



Living Below the Line: Measuring Economic Insecurity Among New Jersey's Retired Seniors



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Division of Aging Services

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Public Law 2015, Chapter 53, mandated the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS) to update the New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index). The Elder Index was originally produced for the New Jersey Foundation for Aging in 2009 by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Foundation supported two updates prior to the DHS produced reports of 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

As noted in the law, the New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index) is a tool that measures the income older adults require to make ends meet and to remain in their own homes.

The Elder Index and related data help elders and policymakers quantify economic security; understand secure seniors' basic expenses; identify who is most likely to lack security; measure the gaps between typical incomes and economic security; and measure how well public policies can help fill security gaps. The legislation calls for the DHS to use the Elder Index to improve the coordination and delivery of public benefits and services to older adults residing in New Jersey and as a planning tool to allocate resources more efficiently.

State and federal agencies offer a variety of tax rebates and housing, food and energy assistance programs to help older adults to remain in their home settings. The Elder Index is a tool for future planning.

The following report was prepared by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey on behalf of the DHS.

New Jersey seniors face an array of economic security challenges, including employment barriers, long-term care needs and living cost increases. Over the previous decade, senior budgets have been squeezed by historically low returns on savings and low-risk investments and increases in prices of basic needs, including food (19.6%), medical care (37.9%), prescription drugs (35.4%), and rent (30.8%).¹

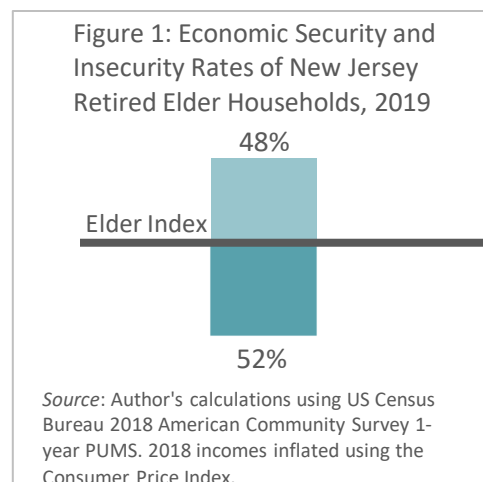
To help current and future seniors, their families, and state and local government to better understand such challenges, the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services presents a report on Elder Economic Insecurity Rates—the proportion of retired seniors whose incomes fell short of the 2019 New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index), a senior-specific basic needs budget.

Executive Summary

The New Jersey Elder Index is a measure of the income retired seniors require to pay for basic monthly expenses and age in place in their communities. The Elder Index defines economic security as income sufficient to pay for housing, food, transportation, health care and miscellaneous items without borrowing, relying on financial gifts, or relying on public support programs. Seniors with incomes below their local Elder Indexes are more likely to make difficult spending choices, to go without one or more basic need, and to have trouble remaining in their homes as they age and/or their health declines.

New Jersey’s statewide Elder Economic Insecurity Rate (EEIR) is 52%; more than five in ten New Jersey retired senior-only households lack incomes that will insulate them against poverty as they age.² While such insecurity affects elders of all backgrounds, New Jersey EEIRs vary greatly by household type, housing type, race, gender and location:

- New Jersey elders who live alone are much more likely than elder couples to live in insecurity. The statewide EEIR is 62% for single elder households, compared to 34% for elder couple households.
- Seventy-nine percent of elder renter households lack economic security incomes. Fifty-one percent of elder homeowners with mortgages and 37% of elder homeowners without mortgages lack economic security incomes.
- Sixty-three percent of single elder woman households and 58% of single elder man households lack security incomes.
- Seniors of color are much more likely to lack economic security incomes than White seniors. EEIRs range from 49% for White seniors to 83% for Hispanic/Latino seniors.
- EEIRs vary greatly by New Jersey county. The overall



insecurity rate is highest in Hudson County (74.6%) and lowest in Ocean County (40%). Several counties with the state's highest EEIRs are clustered in the northeast of the state, while counties with relatively low EEIRs are spread throughout the state.

- Seniors with typical incomes for single senior women face large annual economic security gaps. Economic security gaps vary greatly depending on who lives in a household and where they live.

Changes in EEIRs indicate positive change or raise red flags. They are early, senior-specific indicators of balance or imbalance between incomes and local costs of living, and can help forecast future insecurity among current seniors or future retirees. The statewide EEIR for all New Jersey retired senior-only households fell by 4.7 percentage points between 2010 and 2019. The statewide EEIR fell by 2.26 percentage points between 2010 and 2015, and then fell an additional 2.46 percentage points between 2015 and 2019. EEIRs for the majority of senior subgroups studied fell over the decade, but fell most for homeowners and Black households. EEIRs rose for Hispanic householders (2.1 percentage points) and renters (0.6 percentage points).

EEIR increases are in part defeated by state and federal public support programs which help provide basic needs and protect participants' health. Income eligibility limits for anti-poverty programs dating back to the 1960s, such as Medicaid and food assistance, are still percentages of the federal poverty guidelines (e.g., 100% FPL). The official poverty guidelines also date back to the 1960s, and are blunt indicators of deprivation associated in the public mind with chronic, intractable social problems. In contrast, newer support programs, such as New Jersey's Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD), do not have income limits based on the poverty guidelines, and are designed to help participants with moderate incomes avoid poverty when they encounter health and financial crises. When all support program income eligibility limits are expressed as percentages of the Elder Index (for single renters), eligibility limits range from 33% of the Elder Index (Supplemental Security Income) to 128% of the Elder Index (Senior Gold prescription assistance). This suggests a logical public assistance continuum with security, rather than only poverty management, as its goal.

Once economic insecurity rates, economic security gaps and available supports are understood, the Elder Index can be used to model federal and state support programs' impact on economic security gaps and EEIRs. Impacts can be modeled for individual or multiple support programs, and can be modeled for individual households, for New Jersey retired seniors as a whole, or for senior subgroups. This study demonstrates that a program such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), when accessible, can reduce a senior household's economic insecurity gap by more than 15 percentage points, and that New Jersey's property tax relief programs can reduce a senior household's economic insecurity gap by more than 16 percentage points.

Defining Security: The Elder Economic Security Standard Index

Poverty rates alert society to destitution, and changes in poverty rates suggest change in the economy and how well policy is helping those most in need of assistance. But the federal poverty guidelines—also known as the federal poverty level, the poverty line, or the FPL—are an antiquated, one-size-fits-all nationwide measure that tells us little about those living in poverty or the many New Jersey seniors whose incomes exceed the poverty guidelines but do not allow them to escape the shadow of poverty. Data and research based on the poverty guidelines—or the more contemporary Supplemental Poverty Measure—fail to capture the experiences and broader social impact of hundreds of thousands of seniors who currently have, or may have, trouble remaining in their homes as health declines and/or financial resources dwindle.³

The Elder Index is a measure of the income *fully retired* adults require to meet basic monthly expenses and age in place in their communities. The Elder Index defines economic security as income sufficient to meet these basic monthly expenses without borrowing, relying on gifts from family, or relying on public assistance programs such as food stamps or medical assistance.⁴ Elder Index expenses include housing, food, basic transportation, health care and miscellaneous items such as clothing and household and personal needs.

Table 1: Statewide Elder Economic Security Standard Index for New Jersey, 2019

Expenses	Elder Person			Elder Couple		
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter	Owner w/ Mortgage
Housing	\$1,071	\$1,201	\$2,174	\$1,071	\$1,201	\$2,174
Food	\$257	\$257	\$257	\$471	\$471	\$471
Transportation	\$224	\$224	\$224	\$344	\$344	\$344
Health Care	\$396	\$396	\$396	\$792	\$792	\$792
Miscellaneous	\$390	\$390	\$390	\$536	\$536	\$536
Elder Index Per Month	\$2,338	\$2,468	\$3,441	\$3,214	\$3,344	\$4,317
Elder Index Per Year	\$28,056	\$29,616	\$41,292	\$38,568	\$40,128	\$51,804

Source: Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, *The 2019 New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index*

Note: For additional information on the Elder Index methodology, see the Gerontology Institute's *The National Economic Security Standard Index*.

Housing: Rent, owner costs (insurance, property taxes, utilities) or mortgage payments plus owner costs

Food: Cost of food prepared at home, based on the USDA Low-Cost Food Plan for older adults

Transportation: Automobile owner and operating costs, based on National Household Travel Survey senior driving data and IRS car travel reimbursement rates

Health Care: Premiums for Medicare Parts B and C and average out-of-pocket costs, including copayments and deductibles

Miscellaneous: Household needs and other additional spending; calculated as 20% of all other Elder Index expenses, based on Department of Labor Consumer Expenditure Survey data

The Elder Index helps workers and retirees plan for the future. It also can help quantify the impact of public

policy and programs which promote seniors' security. The Elder Index helps pre-retirees, elders, advocates, policymakers, foundations and direct service providers:

- define, quantify and examine the components of elder economic security;
- measure the gaps between typical incomes and economic security;
- understand insecurity levels, how insecurity levels have changed over time, and where insecurity levels are highest;
- measure public policies' security impacts;
- evaluate current public support programs' potentials to fill gaps and move households toward security.

The main Elder Index innovation is its specific focus on retirees and local living costs. Variations in households and local costs of living create a broad range of retirement income requirements. The 2019 New Jersey Elder Index's greatest annual value for seniors in *good* health is \$57,288, for homeowner couples with mortgages in Bergen County.⁵ The Elder Index's smallest annual value is \$23,256, for single homeowners without mortgages in Ocean County (Appendix A).

Besides Bergen County, the state's most expensive counties for senior homeowners carrying mortgages include Morris, Passaic, Essex, Union and Hudson Counties. The state's less densely populated counties, such as Salem, Cumberland, Burlington, Atlantic and Gloucester Counties, are generally less expensive for mortgage holders.

Some of the least expensive counties for homeowners are similarly inexpensive for renters. Atlantic County is least expensive for single renters, with an annual Elder Index of \$26,844, followed by Burlington, Salem, Mercer and Cumberland Counties. The most expensive places for renters include Bergen, Passaic, Hunterdon, Middlesex and Somerset Counties. Some counties, such as Bergen, are very expensive regardless of a seniors' housing or health status. However, local supply and demand dynamics mean that a county can be, for example, relatively inexpensive for mortgage holders and relatively expensive for renters.

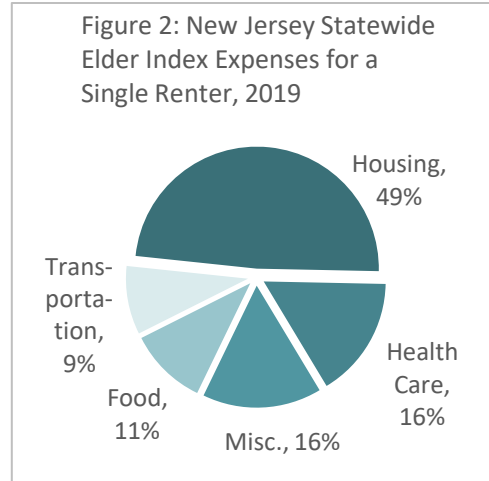
For more information on the New Jersey Elder Index, the latest data, and additional analysis of geographic differences in New Jersey, see *The 2019 New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index*.

The Greatest Determinants of Economic Security—Housing and Health Care Expenses

Housing and health care costs comprise two-thirds of the statewide Elder Index budget for retired single renters (Figure 2). Housing and health care costs are the greatest determinants of elder economic security, regardless of where New Jersey seniors live. Retired senior mortgage holders will typically spend more than twice as much on housing as retired seniors without mortgages. The difference between typical homeownership costs for those with mortgages and those without is greatest in Cape May County (130%), Warren County (128%), Ocean County (117%) and Morris County (112%). Seniors who carry mortgages into retirement usually face the greatest budget challenges in those counties with high average residential property values, such as Bergen, Essex, Passaic, Union, Hudson and Morris Counties.⁶ In these counties, mortgages and attending owner costs—insurance, real estate taxes, maintenance—comprise as much as 56% of the Elder Index budget for couples and 68% of the Elder Index budget for single seniors.

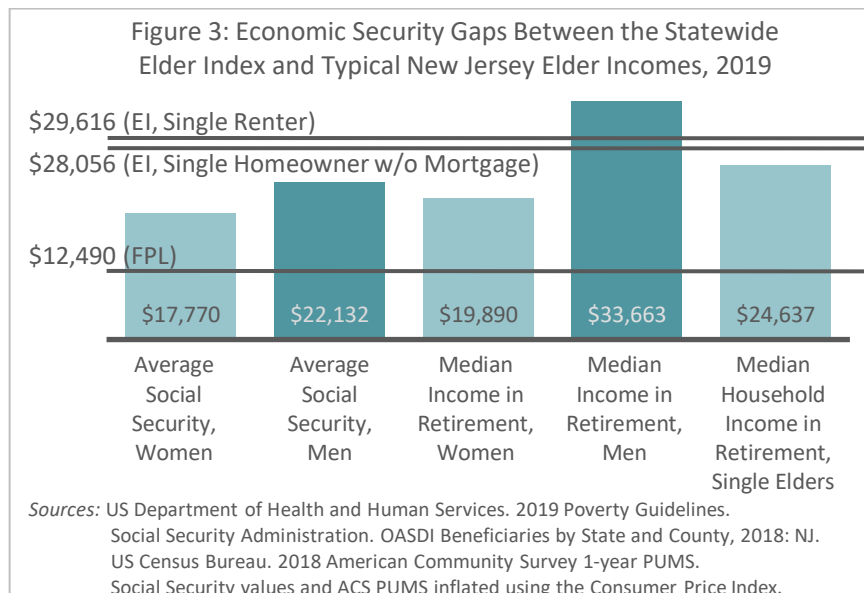
In the most expensive counties for retirees *without* mortgages, homeownership costs range from \$1,199 (Hudson County) to \$1,357 (Essex County), and comprise as much as 39% of the Elder Index budget for couples and 51% of an Elder Index budget for single seniors.

Typical monthly rents for the 1-bedroom apartments included in the Elder Index vary widely, from \$936 per month (Cumberland County) to \$1,425 per month (Bergen County). In more expensive counties for renters—Bergen, Passaic, Somerset, Hunterdon and Middlesex Counties—rent is 28-40% of the Elder Index budget for couples and as much as 41-53% of the Elder Index budget for single seniors.



The Economic Security Gap

Some typical retiree incomes in New Jersey meet economic security requirements, while others fall well short. Statewide median annual household income among couples—who have the highest income among retired seniors—was \$60,324 in 2019, which exceeds all statewide and county Elder Indexes. The 2019 median annual income of retired single men, \$33,663, is much lower—greater than statewide and county Indexes for single renters and single homeowners without mortgages, but less than statewide and county Indexes for single homeowners with mortgages (Figure 3). In contrast, retired single women’s median annual income was \$19,890, more than \$6,000 short of the statewide Elder Index for homeowners without mortgages and more than \$7,600 short of the statewide Elder Index for renters. Retired single women’s median income falls short of the Elder Index for single renters by approximately \$12,500 in the state’s most expensive county (Bergen County) and by almost \$7,000 in the least expensive county for renters (Atlantic



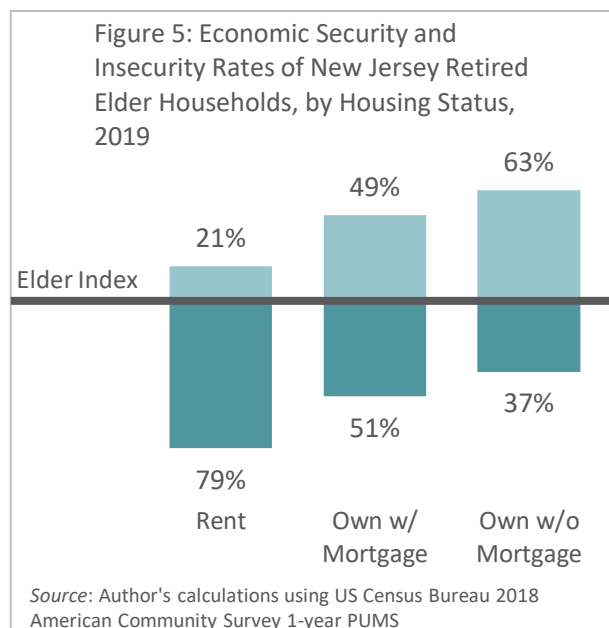
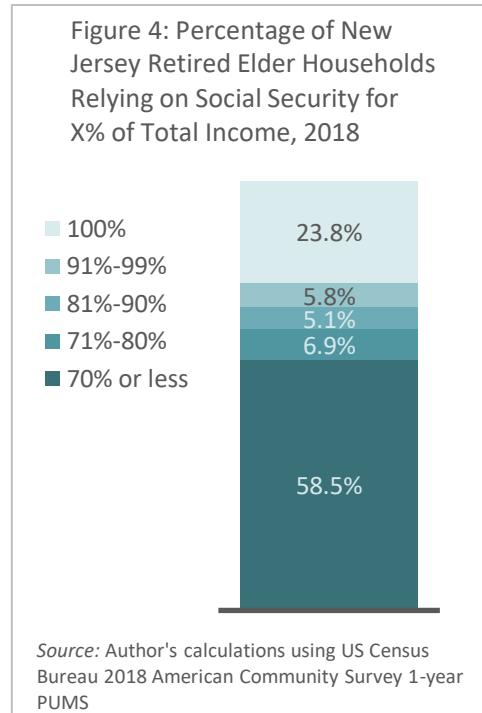
County).

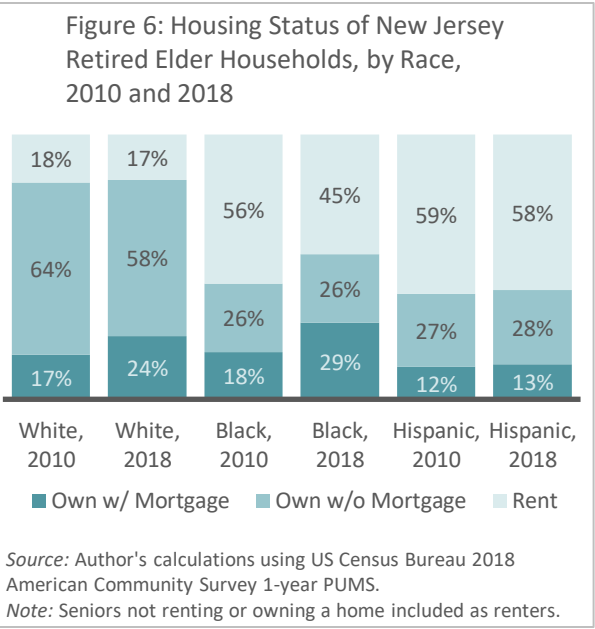
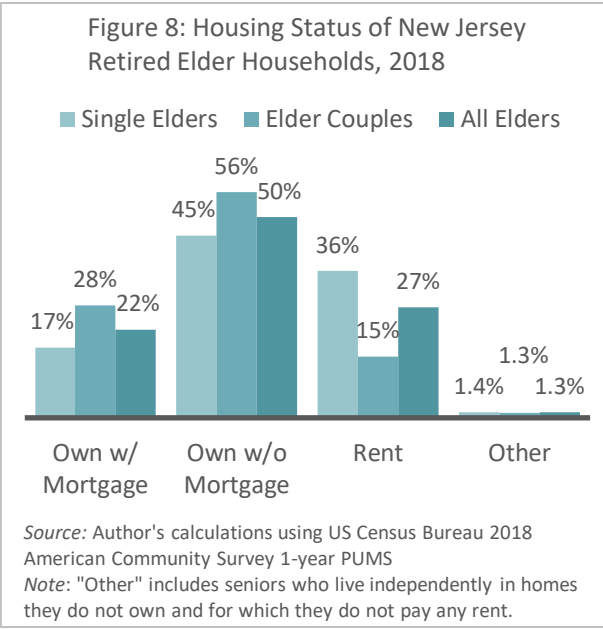
Unlike median incomes, average Social Security payments do not meet statewide average or county Elder Index expenses for any of the state’s retirees. A single renter who relied entirely on New Jersey’s average Social Security payment for men fell nearly \$7,500 short of the statewide Elder Index for renters. A single renter who relied entirely on the state’s average Social Security for women fell nearly \$12,000 short of an economic security income. Nearly 24% of fully retired New Jersey senior households who receive Social Security relied on Social Security as their sole source of income in 2018 (Figure 4). Over one-third of these households relied on Social Security for 80% or more of their incomes.

EEIRs—Homeowners and Renters

Those who own their homes outright are much less likely to lack economic security than renters. The EEIR for seniors without mortgages is 37% (Figure 5). Elder homeowners *with* mortgages require the highest incomes to be economically secure, but report a higher median income, and the EEIR of homeowners with mortgages, 51%, is much lower than the EEIR for renters, 79%. Senior renters are particularly vulnerable to shifting costs in their communities, as rental housing costs can change dramatically quickly. Local wages may increase as rents and other costs of living increase, but retired adults living on fixed incomes can find themselves quickly priced out of local rental markets.

While homeownership has often been considered a sound foundation for retirement, carrying a mortgage into retirement can place seniors at risk. In some counties, mortgage holders need incomes fifty percent higher than non-mortgage holders need to attain the Elder Index. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of senior homeowners carrying mortgages increased notably between 2010 and 2018. The proportion of Black seniors carrying mortgages into retirement has increased most dramatically, from 18% to 29%. While homeownership can protect seniors from a variable rental market and improve EEIRs as elders pay off mortgages, larger numbers of new retirees requiring higher incomes to attain security can stress households, extended families and public support systems during a financial downturn or crisis, as demonstrated



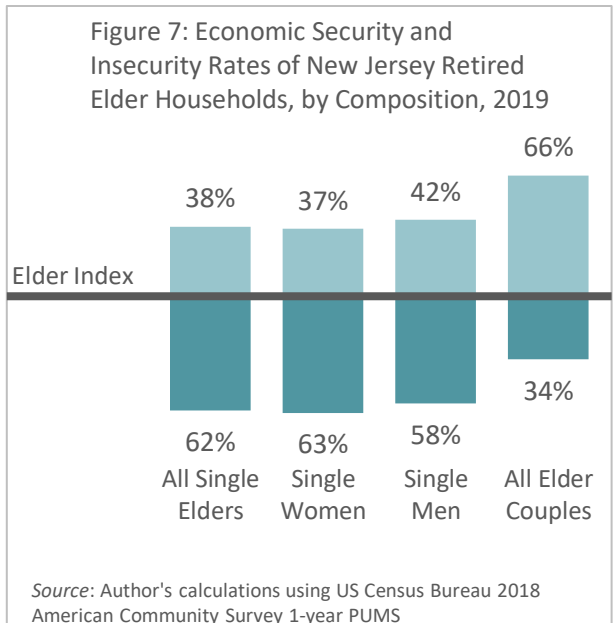


during the Great Recession.

Single Elders and Couples

Single elders are much more likely to lack economic security than couples: 62% of single elders living alone report household incomes below the Elder Index, compared to 34% of elder couples (Figure 7). Retired New Jersey elder couples report median household incomes more than double those of their single counterparts and are more likely to own their homes free and clear. While 36% of New Jersey's retired single elders rent, only about 15% of retired elder couples rent, and 56% of elder couples studied live in a home owned without a mortgage (Figure 8).

Sixty-nine percent of senior men in New Jersey live with a spouse or partner, versus 42.5% of women. This is in part due to the gender disparity in life expectancies. The disparity is decreasing,⁷ but older women continue to outnumber older men. In 2018, there were approximately 187,000 more women than men age 65 and over in New Jersey (down from 201,000 in 2017).⁸ Women make up an even greater share of the population among the oldest seniors, and women are more likely than men to live alone for some portion of their retirement years. Women's longer lifespans, greater likelihood of living alone, and lower incomes in retirement combine to create a 63% statewide insecurity rate for single senior women.



Seniors of Color

While Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are high among seniors of all races and ethnicities, rates for households headed by retired seniors of color are particularly high. Among retired elder households, 83% of Hispanic households, 65% of Black households, 62% of Asian households and 49% of White households lack incomes that allow basic economic security (Figure 9).⁹

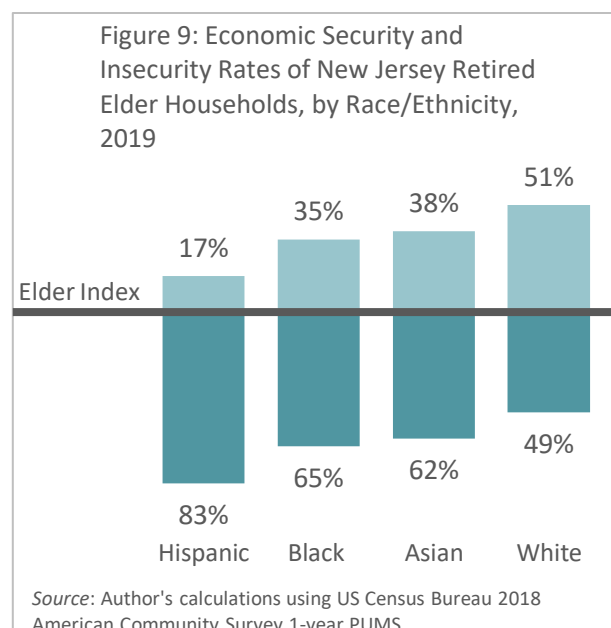
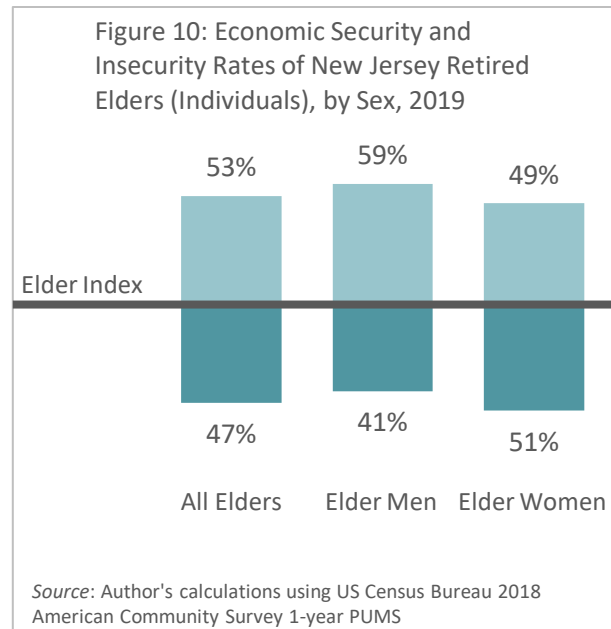
Nationwide, retired seniors of color report annual incomes several thousand dollars lower than White elders' incomes.¹⁰ In New Jersey, median income for senior White women (\$21,601) exceeds median incomes of Black women (\$19,248), Hispanic women (\$10,800) and Asian women (\$12,396).¹¹ Median income increased most for retired Black and White women, and least for Asian women, between 2010 and 2019. Income increases for Hispanic and Asian women were below the period's rate of inflation.

Racial disparities in retirement income reflect in part the fact that, prior to retirement, men and women of color earn lower median wages than White workers.¹² They also are more likely to work in jobs that do not offer retirement plans,¹³ and seniors of color tend to accumulate less retirement savings.¹⁴

In addition, seniors of color rely more heavily than White seniors on Social Security as a source of income, but have average annual Social Security payments several thousand dollars lower than White seniors' payments. Seniors of color may also face higher expenses, as they are more likely to be renters. In New Jersey in 2018, 17% of retired White seniors, 45% of retired Black seniors, and 58% of retired Hispanic seniors rented.

Men and Women

Fifty-one percent of New Jersey senior women live in households which lack economic security incomes, compared to 41% of senior men (Figure 10). In 2019, retired senior men's median annual income was nearly 70% higher than retired elder women's median income—\$33,663 versus \$19,890. Occupational segregation, pay inequity and caregiving responsibilities all contribute to women's



reduced earnings during their working-age years and to diminished capacity for saving. Further, these factors contribute to both lower Social Security payments and a reduced likelihood of savings and pension income.¹⁵ Just 42% of New Jersey’s women (and 50% of the state’s men) reported income from a retirement plan or pension. In addition, senior women are more likely to live without a spouse or partner than elder men are, and New Jersey’s women are more likely than men to be renters—26% versus 19.5%.

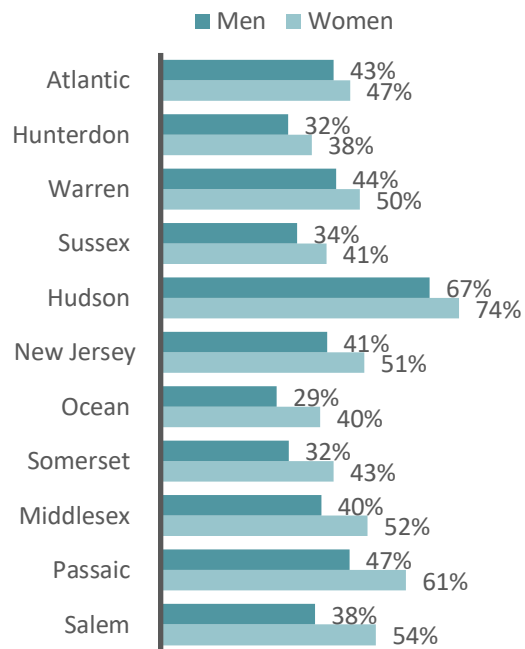
EEIRs by County

Hudson County has New Jersey’s highest overall EEIR, 75%, while Ocean County has the lowest, 40% (down from 45% in 2015). Other counties with high EEIRs include Essex (66%), Passaic (61%), Cumberland (58%) and Union (57%) Counties. Counties with lower insecurity rates include Hunterdon (40%), Burlington (41%), Morris (42%) and Somerset (43%) Counties (Figure 11).

Counties with high economic security income requirements are not necessarily the counties with the highest insecurity rates, as senior incomes in such counties may also be relatively high. For example, Morris County is among the more expensive counties in the state, but the county’s EEIR is fourth lowest. Conversely, Cumberland County is one of the least expensive counties, but the county’s EEIR is fourth highest. Several former less expensive counties are becoming notably more expensive. The Cape May County renter Index has increased by over \$3,200, 12.8%, 2015-2019. This is the greatest increase in the state, and Cape May is the only County whose overall EEIR increased (by .5 percentage points) between 2015 and 2019.

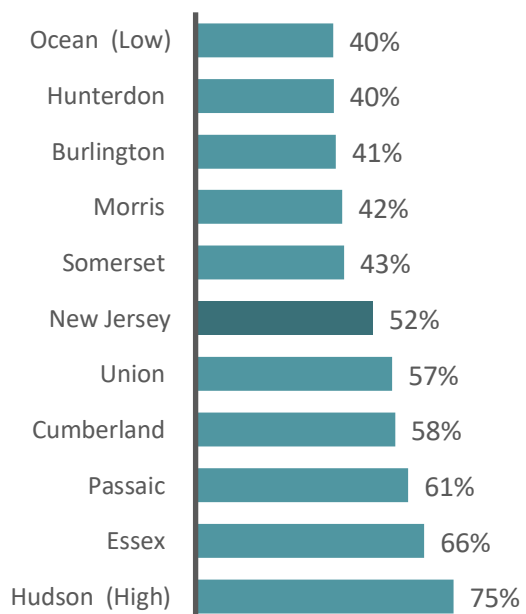
Insecurity rates for single elders range from 50% in Ocean County to 79% in Hudson County. EEIRs

Figure 12: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elders for Selected Counties, by Gender, 2019



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

Figure 11: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Households for Selected Counties, 2019



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

are highest in the state's northeastern counties, such as Essex (74%) and Passaic (73.6%) Counties, and in Cumberland County (70.6%) (Appendix D). In contrast, the rate of insecurity for elder couples ranges from a low of 23% in Burlington County to a high of 60% in Hudson County. In addition to Hudson County, elder couples are most insecure in Bergen (40%), Essex (39.5%), and Warren (38.4%) Counties (Appendix E).

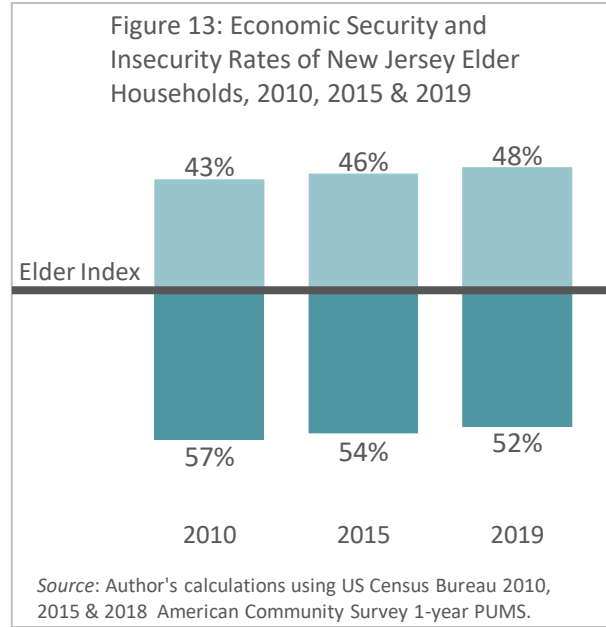
The EEIR for women is higher than the EEIR for men in every New Jersey county. Salem (15 percentage points), Passaic (14 percentage points) and Middlesex (12 percentage points) Counties have the widest insecurity rate gender disparities (Figure 12). Atlantic (4 percentage points), Hunterdon (6 percentage points), Warren (6 percentage points) and Sussex (7 percentage points) Counties have the smallest disparities.

The gap between women and men's EEIRs has decreased in 16 New Jersey counties between 2015 and 2019. The gap has declined most dramatically—from 12.7 to 5.9 percentage points—in Hunterdon County, and has fallen notably in Warren (12.4 to 5.9), Mercer (13.5 to 8.4), Gloucester (14.4 to 9.9), Sussex (11.6 to 7.3), and Atlantic (7.9 to 4.1) Counties. The greatest increases in the gap between women and men's insecurity rates occurred in Middlesex (8.1 to 11.6) and Passaic (11.5 to 14.1) Counties. Salem and Somerset Counties were at the bottom of the gender gap rankings in both 2015 and 2019; Atlantic and Hudson Counties ranked well both years. Most counties' gender gap rankings varied notably over the period.

Change in EEIRs Over Time

The 2019 New Jersey Elder Index is a snapshot of seniors' current needs and conditions. However, the Elder Index can also provide insight into change in senior well-being over time; EEIRs can reveal incomes outpacing or falling behind local inflation, and can suggest directions for targeted, pro-senior policy change.

The overall insecurity rate for New Jersey retired senior households fell by 4.7 percentage points between 2010 and 2019 (Figure 13). The EEIR fell 2.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2015 and fell by over 2.4 percentage points between 2015 and 2019. Improving security during both periods is attributable to increasing incomes and falling or modestly increasing costs, though in different proportions. Senior incomes fell during the 2007-2008 financial crisis and following recession as interest rates and returns on investment fell to record lows and Social Security cost-of-living allowances were eliminated due to deflation. In the Great Recession’s aftermath, senior incomes recovered slowly with the economy. 2015-2018 saw retiree incomes increase along with interest



rates and a booming stock market, while overall inflation started at zero in 2015 and rose to 2.4 percent in 2018. Between 2010 and 2019, the state’s *median* retiree income increased by 18% among single elders and by one-third among elder couples, while the Elder Index increased between 3.3% and 10.8%, depending on household type.

Insecurity rates fell between 2010 and 2019 for a broad cross-section of seniors. The largest decreases in insecurity were found primarily among those seniors with the lowest rates—senior couples (5.8 percentage points), homeowners without mortgages (7.5 percentage points) and homeowners with mortgages (6.9 percentage points) (Table 2). EEIRs also fell for single women and men and seniors reporting self-care difficulty. The most remarkable decrease in insecurity was seen among retired Black households—13.8 percentage points.¹⁶

Table 2: Percentage Point Change in Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Households, 2010-2019*

Household Type	Change in Insecurity Rate	Household Type	Change in Insecurity Rate
All Households	-4.7	Owner w/o Mortgage	-7.5
Single Women Households	-3.4	Renter	0.6
Single Men Households	-0.9	Owner w/ Mortgage	-6.9
Couple Households	-5.8	Black Head of Household	-13.8
Women	-5.4	White Head of Household	-3.3
Men	-5.0	Hispanic Head of Household	2.1

Source: Author's calculation using US Census Bureau 2010 & 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS

* Negative percentage point changes indicate falling insecurity rates and improving security.

In contrast, EEIRs *increased* over the period for two senior subgroups—Hispanic households (2.1 percentage points) and renters (0.6 percentage points).

Figure 14 depicts EIR decreases between 2010 and 2019. It suggests a significant increase in financial well-being among many, but also suggests that gaps among senior subgroups are not closing or are closing very slowly, and that EIRs for single householders and renters may remain much higher than EIRs for other seniors.

Measuring Potential Economic Security Impacts of Major Federal and State Support Programs

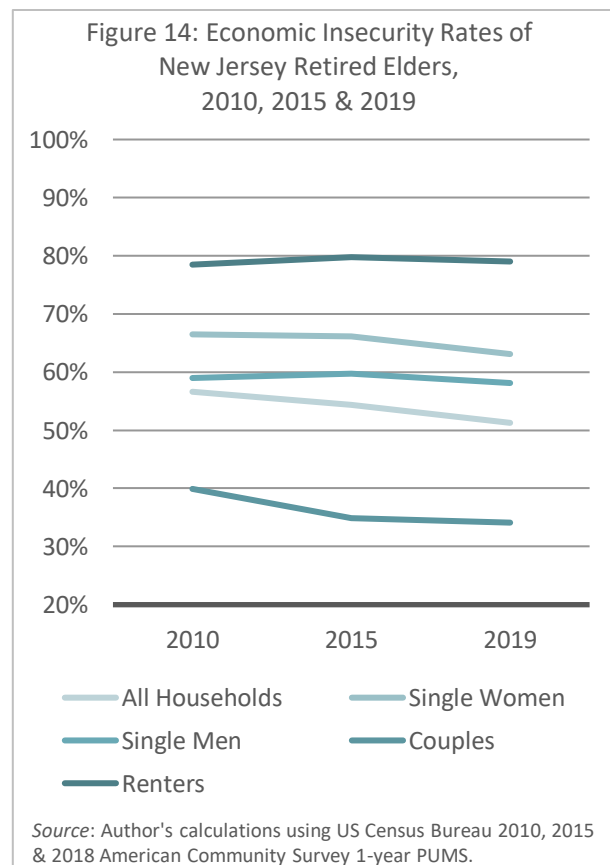
There are, essentially, two means of closing economic security gaps: increasing income and decreasing expenses. For retired seniors, means of increasing income are limited, but may include re-entering the labor force, selling real assets such as homes, cars or personal possessions, pursuing more aggressive investments, and obtaining a reverse mortgage. Alternatively, seniors can effectually borrow against their future consumption by accelerating spend-down of financial assets. Means of decreasing expenses include sharing housing or moving into cheaper housing—sometimes outside the state—giving up personal automobiles, eliminating non-basic needs from spending or spending less on essentials such as health care, insurances or food.

Several federal and state programs help New Jersey seniors maintain or increase income, decrease spending on basic needs, or obtain basic needs they might otherwise do without. The below is a list of major support programs available to the state’s seniors and a summary table of income eligibility limits (Table 3). The programs fall into three broad categories: income, health and housing/property taxes. Program descriptions include income and household resource (i.e., liquid asset) limits. Programs may have gross income limits, net income limits (after specific allowable expenses), or both. The list does not include Social Security and Medicare, “entitlement” programs in which workers “pre-pay” for benefits through payroll taxes during their working years.¹⁷

Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income, administered by the federal Social Security Administration, provides monthly cash payments to elders with



no or very low incomes. SSI eligibility income and resource/asset limits are the lowest of any work or income support available to New Jersey elders. For 2019, elders received the difference between their incomes and \$9,627, and qualifying elder couples receive the difference between their incomes and \$14,188. This includes the NJ State Supplement Payment (SSP), which provides additional small monthly cash payments to elders who receive SSI. Single and married elders must maintain no more than \$2,000 and \$3,000 in resources, respectively, not including a home, one car and household items.

Health

New Jersey Care/Medicaid

New Jersey Care offers complete Medicaid coverage to very low-income elders. It pays for Medicare Part A and B premiums. For 2019, the annual income and resource limits for a single elder were \$12,490 and \$4,000, respectively. For elder couples, the annual income limit is \$16,910 and the resource limit is \$6,000.

Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS)

Medicaid Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) provides long-term services and supports through NJ FamilyCare managed care. MLTSS provides home- and community-based services which help seniors remain in their homes and communities, including personal care, home-delivered meals, mental health services and care management. MLTSS also coordinates assisted living, nursing home care and community residential services. Participating seniors must require assistance with basic activities such as bathing or other self-care, and in 2019, the annual income limit for single seniors was \$27,756.¹⁸

Qualified Income Trust (QIT)

Qualified Income Trusts (QITs, a.k.a. Miller Trusts) allow seniors to participate in Medicaid Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) when incomes exceed income eligibility limits. Participants enter into a written trust agreement to deposit income above 300% of the Federal Benefit Rate (a.k.a. SSI Standard Benefit Amount) into a special bank account. The income deposited into the QIT is not counted when determining Medicaid financial eligibility. QITs have special conditions that must be met and are subject to approval and monitoring. Individual participants must maintain no more than \$2,000 in resources.

Medicare Savings Programs (QMB, SLMB, SLMB-QI-1)

The Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) include Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) and Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary-QI-1 (SLMB-QI-1). The QMB program helps low-income elders enrolled in Medicare Part A pay for all or part of Medicare Part B premiums, deductibles and co-payments. Premiums for Part C supplementary insurance are not covered. To qualify, an elder's gross annual income must be no more than \$12,490 for a 1-person household and \$16,910 for a 2-person household. Single and married elders must also maintain no more than \$7,730 and \$11,600 in resources, respectively.

The SLMB program pays for all or part of Medicare Part B premiums for qualified recipients. Recipients must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and C. There are two tiers of the SLMB program. To qualify for SLMB, a senior's gross annual income must be no more than \$14,988 for a 1-person household and \$20,292 for a 2-person household. SLMB-QI-1 recipients must have annual incomes of no more than \$16,872 for a 1-person household and \$22,836 for a 2-person household. For both the SLMB and SLMB-QI-1 programs, single and married seniors must maintain no more than \$7,730 and \$11,600 in resources, respectively.

Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy (LIS)

The Low Income Subsidy helps elders with prescription drug expenses. The federal government subsidizes participants' private Medicare Part D drug (insurance) plan premiums, and helps pay drug deductibles and co-payments. Those participating in Medicaid or Medical Savings Programs automatically qualify for LIS. For full eligibility, gross monthly income must be no more than 135% of the federal poverty level, or "FPL" (\$16,862 for a 1-person household; \$22,829 for a 2-person household). Thereafter the program provides help on a sliding scale to those with incomes up to 150% FPL (\$18,735 for a 1-person household; \$25,365 for a 2-person household). Single and married elders must also maintain no more than \$9,230 and \$17,160 in resources, respectively, to receive full LIS benefits. In order to receive partial LIS benefits, single and married seniors must maintain no more than \$14,390 and \$28,720 in resources, respectively.

Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)

Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled is a state-funded prescription drug program administered by the Department of Human Services that provides coverage for low-income elders whose incomes and/or resources exceed LIS limits. Elders must enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan in order to receive benefits. In 2019, recipients paid \$5 for generic prescriptions and \$7 for brand-name prescriptions, and the program pays for Part D premiums, deductibles and prescription costs exceeding the co-payment. Single elder and elder couple annual income limits were \$27,951 and \$34,268, respectively. There are no resource limits for the program.

Senior Gold

Senior Gold helps seniors with incomes or resources exceeding PAAD limits to pay for prescription drugs. Like PAAD, the program is state-funded and administered by the Department of Human Services. Elders must enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan to receive benefits under Senior Gold. Senior Gold recipients pay for their own Medicare Part D premiums, but pay only \$15 and 50% of the remaining cost for each prescription. However, once out-of-pocket costs reach \$2,000 per year for an individual or \$3,000 per year for a couple, the recipient is responsible only for flat \$15 co-payments. The annual income limit was \$37,951 for single elders and \$44,268 for elder couples in 2019. There are no resource limits for the program.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is funded by the USDA, which awards states grants used to provide low-income seniors with coupons exchangeable for foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agricultural programs. Those 60 or older must have household incomes no more than 185% FPL—\$23,107 for a 1-person household; \$31,284 for a 2-person household. Seniors can use SFMNP benefits to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the food stamps program, provides low-income households with electronic benefit cards which participants use to purchase food. The US Department of Agriculture funds the program through the Food and Nutrition Service, and New Jersey administers the program, including establishing eligibility and distributing benefits. Monthly income must be no more than 100% FPL—\$12,492 for a 1-person household; \$16,920 for a 2-person household—after a small deduction for earned income and deductions for portions of exceptional medical and housing expenses. In 2019, the single and elder couple liquid household resource limit was \$3,500.

Housing/Property Taxes

Universal Service Fund (USF)

The Universal Service Fund, a state fund administered by the Department of Community Affairs, helps New Jersey's low-income residents pay natural gas and electricity bills. Recipients receive a credit on their utility bills that varies with the percentage of income spent on natural gas and electricity. The maximum benefit per household is \$1,800 annually. Recipients must have incomes less than 175% FPL—\$23,112 for a 1-person household; \$31,284 for a 2-person household—and spend more than 3% of income on electric or natural gas service. If seniors heat their homes with electricity, they must spend more than 6% of income on electricity.

Lifeline Utility Assistance

Lifeline provides energy assistance to elderly and disabled households. The program issues a \$225 credit to eligible households to pay for natural gas and electricity bills. There are no resource limitations, but seniors must meet PAAD income eligibility requirements or participate in PAAD, SSI or selected medical assistance programs.

LIHEAP/Home Energy Assistance (HEA)

The Home Energy Assistance program provides payment to energy providers on behalf of homeowners and tenants. HEA is federally funded and administered by the Department of Community Affairs and county welfare agencies and Boards of Social Services. In 2019, income limits were \$24,984 for a 1-person household and \$33,828 for a 2-person household. There are no resource limits. HEA benefits vary according to income, household size, fuel and vendor type and locality.

Housing Assistance

Seniors can receive housing subsidies from three programs funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP, formerly Section 8), public housing, and the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program. HCVP participants select any market-rate rental housing with a property owner accepting HCVP vouchers, and voucher amounts are based on a local "fair market rent" established by HUD. The Section 202 program provides capital and operating funds to developers and operators of subsidized senior housing with supportive services.

Those with 80% median family income (MFI) for a county (e.g., \$52,850 and \$40,150 for a single adult in Bergen and Cumberland Counties, respectively) are eligible for assistance. However, those with "very low" incomes, below 30% MFI (e.g., \$37,350 and \$25,100 for a single adult in Bergen and Cumberland Counties, respectively), are granted priority for limited assistance, and housing assistance recipients rarely have incomes above 50% MFI.

State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)

The State Rental Assistance Program is a state-funded program for low-income individuals administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The program provides rental assistance analogous to HCVP vouchers to those who do not receive federal program assistance. HCVP eligibility rules apply, and SRAP accepts only applicants with incomes below 30% MFI. The program maintains set-asides for elders.

Homestead Benefit

The Homestead Benefit (formerly the Homestead Rebate) provides property tax relief to homeowners. The amount of the Homestead benefit is based on property tax paid and income. For 2017 Homestead Benefits filed for in 2019, single seniors and senior couples with incomes up to \$100,000—not including Social Security payments and certain pension payments—received 10% of actual property tax paid in the base year, 2006. Those with incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000 were eligible for a 5% rebate.

Property Tax Reimbursement (Senior Freeze)

Property Tax Reimbursement “freezes” elders’ property taxes by allowing those who are eligible to pay the same property tax bills (for 2019) that they paid for a past base year in which they met program requirements. Recipients must have lived in New Jersey since 2008 or earlier, and have lived in the same home since 2015. Income must have been no more than \$89,013 in 2018 and \$91,505 in 2019 in order to qualify.

Property Tax Deduction/Credit

The Property Tax Deduction allows homeowner and renter elders to deduct 100% of their property tax (up to \$15,000) from their gross income on their NJ income tax returns. Renters are permitted deductions of 18% of annual rent. Those elders whose potential tax deductions would not reduce their tax bills by more than \$50 are eligible for a \$50 tax credit. For 2019 reimbursements, 2018 incomes must have been *more than* \$10,000 for a single elder and \$20,000 for an elder couple. Single elders with gross incomes of less than \$10,000—not including Social Security benefits and a portion of pension or IRA income—and elder couples with gross incomes of less than \$20,000 were eligible for a \$50 credit.

Annual Property Tax Deduction for Senior Citizens

The Annual Property Tax Deduction for Senior Citizens allows elders a property tax deduction of up to \$250. Recipients must have lived in their New Jersey homes for one year by October of the pre-tax year. To qualify, elders must have gross incomes of no more than \$10,000—not including monies from Social Security or federal and state pensions or disability and retirement programs.

Table 3: 2019-2020 New Jersey Public Support Program Income Limits as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and New Jersey Statewide Elder Index

Support Program*	% FPL, 1 Adult (2019)	% FPL, 2 Adults (2019)	% Elder Index, Single Homeowner w/o Mortgage (2019)	% Elder Index, Single Renter (2019)	% Elder Index, Homeowner Couple w/ Mortgage (2019)
Federal Poverty Guidelines/Level (FPL)	\$12,490	\$16,910			
Supplemental Security Income	77%	84%	34%	33%	27%
SNAP	100%	100%	45%	42%	33%
New Jersey Care (Medicaid)	100%	100%	45%	42%	33%
QMB Medicare Saving Program	100%	100%	45%	42%	33%
SLMB Medicare Saving Program	120%	120%	53%	51%	39%
Medicare Part D Low-Inc. Subsidy, full	135%	135%	60%	57%	44%
SLMB-QI-1 Medicare Saving Program	135%	135%	60%	57%	44%
Medicare Part D Low-Inc. Subsidy, partial	150%	150%	67%	63%	49%
Universal Service Fund	185%	185%	82%	78%	60%
LIHEAP/Home Energy Assistance	200%	200%	89%	84%	65%
PAAD**	224%	203%	100%	94%	66%
Lifeline	224%	203%	100%	94%	66%
SRAP***	225%	190%	N/A	95%	N/A
Senior Gold**	304%	262%	135%	128%	85%
Housing Assistance***	423%	357%	N/A	178%	N/A

* Income limits may be gross income or net/countable income, and are elder-specific where possible.
** Income eligibility limits, set by state law, are not normally expressed as a percentage of the FPL.
*** Federal and state income limits are 80% and 30% area/county median income, respectively. 75% of federal and 100% of state subsidies are reserved for tenants with incomes of 30% AMI or lower. (Families with assets exceeding \$5,000 may have a portion of asset-based income added to household income during eligibility determinations.)

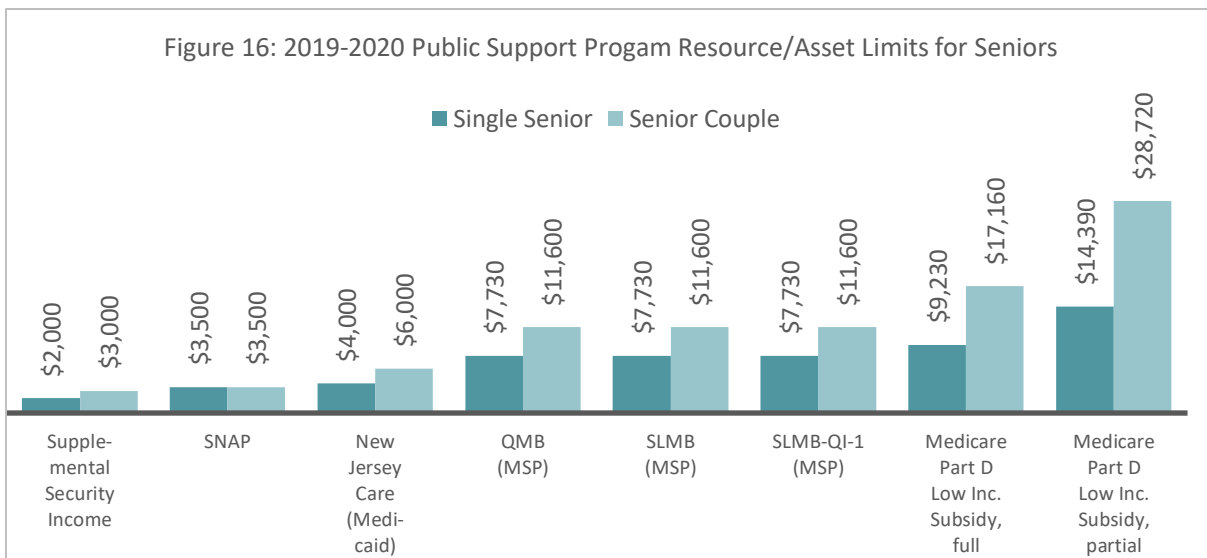
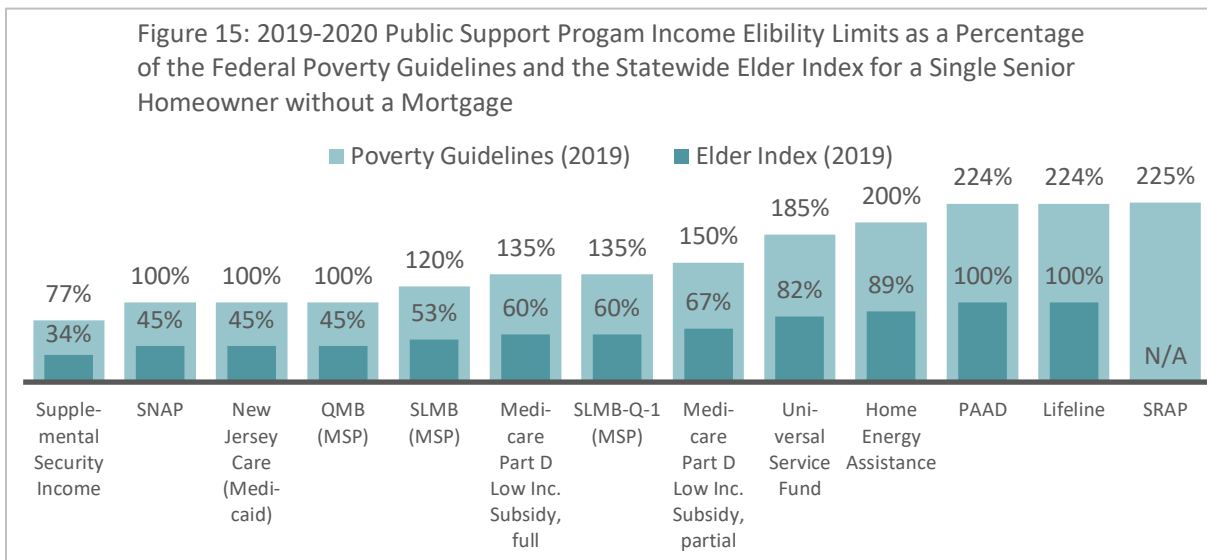
Expressing Support Program Income Eligibility Limits in Terms of the Elder Index

Public supports can be divided into two groups: basic income, food and medical assistance which helps the officially poor survive or better manage their poverty; and more inclusive programs which protect security and help participants remain safely in their homes. The first group of programs tends to have income eligibility limits centered around 100% of the federal poverty guidelines; the second group of supports tends to have higher income eligibility limits, and some of those limits are not expressed relative to the poverty guidelines.

Figure 15 presents support program income eligibility limits as a percentage of both the federal poverty guideline for a single adult and the lowest economic security threshold, the Elder Index for a single senior

homeowner without a mortgage. Excepting Senior Gold and federal housing assistance, income eligibility limits range from 77% to 225% of the poverty guideline and from 34% to 100% of the Elder Index.¹⁹ The “safety net” has been created, patchwork, over decades, and yet, when benchmarked against the Elder Index, eligibility limits suggest an assistance continuum which leads to security—approximately 100% of the Elder Index—and addresses the needs of both the officially poor and those not poor but still living within the shadow of poverty.²⁰

Resource limits—limits on program participants’ savings and other liquid assets—are usually higher for support programs with higher income eligibility limits (Figure 16). Programs such as housing assistance, energy assistance and property tax credits, which have higher income eligibility limits, do not have resource limits.



Demonstrating the Impact of Support Programs on Elder Economic Security Rates

Once economic security gaps and available support programs have been identified, it becomes possible to demonstrate how programs fill gaps by increasing income or decreasing expenses.

In the following modeling exercise, US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) income, household composition, housing, and other data are used to calculate support program income eligibility and “benefit” amounts for each of the state’s retired senior households. ACS data is then used to calculate how benefit amounts help close security gaps by moving a household closer to its local Elder Index.²¹ Three types of support are modeled:

- state property tax relief (Homestead Benefit, Property Tax Reimbursement, Property Tax Deduction/Credit, and Annual Property Tax Deduction for Senior Citizens)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Social Security Cost-of Living-Allowance (COLA) annual inflation adjustment to Social Security payments

The property tax relief calculation uses household income, housing and property tax information to calculate relief amounts under 2019 tax year rules. The SNAP calculation uses reported household composition, housing cost and income information to calculate SNAP benefit amounts under 2019-2020 program rules. The Social Security calculation uses the 2009 5.8% COLA to calculate increases in Social Security payment amounts reported by households within the American Community Survey.

Table 4 presents average benefits for seniors eligible for benefits. SNAP provides the largest single program benefit, \$1,612 per year, but provides benefits to the smallest proportion of New Jersey seniors, 8.2%.²² Property tax relief in its several forms provides an average total of \$936 per household per year, and the Social Security COLA provides an average of \$1,224 per year. COLA effects would be much lower if the calculation used a more typical cost of living allowance: Using the 2019 COLA of 2.8% results in an average household income increase of \$591 per year.

The three supports’ potential impact on statewide EEIRs is modest. The Social Security COLA decreases the statewide EEIR by 1.92 percentage points. Property tax relief contributes a 1.33 percentage point decrease in the statewide EEIR and reduces the EEIRs of homeowners with and without mortgages by 1.13 and 2.12 percentage points, respectively. Property tax relief has no effect on the statewide renter insecurity rate.

These modest changes in the overall statewide EEIR are not surprising, as a change in the EEIR only occurs when a household’s income starts off close enough to the Elder Index for the entire gap between the household’s income and the Elder Index to be filled by a support. This explains why modeled SNAP benefits, which are received by seniors with incomes well

Table 4: Average Annual Benefit to New Jersey Retired Senior Households, by Program/Support, 2019-2020

Social Security COLA	Property Tax Relief	SNAP	Social Security COLA + Property Tax Relief + SNAP
\$1,224	\$936	\$1,612	\$2,205

Source: Author’s calculations using US Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS and 2019-2020 program/support information. 2018 incomes inflated using the Consumer Price Index.
 Note: Weighted average annual program/support benefit among participants or those income eligible for programs

below even the lowest Elder Index, had no measurable impact on 2019 EEIRs. Greater effects are seen, however, when a household receives multiple income increases or supports; when the Social Security COLA, property tax relief, and SNAP are modeled together, the overall New Jersey statewide EEIR falls by 3.37 percentage points.

Larger decreases in insecurity rates would likely be seen if additional programs and supports were modeled; for example, if SNAP, Medicaid, energy assistance and/or housing assistance were all modeled for retired seniors with incomes near the federal poverty guidelines. Larger changes in EEIRs might also be seen if modeling included supports' ability to help seniors avoid large expenses, such as the additional medical care or institutional care costs prevented by Medicaid or long-term care programs.

Additional insight into a support program's impact can be gleaned by examining how much it might increase a single household's economic security level (a household's income as a percentage of its Elder Index). Table 5 presents each program's median impact on the economic security levels of participants/recipients. SNAP improves economic security levels the most among its recipients, by a median 5.4 percentage points.²³ (For example, a senior household has a monthly income equal to 35% of its Elder Index, and its monthly SNAP benefit effectually moves the household's income to 40.4% of its Elder Index.) A large COLA provides a median 3.8 percentage point improvement in economic security. Property tax relief provides a median 3.2 percentage point improvement in economic security. When all three programs are modeled together, the median change in economic security level for households that participate in one or more of the three programs is 7.2 percentage points.

Maximum changes in economic security levels speak more directly to the importance of a program to a specific participant/recipient. SNAP boosts household security by as much as 15.7 percentage points, a large Social Security COLA increases security by as much as 15.9 percentage points, and property tax relief can increase security levels by as much as 16.6 percentage points (Table 5).²⁴ When combined, these programs increased economic security levels by as much as 24.6 percentage points.

Table 5: Percentage Point Increase in Economic Security Levels of New Jersey Retired Senior Households, by Program/Support, 2019-2020

	Social Security COLA	Property Tax Relief	SNAP	Social Security COLA + Property Tax Relief + SNAP
Median	3.8	3.2	5.4	7.2
Maximum	15.9	16.6	15.7	24.6

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS and 2019-2020 program/support information. 2018 incomes inflated using the Consumer Price Index.

Note: Median and maximum annual program/support benefit among participants or those income eligible for programs

Conclusion

The federal poverty guideline is an antiquated, one-size-fits-all measure, and its history and prominence have helped foster policy often limited to managing abject poverty. Seniors, families and policymakers

require additional information about households with incomes \$100, \$1,000 or \$10,000 above the poverty line, about the circumstances and basic needs of the 92% of New Jersey seniors who are not officially poor. Those managing personal finances and those providing assistance to seniors require an aspirational measure of economic security which allows them to speak in common terms about: how to make ends meet; who can and can't make ends meet; what should happen and what actually happens when seniors can't make ends meet; and the effects of economic insecurity on individuals, families, local communities/economies and public finances. While the 2018 statewide 8.0% senior poverty rate²⁵ may prompt New Jersey residents to wonder what is wrong with the impoverished, a statewide overall EEIR of 52% should prompt them to ask what is wrong with retirement, whether traditional concepts of retirement are dated, and how retirement and retirement planning need to be improved.

Having EEIRs in hand makes it possible to explore the nature and remedies of insecurity in New Jersey. Potential foci of future Elder Index-related research might include the following. While many of these topics have already been addressed, at least in part, they have not been addressed within an economic security context.

- causes of economic insecurity at the state, county or sub-county levels
- how well, and for whom, available public support programs are designed to fill gaps between incomes and basic needs
- why insecurity rates vary greatly by county and whether or not retirement incomes, expenses and/or supports can and need to be addressed through state and county policy changes
- whether or not EEIRs are associated with inter-county migration or outward migration from the state
- current security levels and retirement preparation among the state's older workers
- forecasting future economic insecurity gaps and economic insecurity rates

Application of such information in policy and programs will improve government's ability to understand return on public investment and determine appropriate government roles in helping households build security. Such information can also be used in public information, within professional development, at public events and within private counseling sessions to educate current and future retirees and those who help seniors. The goal should be to increase the number of current and future seniors who are able to locate themselves on the economic security continuum, to establish saving and spending goals, to fully understand programs such as Social Security and Medicare, and to understand what public supports can and cannot do to promote independence and aging in one's own home. Use of the Elder Index and Elder Economic Insecurity Rates can and should support public policy which explicitly moves households along a security spectrum and increases self-determination, independence, and the ability to age in place. The end result will be more secure seniors and families who are better able to participate in local economies and contribute to stable communities.

Methodology

This brief calculates Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) by comparing annual incomes required for basic economic security, as defined by the 2019 New Jersey Elder Index, to 1-year 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) PUMS income data for New Jersey households. County-specific Elder Economic Insecurity Rates are calculated by comparing 2019 Elder Index values to 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey PUMS income data. One-year and 5-year ACS income data is inflated to 2019 using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.

The study is limited to households for which Elder Index values have been calculated—households composed of either a single adult age 65 or older or an elder couple consisting of two adults age 65 or older. All adults are fully retired, reporting zero earnings and no work in the past year. Household income consists of the ACS income categories: Social Security, retirement, interest and “other” income. Like all other public supports, Supplemental Security Income and public assistance are not included in income. Approximately 1.2% of households studied received public assistance cash income, not including Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income. Approximately 5.7% of households studied received income from Supplemental Security Income. The incomes of individuals living in homes they do not own and for which they do not pay rent are compared to the statewide New Jersey Elder Index value for renters.

Elder Economic Insecurity Rate values are tested for significance against the relevant American Community Survey PUMS dataset for New Jersey using a chi-squared test. Statewide EEIR values are statistically significant at $P < .05$ for all senior subgroups studied, other than (ACS categories) homeowners with mortgages, seniors reporting self-care difficulty and seniors reporting difficulty living independently.

The study of support program impacts uses ACS household composition, housing data, and other information to estimate support program income eligibility and benefit amounts for all retired senior-only households in the state. EEIRs are then recalculated assuming households apply for and receive these benefits. Three supports/programs are modeled:

- state property tax relief (Homestead Benefit, Property Tax Reimbursement, Property Tax Deduction/Credit, and Annual Property Tax Deduction for Senior Citizens)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Social Security annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)

Together these programs address both sides of the economic security ledger by providing income or reducing expenses (and in the case of food assistance, possibly providing a basic need seniors might otherwise do without). The programs were also chosen because the American Community Survey contains household information—Social Security income, property taxes paid, a food stamps receipt flag and other information—which allows their modeling.

Property tax relief eligibility and values are calculated based on 2018 ACS household income inflated to 2019, housing type and property tax data, and on 2018 and 2019 household income and property tax values.

Relief program eligibility and relief amounts are calculated under 2019 tax year rules. 2019 property taxes paid are 2018 property tax paid inflated using 2019 average total property taxes by county published by the NJ Department of Community Affairs. All households are assumed to meet all property tax relief residency requirements, and to have had the same household and housing statuses between 2015 and 2019. The current report assumes 2015 as homeowners' first Senior Freeze property tax reimbursement eligibility year, as the program requires seniors to have owned and lived in their homes since December 31, 2015. This results in a 4-year freeze in senior tax bills, rather than the new applicant 1-year freeze conservatively assumed in previous versions of this study. This change was made to better reflect NJ seniors' typical residency and Senior Freeze benefit, as the average tenure among seniors studied is 5.3 years.

SNAP benefit values are based on 2018 ACS income and housing costs inflated to 2019. Households are considered eligible for SNAP if they indicated receipt within the 2018 ACS. Benefit amounts were calculated using 2019-2020 program rules and include income deductions for "excess shelter costs" and the New Jersey Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowance. Calculations do not include deductions from gross household income for exceptional medical expenses; calculations therefore likely underestimate benefit amounts for some senior households.

The Social Security calculation uses household Social Security payment amounts reported within the 2018 ACS and the 2009 COLA of 5.8% to calculate increase in payments. Social Security Administration COLAs reflect general inflation within the US economy, and are equal to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) between the third quarter of a prior year and the third quarter of a current year. The 2009 COLA was exceptional, as COLAs have exceeded 2.0% only three times, and have been 0% three times, during the past decade. The 2019 COLA was 2.8% and the 2020 COLA is 1.6%.

Appendix A: Annual Elder Economic Security Standard Index for New Jersey, by County, 2019

Jurisdiction	Elder Person			Elder Couple		
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter	Owner w/ Mortgage
<i>New Jersey</i>	\$28,056	\$29,616	\$41,292	\$38,568	\$40,128	\$51,804
Atlantic County	\$25,944	\$26,844	\$36,504	\$36,516	\$37,416	\$47,076
Bergen County	\$30,516	\$32,376	\$47,184	\$40,620	\$42,480	\$57,288
Burlington County	\$26,304	\$27,288	\$37,284	\$37,392	\$38,376	\$48,372
Camden County	\$27,096	\$27,600	\$37,248	\$38,400	\$38,904	\$48,552
Cape May County	\$25,776	\$28,248	\$38,136	\$37,656	\$40,128	\$50,016
Cumberland County	\$25,188	\$27,552	\$33,876	\$37,236	\$39,600	\$45,924
Essex County	\$31,632	\$29,604	\$44,556	\$41,616	\$39,588	\$54,540
Gloucester County	\$26,400	\$27,828	\$37,368	\$38,100	\$39,528	\$49,068
Hudson County	\$29,448	\$30,924	\$43,812	\$39,516	\$40,992	\$53,880
Hunterdon County	\$28,932	\$31,824	\$41,076	\$39,624	\$42,516	\$51,768
Mercer County	\$26,784	\$27,480	\$39,432	\$36,804	\$37,500	\$49,452
Middlesex County	\$27,552	\$31,536	\$41,256	\$38,172	\$42,156	\$51,876
Monmouth County	\$27,924	\$28,716	\$42,240	\$38,304	\$39,096	\$52,620
Morris County	\$29,472	\$29,784	\$45,096	\$40,104	\$40,416	\$55,728
Ocean County	\$23,256	\$27,912	\$33,756	\$33,612	\$38,268	\$44,112
Passaic County	\$29,976	\$32,256	\$45,024	\$40,056	\$42,336	\$55,104
Salem County	\$25,476	\$27,408	\$33,756	\$36,864	\$38,796	\$45,144
Somerset County	\$29,136	\$31,500	\$43,284	\$39,396	\$41,760	\$53,544
Sussex County	\$27,648	\$29,664	\$39,456	\$38,496	\$40,512	\$50,304
Union County	\$29,832	\$29,412	\$44,316	\$39,948	\$39,528	\$54,432
Warren County	\$26,592	\$28,260	\$40,908	\$37,584	\$39,252	\$51,900
Minimum Value	\$23,256	\$26,844	\$33,756	\$33,612	\$37,416	\$44,112
Maximum Value	\$31,632	\$32,376	\$47,184	\$41,616	\$42,516	\$57,288
Median Value	\$27,552	\$28,716	\$40,908	\$38,304	\$39,588	\$51,768

Adapted from data provided by the Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston.

Appendix B: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elders, 2019

Households	Insecurity Rate
All Elder Households	52%
All Single Elder Households	62%
Single Elder Women Households	63%
Single Elder Men Households	58%
All Elder Couple Households	34%
Hispanic Households	83%
Black Households	65%
Asian Households	62%
White Households	49%
Households without a Mortgage	37%
Renter Households	79%
Households with a Mortgage	51%
Individuals	
Elder Women	51%
Elder Men	41%
All Elders Who Have Self-Care Difficulty	62%
Elder Women Who Have Self-Care Difficulty	66%
Elder Men Who Have Self-Care Difficulty	55%
All Elders Who Have Difficulty Living Independently	60%
Elder Women Who Have Difficulty Living Independently	64%
Elder Men Who Have Difficulty Living Independently	51%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS

Appendix C: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Households, by County, 2019

	Insecurity Rate
<i>New Jersey</i>	52%
Atlantic County	51%
Bergen County	55%
Burlington County	41%
Camden County	56%
Cape May County	52%
Cumberland County	58%
Essex County	66%
Gloucester County	44%
Hudson County	75%
Hunterdon County	40%
Mercer County	46%
Middlesex County	51%
Monmouth County	47%
Morris County	42%
Ocean County	40%
Passaic County	61%
Salem County	53%
Somerset County	43%
Sussex County	43%
Union County	57%
Warren County	50%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

Appendix D: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Single Elder Households, by County, 2019

	Insecurity Rate
<i>New Jersey</i>	62%
Atlantic County	63%
Bergen County	63%
Burlington County	52%
Camden County	64%
Cape May County	65%
Cumberland County	71%
Essex County	74%
Gloucester County	54%
Hudson County	79%
Hunterdon County	50%
Mercer County	56%
Middlesex County	60%
Monmouth County	58%
Morris County	54%
Ocean County	50%
Passaic County	74%
Salem County	63%
Somerset County	51%
Sussex County	56%
Union County	64%
Warren County	56%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

Appendix E: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Couple Households, by County, 2019

	Insecurity Rate
<i>New Jersey</i>	34%
Atlantic County	28%
Bergen County	40%
Burlington County	23%
Camden County	36%
Cape May County	36%
Cumberland County	37%
Essex County	39%
Gloucester County	27%
Hudson County	60%
Hunterdon County	27%
Mercer County	23%
Middlesex County	36%
Monmouth County	25%
Morris County	25%
Ocean County	24%
Passaic County	38%
Salem County	32%
Somerset County	30%
Sussex County	27%
Union County	38%
Warren County	38%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

Appendix F: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Women, by County, 2019

	Insecurity Rate
<i>New Jersey</i>	51%
Atlantic County	47%
Bergen County	54%
Burlington County	39%
Camden County	55%
Cape May County	50%
Cumberland County	56%
Essex County	65%
Gloucester County	43%
Hudson County	74%
Hunterdon County	38%
Mercer County	44%
Middlesex County	52%
Monmouth County	45%
Morris County	41%
Ocean County	40%
Passaic County	61%
Salem County	54%
Somerset County	43%
Sussex County	41%
Union County	57%
Warren County	50%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

Appendix G: Economic Insecurity Rates of New Jersey Retired Elder Men, by County, 2019

	Insecurity Rate
<i>New Jersey</i>	41%
Atlantic County	43%
Bergen County	46%
Burlington County	31%
Camden County	45%
Cape May County	42%
Cumberland County	46%
Essex County	54%
Gloucester County	33%
Hudson County	67%
Hunterdon County	32%
Mercer County	36%
Middlesex County	40%
Monmouth County	35%
Morris County	32%
Ocean County	29%
Passaic County	47%
Salem County	38%
Somerset County	32%
Sussex County	34%
Union County	46%
Warren County	44%

Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

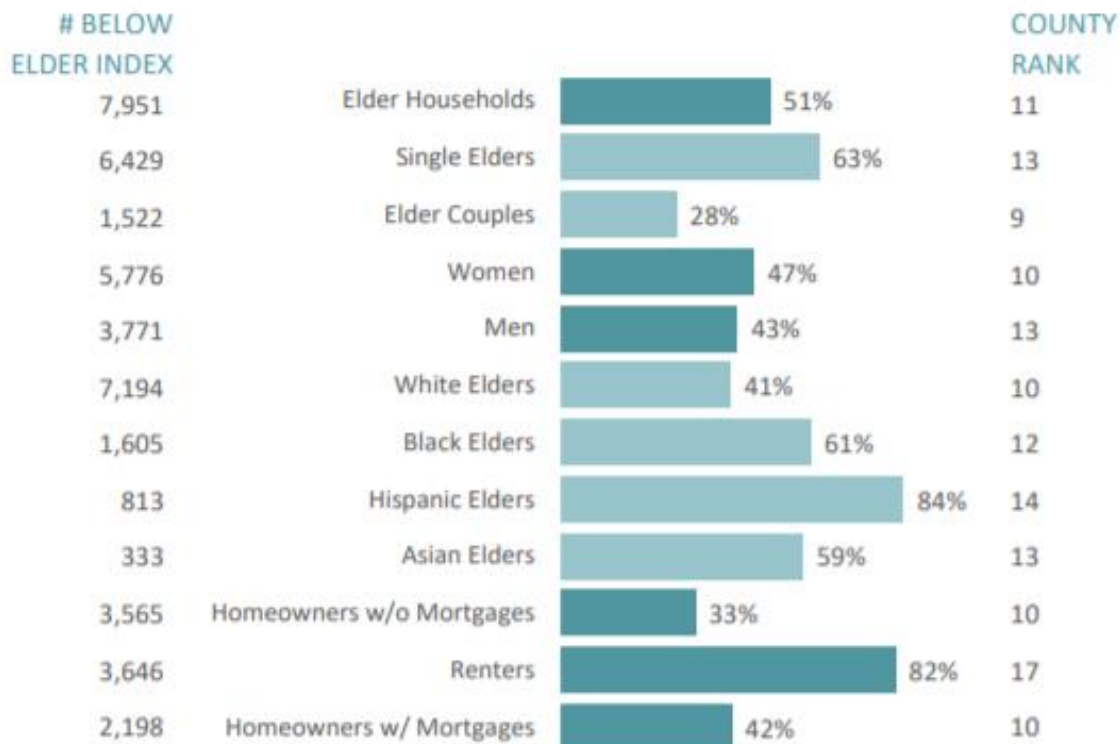
Living Below the Line in Atlantic County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Atlantic County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

15,587	7,951 (51%)	4,546 (37%)	3,405 (14%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

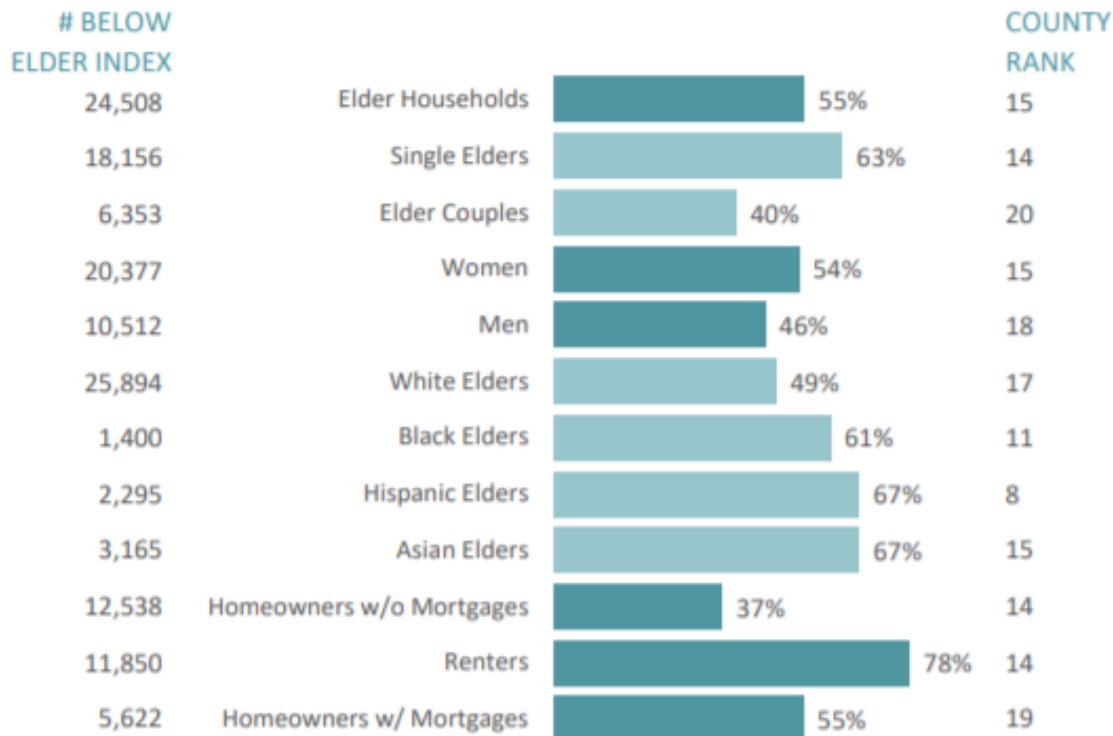
Living Below the Line in Bergen County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Bergen County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

44,520	24,508 (55%)	16,728 (38%)	7,781 (17%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

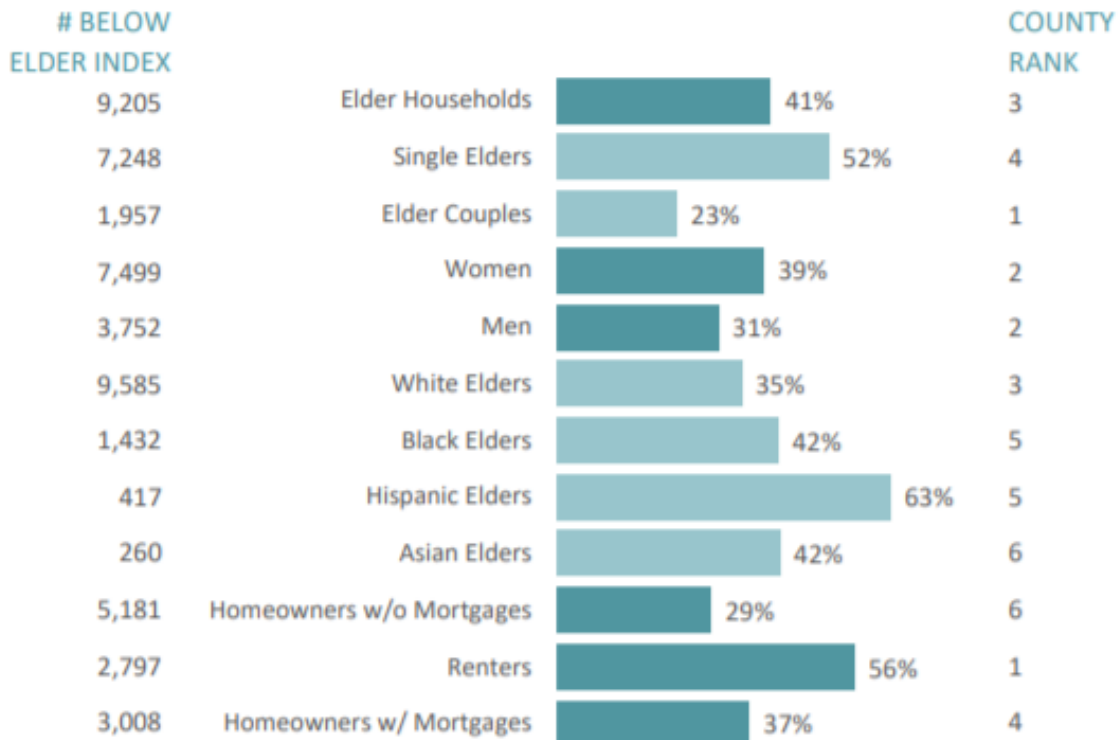
Living Below the Line in Burlington County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fall below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Burlington County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

22,684	9,205 (41%)	7,088 (31%)	2,117 (10%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

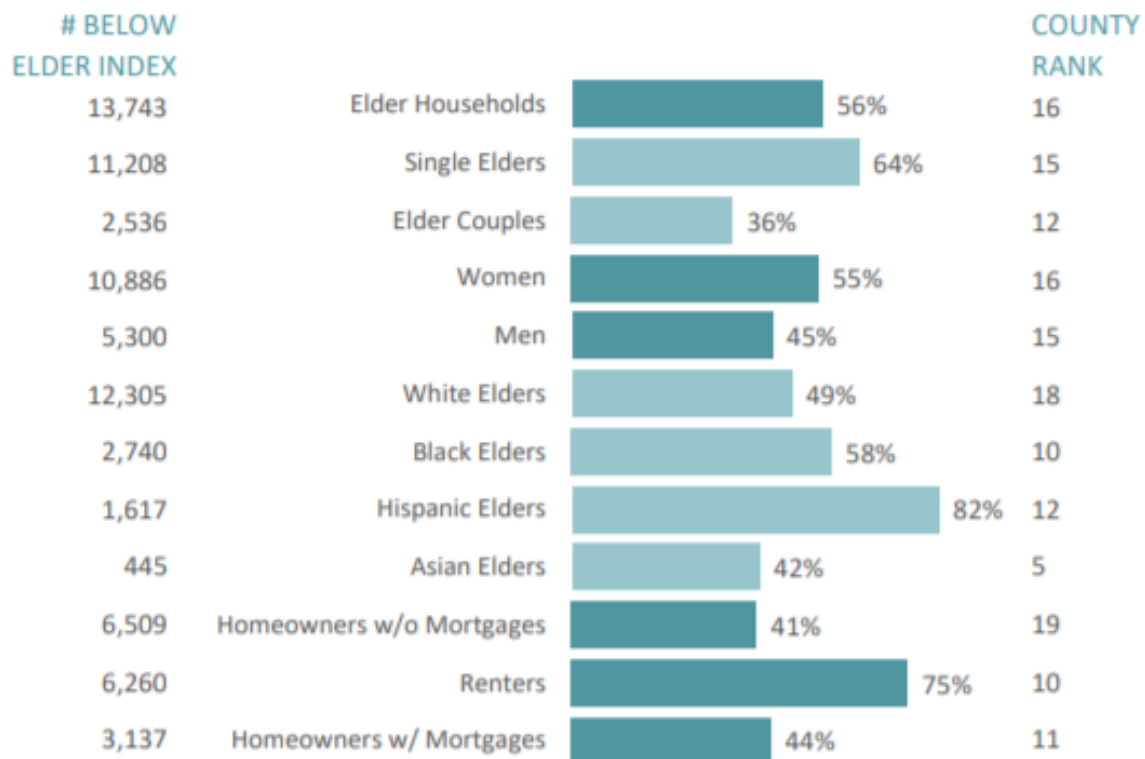
Living Below the Line in Camden County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Camden County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

24,651	13,743 (56%)	8,960 (36%)	4,783 (20%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

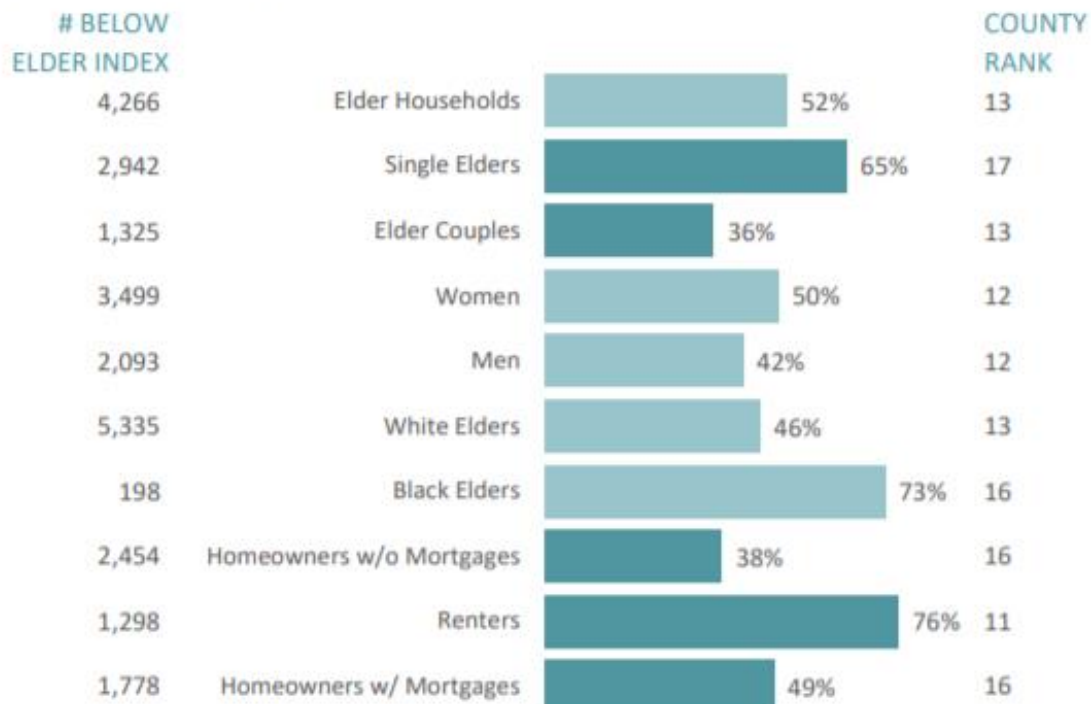
Living Below the Line in Cape May County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Cape May County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

8,229	4,266 (52%)	2,985 (38%)	1,281 (14%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

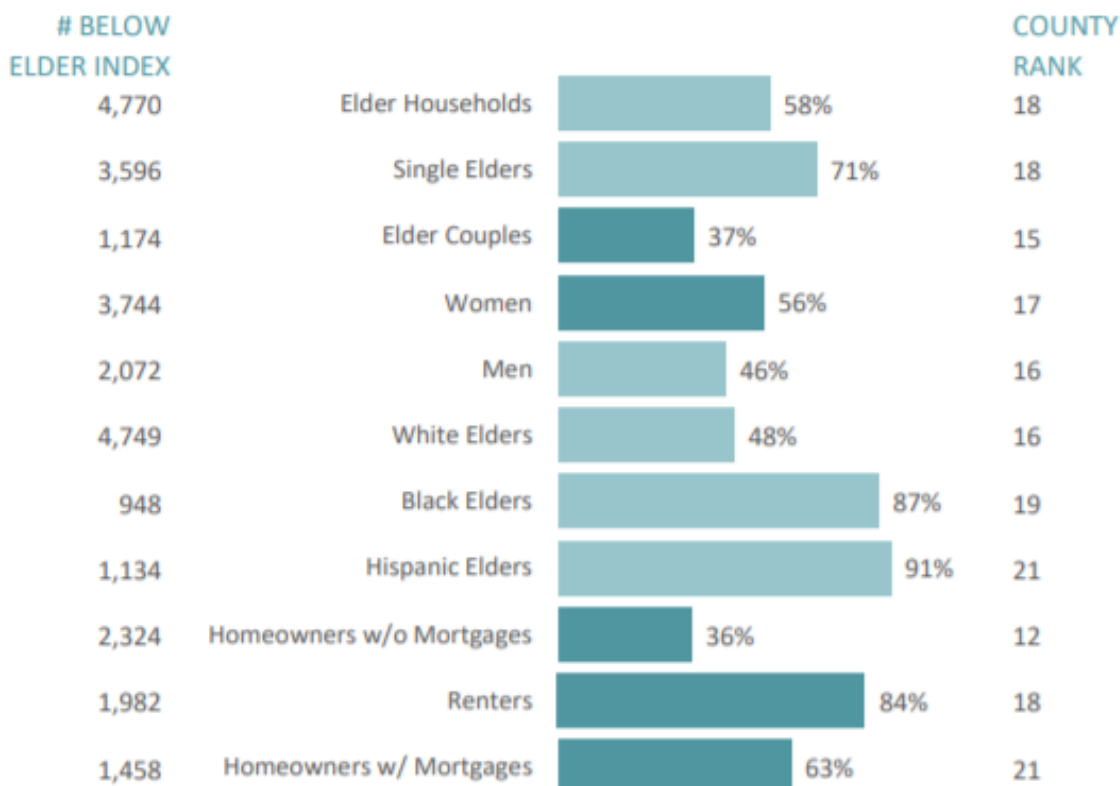
Living Below the Line in Cumberland County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Cumberland County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

8,272	4,770 (58%)	2,730 (40%)	2,040 (18%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

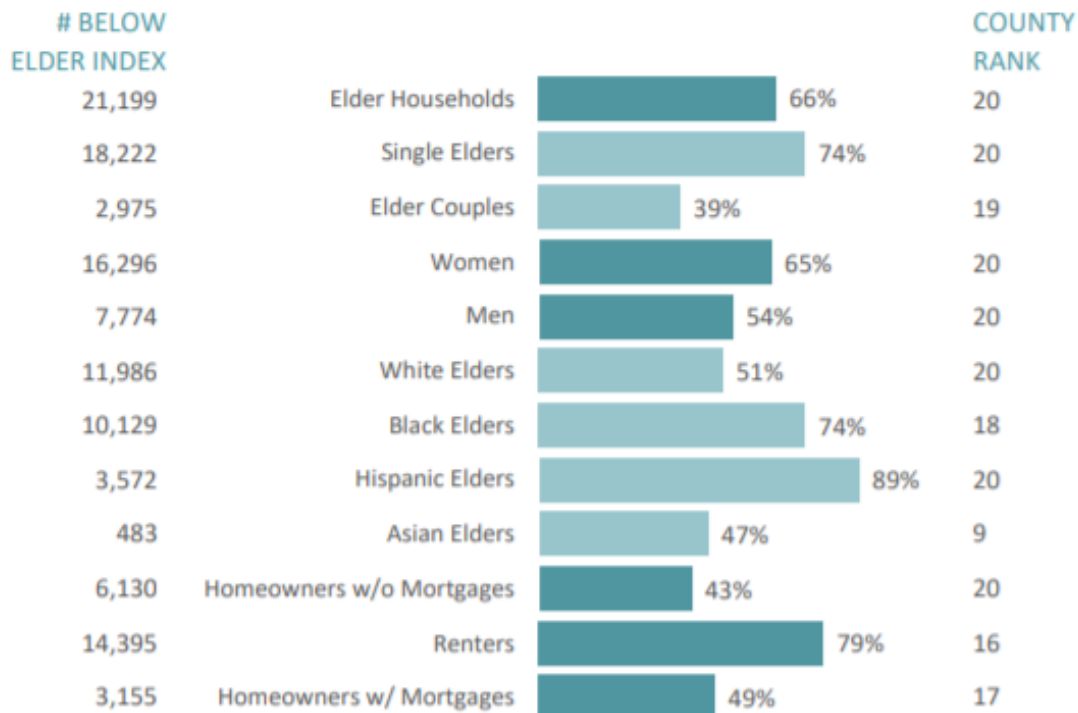
Living Below the Line in Essex County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Essex County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

32,057	21,199 (66%)	12,920 (40%)	8,279 (26%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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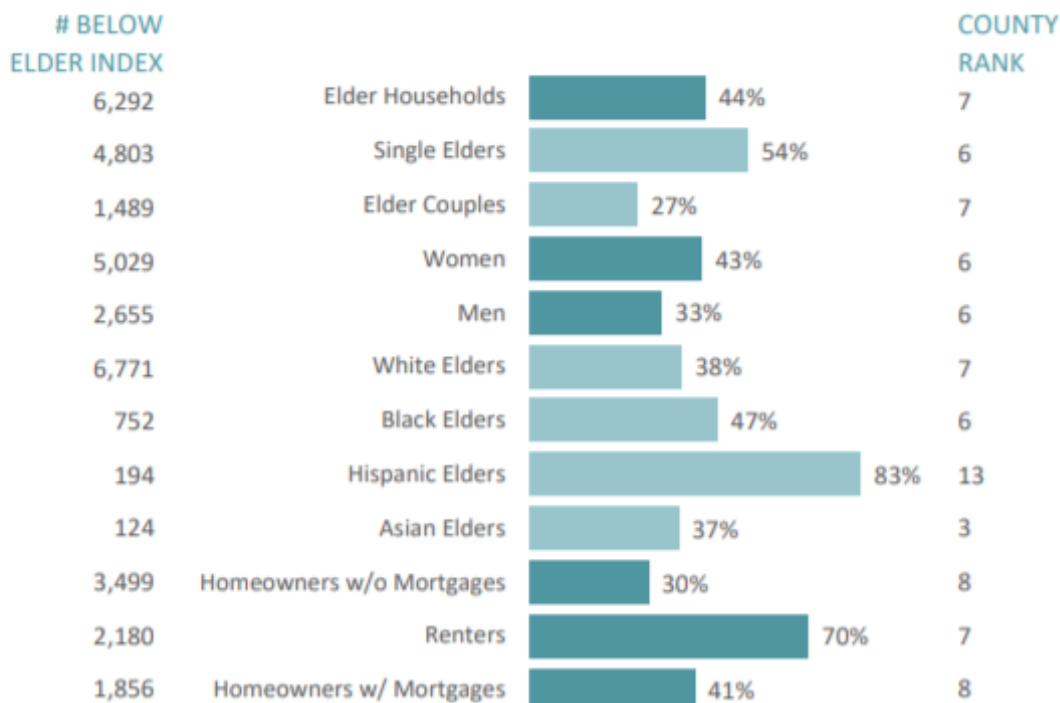
Living Below the Line in Gloucester County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Gloucester County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

14,361	6,292 (44%)	4,860 (34%)	1,432 (10%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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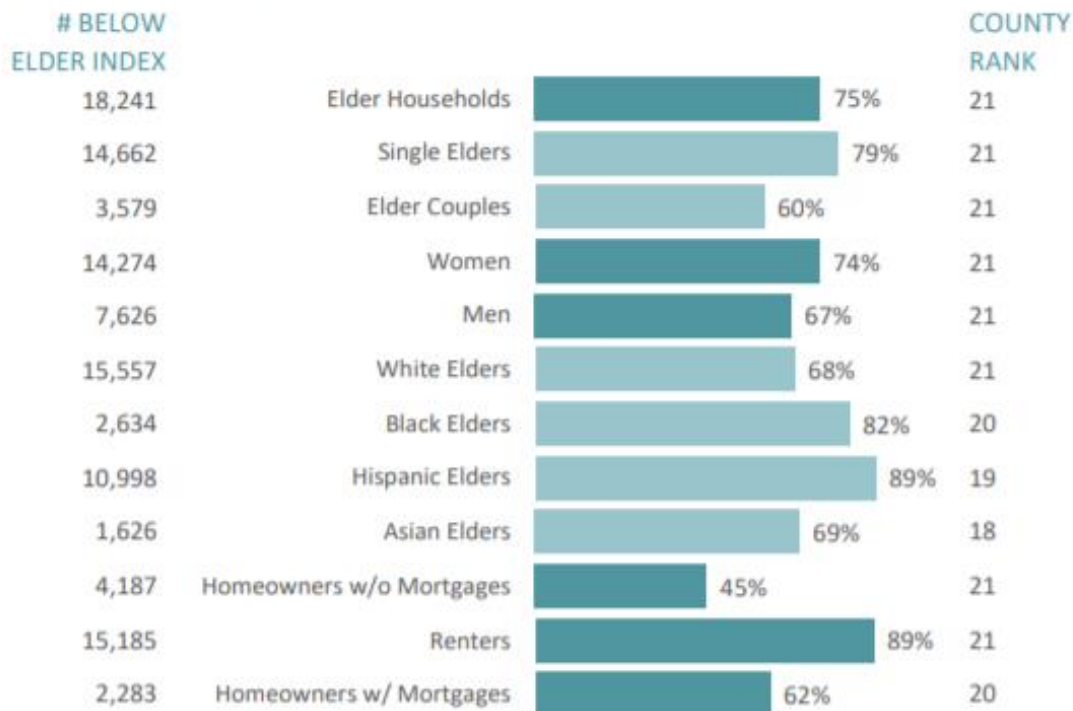
Living Below the Line in Hudson County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Hudson County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

24,462	18,241 (75%)	9,409 (39%)	8,832 (36%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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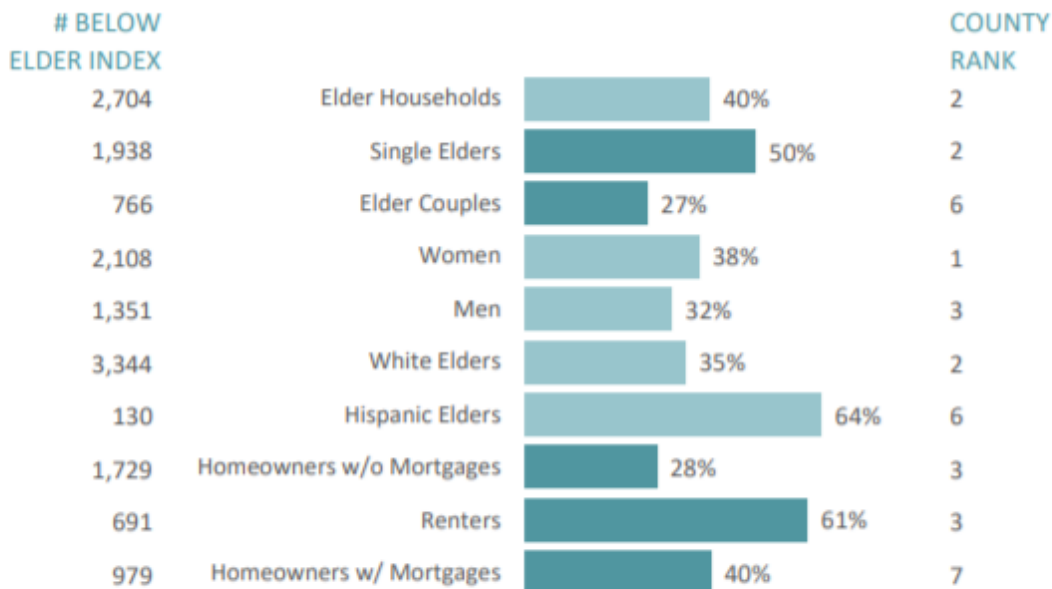
Living Below the Line in Hunterdon County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Hunterdon County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

6,777	2,704 (40%)	2,090 (31%)	614 (9%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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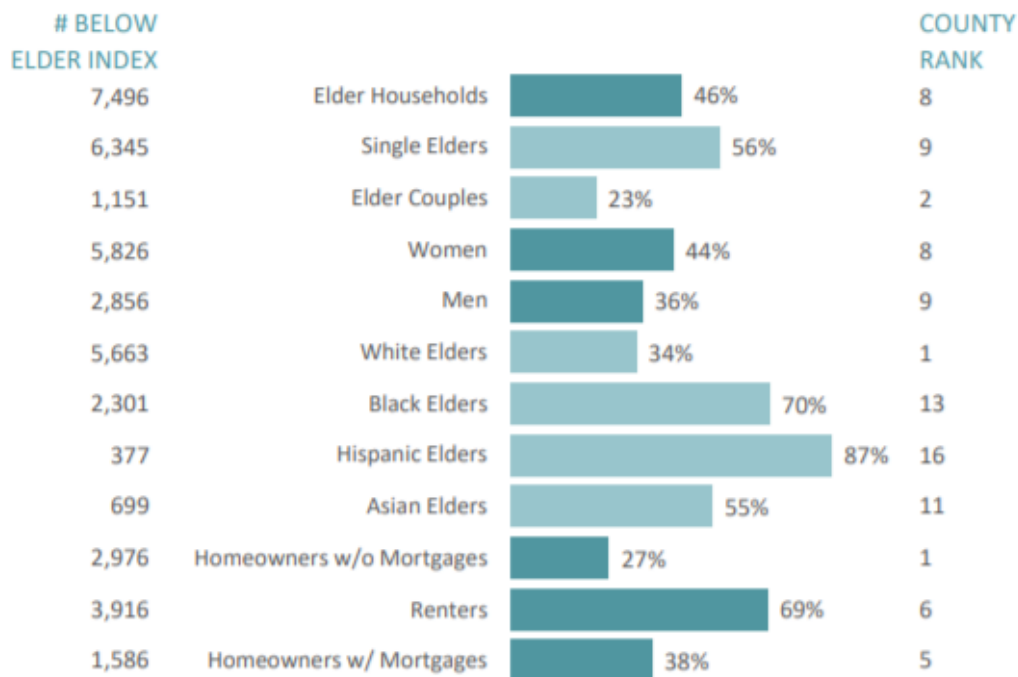
Living Below the Line in Mercer County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Mercer County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

16,240	7,496 (46%)	4,822 (30%)	2,674 (16%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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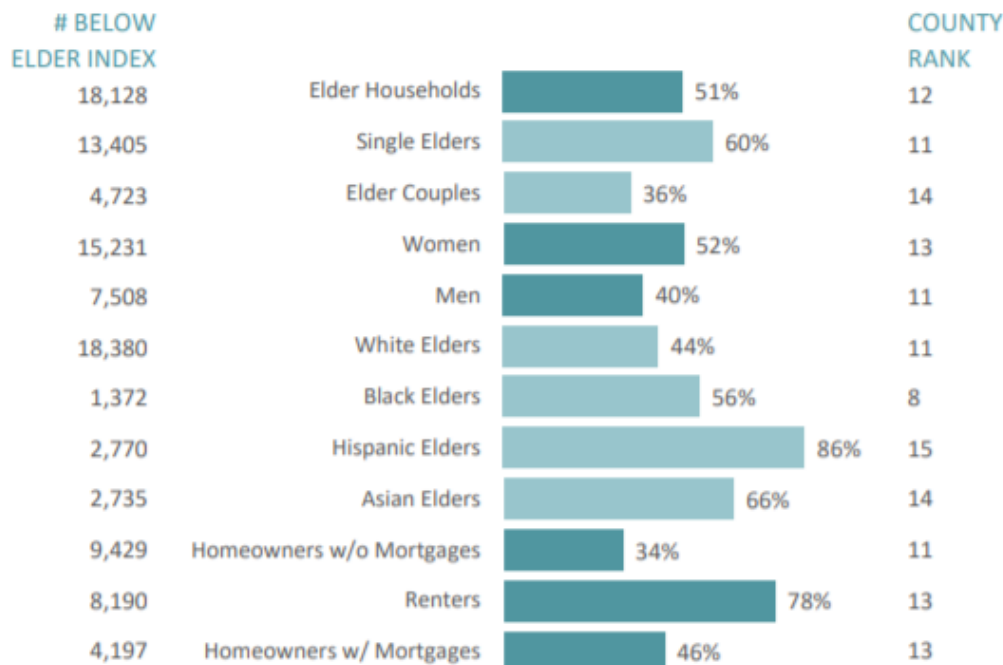
Living Below the Line in Middlesex County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Middlesex County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

35,302	18,128 (51%)	11,975 (34%)	6,153 (17%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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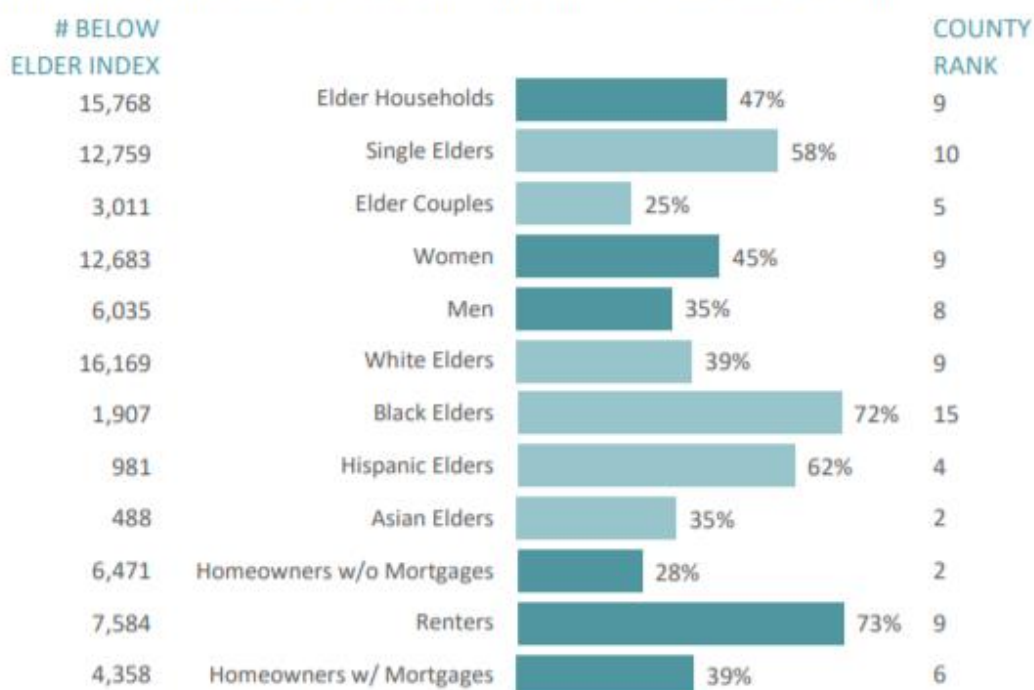
Living Below the Line in Monmouth County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Monmouth County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

33,751	15,768 (47%)	11,779 (35%)	3,990 (12%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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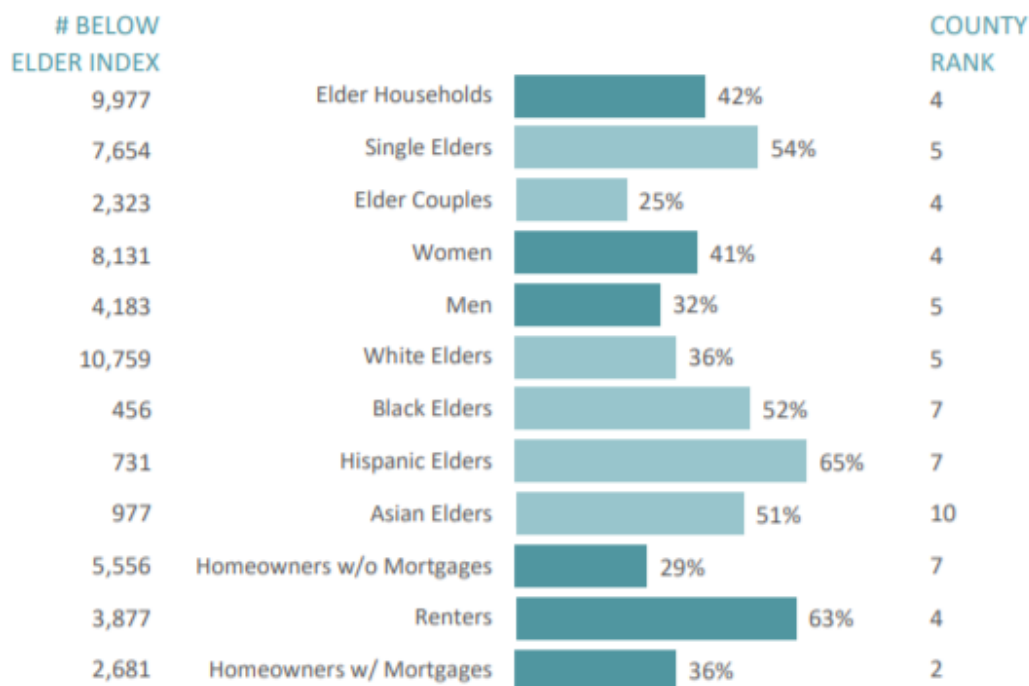
Living Below the Line in Morris County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Morris County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

23,520	9,977 (42%)	7,623 (32%)	2,354 (10%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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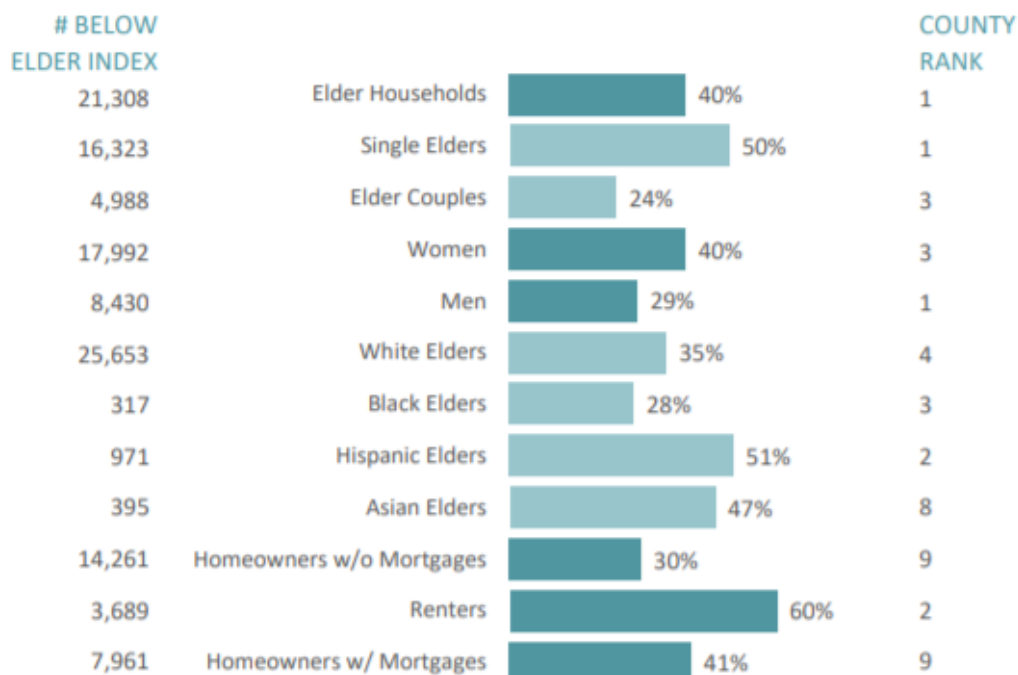
Living Below the Line in Ocean County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Ocean County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

53,485	21,308 (40%)	15,569 (29%)	5,740 (11%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

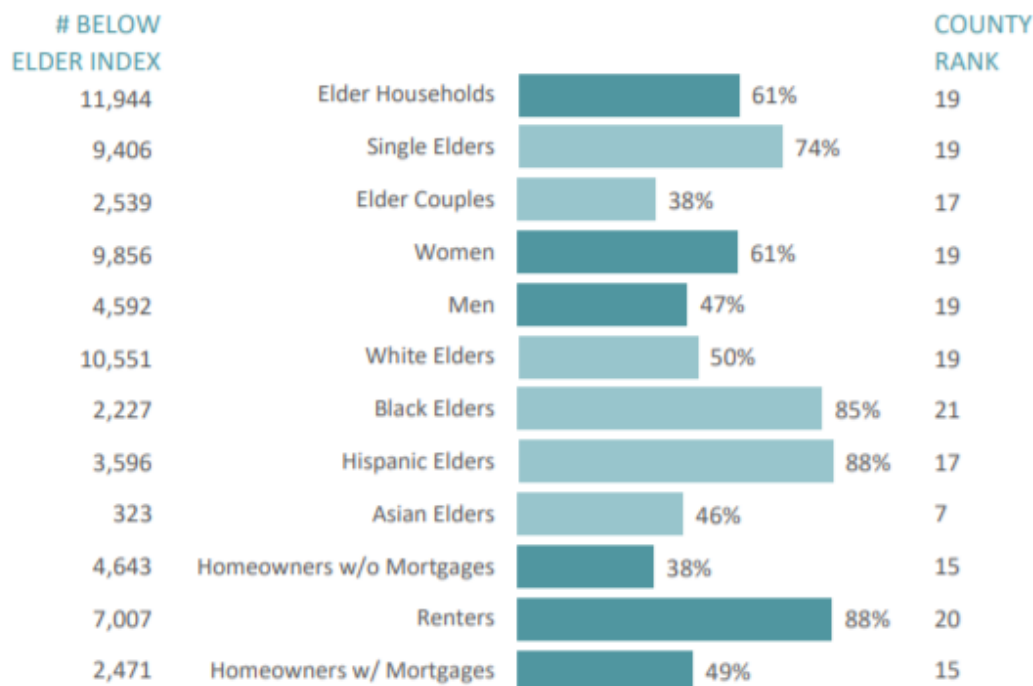
Living Below the Line in Passaic County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Passaic County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

19,428	11,944 (61%)	7,584 (39%)	4,360 (22%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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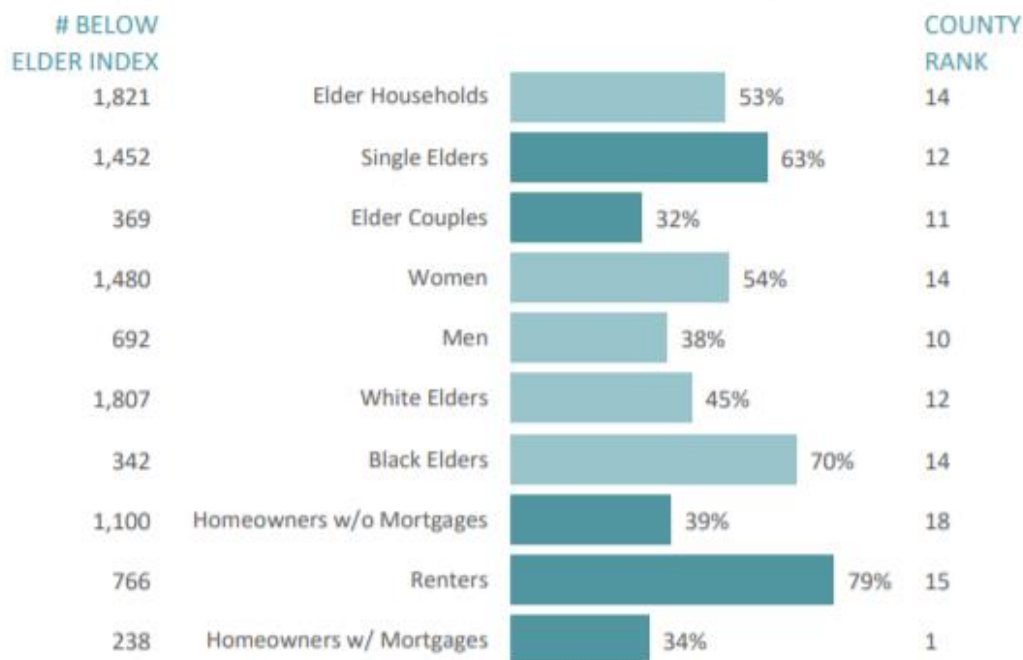
Living Below the Line in Salem County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Salem County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

3,448	1,821 (53%)	999 (39%)	822 (14%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

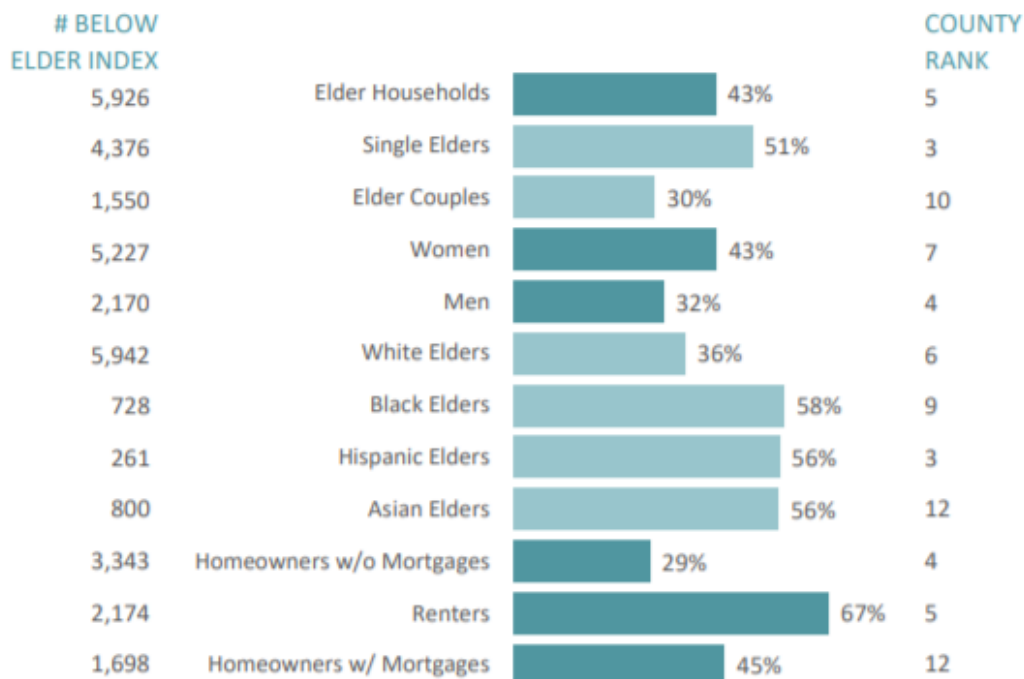
Living Below the Line in Somerset County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Somerset County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

13,807	5,926 (43%)	4,295 (31%)	1,631 (12%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

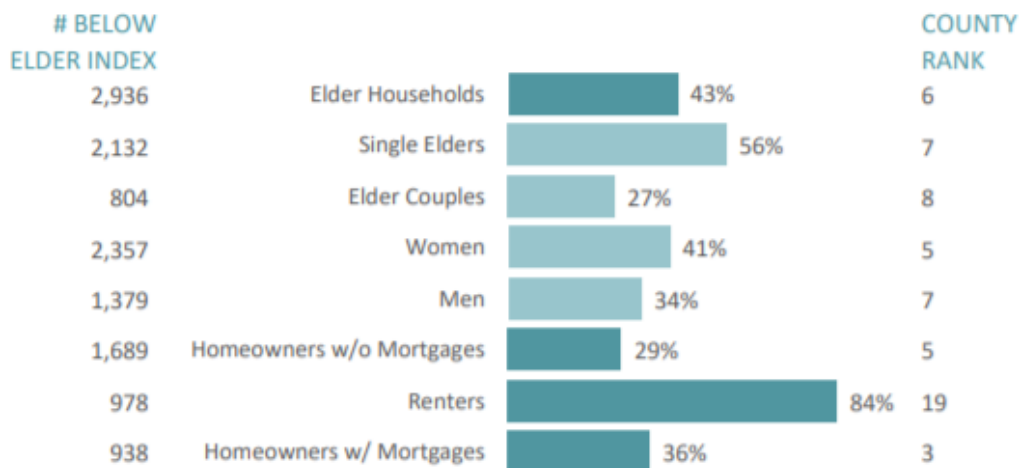
Living Below the Line in Sussex County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Sussex County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

6,778	2,936 (43%)	2,350 (35%)	586 (8%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

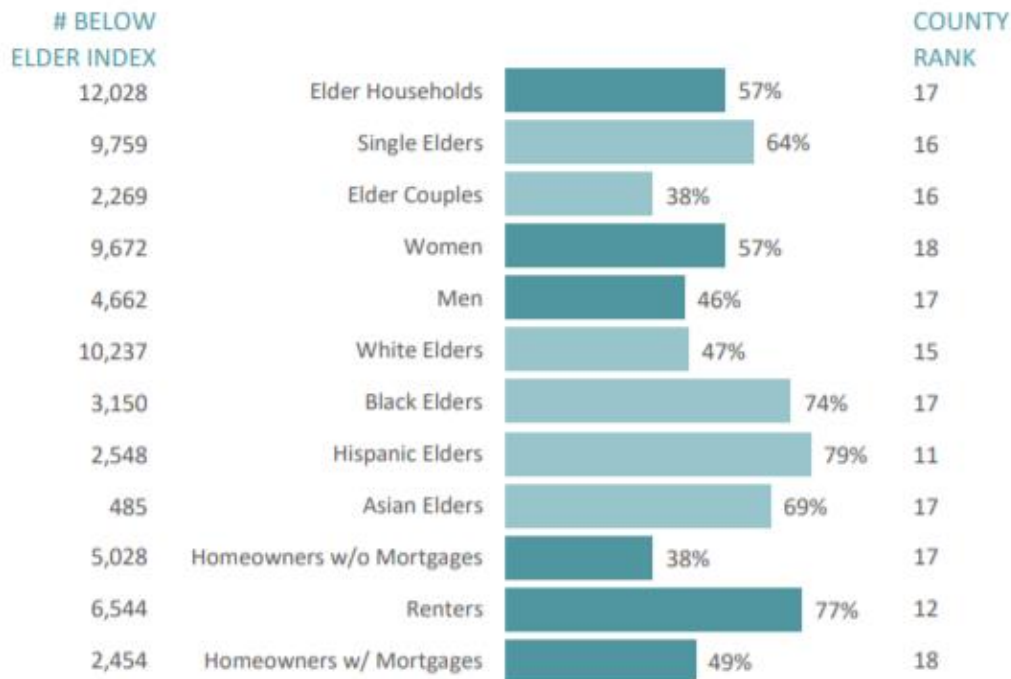
Living Below the Line in Union County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Union County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

21,158	12,208 (57%)	7,614 (36%)	4,414 (21%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

* The Elder Index is a measure of the incomes retired seniors need to meet basic needs and age at home, without relying on public assistance, loans or gifts. The Elder Index budget includes housing, food, Medicare Part C and out-of-pocket healthcare costs, minimal travel by car or public transportation, and miscellaneous household consumables and personal care items. For 2019, the annual NJ Elder Index ranged from \$23,256 for a single homeowner without a mortgage in Ocean County to \$57,288 for an elder couple with a mortgage in Bergen County. More information on the New Jersey Elder Index and EEIRs can be obtained from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services](#) and the [New Jersey Foundation for Aging](#).

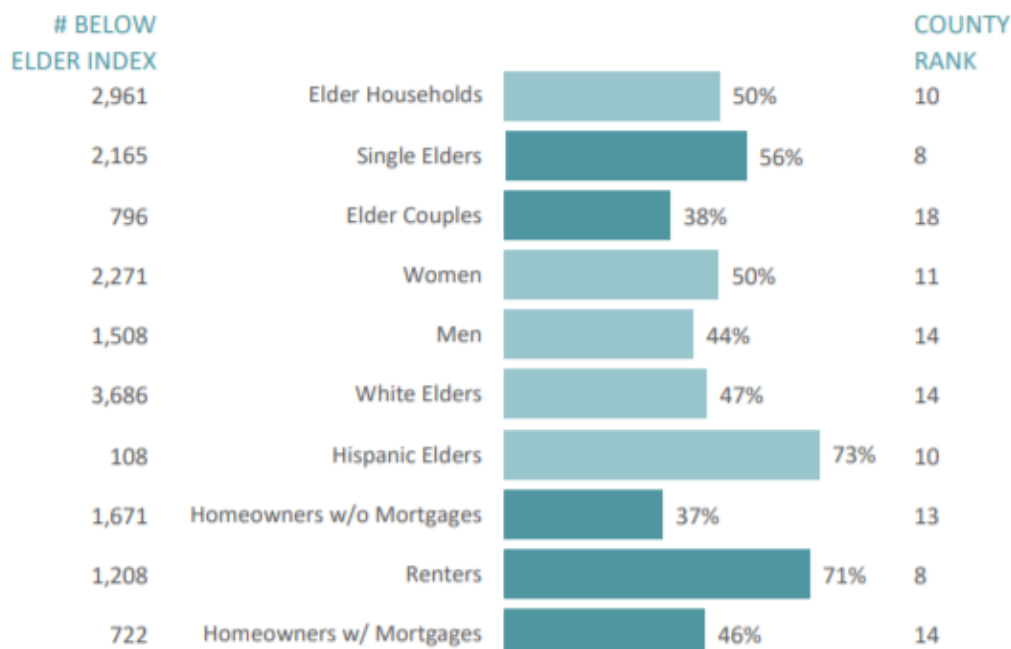
Living Below the Line in Warren County

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Warren County.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

5,941	2,961 (50%)	2,324 (39%)	637 (11%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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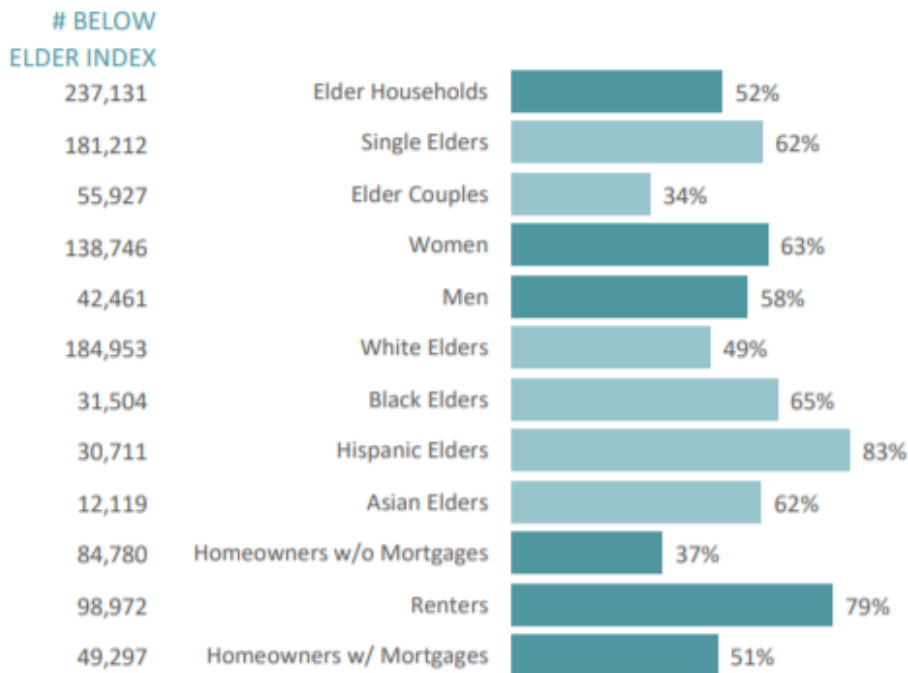
Living Below the Line in New Jersey

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates

Elder Economic Insecurity Rates (EEIRs) are the percentages of New Jersey's retired seniors (65+) and retired *senior-only* households whose incomes fell below the 2019 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for New Jersey.* Seniors with incomes below the Elder Index are more likely to go without basic needs and to be unable to age in their own homes.

434,458	223,175 (52%)	149,250 (35%)	73,925 (17%)
SENIOR-ONLY HOUSHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS BELOW ELDER INDEX	HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN ELDER INDEX & POVERTY	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

EEIRs vary greatly by location, household type, gender, race/ethnicity and housing type. EEIRs are particularly high for single seniors, women, men and women of color, and renters.



Source: Author's calculations using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year PUMS

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¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor. Consumer Price Index: All Urban Consumers (Current Series). <https://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/cu> (March 12, 2020). Price data is data for the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island metro area, with the exception of prescription medicine data, which is for the United States.

² Elder-only households are those composed of single adults age 65 and older who live alone and elder couples age 65 and older who do not reside with additional family members. Older adults who live in group quarters and/or reside with multiple family members or roommates are not included in this analysis, as it is not possible to determine an economic security budget or who within a household pays for expenses. All calculations, tables and figures in this report are for retired elder-only households.

³ The US Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) compares household income to an itemized budget standard similar to the Elder Index. However, the SPM budget is not specific to seniors, and is a measure of abject poverty which does not speak directly to the large proportion of seniors who are not officially poor but are at risk of poverty or destabilizing insecurity.

⁴ For more information on the Elder Index methodology, see *The National Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index: Methodology Overview* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston. 2017) and *The 2019 New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston. 2020). While public supports, particularly food support programs and energy assistance, are critical to helping many elders address the gap between income and economic security needs, elders who depend on public assistance programs are not considered secure.

⁵ All Elder Index values used in analyses and this report are for seniors who self-report being in "good" health. For Elder Index values for seniors who self-report poor or excellent health, please see *The 2019 New Jersey Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston. 2020).

⁶ State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. 2019 Property Tax Information. https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/property_tax.html (February 20, 2020).

⁷ Vincent, Grayson K. and Victoria A. Velkhoff. *The Next Four Decades: The Older Population in the United States: 2010 to 2050*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, Government Printing Office, 2010.

⁸ US Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S0103; using American FactFinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov> (January 09, 2020).

⁹ The group "Hispanic" includes those self-identifying as Hispanic, Latino or Spanish on the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

¹⁰ Wider Opportunities for Women. *Living Below the Line: Economic Insecurity and Older Americans. No. 3: Race/Ethnicity*. Washington, DC: Wider Opportunities for Women, 2015.

¹¹ Due to small sample size, retirement income figures for Asian women may be unreliable.

¹² DeNavas-Walt, Carmen and Bernadette D. Proctor. *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013*. Washington, DC: US Department of Commerce, 2014.

¹³ Copeland, Craig. *Employment-Based Retirement Plan Participation: Geographic Differences and Trends, 2013*. Washington, DC: Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2014.

¹⁴ Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans. *Disparities for Women and Minorities in Retirement Savings*. Washington, DC: US Department of Labor, 2010.

¹⁵ US Government Accountability Office. *Retirement Security: Women Still Face Challenges*. Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2012.

¹⁶ Black and Hispanic New Jerseyans are 13% and 20% of the state's population, respectively, and together comprise 16% of fully retired senior-only households. The 2018 American Community Survey survey included 478 Black (up from 442 in 2017) and 299 Hispanic (up from 328) householders who were fully retired and lived in 1- or 2-person households. These respondents represented 48,142 Black seniors and 36,895 Hispanic seniors. While EEIRs for Black and Hispanic seniors are statistically significant, finer cuts of the data, such as income and EEIRs data for Black and Hispanic men and women, involve smaller sample sizes and should be used with caution.

¹⁷ Whether Social Security and Medicare should be considered entitlements, benefits or something other has been a matter of debate. Social Security is not currently means tested and has no income or asset eligibility limits.

¹⁸ Long-term care assistance eligibility calculations can be complicated, as households may receive utility allowances and spouse "maintenance" and housing allowances. Home equity and spouse resources/assets are also considered.

¹⁹ Most federal and state support program income eligibility limits are adjusted annually relative to poverty guidelines adjusted for inflation. Federally funded support programs, such as housing and energy assistance, which do not tie income eligibility limits to the guidelines, tie limits to median area income, and limits are adjusted annually. As a result, income eligibility limits often remain constant as a percentage of area incomes over time. Eligibility limits for state-funded support programs, such as tax relief programs, are more likely to be cut or not adjusted upward over time to reduce budget impacts.

²⁰ This report draws no conclusions on whether or not supports are sufficiently funded and accessible by seniors, or whether or not current program income and resource eligibility limits are optimal.

²¹ The Elder Index itself is a static threshold and cannot be "lowered" through benefit receipt; however, within this modeling exercise, decreasing household expenses is considered the equivalent of increasing income.

²² SNAP values are calculated for those households indicating food stamp receipt in the 2018 American Community Survey. Monthly benefit estimates consider household income, family size, housing expense and the standard utility allowance. Estimates do not include earned income deductions (as all seniors studied are fully retired) or potential medical deductions from household income.

²³ The Elder Index itself is a static threshold and cannot be "lowered" through benefit receipt; however, within this modeling exercise, decreasing household expenses is considered the equivalent of increasing income.

²⁴ While Social Security COLAs greater than zero help all Social Security recipients, those who receive larger Social Security payments receive larger increases in payments; e.g., a 5% COLA increases a \$1,000 monthly payment by \$50, but increases a \$2,000 monthly payment by \$100, so COLAs disproportionately help households with higher payments.

²⁵ US Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17001; using American FactFinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov> (November 21, 2020).