



[NATION](#)

Latinos

[Add Topic](#)

They paid taxes. Now undocumented Latinos are aging without savings, government care

**Marc Ramirez**

USA TODAY

Published 5:26 a.m. ET Sept. 22, 2022 | Updated 5:52 a.m. ET Sept. 30, 2022

Key Points

A rapidly growing population of elderly undocumented Latinos is projected to explode over the next two decades.

Without legal status, undocumented workers pay billions in taxes that they cannot recoup in retirement or for health care.

"Often, people are forced to continue working until it is physically impossible," said Tovia Siegel, an immigrant advocate in Illinois.

In 1998, Noe Ramirez crossed into the United States from Mexico, hoping to earn enough to buy a new taxi to replace the sputtering cab he drove in Mexico City. The part-time musician found construction work in Houston and played guitar on the weekends.

One morning as he rode his bike to work, he was hit by a drunken driver. The driver fled, leaving him bleeding on the street, his spinal cord crushed. After being hospitalized, he was taken in by a local shelter for undocumented migrants and received medical care through a county program for low-income residents.