

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Washington, D.C. 20212

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/cex>
Technical information: 202-691-6900
Media information: 202-691-5902

USDL-07-1644
FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. EDT
Friday, October 26, 2007

CONSUMER EXPENDITURES IN 2006

Average annual expenditures per consumer unit, which is similar to a household, rose 4.3 percent in 2006, following an increase of 6.9 percent in 2005, according to results from the Consumer Expenditure Survey released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. The increase in expenditures from 2005 to 2006 was larger than the 3.2 percent rise in the annual average Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) over this period.

Increases in spending on housing (7.9 percent), the largest component of spending, and on food (3.0 percent), contributed to the overall increase in 2006. Among the other major components, spending increased for healthcare (3.8 percent), transportation (2.0 percent), and personal insurance and pensions (1.3 percent), while spending decreased for apparel and services (-0.6 percent) and entertainment (-0.5 percent).

Average annual expenditures and characteristics of all consumer units and percent changes, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2004-2006

Item	2004	2005	2006	Percent change	
				2004-2005	2005-2006
Number of consumer units (000's)	116,282	117,356	118,843		
Income before taxes	\$54,453	\$58,712	\$60,533		
Average age of reference person	48.5	48.6	48.7		
Average number in consumer unit:					
Persons	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Earners	1.3	1.3	1.3		
Vehicles	1.9	2.0	1.9		
Percent homeowner	68	67	67		
Average annual expenditures	\$43,395	\$46,409	\$48,398	6.9	4.3
Food	5,781	5,931	6,111	2.6	3.0
At home	3,347	3,297	3,417	-1.5	3.6
Away from home	2,434	2,634	2,694	8.2	2.3
Housing	13,918	15,167	16,366	9.0	7.9
Apparel and services	1,816	1,886	1,874	3.9	-0.6
Transportation	7,801	8,344	8,508	7.0	2.0
Healthcare	2,574	2,664	2,766	3.5	3.8
Entertainment	2,218	2,388	2,376	7.7	-0.5
Personal insurance and pensions	4,823	5,204	5,270	7.9	1.3
Other expenditures	4,461	4,823	5,129	8.1	6.3

NOTE: A consumer unit is defined as members of a household related by blood, marriage, adoption, or some other legal arrangement; a single person living alone or sharing a household with others, but who is financially independent; or two or more persons living together who share responsibility for at least two out of the three major types of expenses: food, housing, and other expenses.

Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data include the expenditures and income of consumers, as well as the demographic characteristics of those consumers. Tables with more expenditure detail than is shown in this news release will be available October 26, 2007 by accessing the BLS website (<http://www.bls.gov/cex>). Tables show 2006 CE data by standard classifications that include income quintile, income class, age of reference person, size of consumer unit, number of earners, composition of consumer unit, region of residence, housing tenure, type of area (urban-rural), race, Hispanic origin, occupation, and education. Other tables available on the website include expenditures by age, region, size, or gender cross-tabulated by income before taxes and other demographic variables. Historical tables back to 1984 and tabulations for selected metropolitan areas are also available.

Other available data

A forthcoming annual report will include a brief discussion of expenditure changes in 2006 and tables with data classified by the standard characteristics listed above. Detailed reports that include CE data are published at two-year intervals and include the standard tabulations and cross tabulations at the same level of expenditure detail as shown on the website. Metropolitan area tables are also included. All data published in the reports and posted to the website are integrated from the two CE components—the quarterly Interview Survey and weekly Diary Survey.

Other survey information available on the Internet includes answers to frequently asked questions, a glossary, order forms for survey products, and analytical articles that use CE data. Beginning with the 2000 data, standard error tables for integrated data are available on the BLS site.

The 2006 Diary and Interview microdata will soon be available on CD-ROM. The Interview files contain expenditure data in two different formats: MTAB files that present monthly values in an item-coding framework based on the CPI pricing scheme, and EXPN files that organize expenditures by the section of the Interview questionnaire in which they are collected. Expenditure values on EXPN files cover different time periods depending on the specific questions asked, and the files also contain relevant non-expenditure information not found on the MTAB files. The CE microdata files are available on CD-ROM back to 1990 and for selected earlier years. Beginning with the 1996 microdata on CD-ROM, files are available in either ASCII format or PC-SAS format. Beginning with the release of the 2005 microdata, both formats are available on one CD-ROM. (See www.bls.gov/cex/csxmico.htm for details.)

For further information, contact the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Office of Prices and Living Conditions, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20212-0001 or call 202-691-6900. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.