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# Women and Aging: The Importance of Social Security Benefits

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides retirement and disability benefits based on a worker's lifetime earnings and survivors benefits based on a spouse's earnings record. These benefits significantly reduce poverty among older Americans, particularly women.



## Social Security benefits provide an important base of economic support

- At least 34 million women received Social Security benefits in 2022 with an average monthly benefit of \$1,563.
- At least 3.7 million Black women received average monthly benefits of \$1,451.
- At least 3.4 million women reported a race other than White or Black, which includes Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and beneficiaries of Hispanic origin. Their average monthly benefit was \$1,240.



## Social Security survivors benefits are important for widows

- Over 3.6 million women received survivors benefits in 2022 with an average monthly benefit of \$1,658.
- Over 346,000 Black women received average monthly survivors benefits of \$1,353.
- Over 319,000 women reported a race other than White or Black, which includes Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and beneficiaries of Hispanic origin. Their average monthly survivors benefit was \$1,238.
- While most women receiving survivors benefits are age 60 or older, over 100,000 women younger than 60 received survivors benefits in 2022 because they are caring for children. Their average monthly benefit amount was \$1,245.



## Researched: Prevailing Over Women's Economic Roadblocks (POWER) Project

- Women often face barriers in career advancement, which can impact economic security at older ages. Historically, women get paid less than men, face discrimination at work, often work in female-dominated occupations, and are more likely to take on unpaid caregiving responsibilities throughout their lifetimes.
- These challenges are intensified for women of color and those with disabilities. A lifetime of lower earnings results in lower benefits at retirement.
- SSA has made significant investments in research. The **Prevailing Over Women's Economic Roadblocks (POWER)** project will identify structural barriers to women's financial advancement and consider actions to improve retirement outcomes for women.
- SSA awarded a contract in May 2024 to engage women's advocates, policy experts, and women with lived experience in focus groups, a Technical Working Group, and a Technical Expert Panel.



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