



Bureau of Labor Statistics

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CONSUMER EXPENDITURES IN 2002

Average annual expenditures per consumer unit rose 2.9 percent in 2002, following increases of 3.9 percent in 2001 and 2.8 percent in 2000, 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 2001 to 2002 was more than the 1.6 percent annual average rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) over this period.

The changes in expenditures from 2001 to 2002 varied among the major components of spending. Expenditures on health care showed the largest increase, 7.7 percent. Spending on entertainment and on personal insurance and pensions also rose more than the overall average, rising 6.5 and 4.3 percent, respectively. Spending on food, housing, transportation, and apparel and services all rose less than the overall average.

Annual expenditures of all consumer units and percent changes, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2000-2002

Item	2000	2001	2002	Percent change	
				2000-2001	2001-2002
Number of consumer units (000's)	109,367	110,339	112,108		
Income before taxes ¹	\$44,649	\$47,507	\$49,430		
Average age of reference person	48.2	48.1	48.1		
Average number in consumer unit:					
Persons	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Earners	1.4	1.4	1.4		
Vehicles	1.9	1.9	2.0		
Percent homeowner	66	66	66		
Average annual expenditures	\$38,045	\$39,518	\$40,677	3.9	2.9
Food	5,158	5,321	5,375	3.2	1.0
At home	3,021	3,086	3,099	2.2	.4
Away from home	2,137	2,235	2,276	4.6	1.8
Housing	12,319	13,011	13,283	5.6	2.1
Apparel and services	1,856	1,743	1,749	-6.1	.3
Transportation	7,417	7,633	7,759	2.9	1.7
Health care	2,066	2,182	2,350	5.6	7.7
Entertainment	1,863	1,953	2,079	4.8	6.5
Personal insurance and pensions ²	3,365	3,737	3,899	11.1	4.3
Other expenditures	4,001	3,939	4,182	-1.5	6.2

¹ Income values are derived from "complete income reporters" only.

² See the Technical note on page 2.

Consumer Expenditure Survey data include the expenditures and income of consumers, as well as the demographic characteristics of those consumers. A soon-to-be-published report will include tables showing the 2002 data classified by income quintile, income class, size of consumer unit, number of earners, composition of consumer unit, age of the reference person, region of residence, housing tenure, type of area (urban-rural), race, Hispanic origin, occupation, and education.

Other available data

Detailed reports that include integrated Consumer Expenditure (CE) Survey data are published at two-year intervals and contain tables of average annual expenditures, income, and characteristics for the same classifications that are shown in the annual report but with additional detail. The most recent two-year report included CE Survey data for 2000 and 2001 and was published in the fall of 2003. Also included in the two-year reports are tables showing average annual data over a two-year period for the following characteristics: income before taxes cross-tabulated by either age, consumer unit size, or region; single consumers by gender cross-tabulated by either income or age; and selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

Tables with the same level of detail as shown in the two-year reports including more current tables are available on the Internet by accessing the BLS site (<http://www.bls.gov/cex>). Other survey information also is available on the Internet, including answers to frequently asked questions, a glossary, and order forms for survey products. The data are available back to 1984. Beginning with the 2000 data, standard error tables for integrated Diary and Interview data are available on the BLS site.

The 2002 Diary and Interview microdata soon will 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 the EXPN files cover different time periods depending on the specific question asked, and the files also contain relevant non-expenditure information not found on the MTAB files. The Interview and Diary 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 a choice of either ASCII format or PC SAS datasets.

Technical note

Beginning in 2001, the Interview Survey includes information collected from respondents using income ranges or brackets in addition to discrete income amounts, as provided in the past. Respondents who are unable or unwilling to provide a specific dollar amount may be able or willing to estimate a range for their incomes. The bracketed data should provide more reliable income estimates because they increase the percentage of households providing income data. This also affects expenditure components derived from income data, such as deductions for Social Security, which are a component of personal insurance and pensions. Therefore, estimates subsequent to 2000 may not be strictly comparable with earlier estimates.

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.