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## ECONversations Explores Aging's Impact on the Economy

May 26, 2016



When it comes to putting the nation's public programs for the elderly on sustainable financial footing, the sooner fiscal policymakers act, the better, according to the Atlanta Fed's latest ECONversations webcast.

The live May 18 ECONversations [webcast](#) is now available for archival viewing. During the webcast, Atlanta Fed research economists Karen Kopecky and Toni Braun discussed their research on fiscal issues related to an aging population. The crux of the matter is that the nation's old-age dependency ratio is steadily climbing—that is, the number of retired persons is rising compared to the number of working-age people whose taxes fund programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

The ranks of Americans 65 and older will increase by 66 percent over the next 20 years, to about 80 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Meanwhile, the group that is working age, or 18 to 64, will grow by less than 10 percent. The aging of the population has wide-ranging implications for the nation's economy, and Kopecky and Braun explored several of those during the half-hour ECONversation.

The webcast follows the publication of the Atlanta Fed's 2015 annual report, [The Graying of the American Economy](#). The Atlanta Fed posted the [final installment](#) of the annual report on May 19.