job market. 15% of people 65 and older were in the labor force in 2007.
- In 2006, the elderly poor spent 19.6% of their income on health care.
- Rural elderly have higher rates of poverty than elderly urban residents but rural communities have fewer resources such as transportation and housing according to the Brookings Institute.
- Many elderly people are food insecure and in need of nutrition-related assistance.
- Black and Hispanic elderly are disproportionately represented among all elderly poor.
- Over 70 % of the elderly poor 65 and older are unmarried (including the widowed).
- The majority of elderly poor obtain nearly 90% of their family income through Social Security and only 15% of elderly poor receive any type of cash assistance from either SSI or other welfare program.
- Many low income and poor elderly do not meet eligibility criteria for other non-cash safety net programs such as energy assistance, housing, and SNAP.
- The elderly poor are more likely to have less education than their peers.
- Immigrant elderly have high poverty rates.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA SOCIAL SERVICES
CONSORTIUM STATISTICS

The California Department of Finance has developed reports that project population growth in the state. Using their data the July 2010 projected population for persons aged 65 and older is as follows:

County	65+	Male	Female	White	Hispanic	Asian	PI	Black	AI	Multi
Calaveras	11,089	5,331	5,758	10,117	508	94	7	92	104	167
Fresno	92,657	40,484	52,173	55,151	24,075	8,182	74	3,270	808	1,097
Kern	75,240	33,368	41,872	50,620	15,398	3,725	65	3,226	877	1,329
Kings	12,018	5,354	6,664	7,132	3,297	619	17	629	155	169
Madera	19,302	9,017	10,285	13,284	4,630	337	20	450	302	279
Mariposa	4,178	2,040	2,138	3,769	178	40	1	11	99	80
Merced	24,288	10,526	13,762	14,878	6,549	1,431	39	811	183	397
San Joaquin	73,855	32,645	41,210	43,662	14,698	9,775	181	3,638	587	1,314
San Luis Obispo	43,191	19,229	23,962	37,933	3,156	918	25	364	268	527
Santa Barbara	55,406	24,338	31,068	41,472	9,745	2,213	86	1,097	346	447
Stanislaus	57,349	24,883	32,466	39,909	11,788	3,120	153	796	559	1,024
Tulare	43,471	19,202	24,269	27,711	12,288	1,798	26	510	492	646

Note: Pacific Islander (PI), American Indian (AI) and Multi Ethnicity (Multi)

A 2008 Central California Institute for Healthy Aging publication titled **Aging in the San Joaquin Valley** reported that Tulare and Fresno counties are ranked 7th and 8th among the California counties with the highest percentage of elderly poor. Further, the same two counties were ranked 5th and 6th for having the most seniors who qualified for both Medicare and Medi-Cal. The report stated that in 2005 there were about 53,000 older persons residing in the Central Valley who received SSI payments.

It is a fact that Social Security has helped reduce poverty among the elderly population; however, today people are living longer, living expenses are increasing, and the solvency of Social Security is of concern. Given the current economic crisis both locally and nationally, it is more than ever important to find ways to be creative in how to serve the elderly living in our communities. Organizations such as the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) advocate on behalf of the elderly and work towards improving the delivery system.