

Economic dependency is defined in terms of the number of persons of working age to the number of persons not of working age. An age dependency ratio is a traditional measure that captures this balance between a working age and a nonworking age populations. In this analysis, the age dependency ratio is the number of persons below age 20 plus the number age 65 and over per 100 persons between ages 20 and 64. The age dependency ratio is projected to increase from 73.7 to 86.3. Although this ratio was higher than the U.S. ratio of 63.9 in 2000, it is considerably lower than the U.S. ratio of 117.2 in 2020. Of the dependents, the old age dependency ratios moves from 24.3 in 2000 to 29.2 in Arkansas, and 27.6 to 64.9 in the U.S. In contrast, the child dependency ratio in Arkansas is anticipated to increase from 49.4 to 57.1, while in the U.S. it increases from 36.3 to 52.3. The ratio of aged persons to youth is also projected to rise, from 49.2 in 2000 to 60.7 in 2020.

Table 3
Dependency Ratios for Arkansas and the U.S., 2000 and 2020

	Year	Arkansas	United States
Median Age	2000	36.0	35.3
	2020	37.3	38.0
Age Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	73.7	63.9
	2020	86.3	117.2
Youth Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	49.4	36.3
	2020	57.1	52.3
Old Age Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	24.3	27.6
	2020	29.2	64.9
Ratio of Aged Persons to Youth (Per 100)	2000	49.2	76.0
	2020	60.7	124.1
Dependency Ratio = (Age under 20 + Age 65 and over) / (Age 20-64) X 100			
Youth dependency ratio = Age under 20 / Age 20- 64 X 100			
Old age dependency ratio = Age 65 and over / Age 20 - 64 X100			

The gender ratio in Arkansas is expected to increase slightly between 2000 and 2020, with 95.3 males per 100 females in 2000, and 98.8 males per 100 females in 2020. As expected, the gender ratio decreases as the age groups of the population increase; within the population of Arkansans ages 65 and older the ratio of males to females was 70.3. By 2020, this proportion is expected to increase to 81.6, indicating that either males will be living longer lives or females will be dying younger, or some combination of the two.

During the same time period, the ratio of children to women in the state (i.e., children under 5 years per 100 females ages 15-44) is expected to rise slightly from 16.5 to 17.1.