

though State-by-State variation is considerable. For the Territories and possessions, however, they constituted only 27.3 percent of total grants and equaled only \$2.61 per capita, as compared with 54.5 percent and \$7.98 per capita for the continental United States.

Economic Status of Aged Persons and Dependent Survivors, December 1951

Estimates are given below of the number of aged persons and of dependent survivors in the population at the end of 1951 who were receiving income from employment, social insurance and related programs, and public assistance.

The basic trend in the leading income sources for these groups continues to be the rapid growth in the relative importance of social insurance, particularly old-age and survivors insurance. Between December 1950 and December 1951 the number of aged persons drawing old-age and survivors insurance benefits increased 27 percent; the number of beneficiaries among widowed mothers with children under age 18 went up 20

percent; and the number of paternal orphan beneficiaries rose 19 percent. Public assistance recipients among these three groups decreased 3, 10, and 9 percent, respectively, during the same period; the number of earners also declined, but the declines were less, relatively, than those for the recipients of assistance.

Many of the old-age and survivors insurance beneficiaries eligible under the 1950 amendments qualify for small benefits, and in the absence of other income they require supplementary public assistance. In February 1952, 12 percent of the aged insurance beneficiaries and 15 percent of the old-age assistance recipients were receiving payments under both programs, as were 9 percent of all child beneficiaries under the insurance program and 5 percent of all children receiving aid to dependent children.

Size of the Aged Labor Reserve

The pressure of the defense mobilization program on manpower resources has aroused speculation on the size of the labor-force reserve among aged persons. Experience dur-

ing World War II leaves little doubt that additional workers can be recruited from among those now in retirement. In 1944 the proportion of all men aged 65 and over who were in the labor force rose to an average monthly rate of 52 percent, or 7 points higher than the average for 1940, while the participation rate for women aged 65 and over went up from 7 to 10 percent. The changes in the size of the aged labor force had a measurable effect on social security operations. Approximately 100,000 old-age assistance cases were closed between January 1942 and July 1945 because the recipient obtained employment. More than 2 in every 3 aged workers eligible for retirement benefits under old-age and survivors insurance preferred to remain at work during the war years.

By the beginning of 1952 the labor-force participation rate for persons 65 years of age and over had receded to the 1940 level. If employment among the aged should rise again to peak wartime rates—52 percent for men and 10 percent for women—the number of additional aged workers might be expected to total perhaps 600,000 (about 500,000 men and 100,000 women). This estimate is somewhat less than others, but it is not unreasonable in the light of the available information on the prevalence of disability among aged persons not in the labor force, the long absence of many older persons from gainful employment, and their opinions when interviewed concerning the desirability of returning to work and the kind of jobs that would attract them back to the labor force.

Sometimes overlooked in discussions of the size of the aged labor-force reserve is the selected character of the aged still at work. They are the survivors of a much larger group of workers, most of whom have fallen to the assaults of age on health, work habits and skills, and emotional balance. References to the experience, reliability, and low injury and absenteeism rates of 65- and 70-year-old employees tell little about the productive potentialities of the millions of aged persons no longer at work. While some of the latter group have been the victims of arbitrary retire-

Estimated number of aged persons and dependent survivors receiving income from specified sources, December 1951¹

[In millions]

Source of income	Persons aged 65 years and over			Widows under age 65		Paternal orphans under age 18 ³
	Total	Men	Women	Total ²	With 1 or more children under age 18	
Total in population ⁴	13.0	6.1	6.9	3.7	0.8	2.1
Employment.....	4.0	2.5	1.5	2.0	.4	.1
Earners.....	3.0	2.5	.5	2.0	.4	.1
Wives of earners.....	1.0		1.0			
Social insurance and related programs:						
Old-age and survivors insurance.....	3.3	1.8	1.5	.2	.2	.8
Railroad retirement.....	.3	.2	.1	(⁵)	(⁵)	(⁵)
Federal employee retirement programs.....	.2	.1	(⁵)	(⁵)	(⁵)	(⁵)
Veterans' compensation and pension program.....	.3	.2	.1	.4	.1	.3
Other ⁶3	.1	.2	(⁵)	(⁵)	(⁵)
Public assistance.....	7.7	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.3

¹ Continental United States only.

² Excludes widows who have remarried.

³ Includes children not living with widowed mother.

⁴ Includes persons with no income and with income from sources other than those specified. Some persons received income from more than one of the sources listed.

⁵ Fewer than 50,000.

⁶ Beneficiaries of State and local government employee retirement programs, and wives of male

beneficiaries of programs other than old-age and survivors insurance and railroad retirement.

⁷ Old-age assistance.

⁸ Aid to dependent children.

Sources: Number of persons of specified age, sex, marital status, family status, and parental status and number of earners, estimated from Bureau of the Census data. Number of persons in receipt of payments under social insurance and related programs and from public assistance reported by administrative agencies, partly estimated.