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Notes

Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2013, p. 2

AT A GLANCE

Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2013, *by Craig Copeland, Ph.D., EBRI*

- More older American families have debt: The percentage of American families with heads ages 55 or older that had debt increased from 63.4 percent in 2010 to 65.4 percent in 2013. Furthermore, the percentage of these families with debt payments greater than 40 percent of income—a traditional threshold measure of debt load trouble—increased in 2013 to 9.2 percent from 8.5 percent in 2010.

- However, other debt measures were down: Total debt payments as a percentage of income decreased from 11.4 percent in 2010 to 10.0 percent in 2013, and average debt decreased from $80,465 in 2010 to $73,211, while debt as a percentage of assets decreased from 8.5 percent in 2010 to 8.1 percent in 2013.

- Housing debt drove the change in the level of debt payments in 2013, while the nonhousing (consumer) debt-payment share of income held stable from 2010. Housing debt was the major component of debt for families headed by individuals ages 55 or older.

- The debt levels among those with housing debt have obvious and serious implications for the future retirement security of these Americans, perhaps most significantly that these families are potentially at risk of losing what is typically their most important asset—their home.

Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2013

By Craig Copeland, Ph.D., Employee Benefit Research Institute

Introduction

Debt is often overlooked when discussing the future income security of retirees. However, any debt that a near-elderly or elderly family has accrued entering or living in retirement is likely to offset any asset accumulations, resulting in a lower level of retirement income security.[1]

This article focuses on the trends in debt levels among those ages 55 or older (near-elderly are defined as those ages 55–64 and the elderly are defined as those ages 65 and older), as financial liabilities are a vital but often ignored component of retirement income security.[2] The Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) is used in this article to determine the level of debt.[3] Debt is examined in two ways:

- Debt payments relative to *income.*
- Debt relative to *assets*.

Each measure provides insight regarding the financial abilities of these families to cover their debt before or during retirement. For example, higher *debt-to-income* ratios may be acceptable for younger families with long working careers ahead of them, because their incomes are likely to rise, and their debt (related to housing or children) is likely to fall in the future. On the other hand, higher debt-to-income ratios may represent more serious concerns for older families, which could be forced to reduce their accumulated assets to service the debt at points where their active earning years are ending. However, if these older families with high debt-to-income ratios have low *debt-to-asset* ratios, the effect of paying off the debt may not be as financially difficult as it might be for those with high debt-to-income and high debt-to-asset ratios.

As described in more detail below, debt levels of the current elderly and near-elderly increased in 2013. However, the average debt held and debt payments as a percentage of income decreased. While holding debt is not necessarily a sign of financial danger for all elderly or near-elderly families (especially if they are also high-income), housing debt (typically the major asset elderly families have) is of particular concern, because leveraging it at this point in their lives may leave them without a major resource to finance an adequate retirement.

Percentage With Debt

The share of older American families that had debt in 2013 increased from 2010. The percentage of American families headed by individuals ages 55 or older with some level of debt was 65.4 percent in 2013, up from the 2010 level of 63.4 percent (Figure 1). The 2013 level was up over 10 percentage points from the 1992 level of 53.8 percent.

The percentage with debt decreased significantly as the family heads aged; i.e., in 2013, 78.5 percent of families with heads ages 55–64 held debt, compared with 41.3 percent of those with heads ages 75 or older. Furthermore, the percentage with debt increased from 2010 to 2013 for families headed by individuals in each age group studied. For those families with heads ages 55–64, the percentage with debt increased from 77.6 percent in 2010 to 78.5 percent in 2013. Among those families with heads ages 65–74, the percentage with debt increased from 65.0 percent to 66.4 percent and for those families with heads ages 75 or older, the increase was from 38.5 percent to 41.3 percent. In addition, each age group in 2013 had a higher percentage with debt than at any survey year during 1992–2013 study period except for families with heads ages 55–64, which peaked in 2007 at 81.7 percent.

The percentage with debt also was also higher for those with higher family incomes across each survey year, except in 2013 when the percentage decreased at the highest-income quartile. In 2013, 44.8 percent of families in the lowest-income quartile had debt, compared with 77.2 percent of those in the third income quartile (Figure 2). Of those in the highest-income quartile, 76.4 percent had debt in 2013, an amount lower than the third income quartile, and also lower than in 2010, when 77.7 percent of those in the highest-income quartile had debt. The 2013 percentage of elderly and near elderly families with debt was the highest during the study period for those families in the third income quartile, while the percentage with debt for families in the highest-income quartile has trended down since 2007 and for families in the lowest-income quartile has leveled off at just above 44 percent since 2007.

Debt Levels

As the percentage of families with heads ages 55 or older *with any debt* increased from 1992–2013, the *average total debt* level also increased: from $36,144 (2013 dollars) in 1992 to $73,211 in 2013. At the same time, the *median debt level* (half above, half below) of those with debt increased from $17,879 to $47,900 (Figure 3). This was a real increase in the average and median debt levels of 102.6 percent and 167.9 percent, respectively, from 1992.[4] However, while the percentage with debt increased from 2010 to 2013, the average debt level and the median debt level of those families having debt decreased during this time from $80,465 to $73,211 for the average and from $59,372 to $47,900 for the median.

These debt levels differed significantly across various family characteristics. Families with younger or more educated heads, higher incomes, and higher net worth had significantly higher average and median debt levels. Significantly higher average levels of debt were also seen in families headed by individuals who were working for someone else, white or married. For example, in 2013, among those with debt, families with heads ages 55–64 had a median debt of $63,300, compared with $20,000 for those headed by people ages 75 or older. Similarly to the overall decline in the median debt, the median debt level across each category break decreased from 2010 to 2013, except for families with a head without a high school diploma and families with a nonworking head that wasn't retired.

While the increases in debt levels from 1992–2013 can be construed as a negative result for these families, debt levels may not tell the full story of their financial well-being. If income and assets grow at a pace faster than these debt levels, these families might actually be in an improving financial position despite the increased debt levels.[5] The next two sections of this article examine debt levels relative to income and assets:

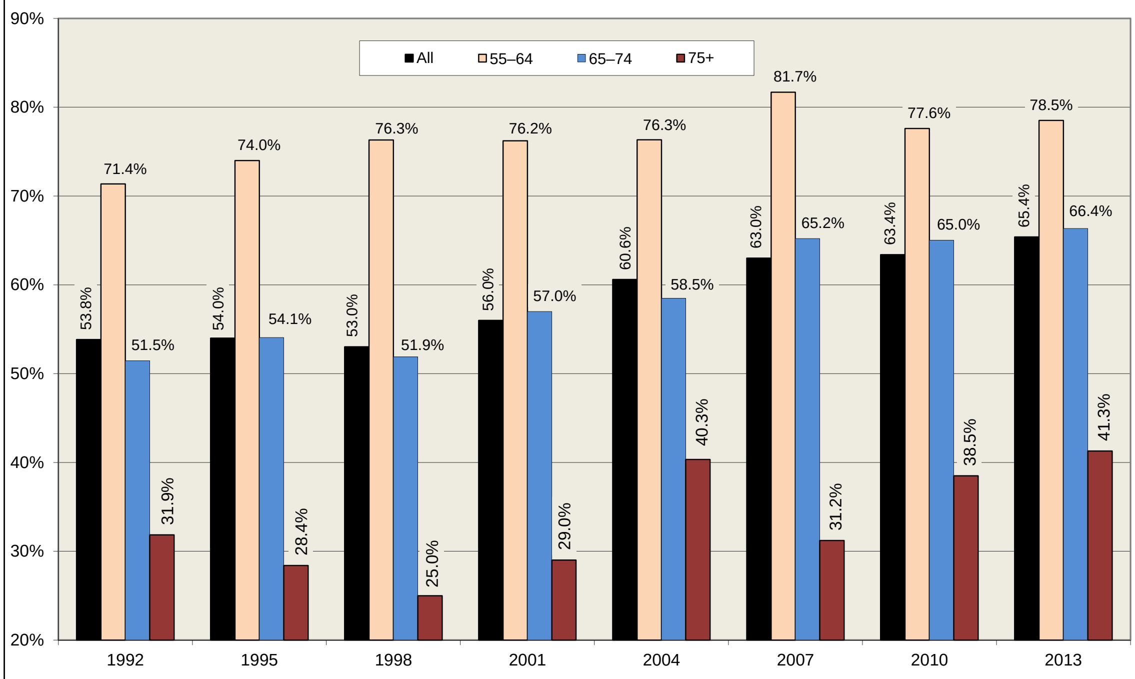
- For income, the amount of debt service is examined by using required debt payments relative to *family income.*
- In contrast, for assets, outstanding debt is measured relative to *total assets.*

Debt Payments

The first measure of the indebtedness of the near elderly (ages 55–64) and elderly (ages 65 and over) is the percentage of family income that debt payments represent. From 1992 to 2001, debt payments were approximately 9 percent of family income, at which point they began trending upward; from 10.3 percent in 2004 to 11.4 percent in 2010 before decreasing to 10.0 percent in 2013 (Figure 4). As the age of the family heads increased, the debt payment percentages decreased, declining from 11.3 percent for families with heads ages 55–64 in 2013 to 6.5 percent for those headed by individuals ages 75 or older. In 2013, the debt payments as a percentage of income declined for each age category from those seen in 2010.

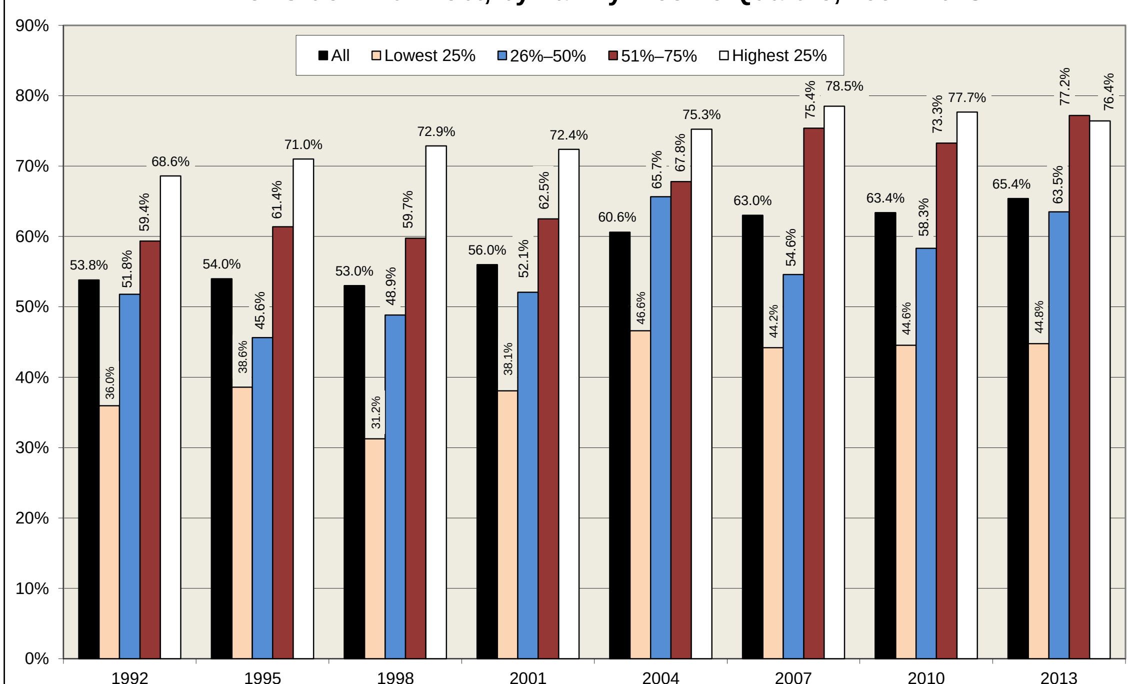
Across the three lowest-income quartiles of these families, the percentages of income that debt payments represented in 2013 were just over 15 percent (Figure 5). There was a significant drop-off for those in the highest-income quartile to 7.7 percent. Debt payments as a percentage of income for the middle two income quartiles were unchanged from 2010 to 2013. In contrast, debt payments as a percentage of income for the lowest- and the highest-income quartiles decreased from 2010 to 2013.

Figure 1
Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Debt, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 2
Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Debt, by Family Income Quartile, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 3

Average Total Debt and Median Total Debt for Those With Debt For Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older, by Various Characteristics, 1992–2013

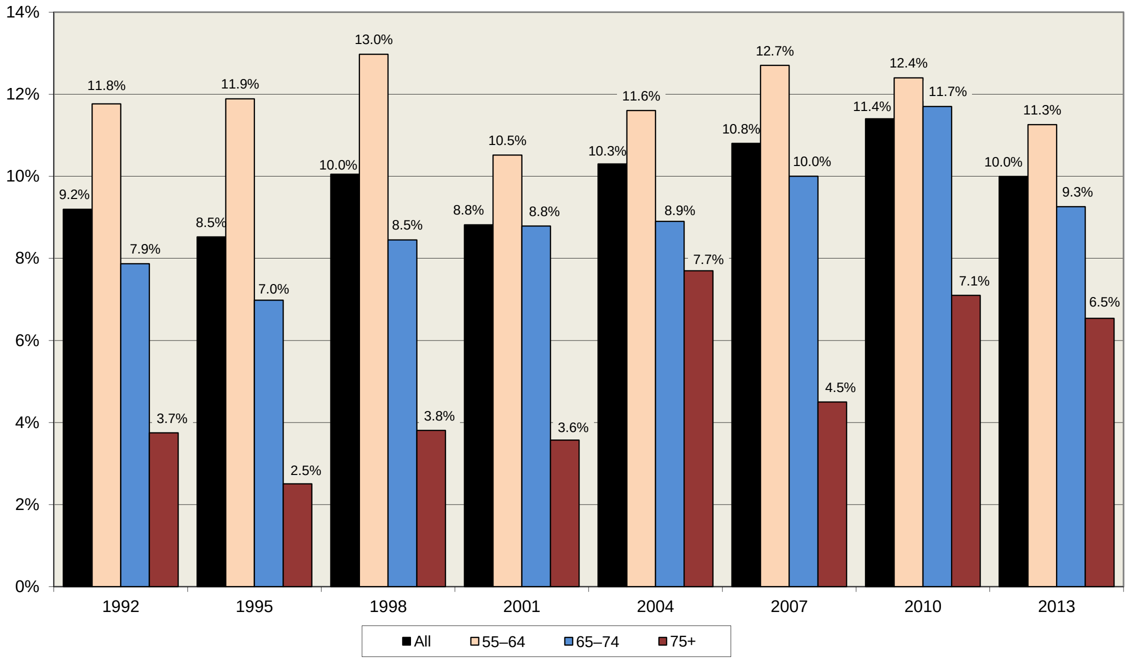
	1992		1998		2001		2007		2010		2013	
Category	Average	Median With Debt	Average	Median With Debt	Average	Median With Debt	Average	Median With Debt	Average	Median With Debt	Average	Median With Debt
All	$36,144	$17,879	$49,616	$31,767	$50,925	$30,210	$79,013	$48,281	$80,465	$59,372	$73,211	$47,900
Age of Family Head												
55–64	62,824	32,507	88,591	50,180	85,589	45,972	120,111	67,414	114,736	82,092	103,187	63,300
65–74	27,487	8,127	39,980	17,156	45,859	17,206	78,150	45,059	75,957	47,798	70,789	43,500
75 or older	9,581	5,201	11,170	11,551	11,775	6,567	14,645	16,618	29,374	32,151	23,680	20,000
Race of Family Head												
White, nonHispanic	36,229	19,504	51,034	33,454	51,421	28,634	80,729	53,446	86,068	64,302	78,411	54,000
Other	35,763	9,671	41,803	22,159	48,327	32,837	71,712	31,439	61,592	47,798	56,726	27,700
Family Income (2013 $s)												
Less than $10,000	8,502	2,438	5,056	2,859	4,478	1,274	28,862	7,119	53,487	19,291	47,375	17,000
$10,000–$24,999	7,888	3,251	13,367	5,719	10,261	8,511	14,893	11,677	19,298	13,160	16,138	10,000
$25,000–$49,999	17,305	12,353	22,668	19,014	24,079	17,798	30,699	24,590	42,681	32,151	42,234	31,000
$50,000–$99,999	31,921	29,256	51,499	48,608	41,992	35,464	87,806	75,229	86,856	75,341	80,945	70,000
$100,000 or more	156,645	91,995	163,263	94,356	174,460	128,720	226,394	197,953	210,902	159,469	195,099	61,000
Family Status												
Married	54,273	27,013	71,296	43,461	69,468	36,777	120,932	83,089	113,767	78,234	104,026	74,690
Single male	32,962	16,579	54,890	44,319	44,124	34,150	51,037	22,703	47,471	37,510	61,994	34,000
Single female	12,378	5,542	18,194	12,438	20,230	11,821	30,642	20,211	42,434	34,294	33,154	24,000
Education of Family Head												
Below HS diploma	13,952	6,745	12,816	11,580	14,770	11,322	21,911	22,456	27,186	18,219	24,819	23,000
HS diploma	22,788	12,109	27,781	27,163	25,599	21,029	44,697	22,569	47,636	40,725	41,617	28,680
Some college	39,323	25,079	54,297	43,461	46,885	27,583	82,361	61,755	77,875	64,302	65,204	43,000
College degree	83,363	48,760	107,856	60,388	110,130	78,808	145,179	112,282	133,453	100,740	126,115	100,400
Net Worth Percentile[a]												
Lowest 25%	7,227	3,819	16,401	9,150	18,780	8,511	28,369	14,597	40,765	21,434	45,983	17,850
25%–49%	14,521	10,418	35,095	29,451	23,708	19,531	57,240	44,913	60,291	58,408	49,772	40,000
50%–75%	24,692	24,656	27,687	35,741	41,703	45,840	66,400	51,650	49,580	47,123	57,054	47,000
75%–90%	41,729	44,860	46,195	52,897	57,463	40,678	88,059	101,054	117,197	110,921	91,751	99,400
Top 10%	182,837	65,989	228,733	120,090	212,508	157,617	278,292	241,406	252,328	246,491	212,509	211,000
Working Status of Family Head												
Works for someone else	52,330	29,029	73,705	47,178	70,870	42,478	119,334	85,952	106,149	75,555	105,011	67,940
Self-employed	156,912	65,176	152,400	45,749	151,806	80,122	203,688	110,036	201,423	120,566	178,667	20,000
Retired	16,592	9,752	22,720	14,439	21,242	13,135	34,218	22,456	38,955	35,473	37,130	27,500
Other nonwork	11,746	2,438	33,117	21,445	22,348	6,567	139,376	55,130	87,766	56,082	88,472	61,000

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1998, 2001, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

[a] Net worth percentiles are for the families with a head age 55 or older, not for all families.

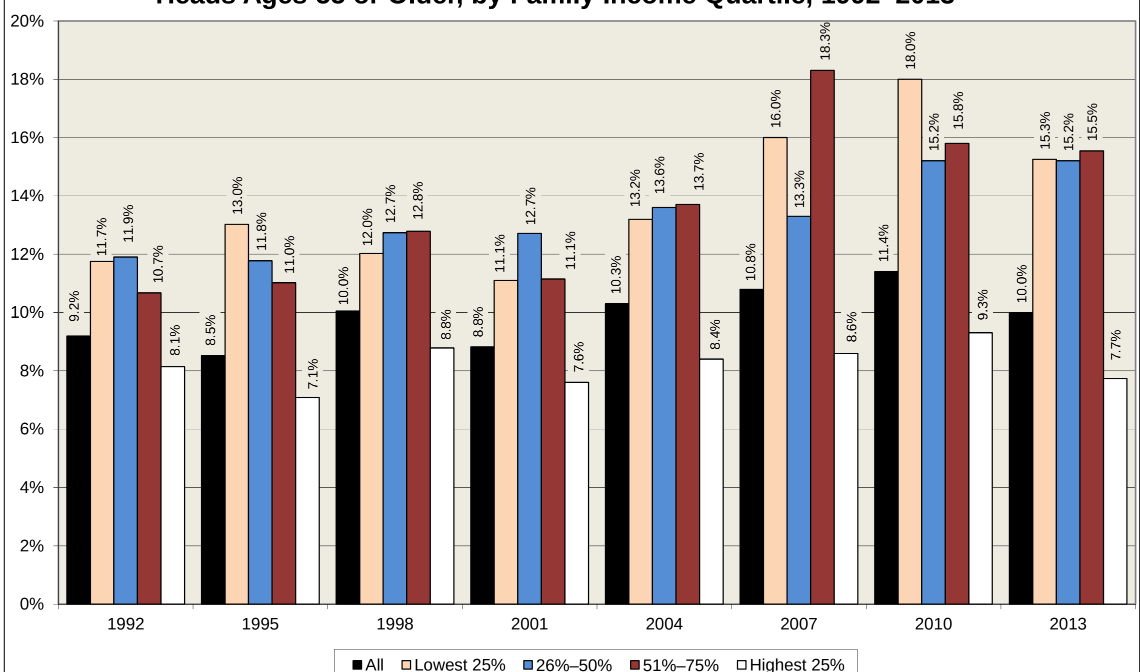
Note: All dollar amounts are in 2013 dollars.

Figure 4
Total Debt Payments as Percentage of Income Among Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 5
Total Debt Payments as a Percentage of Income for Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older, by Family Income Quartile, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Housing: The Driver of Debt

The level of housing debt drove the change in the level of debt payments in 2013, while the nonhousing (consumer) debt-payment share held stable from 2010. The share of income that went to housing debt payments increased from 6.7 percent in 2004 to 8.3 percent in 2010 before declining to 7.0 percent in 2013. Among the age groups, the share of income that housing debt payments represented among families with heads ages 65–74 decreased from 8.6 percent in 2010 to 6.7 percent in 2013, and for families with heads ages 75 or older, it decreased from 4.7 percent in 2010 to 3.8 percent in 2013 (Figure 6).

Excessive Debt Levels

Looking at the *average debt payment* as a percentage of income does not generally reveal how many people are in difficult situations with debt, because the average can mask a wide distribution of individual circumstances. A threshold commonly used for determining a problem with excessive debt is when family debt payments exceed 40 percent *of income*. By that standard, the percentage of families with excessive debt increased in 2013, but it remained below its 2007 level. The proportion of near elderly and elderly families surpassing this threshold increased from 8.5 percent in 2010 to 9.2 percent in 2013, while the 2007 level was 9.9 percent (Figure 7).

The increase from 2004–2007 was a result of the surge in families with heads ages 55–74 whose debt payments were above the 40-percent threshold, while families with heads ages 75 or older experienced a decline in the percentage with debt payments above this threshold. In contrast, the change from 2007–2010 was the result of declines in the proportion above the 40-percent threshold among those with heads ages 55–74, while the percentage with these high debt payments increased for the families with heads ages 75 or older, rising to 4.9 percent in 2010 from 4.3 percent in 2007. However, in 2013, the percentage with debt payments above the 40-percent threshold increased across each age group.

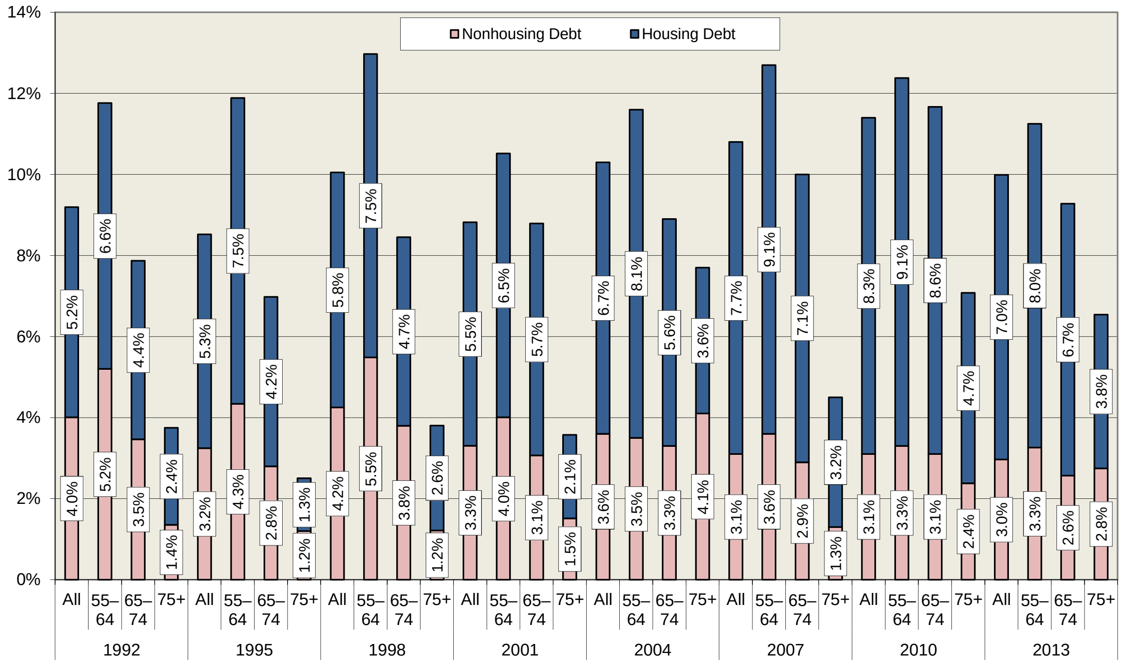
The share of families with debt payments above 40 percent of income was lowest for those families in the highest-income quartile in 2013, as it was in all prior years in the study (Figure 8). The proportion of families above the 40-percent threshold was highest for families in the second income quartile (13.7 percent). Families in the second quartile not only had an increased likelihood of having debt payments above this threshold in 2013, but their percentage overtook the lowest-income quartile to rank in the highest position. While the percentage above the 40-percent threshold declined for the two highest-income quartiles in 2013, the increases in the lowest two quartiles pushed the overall level in 2013 above that of the 2010 level.

Overall debt levels, percentage with debt, debt payments as a percentage of income, and percentage of families with debt payments greater than 40 percent of their income all increased from 1992 to 2013. Furthermore, housing debt increased across all age groups, representing more than 70 percent of all debt. However, many of these measures of debt improved in 2013 except in some measures where they worsened for those families with the least-educated family heads and with the lowest incomes.

Debt as a Percentage of Assets

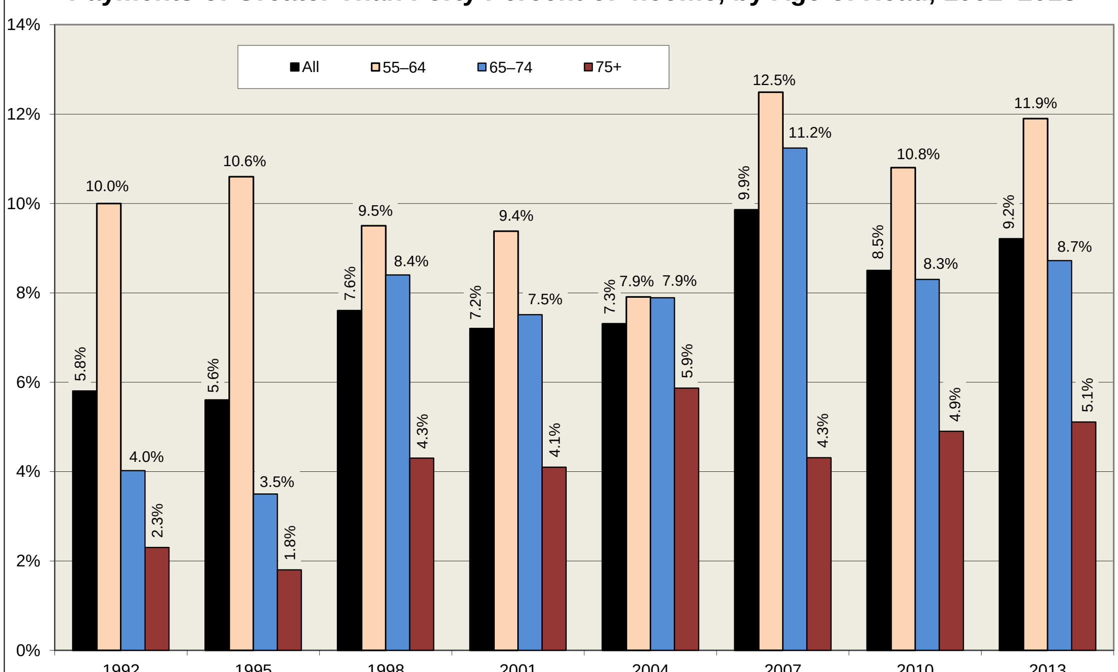
Debt as a percentage of *total assets* for near elderly and elderly families was virtually unchanged at approximately 7.0 percent from 1992–1998 but decreased in 2001 to less than 6.0 percent before increasing to just above 7 percent (at 7.4 percent) in 2007 (Figure 9). In 2010, the percentage jumped to 8.5 percent—the highest percentage (by more than 1 percentage point) during the study period. This percentage declined in 2013 to 8.1 percent. Nearly all of the decrease from 1998–2001 was due to a lower percentage of nonhousing debt relative to assets; nonhousing debt decreased from 3.2 percent in 1998 to 2.3 percent of assets in 2001. After a relatively steady level of housing debt relative to assets from 1992–2001, housing debt increased from 3.5 percent in 2001 to 5.3 percent in 2007 and reached 6.1 percent in 2010. In 2013, the majority of the decrease was from nonhousing debt, while housing debt

Figure 6
Total Housing and Nonhousing Debt Payments as Percentage of Income Among Families With Heads Ages 55 Or Older, by Age of Head, 1992–2013



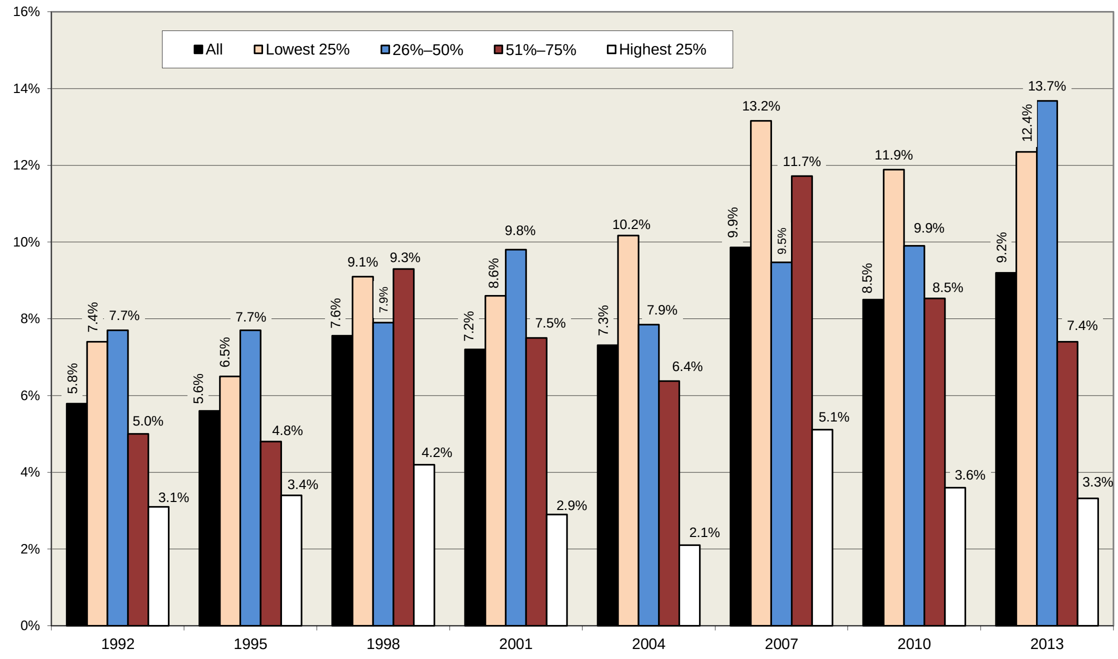
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 7
Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older Who Have Debt Payments of Greater Than Forty Percent of Income, by Age of Head, 1992–2013



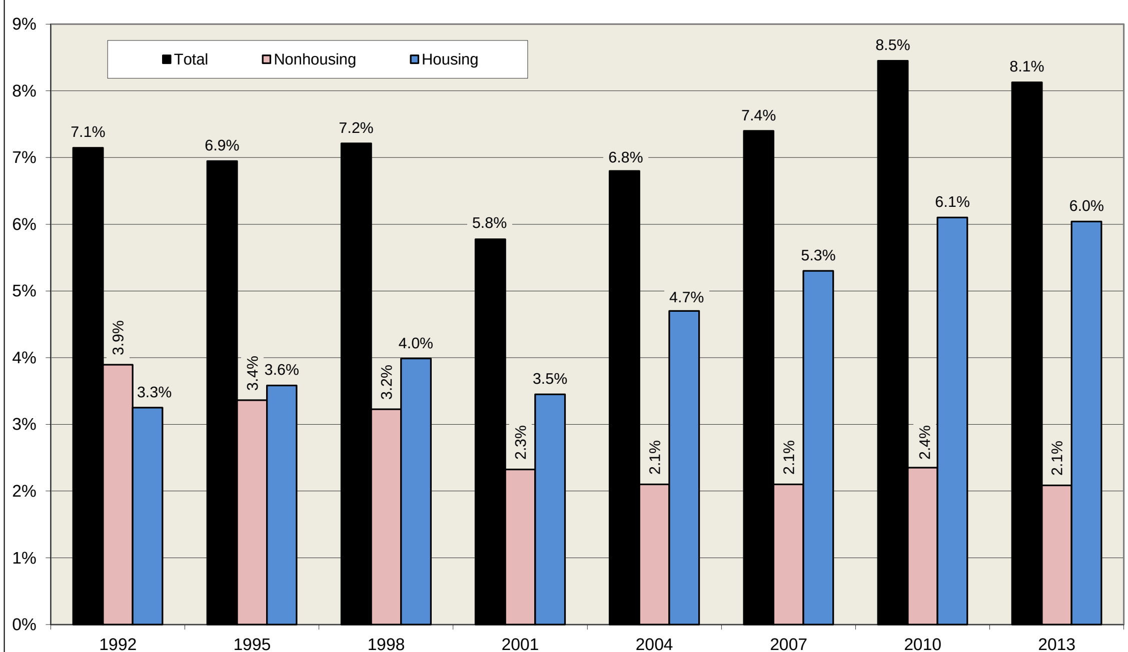
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 8
Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Debt Payments Greater Than Forty Percent of Their Income, by Income Quartile, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 9
Total, Nonhousing, and Housing Debt as a Percentage of Assets for American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

barely budged. Consequently, while *nonhousing* debt as a share of assets has remained relatively low recently, *housing* debt as a share of assets has increased markedly during the same period.

As with the debt level, the share of family assets that debt represents varied significantly across various characteristics of family heads (Figure 10): Overall, it decreased significantly as both the family heads' age and the family's net worth increased. By age of the family head, the debt-to-asset ratio decreased in 2013 from 11.5 percent for those ages 55–64 to 3.7 percent for those ages 75 or older. The lowest-net-worth families stood out as having, by far, the highest debt-to-asset ratio: 93.8 percent in 2013. Other groups of families with high relative debt-to-asset levels were:

- The second-lowest-net-worth quartile of families.
- Families with heads who "work for someone else" or were in the "other nonwork" category.
- Families that did not have white, nonHispanic heads; i.e., minority families.

The *overall* debt-to-asset ratio for those ages 55 or older decreased to 8.1 percent in 2013, down from 8.4 percent in 2010. Furthermore, the *median* debt-to-asset ratio for those with debt was unchanged at 19.6 percent in 2013. Consequently, in 2013, both the total debt as a percentage of total assets and the percentage of debt for those with debt remained at or were just below their highest levels of the study period.

Credit-Card and Housing Debt

During the study period, the proportion of families with heads ages 55 or older with housing debt increased steadily, from 24 percent in 1992 to 42 percent in 2010, before retreating in 2013 to 39 percent (Figure 11). In contrast, the percentage with credit-card debt held steady at the low-30 percent range through 2004, before reaching 38 percent in 2007. In 2010 and 2013, the percentage fell back into the low-30 percent range (Figure 12). The percentages of families with credit-card debt in 2013 were similar to their 1992 levels across each age group despite some jumps in the intervening years, with family heads ages 55–64 having the largest increase, increasing from 37 percent in 1992 to 43 percent in 2013. However, the percentages of families with housing debt increased significantly across all age groups. In particular, for families with heads ages 65–74, this debt increased from 18 percent in 1992 to 42 percent by 2013, and for families with heads ages 75 or older, from 10 percent to 20 percent.

While there was a small increase in the percentage of families with credit-card debt, the median amount owed by those having this debt decreased slightly, to $2,500 in 2013 from $2,604 (2013 dollars) in 2010 (Figure 13). While the overall median slightly declined in 2013, the median credit-card debt for those families carrying it was virtually unchanged among each age group of family heads studied.

Median housing debt, among those having housing debt, ticked upward from 2010 to 2013 ($87,879 in 2010 (2013 dollars) to $93,000 in 2013). Furthermore, these amounts were significantly higher than the 1992 level of $45,510 (Figure 14). While the overall level moved upward between 2010 and 2013, the medians for the age groups 55–64 and 75 or older decreased, while the median increased for those ages 65–74.

Conclusion

The percentage of American families with heads ages 55 or older that have debt increased from 2010 to 2013 (63.4 percent in 2010 to 65.4 percent in 2013). Furthermore, the percentage of these families with debt payments greater than 40 percent of income—a traditional threshold measure of debt-load trouble—increased in 2013 to 9.2 percent from 8.5 percent in 2010. However, total debt payments as a percentage of income decreased from 11.4 percent in 2010 to 10.0 percent in 2013, and average debt decreased from $80,465 in 2010 to $73,211 in 2013, while debt as a percentage of assets decreased from 8.5 percent in 2010 to 8.1 percent in 2013.

The data indicate that housing debt was the major component of debt for families with heads ages 55 or older. Among families with housing debt, the median debt amount increased from 2010–2013, while credit-card debt of those having this debt decreased. Despite some ups and downs among the various measures from 2010 to 2013, the overall debt situation among those ages 55 or older remained at the same general level.

The debt levels among those with housing debt have obvious and serious implications for the future retirement security of these Americans. Perhaps most significantly, elderly or near elderly families with housing debt are potentially at risk of losing what is typically their most important asset—their home. Consequently, older families that take on higher housing debt may well have difficulty avoiding a major lifestyle change in living arrangements for the remainder of their retirement, certainly if they plan to rely on their home as an asset.

These debt results are troubling as far as retirement preparedness is concerned, in that the data indicate that American families just reaching retirement or those newly retired are more likely to have debt—and higher levels of debt—than past generations. Furthermore, the percentages of families whose debt payments are excessive relative to their incomes are at or near their highest levels since 1992. Consequently, even more near elderly and elderly families are likely to find themselves at risk for severe changes in lifestyle after retirement than past generations.

In other work by the Employee Benefit Research Institute,[6] many workers were found to be at risk of running short of money in retirement. This level of debt among families with heads ages 55 or older, along with asset values still recovering from the 2008 recession, will add to the difficulty for many people of this age to save for a retirement that will not run short of money. Moreover, the amount of debt backed by primary residences among these families could lead to either a forced sale or limited ability to use any housing equity for funding retirement.

Endnotes

[1] See Craig Copeland "Individual Account Retirement Plans: An Analysis of the 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances." *EBRI Issue Brief,* no. 406 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, November 2014) for a discussion of asset accumulation estimates from the 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

[2] See Craig Copeland, "Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2010," *EBRI Notes*, no. 2 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, February 2013): 2–15; Craig Copeland, "Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2007," *EBRI Notes*, no. 10 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, October 2009): 2–14; Craig Copeland, "Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2004," *EBRI Notes*, no. 9 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, September 2006): 2–13; and Craig Copeland, "Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992–2001," *EBRI Notes*, no. 4 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, April 2004): 1–13 for prior examinations of debt among this age group.

[3] See Bricker, Jesse, et al. "Changes in U.S. Family Finances from 2010 to 2013: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances." *Federal Reserve Bulletin*. vol. 100, no. 4 (September 2014): 1–40, www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/bulletin/2014/pdf/scf14.pdf (last reviewed November 2014) for more information on the Survey of Consumer Finances.

[4] All dollar amounts in this report are in 2013 dollars.

[5] Although the families may be in a better financial position, this does not mean that they are in an "ideal" financial position.

[6] See Jack VanDerhei "What Causes EBRI Retirement Readiness Ratings™ to Vary: Results from the 2014 Retirement Security Projection Model.®" *EBRI Issue Brief,* no. 396 (Employee Benefit Research Institute, February 2014).

Figure 10

Total Debt as a Percentage of Assets, Percentage With Debt, and Median Total Debt to Asset Ratio For Those With Debt, For Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older, by Various Characteristics, 1992–2013

	1992			1998			2001			2007			2010			2013		
Category	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]	Debt as a Percent Of Assets	Percent With Debt	Median Debt to Asset Ratio[a]
All	7.1%	53.8%	10.1%	7.2%	53.0%	12.8%	5.8%	56.0%	12.1%	7.4%	63.0%	16.0%	8.4%	63.4%	19.6%	8.1%	65.4%	19.6%
Age of Family Head																		
55–64	10.2	71.4	15.6	10.4	76.3	17.6	8.2	76.2	14.9	10.3	81.7	18.8	10.7	77.6	22.8	11.5	78.5	24.3
65–74	5.6	51.5	5.3	5.6	51.9	8.8	4.9	57.0	9.3	6.4	65.2	14.9	7.7	65.0	15.9	6.3	66.4	14.3
75 or older	2.6	31.9	5.2	2.4	25.0	5.5	1.9	29.0	4.7	2.0	31.2	8.3	4.0	38.5	14.6	3.7	41.3	13.9
Race of Family Head																		
White, nonHispanic	6.4	51.6	9.1	6.7	51.7	12.1	5.2	55.0	10.4	6.8	60.7	14.6	7.7	62.3	17.9	7.2	64.7	16.5
Other	15.7	64.0	13.5	14.7	60.3	20.2	15.0	61.3	20.8	14.4	72.9	23.4	15.6	67.1	27.6	18.9	67.7	34.6
Family Income (2013 $s)																		
Less than $10,000	10.5	38.3	11.1	4.6	31.9	13.5	5.3	30.3	8.7	8.9	40.2	9.1	8.3	33.6	44.5	10.4	38.1	28.5
$10,000–$24,999	6.9	43.2	8.8	8.6	37.6	10.0	7.3	41.7	15.3	7.8	44.1	15.0	12.6	46.4	28.9	10.1	48.8	29.4
$25,000–$49,999	6.5	56.4	8.8	7.4	51.1	13.4	7.2	55.4	13.6	8.0	61.1	16.4	10.8	62.2	23.5	14.5	66.4	22.7
$50,000–$99,999	6.5	58.8	8.6	9.8	63.5	17.1	6.2	65.7	12.0	11.8	76.3	21.4	13.1	74.6	21.0	12.9	78.5	19.7
$100,000 or more	7.5	74.5	12.5	6.4	74.1	11.7	5.4	73.5	10.3	6.3	78.8	14.2	6.5	77.1	13.2	5.9	76.0	12.4
Family Status																		
Married	7.4	62.8	10.5	7.2	62.6	12.5	5.5	63.7	10.8	7.5	72.4	15.9	8.2	71.3	17.7	7.5	73.8	17.8
Single male	7.8	43.6	12.9	8.2	46.8	17.5	6.8	54.9	17.5	6.8	54.6	15.4	7.4	52.9	19.8	9.7	57.4	21.2
Single female	5.5	45.1	7.5	6.6	42.0	13.1	6.4	42.4	11.1	7.7	53.1	16.7	11.1	55.7	26.4	10.5	57.0	24.4
Education of Family Head																		
Below HS diploma	8.0	45.0	10.9	7.2	41.0	12.0	6.8	46.1	14.4	8.4	44.8	22.9	12.4	52.4	27.6	13.9	51.0	30.2
HS diploma	6.5	55.8	7.4	6.8	47.6	13.5	5.9	53.6	13.9	9.6	63.6	14.6	11.1	59.5	21.8	12.2	62.0	24.2
Some college	6.5	49.3	12.4	7.0	62.1	15.7	6.5	60.0	10.2	9.8	67.9	22.1	11.7	68.7	27.4	9.9	71.9	22.6
College degree	7.4	67.2	11.2	7.4	66.1	12.2	5.5	64.9	11.4	6.5	69.6	14.9	7.2	69.0	15.7	6.9	71.1	14.7
Net Worth Percentile[b]																		
Lowest 25%	32.2	48.3	24.0	45.2	48.6	40.6	45.3	56.0	42.7	57.4	57.5	59.3	85.3	59.5	76.0	93.8	64.1	80.4
25%–49%	12.3	53.1	9.9	21.5	59.9	19.4	14.8	56.4	13.9	25.4	66.9	22.5	32.5	71.1	32.4	30.7	69.6	27.6
50%–75%	9.0	56.3	9.1	8.3	45.7	10.8	9.9	54.1	11.4	13.3	64.2	11.4	11.9	60.1	12.0	15.0	64.4	12.8
75%–90%	7.0	54.4	7.3	6.5	52.1	7.0	5.8	54.8	4.8	8.2	60.2	9.1	10.3	62.3	10.6	9.3	66.6	9.2
Top 10%	5.8	62.5	3.4	5.1	66.5	4.1	3.7	61.3	4.8	3.9	68.6	5.2	4.1	63.8	5.9	3.5	59.0	5.7
Working Status of Family Head																		
Works for someone else	10.1	78.5	13.0	13.5	80.5	17.9	10.9	79.2	15.8	12.9	80.9	22.6	12.6	81.9	24.6	13.6	80.9	22.8
Self-employed	8.8	71.1	11.3	6.6	74.2	10.8	6.2	73.5	10.4	5.6	79.5	9.2	6.9	77.7	12.9	5.3	78.9	12.8
Retired	4.7	44.9	8.2	4.5	38.7	9.0	3.2	42.8	8.6	4.8	49.6	11.7	6.4	49.2	18.1	6.4	53.8	18.3
Other nonwork	5.0	35.4	5.3	9.9	37.7	16.5	4.0	22.7	4.0	13.0	84.1	26.0	22.8	78.5	40.6	25.2	80.4	48.9

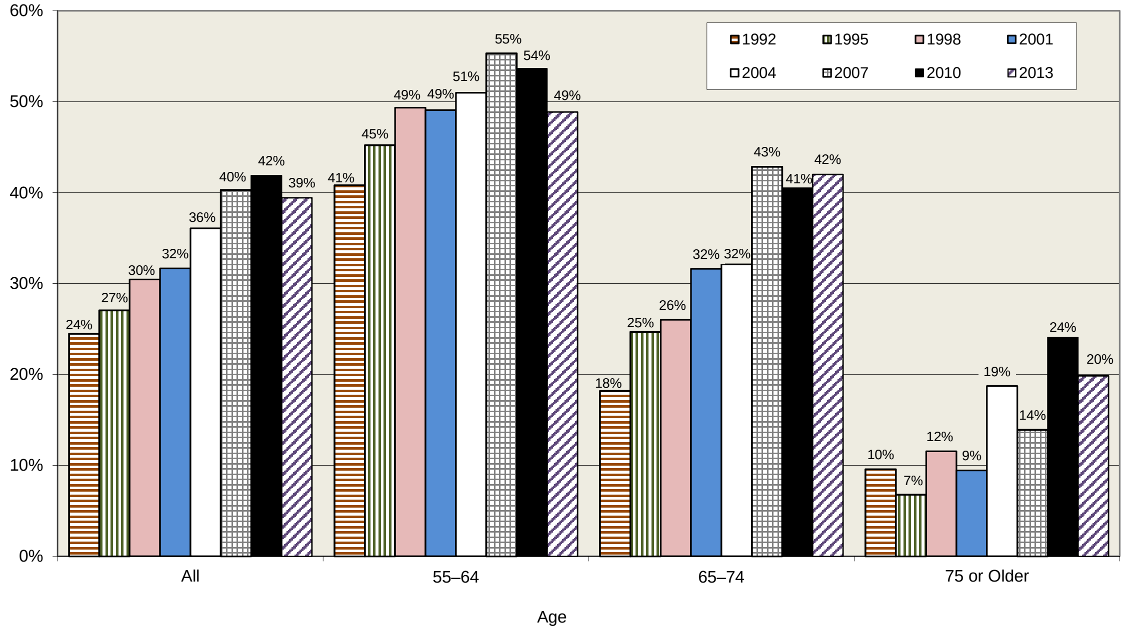
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1998, 2001, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

[a] This includes only those who have debt.

[b] Net worth percentiles are for the families with a head age 55 or older, not for all families.

Figure 11

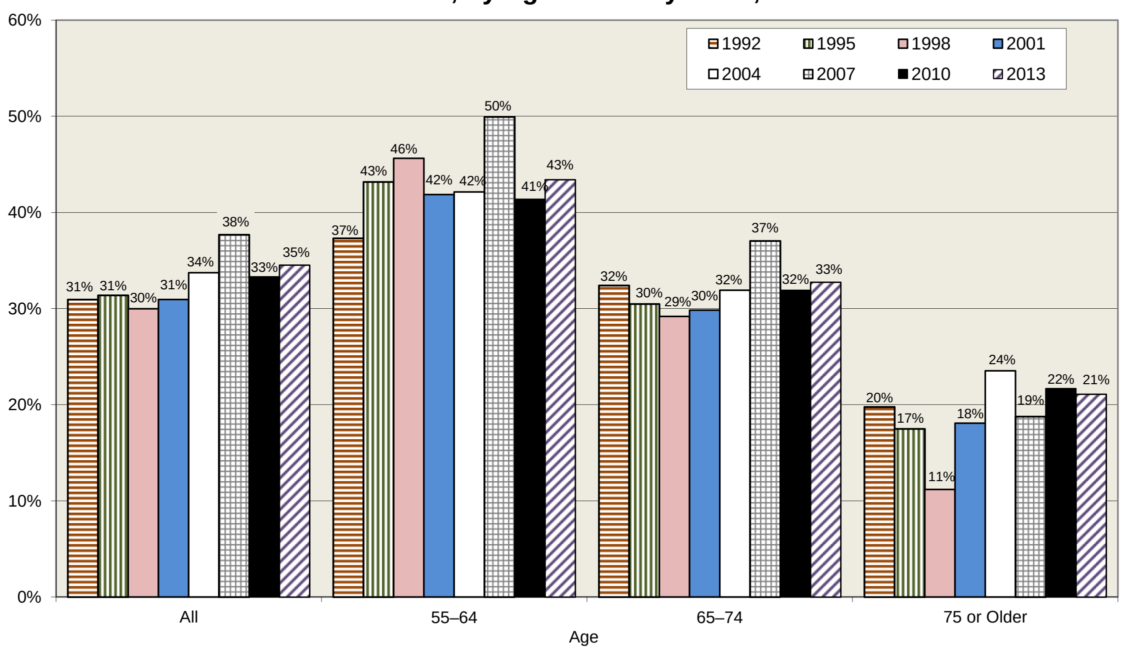
Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Housing Debt, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

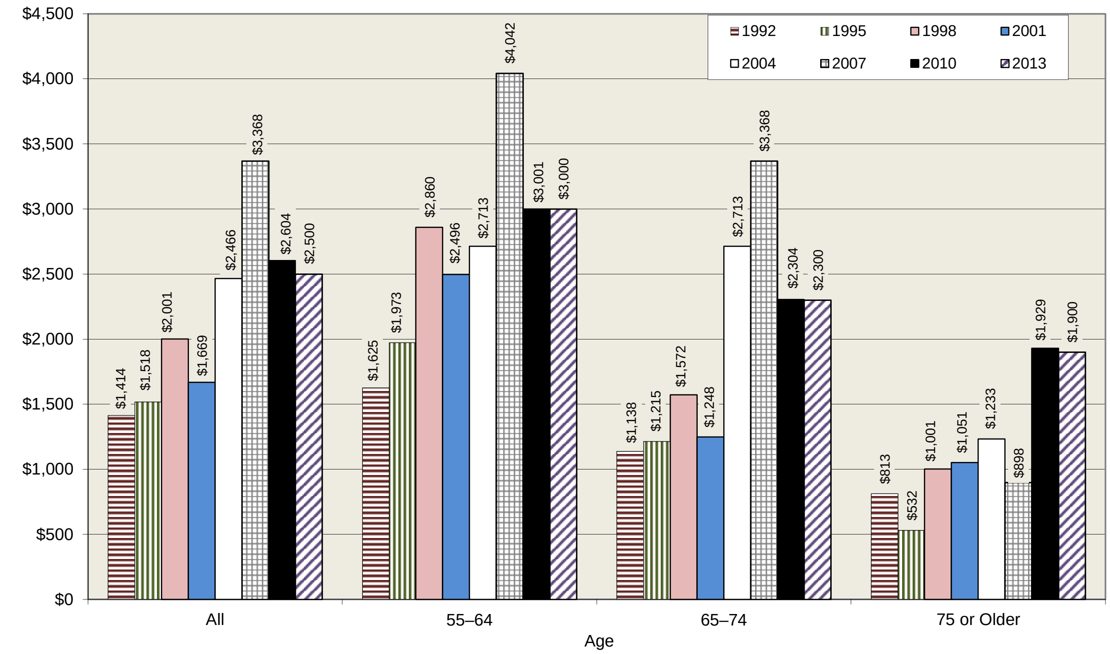
Figure 12

Percentage of American Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Credit Card Debt, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



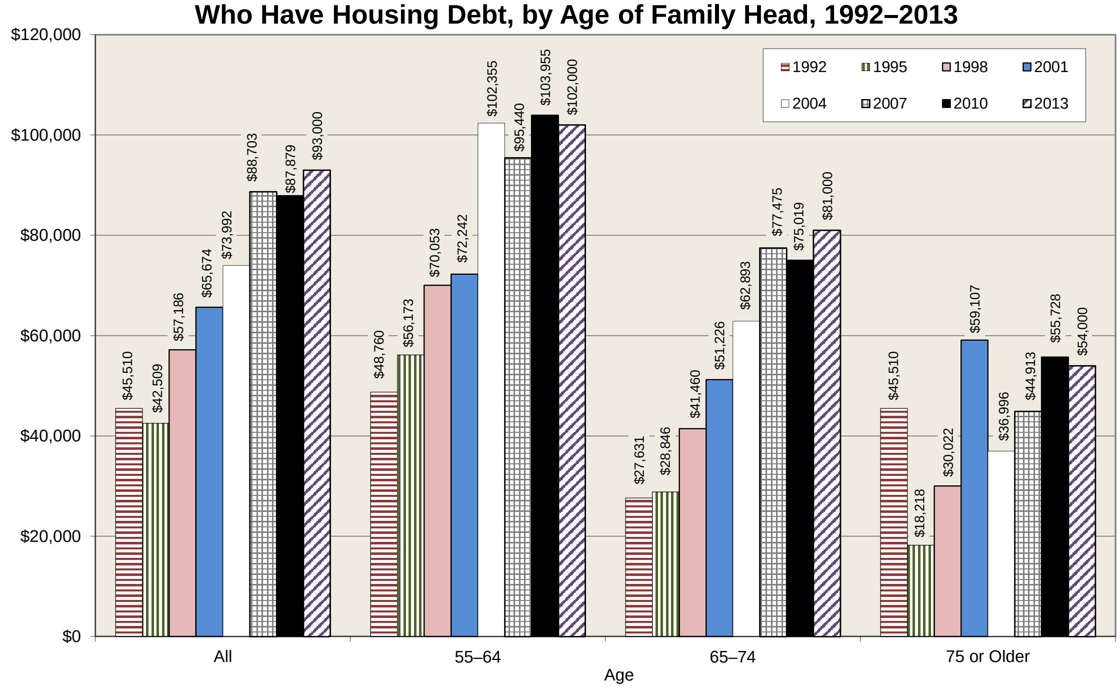
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

Figure 13
Median Credit Card Debt for Those Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older With Credit Card Debt, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.
Note: All dollar figures are in 2013 dollars.

Figure 14
Median Housing Debt for Families With Heads Ages 55 or Older Who Have Housing Debt, by Age of Family Head, 1992–2013



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.
Note: All dollar figures are in 2103 dollars.

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Notes

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