

Age-Friendly Times

News from Teaneck's Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Teaneck's older population is growing

The visual clues are harder to spot in a town with crowded school bus stops and stroller-filled parks, but Teaneck's empty-nest population has grown sharply this millennium.

Nearly 4,700 households - or about 35 percent of the township's total - have at least one person over age 65, and nearly a third of those senior-citizen householders lives alone, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates.

That rise in senior citizens poses a challenging question: How can a suburb largely built to suit families with small children adapt for an older generation that wants to live independently in their communities for far longer than previous generations did?

Teaneck will need to find an answer soon, because, while the township's estimated population of 40,668 grew by only 3.5 percent between 2000 and 2016, it grayed at a much faster rate.

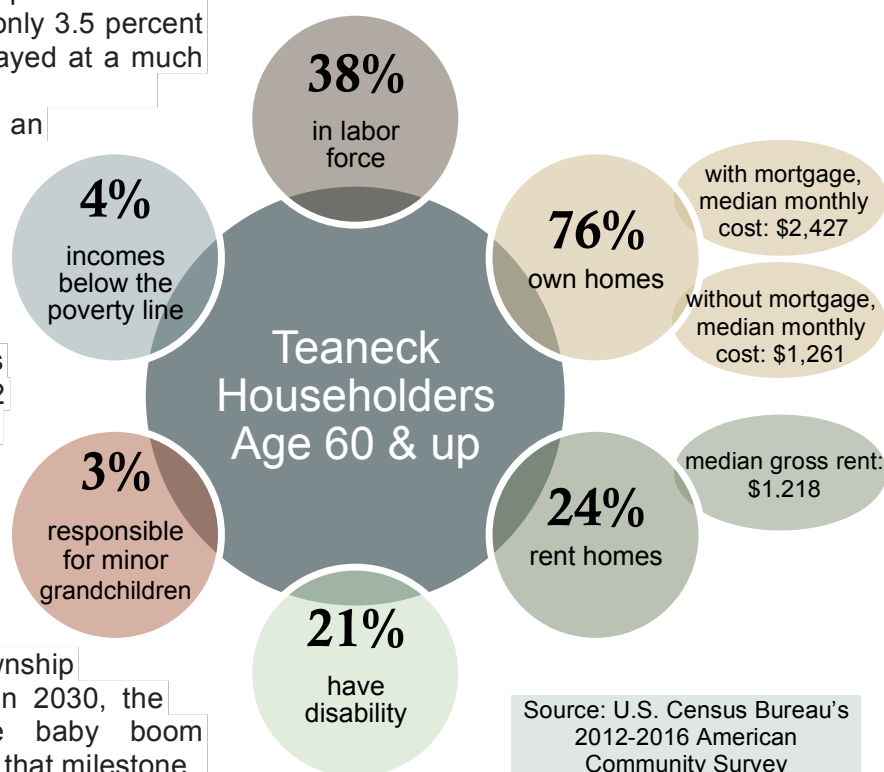
In 2016, there were an estimated 6,845 township residents over age 65, an increase of 22.6 percent from the 5,584 counted in the 2000 census. The number who have lived beyond their 85th birthdays was estimated at 1,290 - a 56.2 percent increase over the 826 found in 2000.

If Teaneck's older population grows at the same rate as what the New Jersey Labor Department expects of the state as a whole, then nearly 1 in 5 township residents would be over 65 in 2030, the year the youngest of the baby boom generation would have passed that milestone.

"It's essential to learn much as much as we can about Teaneck's older population," said Jackie Kates, project coordinator for Age-Friendly Teaneck. "This important data clearly shows that the number of older residents is increasing. We also need to know about the quality of their lives and the challenges older adults in Teaneck face, so that we can be effective advocates for resources that will allow residents to age in place and foster their engagement in the community's civic, economic and social life."

Census numbers are invaluable to suburban communities because they define present-day needs and predict future ones.

POPULATION continued on back



POPULATION from front

- **About 1 in 5 township residents over age 60 has a disability of some type.**

That shows the importance of identifying and improving intersections where a disabled person needs more time to cross a street.

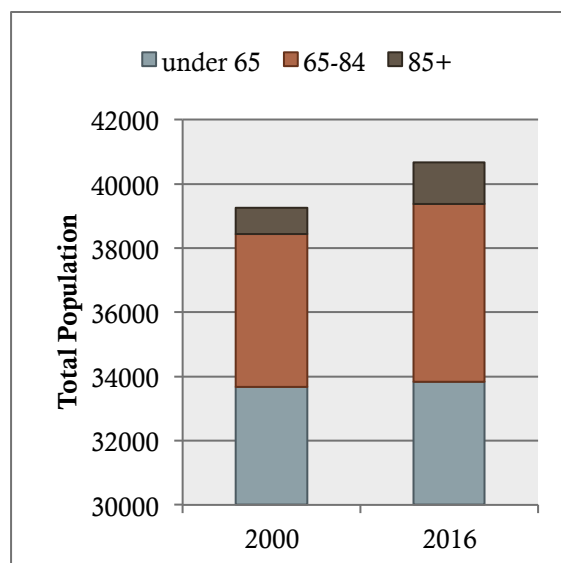
- **In about 1,200 Teaneck households, a person over 65 is living alone.**

That's the reason to push for more social engagement for older residents, as isolation later in life often leads to health declines.

- **About 35 percent of Teaneck's homeowners and more than half of its renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.**

Those percentages apply to all Teaneck adults, not just seniors. Translation: Teaneck could use more affordable housing.

Growth of Teaneck Seniors



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Gratifying jobs in growing field of caring for the old

Within a dozen years, one in five Americans will be over 65, and the country will need an additional 3.5 million health professionals who specialize in taking care of older adults, according to the Eldercare Workforce Alliance.

That's doctors and nurses, of course, but also a long list of other professions.

Social workers and mental health professionals who specialize in geriatrics.

Physical therapists and physical therapy assistants. Recreation, activity and food-service directors in settings such as nursing homes, assisted living residences and senior apartment complexes. Administrators to oversee programs and plan services.

Age-Friendly Teaneck thinks too few young people are encouraged to pursue these paths, and many may shy away, wrongly perceiving that time spent with older adults will leave them depressed instead of inspired and energized.

That's why Age-Friendly Teaneck, in partnership with three service providers, is offering a four-week internship for four Teaneck high school juniors and seniors this summer. The opportunity, offering a \$1000 stipend, will expose the students to a variety of career paths in settings right here in their hometown.

To learn more about the mission of our Career Exploration Internship, visit our website page at www.agefriendlyteaneck.org/internship

Eldercare professionals



Hugo Medrano, food service director at Bright Side Manor

Four student interns will learn about the work of these two staff members of Geriatric Services Inc., and spend time with professionals from Jewish Family & Children's Services of Northern New Jersey and from Homewatch CareGivers of Bergen County



Nicole Smith, activities director at Bright Side and the Brookdale



www.agefriendlyteaneck.org