



SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

SENIORS IN SUMMIT COUNTY, 2026



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POPULATION HEALTH VITAL STATISTICS DATA BRIEF, FEBRUARY 2026

The *Population Health Vital Statistics Data Brief* series was created to provide regular updates to the Community Health Assessment and to provide the community with additional important information about population health. For more information on the Community Health Assessment and to access other reports in the *Vital Statistics Data Brief* series, please visit scph.org/assessments-reports



Public Health
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SENIORS



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Summit County was home to approximately 109,000 seniors, defined here as people age 65 or older in 2023. Those 109,000 people accounted for 20% of Summit County's population on average during the past 5 years. Due to the aging of the Baby Boom generation, the percentage of seniors is expected to continue rising sharply in the coming years.

Senior Population Projections -- Estimates of the 65 and older population for all Ohio counties published by the Ohio Development Services Agency (OSDA) projects Summit County's senior population to peak in 2035 at about 21% of the total population; just over 110,000 people. Summit County's senior population appears to be growing at a faster rate than predicted based on American Community Survey estimates (Figure 2). As of 2024, Summit County's total estimated population age 65+ of 108,814 is nearly 3% higher than the OSDA estimate of 105,717. The decline in the senior population observed from 2020 to 2021 is likely attributable to the impact of COVID-19; in those two years alone, nearly 1,200 seniors died of COVID-19.

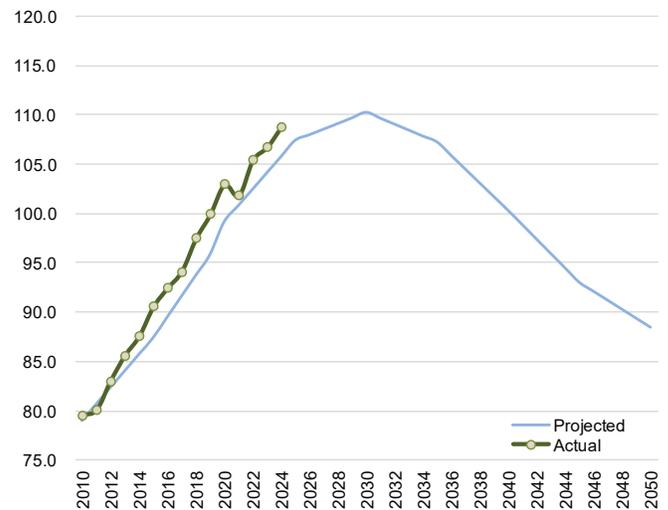


FIGURE 1: SENIORS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION BY SUMMIT 2020 CLUSTER.

Source: 2024 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year average Table B01003.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION OVER AGE 65 IN SUMMIT COUNTY, IN THOUSANDS, 2010-2050 PROJECTION.

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency, 2024 ACS 5-year average

Categories	Age 65+	Categories	Age 65+	Categories	Age 65+
Total population	108,814	RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANDCHILDREN UNDER 18		INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
SEX AND AGE		Population 30 years and over	108,814	Households	72,097
Male	44.2%	Living with grandchild(ren)	2.7%	With earnings	39.0%
Female	55.8%	Responsible for grandchild(ren)	0.9%	Mean earnings (dollars)	\$55,145
Median age (years)	73.3	VETERAN STATUS		With Social Security income	87.1%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN		Civilian population 18 years and over	108,814	Mean Social Security income (dollars)	\$25,909
One race	97.9%	Civilian veteran	11.7%	With Supplemental Security Income	7.4%
White	85.4%	DISABILITY STATUS		Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	\$8,855
Black or African American	10.6%	Civilian noninstitutionalized population	105,353	With cash public assistance income	1.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	With any disability	32.6%	Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)	\$1,066
Asian	1.6%	No disability	67.4%	With retirement income	61.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	RESIDENCE 1 YEAR AGO		Mean retirement income (dollars)	\$29,036
Some other race	0.3%	Population 1 year and over	108,814	With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits	10.5%
Two or more races	2.1%	Same house	94.0%	POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	0.8%	Different house in the United States	5.9%	Population for whom poverty status is determined	105,353
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	85.2%	Same county	3.9%	Below 100 percent of the poverty level	10.2%
RELATIONSHIP		Different county	2.0%	100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	7.1%
Population in households	105,022	Same state	1.7%	At or above 150 percent of the poverty level	82.6%
Householder or spouse	93.60%	Different state	0.3%	Occupied housing units	72,097
Parent	2.1%	Abroad	0.1%	HOUSING TENURE	
Other relatives	2.3%	PLACE OF BIRTH, NATIVITY / CITIZENSHIP		Owner-occupied housing units	76.2%
Nonrelatives	2.0%	Total population	108,814	Renter-occupied housing units	23.8%
Unmarried partner	1.1%	Native	102,758	Average household size of owner-occupied unit	1.8
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		Foreign born		Average household size of renter-occupied unit	1.45
Households	72,097	Entered 2000 or later	5.7%	SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	
Family households	50.3%	Entered 1990 to 1999	9.2%	No telephone service available	0.8%
Married-couple family	39.7%	Entered before 1990	85.0%	1.01 or more occupants per room	0
Female householder, no husband present	7.6%	Naturalized U.S. citizen	83.0%	Owner-occupied housing units	54,971
Nonfamily households	49.7%	Not a U.S. citizen	17.0%	MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A % OF INCOME	
Householder living alone	47.0%	LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME		Less than 30 percent	74.8%
MARITAL STATUS		Population 5 years and over	108,814	30 percent or more	25.2%
Population 15 years and over	108,814	English only	95.2%	OWNER CHARACTERISTICS	
Now married, except separated	53.0%	Language other than English	4.8%	Median value (dollars)	218,900
Widowed	19.8%	Speak English less than "very well"	2.7%	Median monthly owner costs with a mortgage	\$1,281
Divorced	18.2%	EMPLOYMENT STATUS		Median monthly owner costs without a mortgage	\$626
Separated	1.1%	Civilian population 16 years and over	108,814	Renter-occupied housing units	17,126
Never married	7.9%	In labor force	19.5%	GROSS RENT AS A % OF HH INCOME	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		Employed	18.8%	Less than 30 percent	43.7%
Population 25 years and over	108,814	Unemployed	0.7%	30 percent or more	56.3%
Less than high school graduate	8.4%	Percent of civilian labor force	3.4%	GROSS RENT	
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	33.0%	Not in labor force	80.5%	Median gross rent (dollars)	\$952
Some college or associate's degree	29.0%				
Bachelor's degree or higher	29.6%				

FIGURE 3: SENIOR DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, 2024.

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

Senior Demographic Profile

Figure 4 presents a comprehensive demographic profile of the 65 and older population in Summit County from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Details on several indicators can be found below:

- Age, sex, and race -- The median age of seniors in Summit County is 73.3 years; the same as in 2023. Most seniors are female (56%), which is higher than the total population figure of 51%. A higher percentage of seniors are white (85%) than the total population (74%). Only 11% of seniors are African-American; lower than the percentage of African-Americans in the total population (15%). Asians make up 1.7% of the 65 and older population; about half their proportion in the total population (5%).
- Disability status -- Nearly one-third of seniors (33%) have at least one disability. Of those with a disability, 20% have an ambulatory disability, while

13% have a hearing disability, 9% have a cognitive disability, and 14% have a disability that makes independent living difficult or impossible. Other disabilities include self-care (6%) and vision (5%).

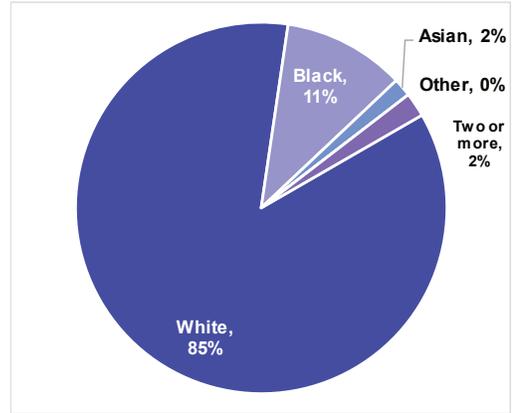


FIGURE 5: SENIORS BY RACE, 2024

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

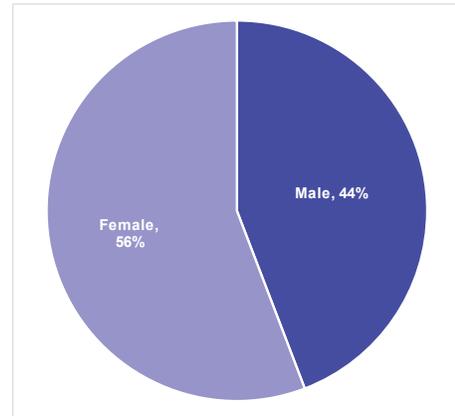


FIGURE 6: SENIORS BY SEX, 2024

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

Disability Type	With a disability	Percent with a disability
Hearing difficulty		
Total 65+	13,931	13.2%
Age 65-74	5,444	8.7%
Age 75 and over	8,487	19.8%
Vision difficulty		
Total 65+	4,906	4.7%
Age 65-74	1,594	2.6%
Age 75 and over	3,312	7.7%
Cognitive difficulty		
Total 65+	9,451	9.0%
Age 65-74	3,255	5.2%
Age 75 and over	6,196	14.5%
Ambulatory difficulty		
Total 65+	21,016	19.9%
Age 65-74	8,150	13.0%
Age 75 and over	12,866	30.0%
Self-care difficulty		
Total 65+	6,177	5.9%
Age 65-74	1,944	3.1%
Age 75 and over	4,233	9.9%
Independent living difficulty		
Total 65+	14,315	13.6%
Age 65-74	3,553	5.7%
Age 75 and over	10,762	25.1%

FIGURE 4: DISABILITY TYPES, 2024*

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

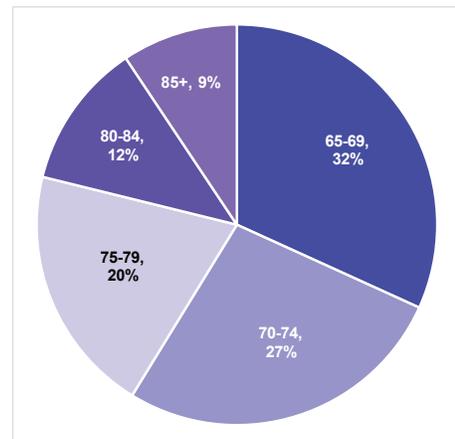


FIGURE 7: SENIORS BY AGE, 2024

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

* See Appendix A: Disability Status Definitions on page 13 for the meaning of these terms.

- **Housing and households** -- Half of seniors (50%) live in a household with at least one spouse or family member, while nearly half (48%) live in a one-person household. More seniors live in owner-occupied housing than the general population (80% and 68%, respectively). Nearly 20% of seniors rent.

Other important demographic characteristics of seniors in Summit County include:

- **Income and poverty** -- Just over 10% of seniors live below the poverty line in Summit County; about 11,000 in all; lower than the rate for the county as a whole (13%). Most of the difference in poverty rates can be explained by the impact of social safety net programs like Social Security, Medicare, and others that benefit seniors. In fact, a November 2018 study by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities entitled "Social Security Lifts More Americans Above Poverty Than Any Other Program" estimates that the nationwide 2021 poverty rate for seniors would have risen from 10% to over 38% in the absence of Social Security benefits.¹

Sources of income for seniors: The vast majority of seniors in Summit County receive Social Security income (87%), while 61% receive other forms of retirement income. Social Security benefits averaged \$25,909 per year, while other retirement sources averaged \$29,036. Nearly 39% of seniors receive earned income, while 10.5% received benefits from the SNAP program. Seven percent received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), while 2% got cash assistance.

Notes:

¹ Romig, K. (2018). Social Security Lifts More Americans Above Poverty Than Any Other Program. Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/social-security-lifts-more-americans-above-poverty-than-any-other-program>.

- **Employment** -- Nearly 9% of Summit County seniors worked full-time in the past 12 months, while 13% worked part-time. The vast majority, 78%, did not work at all.

Younger seniors (ages 65-69) worked the most, with 20% working full-time and another 21% working part-time, with 59% not working at all. Only 3% of those age 70 and older worked full-time while 12% worked part-time and 85% did not work at all.

- **Household Income** -- The median household income for all seniors is \$50,504 per year; lower than the \$68,360 for all households.

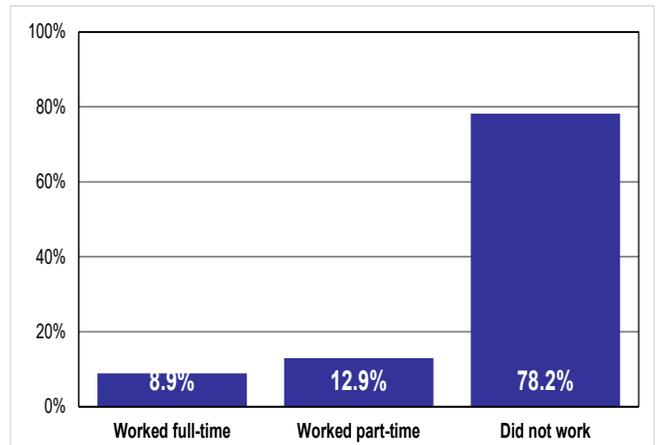


FIGURE 8: SENIOR EMPLOYMENT, 2024
Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table B23027.

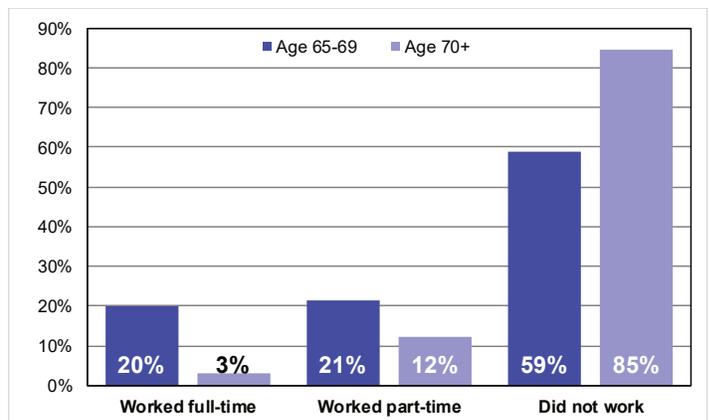


FIGURE 9: SENIOR EMPLOYMENT BY AGE GROUP, 2024

Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table B23027.

- Mortgage burden** -- In the years just before retirement (ages 60–64), 58% of owner-occupied homes are mortgaged. That percentage drops to 45% of occupied homes with a mortgage between ages 65 and 74, and again to 25% for those age 75 or older. According to the ACS, the median monthly cost for senior homeowners with a mortgage is \$1,281. Median monthly owner costs for seniors without a mortgage is \$626. Even without a mortgage, homeowner costs for seniors add up to more than \$7,500 annually. One-quarter of seniors who own their homes (25%) pay at least 30% of their income for mortgages and other housing costs.
- Renter burden** -- Seniors who rent face an even greater housing cost burden. More than 56% of seniors who rent spend at least 30% of their income on rent; well above the rate for all Summit County residents (47%).

- At least part of the difference in the renter burden for seniors can be explained by their change in income. The median household income for those age 45-64 was \$87,750 in 2024; the highest of any age group. As noted earlier, the median household income for those 65 and older was just \$53,323. That's a 39% decline in median income when moving into retirement years.

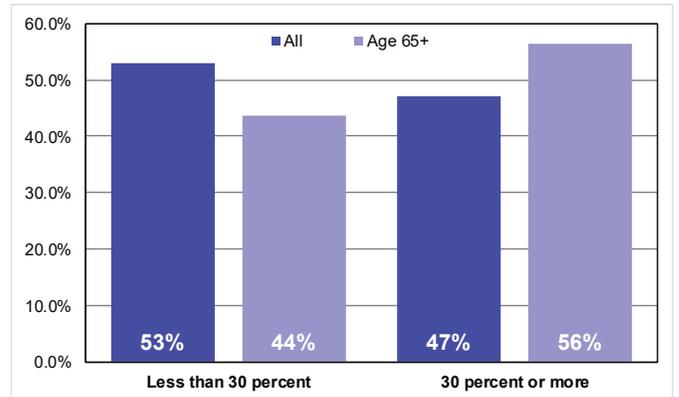


FIGURE 11: PERCENT OF RENTERS PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME FOR RENT, 2024
 Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

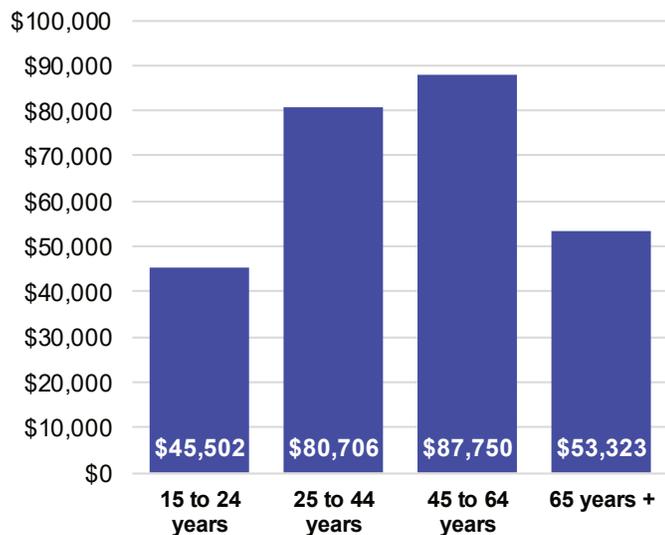


FIGURE 10: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE, SUMMIT COUNTY 2023.
 Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S1903.

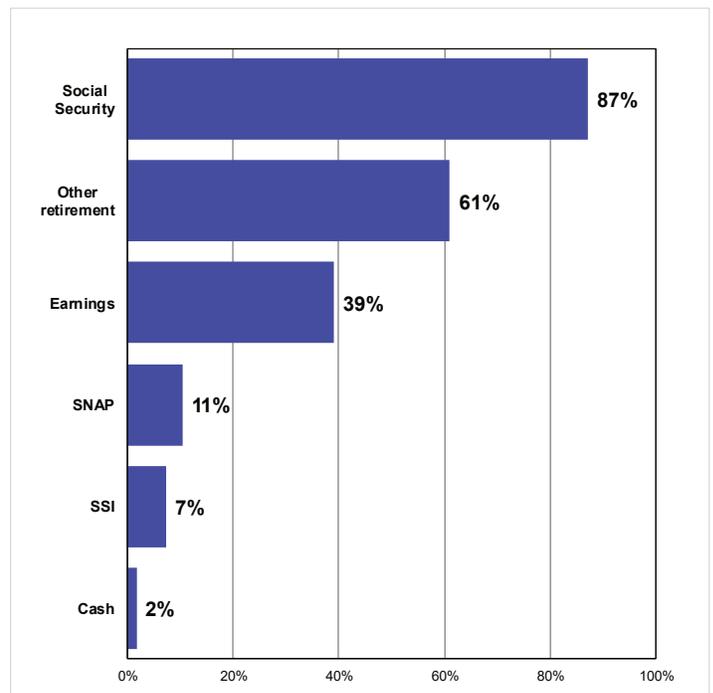


FIGURE 12: HOUSEHOLD INCOME SOURCES FOR SENIORS, SUMMIT COUNTY 2023. Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table S0103.

- Unfortunately, monthly rental costs for seniors don't drop anything like enough to keep pace with that income loss. According to ACS data for 2024, median gross rent for all Summit County residents is \$1,043 vs. \$952 for those age 65 and older. That's a decline of only 9% as people move into their retirement years.
- Grandparents raising grandchildren -- One of the more important social indicators the ACS tracks is grandparents raising their own grandchildren. Here in Summit County, an estimated 7,389 grandparents live in the same household as their grandchildren. Of that total, 2,923 grandparents were responsible for raising those grandchildren. Because unintended pregnancies can happen at very early ages (making people parents and sometimes grandparents early in life), the ACS category for grandparents begins at age 30. Of the 2,923 grandparents raising their grandchildren, just under 80% (2,316) are over age 60.

Among grandparents who were raising their own grandchildren, 62% were doing so without the help of the children's parents. The burden of being responsible for raising a child not only puts physical and emotional stress on those seniors

who are raising their grandchildren, but significant financial burdens as well. According to the ACS, the median household income of those doing so without the help of the children's parents is much lower than for grandparents who are getting that help.

The amount of time grandparents must commit to raising their own grandchildren can also significantly increase the stress seniors raising their own grandchildren face. According to ACS data, 55% have been responsible for raising their grandchildren for 3 years or longer. A much smaller percentage (6%) have been responsible for less than a year.

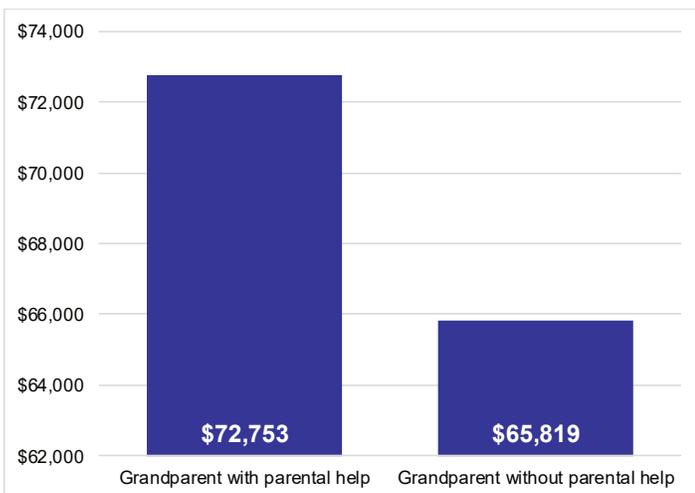


FIGURE 13: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR OWN GRANDCHILDREN, 2024. *Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table B10010.*

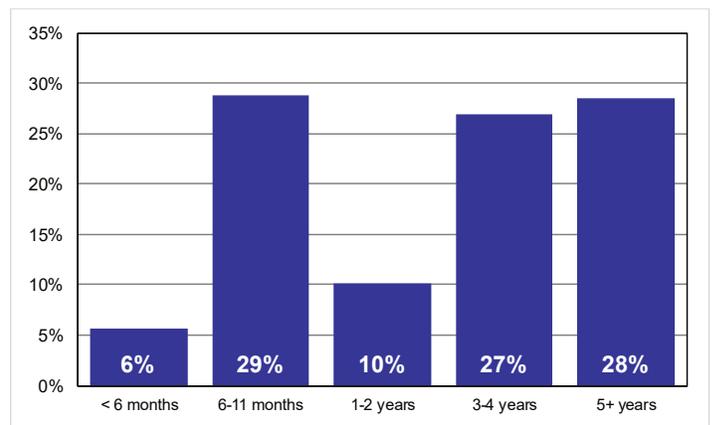
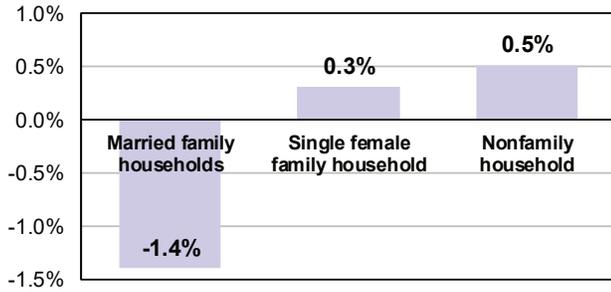


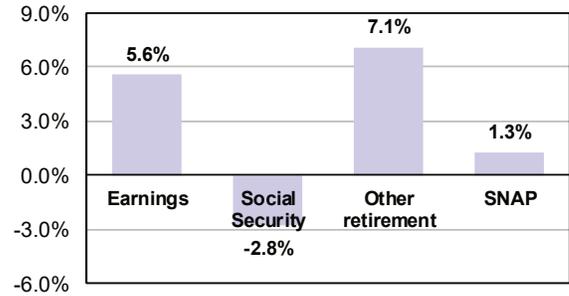
FIGURE 14: LENGTH OF TIME THAT GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR OWN GRANDCHILDREN ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM, 2024 *Source: 2024 ACS 1-year estimate Table B10050.*

Senior Social, Economic, and Demographic Changes, 2014-2024

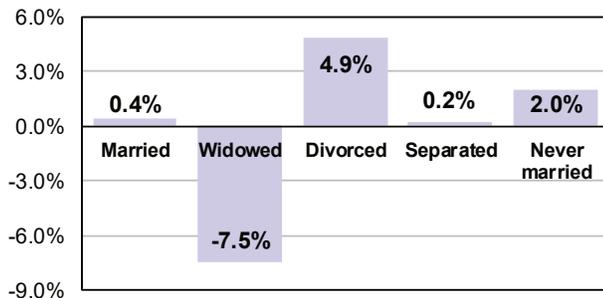
Households -- The percent of married senior households dropped and both single and non-family households rose.



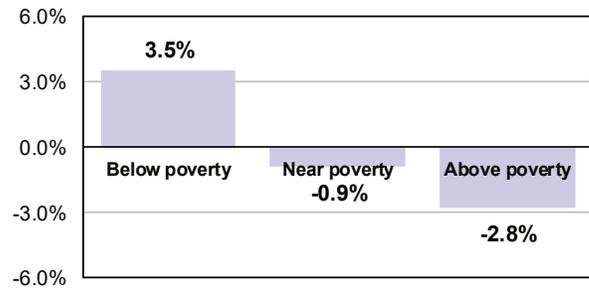
Income -- The percent of seniors on Social Security is lower, and those with earnings, other retirement income, and food stamps is higher.



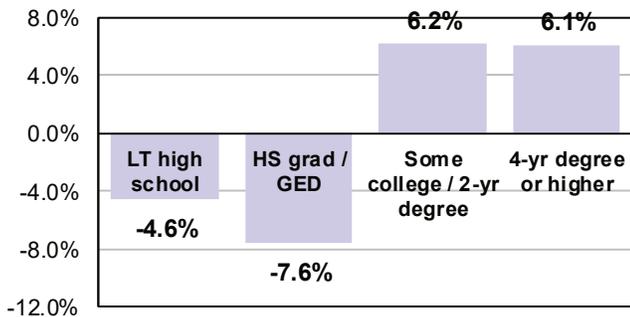
Marital status -- The percent of widowed senior households dropped while divorced and never married households rose.



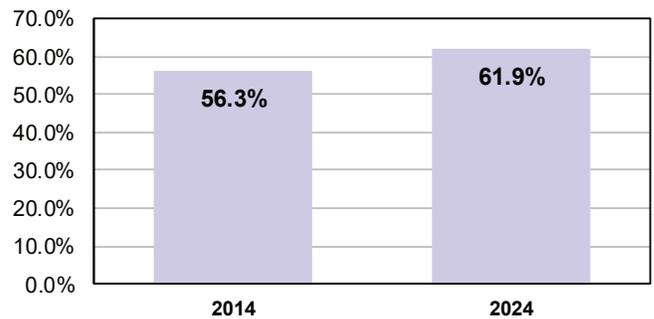
Poverty -- The percent of seniors falling into poverty rose as those above and near poverty fell since 2014.



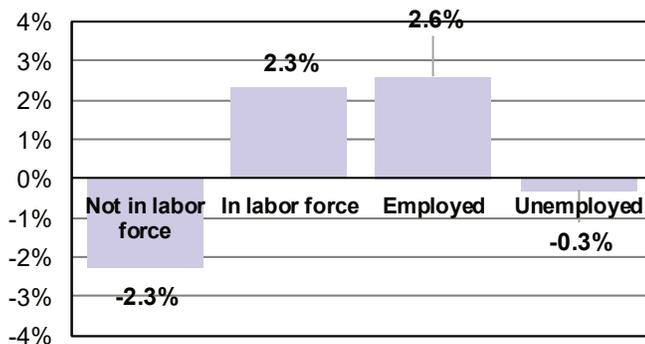
Educational attainment -- The education level of seniors has been rising as younger generations with higher education age into becoming seniors.



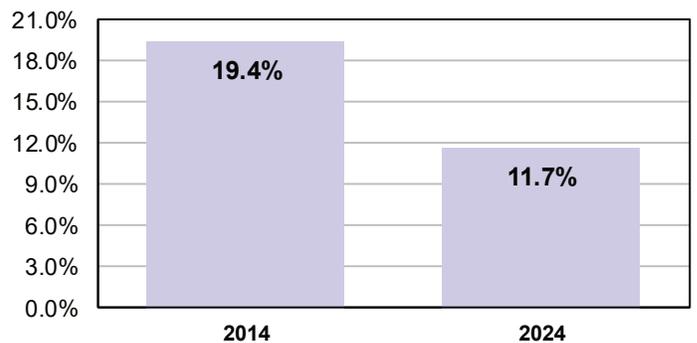
Renter burden -- The percent of senior renters paying 30% or more for their rent rose since 2014.



Employment -- A higher percentage of seniors are in the labor force and working than in 2014.



Veteran status -- The percent of seniors who are veterans dropped from one-in-five in 2014 to one-in-nine by 2023.



Health Issues Among Seniors

Fall-related injuries -- Summit County seniors averaged nearly 6,700 emergency room (ER) visits per year for a fall-related injury; nearly 60,000 visits since 2016. Fall-related ER visits rose from just over 50 per 1,000 seniors in 2016 to 82 per 1,000 in 2024,

Of those 60,000 visits, records for 3,100 visits included specific mentions of a head injury associated with the ER visit (which could either be a cause or consequence of the fall). Nearly 343 de-identified individuals, about 10% of the total, visited an ER more than once for a fall-related injury between 2016 and 2024.

Fall-related deaths -- From 2016-2024, 449 Summit County seniors suffered a fall-related death; about 64 per year (Note: 2024 data is not yet complete). Fall-related deaths hit a low of 35 per 100,000 in 2019, then moved sharply in the opposite direction in 2020, ending that year at 64 per 100,000. Fall-related deaths

remained close to that elevated level through 2023 (2024 data is still preliminary and is not included here).

There are two likely explanations for the sharp decline in fall-related ER visits and the sharp growth in fall-related deaths from 2019-2020. First, the lockdowns necessitated by COVID-19 in 2020 may have made many seniors afraid of going to an ER after a fall for fear of being exposed to COVID-19. Not seeking medical assistance after a fall could significantly increase the danger of dying from fall-related injuries. Second, the need for vulnerable seniors to avoid exposure to COVID-19 reduced opportunities for healthy physical activity. Normal activities such as shopping, walking, or participating in exercise classes were all negatively impacted by 2020's movement restrictions.

Age of fall-related incidents -- The average age of fall-related ER visits over age 65 was 79.4 since 2016, while the average age of fall related deaths was 81.9.

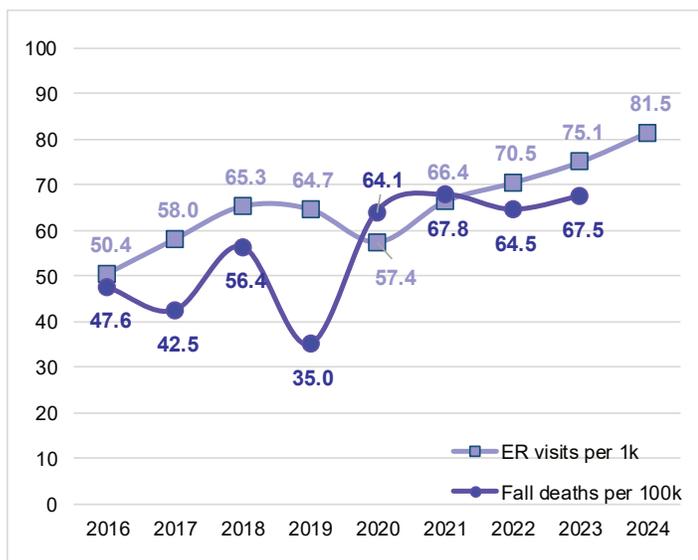


FIGURE 15: FALL-RELATED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS AND FATALITIES, 2016-2024.
Sources: EpiCenter, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records

Type of fall-related death, age 65+	Deaths 2016-2024
Other fall on same level	238
Unspecified fall	169
Fall on and from stairs and steps	54
Fall involving bed	14
Fall involving wheelchair	9
Fall on same level from slipping, tripping, stumbling	6
Fall involving chair	6
Other fall from one level to another	4
Fall on and from ladder	4
Fall on same level involving ice and snow	3
Fall from, out of or through building or structure	2
Fall involving other furniture	2
Fall from tree	1
Total	512

FIGURE 16: FALL-RELATED FATALITIES BY SPECIFIED CAUSE, 2016-2024.
Sources: EpiCenter, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia -- Between 2016 and 2023, there were 4,853 Summit County residents who died of either Alzheimer's Disease or dementia. Alzheimer's Disease deaths rose to become a majority of all Alzheimer's / dementia cases in 2018. As of 2023, 60% of these combined cases were Alzheimer's disease. The vast majority of cases, 67%, occurred in the 85 and older population. The youngest victim of either disease was 45, while the oldest was 108.

Age-adjusted death rates for Alzheimer's disease and unspecified dementia grew by about 6% between the 2009-2013 and 2019-2023 time periods.

For a more detailed look at Alzheimer's Disease and dementia, please see our data brief entitled "Alzheimer's Disease in Summit County," which can be downloaded at <https://www.scph.org/assessments-reports>.

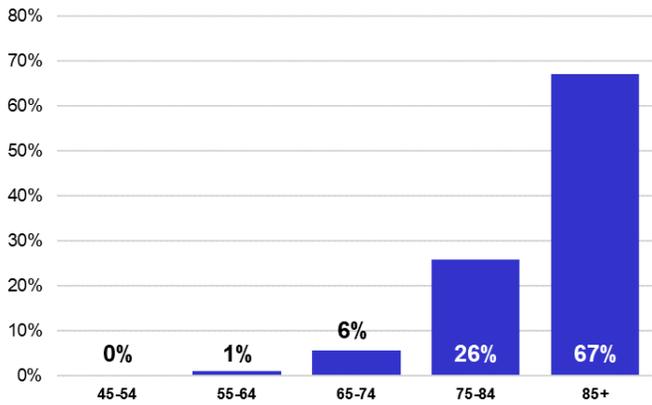


FIGURE 17: ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS BY AGE GROUP, 2024 *Source: Ohio Department of Health (ODH) death records*

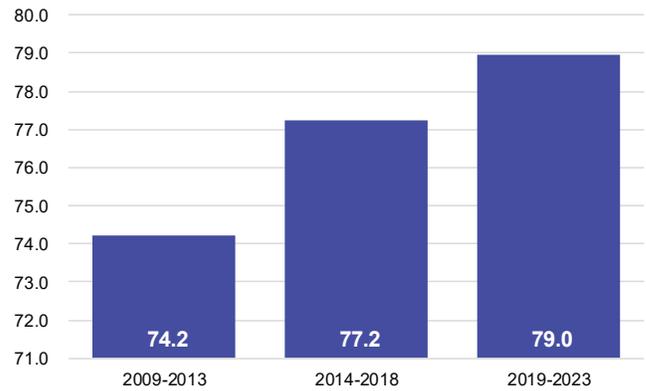


FIGURE 18: AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES FOR ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS - 2009-2023 *Source: ODH death records*

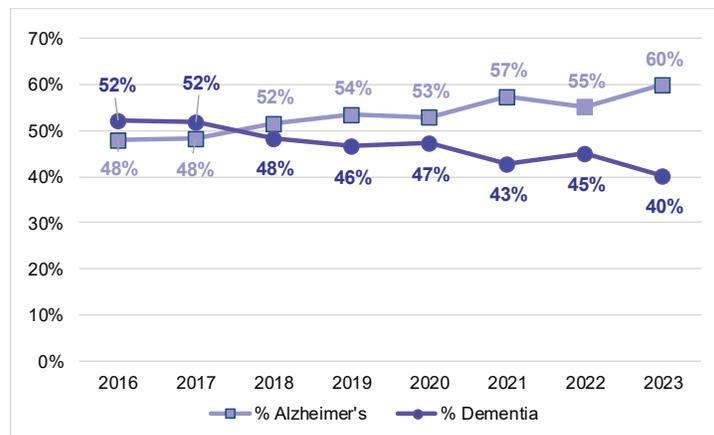


FIGURE 19: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE DEATHS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL ALZHEIMER'S AND UNSPECIFIED DEMENTIA DEATHS - 2016-2024. *Source: ODH death records*

Top 10 Leading Causes of Death

The table below is based on a format originally designed by the CDC. It shows the top 10 leading causes of death for each of three age groups in Summit County over age 65. Some of the more common causes of death are color-coded so that readers can follow the progression of that disease throughout the age spectrum.

Rank	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 & over
1	Cancer	Cancer	Heart disease
2	Heart disease	Heart disease	Cancer
3	Chronic lower respiratory	Chronic lower respiratory	Alzheimer's disease
4	Stroke	Stroke	Stroke
5	Diabetes	Alzheimer's disease	Chronic lower respiratory
6	Accidents	Diabetes	Flu / pneumonia
7	Kidney disease	Kidney disease	Accidents
8	Septicemia	Accidents	Diabetes
9	Chronic liver / cirrhosis	Parkinson's disease	Hypertension
10	Flu / pneumonia	Flu / pneumonia	Kidney disease

FIGURE 20: TOP 10 LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN SUMMIT COUNTY (NON-COVID), 2016-2024, AGE 65+. *Source: ODH death records*

Appendix A: Disability Status Definitions

The American Community's definitions of the various types of disability mentioned in Figure 4 are defined as follows:

- The question on **Hearing Difficulty** asks respondents if they are "deaf or...have serious difficulty hearing."
- The question on **Vision Difficulty** asks respondents if they are "blind or ... have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses."
- The question on **Cognitive Difficulty** asks respondents if due to physical, mental, or emotional condition, they have "serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions."
- The question on **Ambulatory Difficulty** asks respondents if they have "serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs."
- The question on **Self-care Difficulty** asks respondents if they have "Difficulty dressing or bathing."
- The question on **Independent Living Difficulty** asks respondents if due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition, they have difficulty "doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping."