



Senior Citizens in Jefferson County, Colorado: A Profile

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Introduction

The number of senior citizens in the County is set to increase dramatically in the next 20 years. This profile quantifies this forecast and introduces some of the issues that will be raised.

In this profile, the term "senior citizen" is used to describe a person aged 60 or more.

How many senior citizens are in the County today?

According to the State Demographer, some 76,331 people or 14.5% of the County population are senior citizens in 2000.

How many senior citizens were in the County historically?

Less. At Census 1990, some 11.6% (50,954) of the people were seniors. By contrast, in 1980, the percentage of seniors was 9.1% (34,270), and in 1970, 8% (19,130).

DRCOG estimates that about 5% of the people in metro Denver were seniors in 1991.

How many senior citizens will there be in the County in the future?

More. According to DRCOG, there will be an increase from 50,954 seniors constituting 11.6% of the population in 1990, to 159,709 seniors in 2020, constituting 26.8% of the population within Jefferson County.

That's a big increase. Is it in-line with changes in other communities?

Yes. The rate of increase will be slightly higher than the national rate but its basically consistent with a change that is about to significantly impact the world.

Number and percent of senior citizens in 1990, 2000 and 2020

	1990	2000	2020
U.S.A.	41,837,037 (17%)	45,555,000 (17%)	73,769,000 (23%)
Colorado	449,582 (14%)	546,994 (15%)	1,217,000
Metro Denver	211,693 (13%)	264,297 (14%)	600,562
Jefferson County	50,954 (12%)	76,331 (15%)	159,709 (27%)

Sources:

- 1990 data from Census 1990, published by DRCOG, December 1993
- 2000 data from DRCOG, published December 1993 except County data published by the State Demographer
- 2020 data from DRCOG, published January 1997 except U.S. % published by the U.S. Census Bureau
- Metro Denver is defined in this analysis as Adams, Arapahoe, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties. It does not include Boulder County.

Why will there be more senior citizens?

Two reasons: First, Jefferson County and Colorado have large numbers of existing residents who are “Baby Boomers,” that is, born between 1946 and 1964. As they age “in place,” they will create large numbers of senior citizens from 2006 forward. Second, it is forecast that Jefferson County and Colorado will continue to be favored places for in-migration, and a large number of the future in-migrants will be senior citizens.

Where are senior citizens concentrated in the County?

According to the 1990 Census, senior citizens amounted to the following percentage of the overall population, as follows:

Location	Percentage (%)	Location	Percentage (%)
Morrison	47.7	Arvada	11.3
Wheat Ridge	24.1	Evergreen	9.5
Mountain View	23.3	Genesee	9.0
Edgewater	19.1	Columbine	9.0
Applewood	18.7	Broomfield	8.7
Lakewood	15.0	Westminster	7.4
Golden	12.4	Ken Caryl	3.2

Morrison had the highest percentage of senior citizens of any place in the Denver metro area.

By comparison, 11.7% of the total County population was aged over 60 at the 1990 Census, 13% of the metro Denver population, 13.6% of the Colorado population, and 16.8% of the national population.

According to the 1990 Census, Florida, the state with the highest percentage of senior citizens, had 23.6% of its population aged 60 or more.

What issues are created by having an increasing number of senior citizens?

- The first point to note is that tomorrow’s senior citizens will not behave like today’s or yesterday’s senior citizens. The issues being described here are just a guide as to what could happen, but the slogan, “Florida is the future,” is a good place to begin.
- There will be an increase in the construction of nursing and elder care homes for the less active senior citizen and an increase in senior citizen communities for the active senior citizen.
- Zoning regulations will be revised to encourage senior citizens to continue living in their neighborhoods and homes.
- Health care will be revolutionized by the need to deal with a larger group of senior citizens living longer and healthier lifestyles.
- Public school districts will struggle with declining enrollments and citizen non-support.
- Senior citizens will be encouraged to remain active members of the workforce in order to maintain economic vitality.
- A tight labor market will see people work until they’re older and employers will become increasingly flexible.
- The majority of older person care will remain family-provided. The percentage of workers affected by elder-care will increase and employers will need to offer assistance to allow workers to meet their family needs.
- International immigration laws will be relaxed to maintain economic vitality.
- The majority of transportation movements will remain by private car. It will be necessary to improve our roads so that they are safer for older drivers.
- The age at which people become eligible for social security benefits will be raised.
- When Bismark introduced the first modern social security program for people aged 65 or more in Germany, the average life expectancy was 49 years. By contrast, the average life expectancy for a child born in 1997 was 76.5 years.
- Above all, it will be necessary for communities to keep identifying ways to maximize the ability of senior citizens to maintain their independence for as long as possible.