



# Quantifying the Economic Impact of Social Security Benefit Spending

**FPPTA Winter Trustee School**

**February 3, 2026**



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# Why This Research?

Social Security forms the foundation of retirement security in the U.S. The program provides vital benefits to older Americans, surviving spouses, children, and Americans with disabilities.

Social Security also has a powerful impact on the U.S. economy, but this is often overlooked in discussions about the future of the program. This research aims to draw attention to this economic impact by giving one estimate of the level of impact.

As debate about how to resolve Social Security's financing gap heats up in the coming years, it's important to remember that any changes to Social Security will have an effect on the U.S. economy.

# Key Findings

In 2023 \$1.38 trillion in Social Security benefits were paid to more than 67 million beneficiaries, including:

- more than \$1 trillion to nearly 53 million retired worker beneficiaries;
- more than \$154 billion to nearly 6 million survivor beneficiaries, including more than two million children;
- nearly \$152 billion to more than 8.5 million disability beneficiaries.

**QUANTIFYING THE  
ECONOMIC IMPACT**  
of Social Security  
Benefit Spending



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By Tyler Bond and Dan Doohan

October 2025

Report available at: <https://www.nirsonline.org/research/socialsecurityeconomicimpact/>

# Key Findings, Continued

Expenditures made out of those payments collectively supported:

- 12.2 million American jobs that paid \$804.6 billion in labor income;
- \$2.6 trillion in total economic output nationwide;
- \$1.6 trillion in value added (GDP);
- \$363.1 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue.

Social Security benefit expenditures have large multiplier effects.

**Each dollar paid out in benefits supported \$2 in total economic output nationally**, with the largest employment impacts occurring in the food services, healthcare, and retail trade sectors.

# Research Methodology

This research used the software program IMPLAN to model the economic impact of the spending of Social Security benefit payments.

## What is IMPLAN?

- Used to estimate impacts on: jobs, income, value added, total output, and tax revenue.
- An input-output modeling software and data package developed for a USDA Forest Service project, now used for many types of analysis.
- Represents relationships among various sectors in the economy as a matrix & estimates how an initial event reverberates through the economy.

Information on Social Security benefit payments came from publicly available data provided on the Social Security Administration's website. All data refers to benefit payments made in calendar year 2023 as this was the most recent year available for analysis within IMPLAN.

# Social Security paid \$1.4 trillion in benefits in 2023 to over 67 million people

**Table 1: Social Security Benefits, 2023**

	<b>Total OASDI Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Total Retirement Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Total Survivor Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Total Disability Beneficiaries</b>
Number of Beneficiaries	67,076,966	52,729,819	5,833,423	8,513,724
Total Benefit Payments	\$1.4 trillion	\$1.1 trillion	\$154.5 billion	\$151.8 billion
Median Monthly Benefit Amount		\$1,853		\$1,410

Median benefit amounts for some beneficiaries are based upon data provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA). No such data is provided for other categories of beneficiaries.

# The Spending of Social Security Benefits Has a Broad Economic Impact

**Table 2: Jobs and Labor Income**

	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Labor Income</b>
Social Security Benefit Expenditures	12,212,475	\$804,597,188,241

**Table 3: Economic Output and Value Added**

	<b>Economic Output</b>	<b>Value Added (GDP)</b>
Social Security Benefit Expenditures	\$2,644,159,976,775	\$1,577,031,308,638

# The Spending of Social Security Benefits Generates Tax Revenues at Every Level of Government

**Table 4: Local, State, and Federal Tax Revenue**

	Local Tax	State Tax	Federal Tax	Total Tax
Social Security Benefit Expenditures	\$72,970,959,778	\$88,429,028,788	\$201,737,260,553	\$363,137,249,120

# Social Security Benefits Support a Broad Set of Industries Across the U.S.

Top Industries Supported Include:

- Restaurants
- Retail
- Hospitals and Doctors' Offices

**Table 5: Top Fifteen Industries by National Employment Impact**

Industry	Total # Jobs Supported
Limited-service restaurants	594,119
Full-service restaurants	471,029
Other real estate	358,726
Hospitals	357,590
Retail - Food and beverage stores	308,921
Retail - General merchandise stores	307,636
Individual and family services	288,719
Offices of physicians	279,618
Employment services	256,312
Tenant-occupied housing	251,573
All other food and drinking places	236,742
Personal care services	197,031
Couriers and messengers	196,795
Nursing and community care facilities	191,811
Retail - Miscellaneous store retailers	189,617

# Social Security Benefits Also Support a Variety of Occupations Across Industries

Top Occupations Supported Include:

- Retail Workers
- Restaurant Employees
- Medical Professionals

**Table 6: Top Fifteen Occupation Categories by National Employment Impact**

Occupation Category	Wage and Salary Employment	Wage and Salary Income	Supplements to Wages and Salaries	Total Employee Compensation	Hours Worked
Retail Sales Workers	693,630	\$20,403,318,682	\$4,288,329,456	\$24,691,648,139	940,301,902
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	686,883	\$16,128,568,427	\$2,257,606,507	\$18,386,174,933	753,992,431
Material Moving Workers	451,656	\$19,374,820,127	\$3,680,375,529	\$23,055,195,656	752,586,027
Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides	420,818	\$12,662,298,215	\$2,478,155,730	\$15,140,453,945	664,663,689
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	388,746	\$50,729,278,158	\$9,968,620,232	\$60,697,898,390	714,552,804
Business Operations Specialists	347,227	\$35,581,930,651	\$6,137,112,315	\$41,719,042,966	670,986,449
Information and Record Clerks	338,583	\$16,544,123,589	\$2,982,973,056	\$19,527,096,645	561,833,880
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	314,248	\$8,949,631,918	\$1,308,708,325	\$10,258,340,244	427,452,863
Motor Vehicle Operators	260,908	\$14,694,206,192	\$3,083,166,770	\$17,777,372,963	511,880,121
Top Executives	242,906	\$36,749,108,809	\$6,464,000,570	\$43,213,109,379	520,805,367
Computer Occupations	213,972	\$32,422,386,637	\$5,263,016,296	\$37,685,402,933	422,317,667
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	225,386	\$7,000,453,642	\$1,192,500,588	\$8,192,954,229	356,742,737
Health Technologists and Technicians	199,105	\$11,418,401,629	\$2,265,603,081	\$13,684,004,710	352,822,435
Financial Specialists	186,892	\$24,496,657,338	\$4,058,290,381	\$28,554,947,718	374,135,933
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	178,330	\$9,671,308,662	\$1,727,796,316	\$11,399,104,977	314,994,928

# Reserve Depletion in the Social Security Trust Fund Threatens Benefit Cuts

Social Security built up a surplus in the Old Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) trust fund for decades, largely to cover the retirement of the Baby Boomers. Social Security has been drawing on the reserves from the OASI trust fund since 2021 to make full benefit payments.

The latest projections from the Office of the Chief Actuary estimate that the reserves in the OASI trust fund will be depleted late in 2032. Congress could change the law and combine the OASI trust fund with the Disability Insurance (DI) trust fund and delay reserve depletion until 2034. This is what many people assume will happen.

If Congress does not act to resolve Social Security's financing gap, then reserve depletion of the combined OASDI trust fund would result in across-the-board benefit cuts of approximately 19 percent for all current and future beneficiaries.

# A 19% Reduction in Social Security Benefits Would Reduce the Economic Impact by 16.5%

**Table 10: Economic Impact of a 19% Reduction in Social Security Benefits**

	Total Benefit Payments	Employment Impact	Labor Income Impact	Value Added (GDP) Impact	Economic Output Impact
Actual OASDI Benefits Paid - 2023	\$1.4 trillion	12,212,475	\$804,597,188,241	\$1,577,031,308,638	\$2,644,159,976,775
19% Reduction in 2023 OASDI Benefits	\$1.1 trillion	10,203,906	\$672,266,207,510	\$1,317,659,162,222	\$2,209,278,662,189

# Social Security Also Has a Profound Economic Impact in Every State

**Table 7: Employment and Labor Income Impacts, by State**

	# Jobs	Labor Income
Alabama	143,501	\$7.0 b
Alaska	11,341	\$697.1 m
Arizona	208,504	\$12.7 b
Arkansas	86,765	\$4.2 b
California	730,036	\$51.4 b
Colorado	127,292	\$8.2 b
Connecticut	92,378	\$6.4 b
Delaware	30,246	\$1.7 b
DC	6,495	\$539.1 m
Florida	74,4401	\$41.6 b
Georgia	27,3120	\$14.9 b
Hawaii	32,619	\$1.9 b
Idaho	50,539	\$2.8 b
Illinois	320,130	\$20.4 b
Indiana	188,467	\$10.8 b
Iowa	86,667	\$4.4 b
Kansas	79,143	\$4.4 b
Kentucky	126,642	\$6.9 b
Louisiana	119,641	\$5.8 b
Maine	44,449	\$2.5 b
Maryland	134,779	\$7.9 b
Massachusetts	165,295	\$12.5 b
Michigan	322,986	\$18.6 b
Minnesota	168,582	\$10.7 b
Mississippi	80,949	\$3.5 b
Missouri	186,259	\$10.2 b
Montana	33,434	\$1.8 b
Nebraska	48,284	\$2.6 b
Nevada	68,202	\$3.9 b
New Hampshire	41,245	\$2.8 b
New Jersey	220,318	\$15.1 b
New Mexico	51,548	\$2.6 b
New York	440,019	\$31.7 b
North Carolina	298,970	\$17.2 b
North Dakota	18130	\$1.0 b
Ohio	345,928	\$19.0 b
Oklahoma	110,960	\$5.7 b
Oregon	120,452	\$7.5 b
Pennsylvania	415,022	\$25.7 b
Rhode Island	30,452	\$1.8 b
South Carolina	159,846	\$7.9 b
South Dakota	25,696	\$1.4 b
Tennessee	210,819	\$13.2 b
Texas	676,630	\$39.7 b
Utah	63,467	\$3.5 b
Vermont	19,924	\$1.1 b
Virginia	201,554	\$11.6 b
Washington	156,913	\$11.7 b
West Virginia	52,921	\$2.7 b
Wisconsin	181,775	\$10.3 b
Wyoming	12,653	\$562.1 m

**Table 8: Total Value Added and Output Impacts, by State**

	Value Added	Output
Alabama	\$14.9 b	\$24.8 b
Alaska	\$1.4 b	\$2.1 b
Arizona	\$25.7 b	\$41.1 b
Arkansas	\$9.0 b	\$15.1 b
California	\$105.5 b	\$159.9 b
Colorado	\$16.4 b	\$25.9 b
Connecticut	\$13.0 b	\$19.1 b
Delaware	\$3.7 b	\$5.6 b
DC	\$1.1 b	\$1.5 b
Florida	\$85.8 b	\$140.1 b
Georgia	\$31.6 b	\$50.4 b
Hawaii	\$4.2 b	\$6.5 b
Idaho	\$5.6 b	\$9.2 b
Illinois	\$40.0 b	\$62.6 b
Indiana	\$20.7 b	\$33.5 b
Iowa	\$9.2 b	\$14.9 b
Kansas	\$8.8 b	\$14.7 b
Kentucky	\$13.4 b	\$22.3 b
Louisiana	\$12.2 b	\$20.3 b
Maine	\$5.2 b	\$8.2 b
Maryland	\$16.8 b	\$25.7 b
Massachusetts	\$23.6 b	\$35.1 b
Michigan	\$35.9 b	\$58.8 b
Minnesota	\$20.4 b	\$32.6 b
Mississippi	\$7.8 b	\$13.5 b
Missouri	\$20.2 b	\$33.3 b
Montana	\$3.4 b	\$5.7 b
Nebraska	\$5.5 b	\$8.8 b
Nevada	\$8.5 b	\$13.1 b
New Hampshire	\$5.4 b	\$8.2 b
New Jersey	\$29.6 b	\$44.7 b
New Mexico	\$5.5 b	\$9.1 b
New York	\$65.4 b	\$94.0 b
North Carolina	\$34.6 b	\$56.0 b
North Dakota	\$1.9 b	\$3.2 b
Ohio	\$39.0 b	\$62.8 b
Oklahoma	\$11.7 b	\$20.1 b
Oregon	\$14.3 b	\$22.4 b
Pennsylvania	\$48.8 b	\$77.2 b
Rhode Island	\$3.7 b	\$5.7 b
South Carolina	\$17.2 b	\$27.9 b
South Dakota	\$2.7 b	\$4.4 b
Tennessee	\$25.1 b	\$40.2 b
Texas	\$80.0 b	\$132.0 b
Utah	\$7.7 b	\$12.5 b
Vermont	\$2.3 b	\$3.6 b
Virginia	\$25.0 b	\$38.4 b
Washington	\$25.4 b	\$37.6 b
West Virginia	\$5.5 b	\$8.9 b
Wisconsin	\$20.6 b	\$33.3 b
Wyoming	\$1.3 b	\$2.2 b

# State Fact Sheets Detail the Economic Impact of Social Security in Each State

## FLORIDA

### Quantifying the Economic Impact of Social Security Benefit Spending



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#### Key Findings

Benefits paid by Social Security support a significant amount of economic activity in the state of Florida.

Social Security benefits received by retirees and other beneficiaries are spent in the local community. This spending ripples through the economy, as one person's spending becomes another person's income, creating a multiplier effect.

In 2023, expenditures stemming from Social Security supported...

744,401 jobs that paid \$41.6 billion in wages and salaries

\$140.1 billion in total economic output

\$19.8 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues

... in the state of Florida.

Each dollar paid out in Social Security benefits nationally supported \$2 in total economic activity in states like Florida.

#### Overview

Social Security benefits provide crucial income to older adults, survivors, children, and Americans with disabilities. Expenditures made by Social Security beneficiaries also provide a steady economic stimulus to Florida communities and the state economy. In 2023, 5,069,686 residents of Florida received a total of \$104.4 billion in Social Security benefits.

The median Social Security retirement benefit received in Florida was \$1,839 per month. The median Social Security disability benefit received was \$1,448 per month. These modest benefits provide retirees, surviving spouses, children, and Americans with disabilities income to meet basic needs.

Florida	Total OASDI Beneficiaries	Total Retirement Beneficiaries	Total Survivor Beneficiaries	Total Disability Beneficiaries
Number of Beneficiaries	5,069,686	4,131,550	387,383	550,753
Total Benefit Payments	\$104.4 billion	\$83.8 billion	\$10.5 billion	\$10.2 billion
Median Monthly Benefit Amount		\$1,839		\$1,448

Median benefit amounts for some beneficiaries are based upon data provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA). No such data is provided for other categories of beneficiaries.

#### Social Security Benefit Multiplier

Nationally, each \$1 in Social Security benefits paid ultimately supported \$2 in total economic output. This "multiplier" incorporates multiple rounds of impacts of beneficiary spending, as each purchase ripples through the economy of states like Florida. Each dollar of benefits spent supports a greater amount of economic activity because that dollar contributes to the earnings of employees at local businesses who then spend their earnings at other businesses, which broadens the impact of the first dollar spent.

#### Impact on Jobs and Incomes

Expenditures stemming from Social Security benefits supported 744,401 jobs in the state. The total income to state residents supported by Social Security expenditures was \$41.6 billion.

To put these employment impacts in perspective, in 2023 Florida's unemployment rate was 3.0%. The fact that Social Security benefit expenditures supported 744,401 jobs is significant, as it represents 7.6 percentage points in Florida's labor force.

#### Economic Impact

Social Security paid a total of \$104.4 billion in benefits to Florida residents in 2023. Expenditures from these benefits supported a total of \$140.1 billion in total economic output in the state, and \$85.8 billion in value added in the state.

Totals may not add up due to rounding. For data and methodology, see Bond, T. and Donnan, D. 2025. Quantifying the Economic Impact of Social Security Benefit Spending. National Institute on Retirement Security. Washington, DC. [www.nirs.org](http://www.nirs.org)

### Quantifying the Economic Impact of Social Security Benefit Spending

## FLORIDA

#### Impact on Tax Revenues

Social Security benefit payments made to Florida residents supported a total of \$19.8 billion in revenue to federal, state, and local governments.

Federal Tax	\$11.2 billion
State/Local Tax	\$8.6 billion
Total	\$19.8 billion

#### Economic Impacts by Industry Sector

The economic impact of Social Security benefits was broadly felt across various industry sectors in Florida. The ten industry sectors with the largest employment impacts are presented in the table to the side.

Industry	Employment Impact (# Jobs)
Limited-service restaurants	39,644
Full-service restaurants	35,027
Other real estate	25,424
Offices of physicians	24,532
Retail - Food and beverage stores	24,077
Hospitals	22,078
Retail - General merchandise stores	21,218
Personal care services	16,991
Employment services	16,770
Tenant-occupied housing	14,021

#### Economic Impacts by Occupation Category

Social Security benefits in Florida supported jobs in every civilian job category. The table below lists the top five occupations by employment impact.

Occupation Category	Wage and Salary Employment	Wage and Salary Income	Supplements to Wages and Salaries	Employee Compensation	Hours Worked
Retail Sales Workers	47,800	\$1,411,774,219	\$297,194,314	\$1,708,968,533	64,652,768
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	45,174	\$1,112,754,721	\$153,257,502	\$1,266,012,223	49,436,324
Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	25,161	\$3,202,901,133	\$627,241,680	\$3,830,142,813	46,460,539
Material Moving Workers	25,012	\$997,872,138	\$192,417,056	\$1,190,289,194	40,804,948
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	20,873	\$622,359,229	\$89,425,628	\$711,784,857	28,348,019

# State Fact Sheets Provide Information on Social Security in Each State

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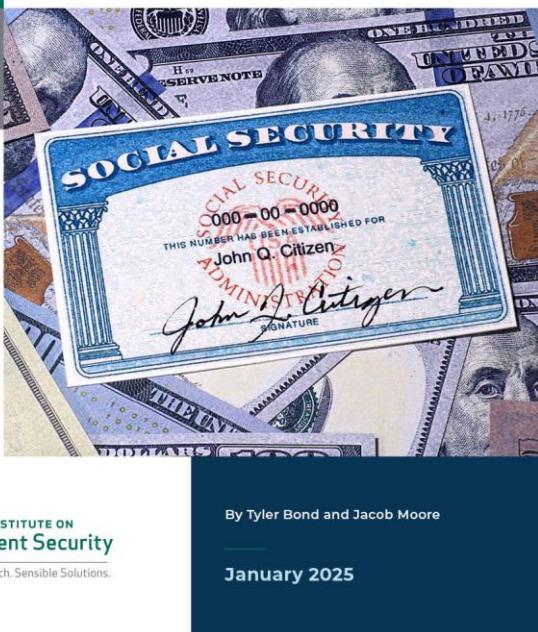
# The Size of State Economies Plays a Role in the Impact of Social Security Benefits

California experienced the largest economic impacts from the spending of Social Security benefits, but this should be expected because California has the largest state economy in the nation. Social Security benefit spending supported nearly \$160 billion in economic output in California in 2023.

Social Security benefit payments also are important in the economies of smaller states. In Florida, Michigan, and West Virginia, the number of jobs supported by the spending of Social Security benefits represented more than seven percent of that state's workforce.

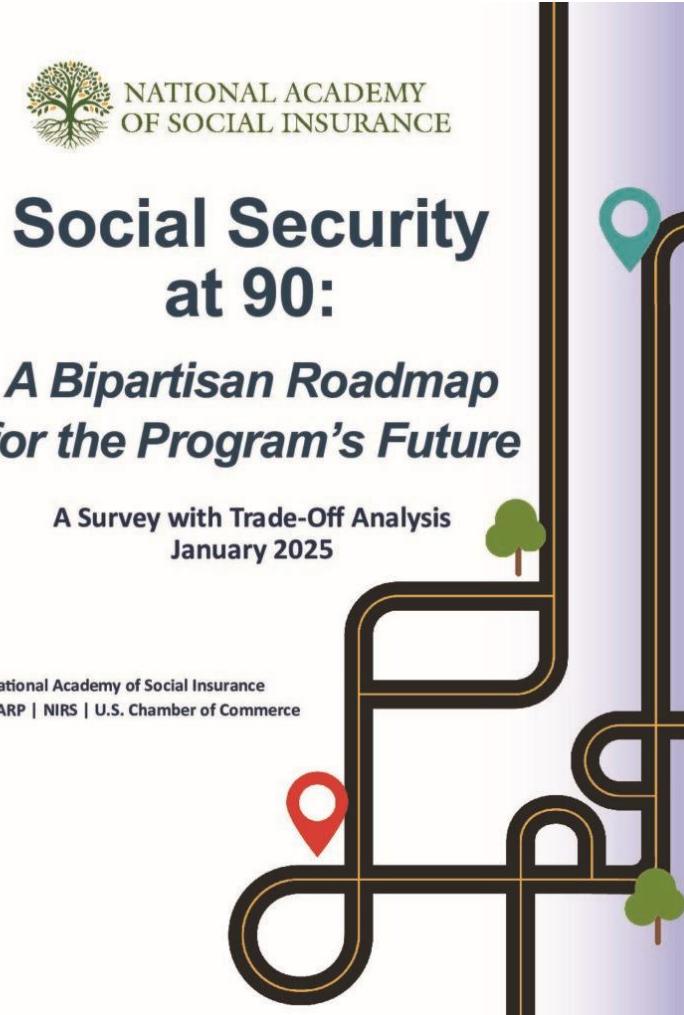
The state fact sheets detail the industries and occupations most impacted by the spending of Social Security benefits in each state. These are largely similar to the national findings: restaurants, retail, and healthcare providers.

# Other Social Security Research from NIRS



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**SOCIAL SECURITY'S  
FIRST 90 YEARS:  
A HISTORY OF  
BIPARTISAN AND  
INTERGENERATIONAL  
SUPPORT**



A Survey with Trade-Off Analysis  
January 2025

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By Tyler Bond and Kelly Kenneally

July 2024

# Questions

