

Social Security: Vital to Tennessee Women and Families

Social Security is a family insurance plan that provides retirement benefits and life and disability insurance to Tennessee's working families.

- About 1 in 5 residents – about 1,251,900 people – receives disability, survivor, and/or retirement benefits from Social Security.
- 93 percent of residents 65 and older receive Social Security benefits.
- About 111,000 children receive Social Security benefits because of the loss of a parent's income due to death, disability or retirement.
- About 284,300 disabled workers and their family members receive Social Security benefits.
- About 104,300 widowed spouses receive Social Security survivor's benefits. (Nationally, women represent virtually all (99 percent) of spouses receiving survivor benefits.)

Tennessee women depend on modest Social Security benefits to get by.

- Women are a majority of both adult beneficiaries and beneficiaries 65 and older.
- The average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is about \$11,800 per year, compared to about \$15,800 for men 65 and older.
- Older women rely more on income from Social Security than older men do. Median income for women 65 and older living alone is \$14,900 per year – and Social Security represents 75 percent of that amount. Median income for comparable men is \$22,300 – and Social Security represents 56 percent of that amount.

Social Security is a critical anti-poverty program for Tennessee women and families.

- Social Security lifted 555,000 residents out of poverty, including 39,000 children.
- Social Security dramatically reduced poverty rates for women 65 and older: from 55 to 13 percent for all women 65 and older, and from 71 to 23 percent for older women living alone.

Sources: Social Security Administration, Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin, 2010, *available at* <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/>, and OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County, 2010, *available at* http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/oasdi_sc/2010/index.html. Calculations of Social Security's share of median income and impact on poverty based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (2007-2010, averages over 3 or 4 years depending on sample size) (using CPS Table Creator II, *available at* http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/apm/cpssc_alt pov.html).