

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

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 Washington.

Social Security in Washington

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

- A total of 92 percent, or 832,234, of older Washington residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was \$15,600.
- Social Security accounted for 44 percent of the typical older Washingtonian's family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Washington 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 Washingtonians from falling into poverty

- Census data show about 7 percent, or 55,790, of older Washingtonians living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 33 percent of older Washingtonians, or 279,274 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Washington's economy

- Social Security provided \$16.7 billion in benefits to all Washingtonians and \$12.7 billion in benefits to Washingtonians aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Washington

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

- On average, Washington's Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated \$3,735 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Washington adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 10 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Washingtonians

- Nearly 97 percent of older Washingtonians were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Washington's economy

- The Medicare program spent an estimated \$6.9 billion on health care services for 889,534 older Washingtonians in 2012.