Why Social Security and Medicare Are Vital to Older Americans in Kentucky

Social Security and Medicare provide income and health security to older Americans aged 65 and older. Growing debt burdens, dwindling pensions, and increasing health care costs make these programs more important than ever. Here’s what they do for Kentucky.

Social Security in Kentucky

Older Kentuckians count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work

- A total of 92 percent, or 564,601, of older Kentucky residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,100.
- Social Security accounted for 58 percent of the typical older Kentuckian’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Kentucky are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 86 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Kentuckians from falling into poverty

- Census data show about 9 percent, or 51,152, of older Kentuckians living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 42 percent of older Kentuckians, or 234,641 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Kentucky’s economy

- Social Security provided $11.8 billion in benefits to all Kentuckians and $7.8 billion in benefits to Kentuckians aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Kentucky

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high

- On average, Kentucky’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $4,487 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Kentucky adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 16 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Kentuckians

- Nearly 98 percent of older Kentuckians were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Kentucky’s economy

- The Medicare program spent an estimated $5.5 billion on health care services for 599,025 older Kentuckians in 2012.