LOCAL STUDY AREA / ACS 2020–2024 5-YEAR PUMS

Phoenix: walking difficulty and household vehicle access among older adults

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Study area: Maricopa County, AZ. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020–2024 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), analyzed by SeniorMedRides.com.

This fact sheet online: https://seniormedrides.com/research/senior-transportation-access/phoenix/. Full report: https://seniormedrides.com/research/senior-transportation-access/. Transportation providers listed for this area on SeniorMedRides.com: https://seniormedrides.com/phoenix-az/.

Key numbers

- An estimated **17,766 ±1,355** people 65+ in the Phoenix study area report serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs **and** live in a household with no vehicle (based on 846 sample records).
- **13.40% ±0.95** of older adults with serious walking difficulty live in a household with no vehicle, compared with **3.89% ±0.28** of those without walking difficulty: a difference of 9.51 ±1.01 percentage points and a ratio of 3.44 ±0.36.
- Adjusted for age (direct standardization to the eight-area 65+ age mix): 11.42% ±0.88 vs 4.23% ±0.30, a difference of 7.18 ±0.94 points and a ratio of 2.70 ±0.29.
- 10.31% ±0.32 of older adults in the study area are 85 or older (eight areas combined: 10.28%).

Figures are ACS 2020–2024 5-year estimates: period averages for 2020–2024, not single-year values. They cover people 65+ living in housing units; nursing homes and other group quarters are excluded. ± is the 90% margin of error. These estimates do not directly measure missed medical appointments, transportation demand, wheelchair use, or unmet transportation needs.

By age

Age	People with walking difficulty and no vehicle	No-vehicle share, with walking difficulty	No-vehicle share, without walking difficulty
65–74	5,023 ±653 (n=246)	9.48% ±1.15	2.86% ±0.31
75–84	5,337 ±772 (n=247)	11.23% ±1.55	3.60% ±0.41
85+	**7,406 ±849 (n=353)**	**23.08% ±2.32**	**14.01% ±1.66**

How this study area compares with the other seven combined

- Age-standardized share of older adults with walking difficulty in a no-vehicle household: not distinguishable from the other seven areas combined after adjustment for multiple comparisons (-0.68 ±1.00 points).
- Age-standardized share of all older adults in a no-vehicle household: lower than the other seven areas combined (-0.91 ±0.34 points; remains after Holm adjustment).
- Part-vs-whole ratio (supporting measure): not distinguishable from the other seven areas combined after adjustment for multiple comparisons (+0.18 ±0.15).
- Each study area is compared only with the other seven areas combined, using age-standardized measures. The comparison plan was written before any comparison test was run, but after the unadjusted estimates had been seen, so it is planned but not pre-registered. p-values are Holm-adjusted within each family of tests at a 10% familywise level (more lenient than the common 5%). The study areas are not ranked.

Supporting comparison: with walking difficulty vs all older adults

Against all older adults (a group that includes those with walking difficulty): 13.40% ±0.95 vs 5.63% ±0.29 (ratio 2.38 ±0.14); age-standardized 11.42% ±0.88 vs 5.61% ±0.28 (ratio 2.04 ±0.14).

Context from published sources (different universes)

- People 65+ with serious walking difficulty (ACS table B18105, civilian noninstitutionalized, study-area counties): 138,608 ±2,805, or 18.96% ±0.38.
- Households with a householder 65+ and no vehicle (ACS table B25045; households, not people): 34,224 ±1,562, or 7.66% ±0.34 of such households.
- CDC PLACES 2025 release (2023 data; modeled; all adults 18+): adults reporting that a lack of reliable transportation kept them from medical care, meetings, work or daily living in the past 12 months: Maricopa County 8.3% (CDC's 95% CI 7.1–9.5). This is CDC's measure, attributed to CDC; it is not part of this report's estimates.

Terms and limits

- Walking difficulty is the ACS ambulatory difficulty item: serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, as reported in the survey.
- No vehicle means no car, van or truck kept at home for household use; it is a household measure, not a measure of transportation access.
- These estimates do not directly measure missed medical appointments, transportation demand, wheelchair use, or unmet transportation needs. They count people and shares. They also do not measure trips, Medicaid eligibility, service supply or capacity, or whether transportation services are adequate. A household without a vehicle may still get rides from family, friends, transit or paratransit.
- Associations are descriptive; nothing here shows cause and effect. Figures are ACS 2020–2024 5-year estimates: period averages for 2020–2024, not single-year values.

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How to cite

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> Source data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020–2024 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). The Census Bureau has not reviewed, endorsed or certified this analysis or its findings.

Data: `data/joint_estimates.csv`, `data/with_without_contrast.csv`, `data/with_without_std.csv`, `data/with_without_by_age.csv`, `data/age_specific.csv`, `data/part_vs_whole.csv`, `data/comparisons.csv`.