Elders Who Can’t Make Ends Meet in Los Angeles City As Measured by the California Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index

The California Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index) measures how much income is needed for a retired adult age 65 and older to adequately meet his or her basic needs including housing, food, out-of-pocket medical expenses, transportation, and other necessary spending. For an elderly renter living alone in L.A., the Elder Index is approximately $25,000/year.

Not Just “Poor” Elders Who Are Struggling in L.A.

- 58% of all elders age 65+ do not have enough income to meet their most basic needs, as measured by the Elder Index. That’s over 204,000 elders struggling to make ends meet in L.A.

- In contrast, according to the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), only 11% (40,000) of L.A. elders are considered “poor,” with annual individual incomes below $10,210.

- But a large number of other elders (164,000 or 47%) fall into the “eligibility gap,” with incomes above the FPL but below the Elder Index. These elders don’t have enough money to cover their most basic needs, but have too much to qualify for many public programs.

Elders Living Alone Are More Vulnerable

- With high housing costs in L.A., both women and men living alone are economically vulnerable. Almost 6 out of 10 elders living alone have incomes below the Elder Index and struggle to make ends meet.

- Elders living with a partner are doing somewhat better, but more than one-third of them are still economically insecure.

(more)
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Race Makes a Difference

- Elders of all races/ethnicities are struggling in high cost L.A. Almost half of non-Latino Whites have incomes below the Elder Index.
- Elders of color, who typically earned less than whites throughout their working lives and who often don’t have pensions and 401Ks to supplement their Social Security income, are struggling the most:
  - 8 out of 10 Latinos
  - 7 out of 10 African Americans
  - Over 7 out of 10 Asian elders
...living alone in L.A. are trying to make ends meet with incomes below the Elder Index.

Renters Living Alone Are the Most Economically Vulnerable

- Three fourths of elder renters living alone in L.A. are trying to survive on incomes below the Elder Index.
- More than half of elders living alone who own their home, but are still paying off a mortgage, are unable to meet their basic needs.
- Elders who own their homes outright are doing some what better, but still struggling. More than one-third cannot make ends meet.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s 2006 ACS data, compiled by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.
To view the numerical data behind these graphs and access a statewide comparison, click here.

For more information, see Half A Million Older Californians Living Alone Unable to Make Ends Meet by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development at http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/elder_index09feb.html.