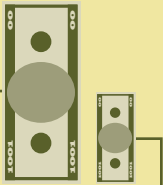




Economic Stability

\$2327

Monthly
Income of the
Economically
Stable



\$1215

Avg. Monthly
Social Security
Benefit in IN



67% of Older
Hoosiers Rely
on Soc. Sec. as
Their Primary
Source of
Income



600K

Potential
Number of
Economically
Insecure Older
Hoosiers

Sources:
National Council on
Aging, AARP, U.S.
Census Bureau

For many older Americans, the "Golden Years" are becoming tarnished. Rather than kicking back to enjoy the fruits of their labor, **today's seniors are increasingly struggling to make ends meet or scrimping to extend the life of their nest eggs.**

Many are one missed paycheck or medical crisis away from disaster. Women and minorities are particularly vulnerable.

A number of factors contribute to this strife. **More older adults rely solely on Social Security benefits for income each year.** This situation corresponds with increases in levels of senior debt, bankruptcy and foreclosure.

It also correlates with an increase of people aged 55+ in the workforce. **Today's older adults are experiencing a high unemployment rate, as well as nearly year-long searches for new work.**

On top of these income, debt and employment issues, **seniors face ever-climbing medical costs and, at times, are unable to meet their nutritional needs.**

All older adults and their families must plan to avoid these pitfalls. Even financially secure individuals may need help fighting financial abuse, budgeting for long-term care or managing day-to-day finances. **When it becomes clear that assistance is needed, seniors must know how to seek out, ask for and receive help.** This brief will equip readers with tools to aid in that process, thereby improving the odds that Indiana seniors will live long, happy, stable lives.

AGING ISSUES IN BRIEF JULY 2012

Definitions & Statistics 2

Programs & Best Practices 3

How to Help & Learn More 4

 Indiana Grantmakers
ALLIANCE
...advancing philanthropy
indianagrantomakers.org

 UNIVERSITY of
INDIANAPOLIS.
CENTER FOR AGING & COMMUNITY
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS
cac.uindy.edu

Economic Stability Definitions & Statistics

ECONOMIC STABILITY

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) defines economic security as living 250% above the federal poverty level. Today, individuals must earn in excess of \$27,925 per year, or roughly \$2,327 per month, to be economically secure. When this level of income is reached, it is more likely that basic needs will be met.

When deciding whether an older American is truly economically stable, her income and expenses, as well as her ability to overcome a crisis, should be considered. To determine financial fitness, NCOA recommends assessing:

- debt, especially outstanding credit card balances and medical bills;
- employment, including how easy finding new work would be in case of job loss;
- health, particularly prescription costs, disease management and nutrition; and
- housing, including the cost of shelter and the management of home equity.

If a senior reaches a point where support is necessary to remain economically stable, many programs, services and subsidies are available. In some cases older adults may be too proud or embarrassed to ask for help, and in many more they simply do not know where to start.

Related Concepts

- **Food Insecurity**
The U.S. Department of Agriculture labels households as food insecure when they are uncertain of having, or are unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all members due to insufficient money or other resources.
- **Housing-Cost Burden**
The U.S. Census Bureau defines 30% or more of income spent on housing costs as housing-cost burden. Forty-six percent of renters and 36% of homeowners fall into this unaffordable category.

272%

Amount bankruptcy filings rose among Americans age 55+, 1991-2007.

\$10,000+

Average credit card debt of older Americans. Most charges reflect daily living and medical costs.

38%

Percentage of Indiana adults age 55+ who work.

More than 1 in 4

Number of mortgages in delinquency or foreclosure owned by older Americans.

15%

Percentage of Medicare-recipient household incomes spent on medical expenses in the U.S.

2 out of 3

Number of older adults nationwide who are eligible for SNAP but have not enrolled.

\$3 Billion

Amount lost across the country by victims of elder financial abuse each year.

Sources: Consumer Bankruptcy Project, National Council on Aging, U.S. Department of Labor, AARP, Kaiser Family Foundation, MetLife Mature Market Institute

Economic Stability Programs & Best Practices

PROGRAMS

Click on any program in white to learn more.

To learn more about those in black, read this: *You Gave, Now Save: A Guide to Benefits Programs for Seniors.*

General Counseling & Support

BenefitsCheckUp

Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly and Disabled (CHOICE)

Eldercare Locator

OPTIONS—The Indiana Elder Affairs Network

Employment

Goodwill Job Training Programs

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Seniors Having Information about Tomorrow (SHIFT)

WorkSearch Information Network

Health

Extra Help (for prescriptions)

Medicare Savings Programs

State and Corporate Prescription Programs

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Housing

Foreclosure Mitigation

Home Energy Assistance Programs

Home Equity Advisor

Reverse Mortgage Programs

Money Management

AARP Money Management Program

Automatic Bill Payment Services

Credit Counseling

My Retirement Paycheck

Savvy Saving Seniors

Nutrition

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Senior Farmers Markets Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

BEST PRACTICES

Click on the title of any standout to learn more.

Economic Security Initiative

This National Council on Aging initiative includes one-on-one assistance, counseling, and follow-up for older adults as they find job training, assistance with health care and prescription drugs, housing and nutrition programs, and financial planning.

AARP Money Management Program

This program offers daily money management service to help low-income older or disabled people who have difficulty budgeting, paying routine bills, and keeping track of financial matters. Currently, this program is available in seven Indiana communities.

You Gave, Now Save

You Gave, Now Save is a campaign that aims to help low-income older adults meet their financial needs, primarily through a guide to benefits programs.

Elder Economic Security Initiative

This Wider Opportunities for Women initiative enables policy makers, aging advocates and others to develop policies and programs to help elders age in place with dignity while promoting their economic security. A key component of the initiative is the Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index, a measure of well-being that determines the income and supports needed for older adults to meet their basic needs.

Economic Stability: How to Help & Learn More

Analyzing Economic Stability Proposals

Does this request address one of the pillars of economic stability: employment, health, housing, money management and nutrition?

Will it simplify the benefit search, application and/or enrollment processes?

Does it ease the burden of day-to-day money management or reduce the risk of financial hardship caused by inattention to financial matters?

Will it help prevent elder financial abuse?

HOW TO HELP

- Organize a One Away campaign or National Council on Aging event in your community
- Encourage and/or require inter-organizational cooperation to fuel comprehensive stability services
- Increase awareness of benefits availability through the promotion of the BenefitsCheckUp website and the You Gave, Now Save benefits guide
- Talk to local financial institutions about increasing older adults' awareness of and access to automated bill-pay, which may include designating someone to help customers set up these payment channels
- Replicate best practice programs across our state

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click on any of the resources below for more.

Articles & Reports

- "A Blueprint for Increasing the Economic Security of Older Adults: Recommendations for the Older Americans Act", National Council on Aging
- AARP Indiana Fact Sheets
- "Economic Security Initiative: Outcomes and Successes from a Promising Pilot", National Council on Aging
- National Council on Aging Fact Sheets
- "National Elder Economic Security Initiative", Wider Opportunities for Women
- "NCOA Awarded Grant to Provide EconomicCheckUp for Vulnerable Older Adults"

Campaigns

- One Away
- You Gave, Now Save

Organizations

- AARP
- Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
- Grantmakers in Aging (GIA)
- National Able Network
- National Council on Aging (NCOA)
- Society of Certified Senior Advisors (SCSA)
- Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)

Still Have Questions?

**Ask the Experts at the
University of Indianapolis
Center for Aging & Community
at emiller@indy.edu.**