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

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 Nebraska.

Social Security in Nebraska

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

- A total of 92 percent, or 235,858, of older Nebraska residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,800.
- Social Security accounted for 49 percent of the typical older Nebraskan’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Nebraska are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 71 percent of their family income from Social Security.

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

- Census data show about 7 percent, or 15,126, of older Nebraskans living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 35 percent of older Nebraskans, or 81,552 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Nebraska’s economy

- Social Security provided $4.3 billion in benefits to all Nebraskans and $3.4 billion in benefits to Nebraskans aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Nebraska

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

- On average, Nebraska’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $4,272 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Nebraska adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 13 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Nebraskans

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

Medicare plays an important role in Nebraska’s economy

- The Medicare program spent an estimated $2.2 billion on health care services for 250,137 older Nebraskans in 2012.