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A new survey finds more poor Californian senior that previously thought

By

A new survey conducted by UCLA finds more poor seniors in [California](#) than many had realized. Almost half of California seniors are poor, according to the research.

The University used a different methodology in measuring which seniors struggle to make ends meet in the state. Now, some California congressmen want to use the same methods in determining who is eligible for benefits.

From [her story](#) in the Silicon Valley Mercury News, Karen de Sa tells us more about the research.

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research report measured economic stability by the real costs to eat, travel and pay for medical costs and housing in each of California's 58 counties.

Its findings reveal 47 percent of state residents 65 and older are unable to pay for their basic needs. That's 864,000 seniors, more than half of whom struggle at home alone.

The new data reveal far deeper poverty rates among seniors than was previously known. According to the decades-old standard of measuring poverty, only 9 to 10 percent of California seniors were considered poor, that is, earning less than \$10,000 a year. Researchers note that amount is peanuts in high-cost California, failing to reflect the true cost of survival.

“For us, what’s striking is that these numbers are not even taking into account the latest economic crisis,” said co-author Susie Smith, a program director at the nonprofit Insight Center for Community Economic Development. She noted the report used 2007 census data. “We can only imagine when we update this information next year, what the numbers are going to look like.”

One additional hardship is already known: The recently passed state budget cuts aid to thousands of seniors.

In Silicon Valley, more than 48 percent of seniors fell below the survival standard. In Santa Clara County — where homeownership for many has shifted from a poverty-buffer to a neck yoke — there are signs that homeowners face particularly dire trade-offs as nonhousing costs grow making mortgages more difficult to meet.

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