

Elder Index: Basic Expenses

Single Renter Living Alone | CA Average

The California Elder Index is a county-specific measure of the minimum income necessary to cover all of a senior's basic needs.

Rent (one bedroom apt.)	\$864
Food	\$257
Healthcare	\$334
Transportation	\$239
Miscellaneous	\$249

Monthly Total **\$1,943**

ANNUAL TOTAL **\$23,317***

* Annual total may not equal the sum of monthly totals due to rounding.

What Seniors Need to Make Ends Meet



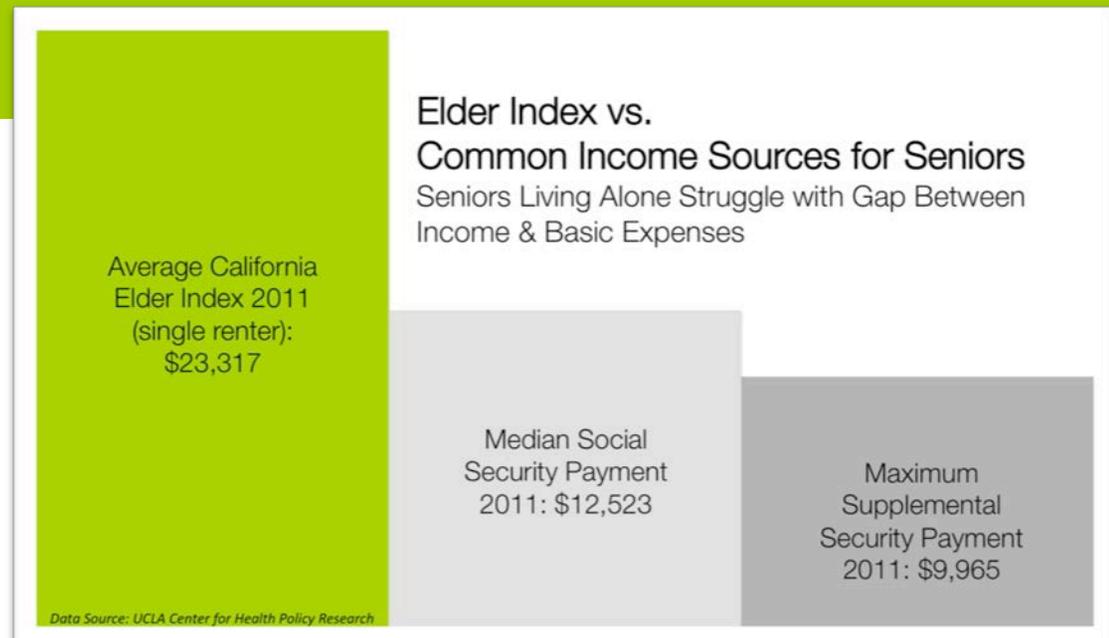
The California Elder Economic Security Initiative (Cal-EESI) at the Insight Center for Community Economic Development works with a broad coalition of statewide and national partners to transform the way we measure and address the economic needs of older Californians. Cal-EESI uses the Elder Economic Security Index (Elder Index) to accurately quantify how much income it takes older Californians (65+) to make ends meet in each California county.

Calculated in partnership with UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Elder Index measures the cost of older adults' basic expenses: housing, food, medical care, and transportation.

You can find detailed county-by-county data at www.insightccd.org.

Seniors – no matter what their source of income – often struggle to make ends meet in California. The median Social Security payment for elder renters, which is often the major if not sole source of income for seniors, only provides about half of what seniors really need to make ends meet (\$12,523 v. \$23,317).

The maximum Supplemental Security Income payment, which is intended for low-income seniors, the blind and disabled, also covers less than half (43%) of the costs of basic needs for an elder renter (\$9,965 v. \$23,317).



Bridging the Gap Where Poverty Measures Fall Short

While support programs can help seniors bridge the gap, many use the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPL) to determine eligibility.

The problem is that the FPL is the same dollar amount across the country, and does not reflect today's cost of living. The FPL represents only 46 percent of what seniors need to get by in California. As a result, thousands of economically insecure seniors fall through the cracks of our public systems with too much income to qualify for support, but not enough to get by.

The Elder Index is a more accurate measure because it is both county-specific and includes all of a senior's basic costs (food, housing, medical care, and transportation).

The Elder Economic Planning Act of 2011 (AB 138) made the Elder Index *the* standard for measuring seniors' economic security in California. It requires state and local aging agencies to use the Elder Index to craft more effective programs and policies in planning for California's growing aging population.

Leaders across the state use the Elder Index to help ensure that older Californians have the resources they need to be economically stable.

Measuring Economic Security Instead of Poverty

Poverty Measures Fall Far Short of Needs for All California Seniors

Average California
Elder Index 2011
(single renter):
\$23,317

Median California
Supplemental
Poverty Measure
2011(single renter):
\$14,268

Federal Poverty
Guidelines 2011:
\$10,890

Elder Index Data Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.
The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) is the weighted median threshold for single elderly renters in California.
SPM Data Source: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality and Public Policy Institute of California, based on US Census' methodology.

- Policymakers use the Elder Index to craft more effective legislation.
- Public agencies and local governments use the Elder Index to plan programs and allocate resources.
- Foundations use the Elder Index to identify vulnerable populations, measure the impact of their investments, and expand their grantmaking in the aging field.
- Direct service providers use the Elder Index to help them accurately evaluate senior needs, and seek additional funding.
- Advocates use the Elder Index to make the case for the importance of senior support programs to policymakers, the press and community stakeholders.
- Adults of any age use the Elder Index to make informed decisions about when to retire, how much to save, and if they will need to work after formally "retiring."

For more information, visit www.insightccd.org/Cal-EESI or contact Susie Smith, Insight Center's Managing Director, at 510.251.2600 x108 or ssmith@insightccd.org.