As the older population grows larger, it will also grow more diverse, reflecting the demographic changes in the U.S. population as a whole over the last several decades. By 2050, programs and services for older people will require greater flexibility to meet the needs of a more diverse population.

In 2006, non-Hispanic whites accounted for 81 percent of the U.S. older population. Blacks made up 9 percent, Asians made up 3 percent, and Hispanics (of any race) accounted for 6 percent of the older population. Projections indicate that by 2050 the composition of the older population will be 61 percent non-Hispanic white, 18 percent Hispanic, 12 percent black, and 8 percent Asian. The older population among all racial and ethnic groups will grow; however, the older Hispanic population is projected to grow the fastest, from just over 2 million in 2005 to 15 million in 2050, and to be larger than the older black population by 2028. The older Asian population is also projected to experience a large increase. In 2006, just over 1 million older Asians lived in the United States, by 2050 this population is projected to be almost 7 million.

Data for this indicator’s chart and bullets can be found in Table 2.