

WOMEN'S LONGEVITY GAP — WOMEN LIVE LONGER ON LESS

AGE+
www.ageplus.org



LIVING LONGER—NOW, WHAT ABOUT BETTER?



Maybe it's the hard work or better self-care. Whatever the reasons, as a group, women on average live 4+ years longer than men. A woman turning 75 today has a life expectancy of 13 years, nearly two years longer than a man the same age—years sometimes called the “longevity gap.”

These extra years are a gift that can be full of joys, contentment and purposeful living. In Oregon, women make outsized contributions to communities as volunteers. In fact, they rank first in the nation.

Yet, whether a woman's extra years are well-lived may depend on whether she has rich social connections and is free of functional limitations. Most important may be her financial security. Will she have enough to pay for food, housing and care?

For many women, financial and social resources dwindle in the “bonus” years. A woman may need to cover her expenses single-handedly during a time in her life when her needs for care and medical attention are likely at their highest. Thousands of older, single women are being financially squeezed. In Oregon, more than 40% of women 75+ live in low-income households. That's a problem.

After a lifetime invested in paid and unpaid work, caregiving for family and neighbors, and tending to the strength and fabric of community life, it is threadbare gratitude for many to be left alone and poor in old age.

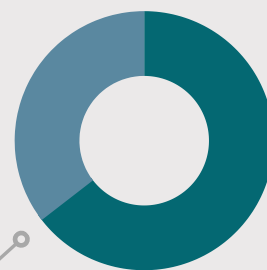
Over the next 20 years, the number of Oregon women 75+ will double. This demographic shift demands a clear-eyed look at older women's current circumstances and an unblinking understanding of how larger societal choices and shared assumptions have created these conditions.

GROWTH SPURT WOMEN 75+ WILL DOUBLE

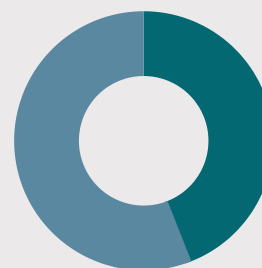
371,000
2040

183,000
2020

2020 SNAPSHOT OREGON WOMEN 75+



55% of Total
Live in
Rural Areas



44% of Total
Live Alone

ON HER OWN, WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Many Oregonians come into their retirement as part of a two-person household, sharing income and expenses. The median income for a household of two (\$27,000) falls steeply for a household of one. Ongoing spikes in the costs for food, gas, utilities and other basics add more stress year after year.



RURAL WOMEN

\$16,600

- 80% from Social Security
- 14% from retirement benefits
- 6% from other

TYPICAL INCOME



URBAN WOMEN

\$18,500

- 70% from Social Security
- 16% from retirement benefits
- 14% from other

BASIC COST OF LIVING

- Coos County.....\$25,000
- Umatilla County.....\$23,000
- Multnomah County....\$31,500
- Clackamas County.....\$36,000

**2022 FEDERAL
POVERTY LEVEL FOR A
HOUSEHOLD OF ONE:
\$13,600**

**POVERTY RATE IN
RURAL OREGON:
16%+**

Sources: Center for Women's Welfare, Univ. of Washington, 2021 @ selfsufficiencystandard.org; ACS 2017 PUMS, U.S. Census

WHY SUCH MODEST RETIREMENT INCOME?

Years of unpaid labor such as caregiving, lower wages and disrupted employment mean women generally have lower Social Security benefits, fewer pensions and less money saved over a lifetime.

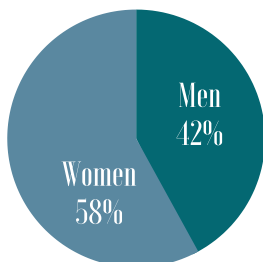
MOST LOW-WAGE JOBS ARE WOMEN'S JOBS

These low-wage jobs rarely come with benefits such as pensions or 401ks. Meanwhile, nearly 1 in 3 women in the low-wage workforce and 1 in 4 in the lowest-paying jobs are supporting children at home.

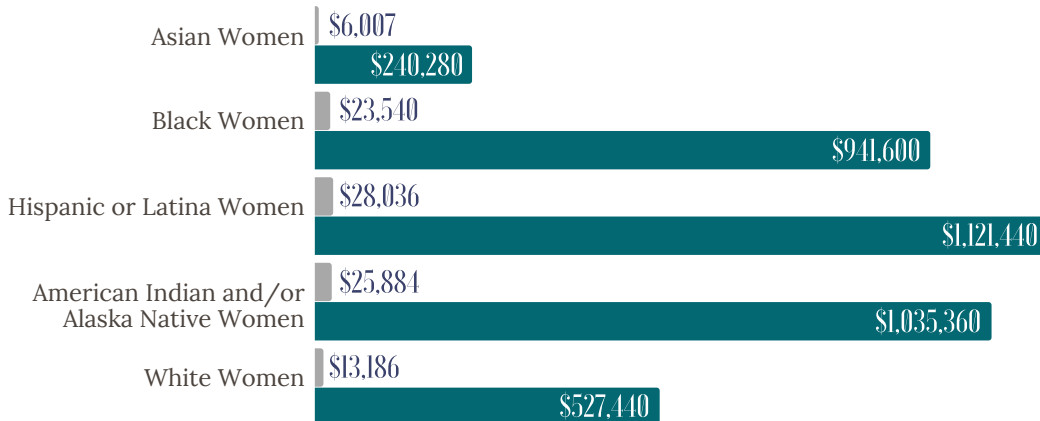
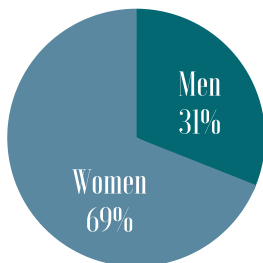
THE PERSISTENT INCOME GAP

Women of all races on average earn \$0.82 on the dollar compared to men. It may not sound like much. But the cumulative wage gap over a woman's career is more than a few cents.

**LOW-WAGE
WORKFORCE**



**LOWEST-WAGE
WORKFORCE**



■ Individual earnings gap in 2018 ■ Individual 40-year earnings gap

HER SALARY AS CEO OF THE HOUSEHOLD: \$000,000

The amount American women would have made in 2020 if they had earned minimum wage for the unpaid work they did around the house and caring for relatives is **\$1.5 trillion**.

WITH NO FINANCIAL BENEFITS PACKAGE

Women work plenty, but often don't get paid. When a woman devotes her time and energies to care work, childcare and household management, her work doesn't come with 401k plans, pensions or a buildup of Social Security credits. As a result, she will have less available income and savings in retirement compared to men.



LOOKING AHEAD—SOME HEFTY EXPENSES

COSTS TO MAINTAIN A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE HOME

Most older people say they want to grow older in their own home, in the community where they are comfortable. However, home can become a burden for someone without a partner to share the work, provide help climbing stairs, or take out the trash. Household expenses such as taxes, utilities and maintenance don't change much between a single person and a couple. And all the while, her house is aging along with her. Safety measures, maintenance and upkeep may be neglected or unaffordable.

MEDICAL AND HOME CARE EXPENSES

If her partner dies first, it often means their medical and care expenses will have depleted the couple's savings just when she comes into her own higher cost years. Without a partner to help with her needs, she may require extra money for home visits, medical care, house maintenance, transportation and more.



GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

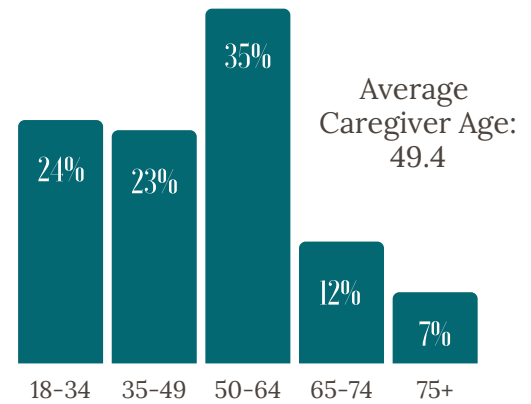
Transportation polls near the top of concerns for older adults. For older women, it is especially challenging. Although the total life expectancy for women 70-74 years is approximately 21 years, their "driving life expectancy" is only 11 years. This is bad news in an environment built for cars. Transportation to shopping, religious services and medical care will likely be more expensive. For example, in rural places, the median distance to the nearest grocery store is over 3 miles, and the nearest hospital is more than 17 minutes away. Even more costly to her health and emotional and mental well-being is the increased likelihood of social isolation, especially in the suburbs and rural places.

SHE'S THE BACKBONE OF CAREGIVING

BUT IN LATER YEARS, SHE'LL NEED THE CARE

WOMEN WORK A LOT OVER THE YEARS—AND IT COSTS THEM

Collectively, Oregon women and girls spend nearly 0.5 billion hours each year caring for family members. This caregiving is vital to Oregon's families and communities. Yet over their lifetimes, nearly all of Oregon's women and girls experience negative financial and career consequences related to giving this essential care.



2020 Base: Caregivers of Recipient Age 18+ (n=1,392)
Note: Results are rounded and may not equal 100%

WHAT IS THAT CARE WORTH?

Compare the monthly median costs of outside help in Oregon (2021)

IN-HOME CARE	COMMUNITY & ASSISTED LIVING	NURSING HOME FACILITY
<u>Homemaker Services</u> \$6,006	<u>Adult Day Health Care</u> \$2,654	<u>Semi-private Room</u> \$10,342
<u>Home Health Aide</u> \$6,101	<u>Assisted Living</u> \$5,045	<u>Private Room</u> \$11,113



SHE SPENT YEARS CARING FOR OTHERS—NOW WHO WILL CARE FOR HER?

Changes in Oregon's family structures may reduce availability of adult family members to provide care.

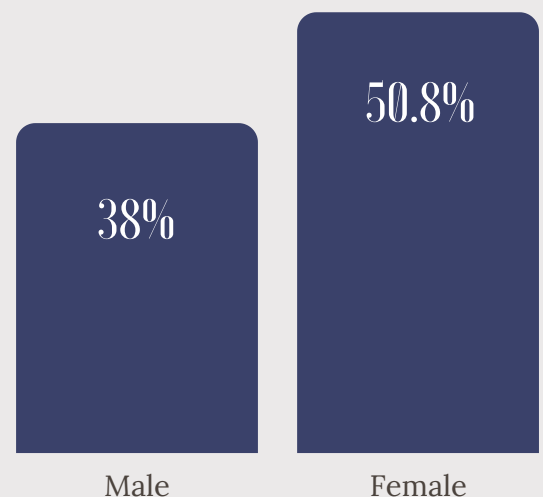
- As more young people delay marriage, they may be fully absorbed in child raising during the years Mom needs care.
- Complex living arrangements such as blended families and single parenting may lead to weaker family ties, resulting in less consistent, reliable support of aging parents.

IT'S A MOM'S WORLD—EXCEPT WHEN SHE'S NOT ONE

A new, first-ever report of its kind released in 2021 by the U.S. Census Bureau shows 15.2 million, nearly 1 in 6 (16.5%), adults age 55+ are childless. The level of childlessness among older adults is expected to increase and is even more common among older women living alone—26%.

ONE RESULT OF NO BUILT-IN CARE

Percentage of Retirees With an Overnight Nursing Home Stay After Age 70 Until Death, By Gender





THERE'S JUST NO STOPPING HER

OREGON COMMUNITIES DEPEND ON PEOPLE LIKE THESE OLDER WOMEN:

- *My partner was diagnosed with bone cancer earlier this year and older members of our community have signed up to give him rides to his chemo treatments.*
- *I am part of a citizen science team that monitors the bays, rivers and creeks in my county.*
- *Mi abuela aporta en la familia en el cuidado de sus nietos después de clases.*
- *I am creating an urban mini farm and little free library. I share all I grow.*
- *Our Adult Center has a theater group that entertains and raises money for Meals on Wheels.*
- *I am 85 living independently in my own home and still drive and do welfare checks on those alone.*
- *I help a friend with memory loss, taking her to coffee hour and giving her caregiver a break.*
- *I see giant smiles on children's faces when I go to our schools and spend time reading with kids.*
- *My friends in their 80s are invaluable for advice, comfort and just plain fun!*

Stories from respondents to the AGE+ Survey on Aging in Oregon, 2022

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN THIS DISCUSSION OF THE LONGEVITY GAP FOR WOMEN IN OREGON. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OLDER OREGONIANS?

SHARE YOUR STORY OR COMMENTS AT WWW.AGEPLUS.ORG/STORIES.

About AGE+

AGE+ empowers communities of all ages to value and care for older adults, especially those who are isolated, low-income and underserved. AGE+ engages communities through stimulating partnerships, training caregivers and developing innovative programs that address the real and growing challenges and opportunities facing aging in America.

For sources go to: www.ageplus.org/sources.

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