



NEWS RELEASE



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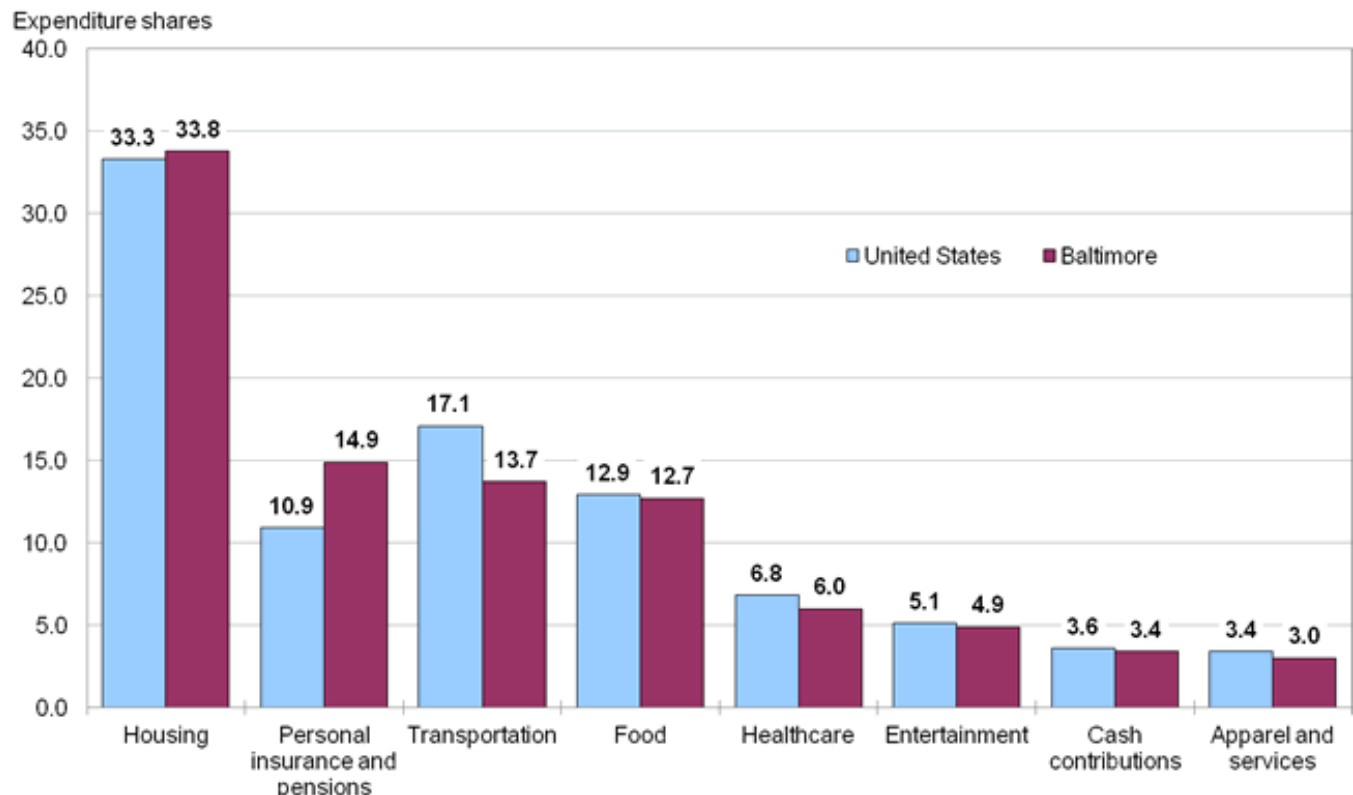
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Consumer Expenditures for the Baltimore Area: 2011-2012

Consumer units¹ in the Baltimore-Towson, Md., metropolitan area spent an average of \$62,262 per year in 2011-2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that this figure was over 23 percent higher than the \$50,581 average expenditure level for a typical household in the United States. Not only did households in the Baltimore area spend more than the U.S. average, they allocated their dollars differently among the major categories, differing significantly in 3 of the 8. For example, the share of expenditures for healthcare, which accounted for 6.0 percent of a typical household's budget in the Baltimore area, was significantly lower than the nationwide average of 6.8 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures for the eight major categories in the United States and Baltimore metropolitan area, 2011-2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Housing in the Baltimore area averaged \$21,031 annually and was the largest expenditure category, accounting for 33.8 percent of a Baltimore-area household's total budget. (See [table 1](#) and [table 2](#).) This share was similar to the 33.3-percent national average. Overall, 8 of the 18 published metropolitan areas had expenditure shares for housing significantly above the U.S. average while 3 had significantly lower-than-average shares. (See [chart 2](#).) Housing expenditures among the 18 areas ranged from 39.7 percent in New York to 31.7 percent in Detroit. (See [table 3](#).)

The majority of housing expenditures in Baltimore went toward shelter, 61.1 percent, which includes mortgage interest, property taxes, repairs, and rent, among other items; nationwide, 58.5 percent of the average housing budget was allocated for shelter. (See [table A](#).) Utilities, fuels, and public services expenses accounted for 20.5 percent of the housing budget locally; nationally, they made up 21.9 percent. The rate of homeownership in Baltimore, at 72 percent, was above the U.S. average of 65 percent.

Table A. Percent distribution of housing expenditures, United States and Baltimore, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Baltimore
Housing	100.0	100.0
Shelter	58.5	61.1
Utilities, fuels and public services	21.9	20.5
Household operation.....	6.8	6.4
Housekeeping supplies.....	3.6	4.1
Household furnishings and equipment	9.2	7.9

Baltimore households spent 14.9 percent of their annual budget on personal insurance and pensions, significantly above the national average of 10.9 percent, making this the second-largest expenditure category for the area's consumer units.

At 13.7 percent of the total budget, transportation was the third-largest expenditure category in the Baltimore area and was significantly lower than the national average of 17.1 percent. Among the 18 metropolitan areas nationwide, 8 (including Baltimore) had below-average transportation shares; only Houston had a significantly above-average transportation share. (See [chart 3](#).)

Of the \$8,532 in annual expenditures for transportation in Baltimore, 92.5 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to the national average of 93.9 percent. The remaining 7.5 percent of a Baltimore household's transportation budget was spent on public transit, which includes fares for taxis, buses, trains, and planes—this allocation was above the 6.1-percent average for the nation. (See [table B](#).) The average number of vehicles per household in Baltimore (1.8) was very close to the national average (1.9).

Table B. Percent distribution of transportation expenditures, United States and Baltimore, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Baltimore
Transportation	100.0	100.0
Vehicle purchases (net outlays).....	34.0	25.3
Gasoline and motor oil.....	31.3	34.2
Other vehicle expenses	28.6	33.0
Public transportation	6.1	7.5

The portion of a Baltimore consumer unit's budget spent on food, 12.7 percent, was close to the 12.9-percent U.S. average. Among the 18 metropolitan areas, 14 had food expenditure shares that were not measurably different from the nationwide average, while three others had significantly below-average shares. Only Los Angeles had a significantly above-average food expenditure share. (See [table 3](#).)

Households in Baltimore spent \$4,382, or 55.4 percent, of their food dollars on food prepared at home and the remaining 45.6 percent on food prepared away from home, such as restaurant meals, carry-out, board at school, and catered affairs. In comparison, the typical U.S. household spent 59.4 percent of its food budget on food prepared at home and 40.6 percent on food prepared away from home.

As noted, Baltimore is 1 of 18 metropolitan areas nationwide for which Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data are available. Metropolitan area CE data and that for the four geographic regions of the United States are available on our Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm>. Metropolitan area CE news releases are available at <http://www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.htm>.Footnotes

¹ See the Additional Information for the definition of a consumer unit. The terms consumer unit and household are used interchangeably throughout the text for convenience.

Additional Information

Data contained in this report are from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, which is collected on an ongoing basis by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CE data were averaged over a two-year period, 2010 and 2011 and are available for the nation, the 4 geographic regions of the country, and 18 metropolitan areas. The metropolitan area discussed in this release is

Baltimore-Towson, Md., which is comprised of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties and Baltimore City in Maryland.

The survey consists of two components, a diary or recordkeeping survey, and an interview survey. The integrated data from the BLS Diary and Interview Surveys provide a complete accounting of consumer expenditures and income, which neither survey component alone is designed to do. Due to changes in the survey sample frame, metropolitan area data in this release are not directly comparable to those prior to 1996.

A consumer unit is defined as members of a household related by blood, marriage, adoption, or 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 2 out of 3 major types of expenses – food, housing, and other expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

CE metropolitan area estimates are not comparative cost of living surveys, as neither the quantity nor the quality of goods and services has been held constant among areas. Differences may result from variations in demographic characteristics such as consumer unit size, age, preferences, income levels, etc. However, expenditure shares, or the percentage of a consumer unit's budget spent on a particular category, can be used to compare spending patterns across areas. Sample sizes for the metropolitan areas are much smaller than for the nation, so the U.S. estimates and year-to-year changes are more reliable than those for the metropolitan areas. Users should also keep in mind that prices for many goods and services have changed since the survey was conducted.

Expenditure shares for housing and transportation that are above or below that for the nation after testing for significance at the 95-percent confidence interval are also identified in charts 2 and 3 for the 18 metropolitan areas surveyed.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with our ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

For additional technical documentation and related information, see www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch16.htm.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200. Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures, United States and Baltimore, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011–12

Item	United States	Baltimore
Average annual expenditures.....	\$50,581	\$62,262
Percent distribution:.....	100.0	100.0
Food.....	12.9	12.7
Alcoholic beverages.....	0.9	0.9
Housing.....	33.3	33.8
Apparel and services.....	3.4	3.0
Transportation.....	17.1	13.7*
Healthcare.....	6.8	6.0*
Entertainment.....	5.1	4.9
Personal care products and services.....	1.2	1.3
Reading.....	0.2	0.3
Education.....	2.2	4.0
Tobacco products and smoking supplies.....	0.7	0.3*
Miscellaneous.....	1.6	0.9*
Cash contributions.....	3.6	3.4
Personal insurance and pensions.....	10.9	14.9*
* Statistically significant difference from U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level. Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.		

Table 2. Consumer unit characteristics and average annual expenditures, United States and Baltimore, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Baltimore
Footnotes: (1) Data are likely to have large sampling errors.		

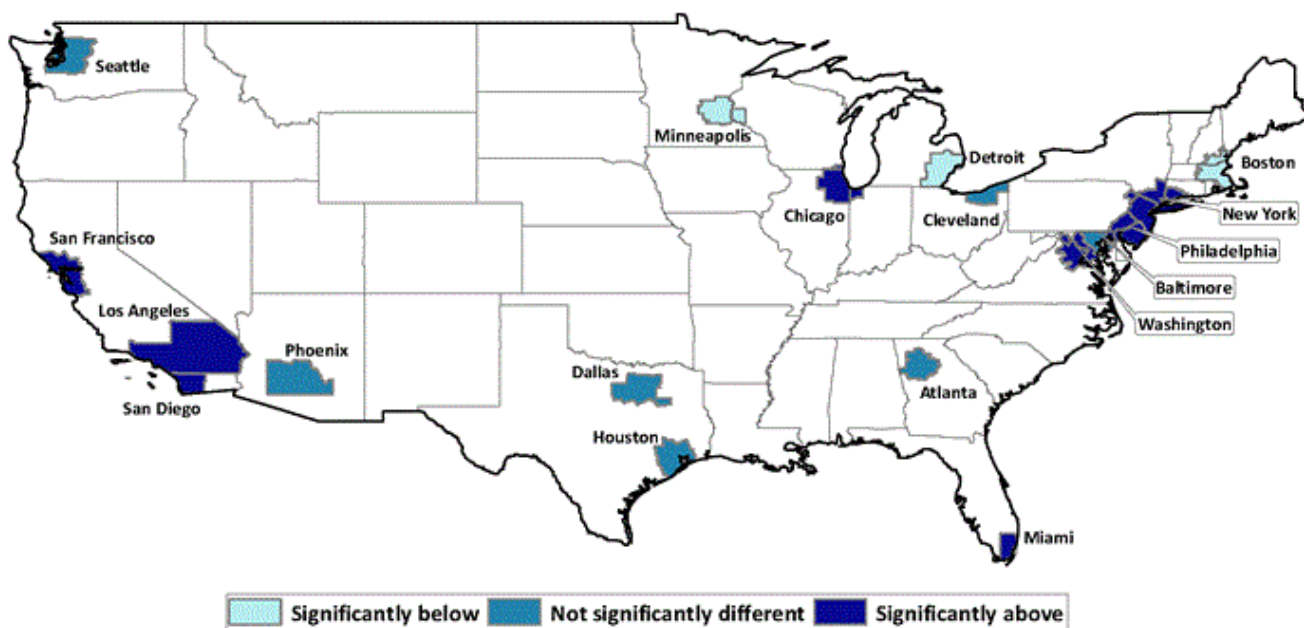
(1) Data are likely to have large sampling errors.

Table 3. Percent share of average annual expenditures for housing, transportation, and food, United States and 18 metropolitan areas, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012

Area	Housing	Transportation	Food
United States	33.3	17.1	12.9
Atlanta	34.7	16.9	11.7*
Baltimore	33.8	13.7*	12.7
Boston	31.8*	14.8*	13.2
Chicago	34.9*	15.0*	12.3
Cleveland	31.9	17.8	12.3
Dallas	32.9	18.6	12.5
Detroit	31.7*	18.8	13.3
Houston	31.9	20.3*	12.5
Los Angeles	37.7*	16.0*	13.6*
Miami	38.4*	17.0	13.7
Minneapolis	31.8*	17.5	12.6
New York	39.7*	13.7*	12.4
Philadelphia	37.9*	14.4*	12.7
Phoenix	34.8	15.9	13.0
San Diego	38.5*	15.6	12.0
San Francisco	35.2*	14.2*	11.5*
Seattle	34.1	15.7	12.8
Washington	35.3*	15.0*	11.6*

*Statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.

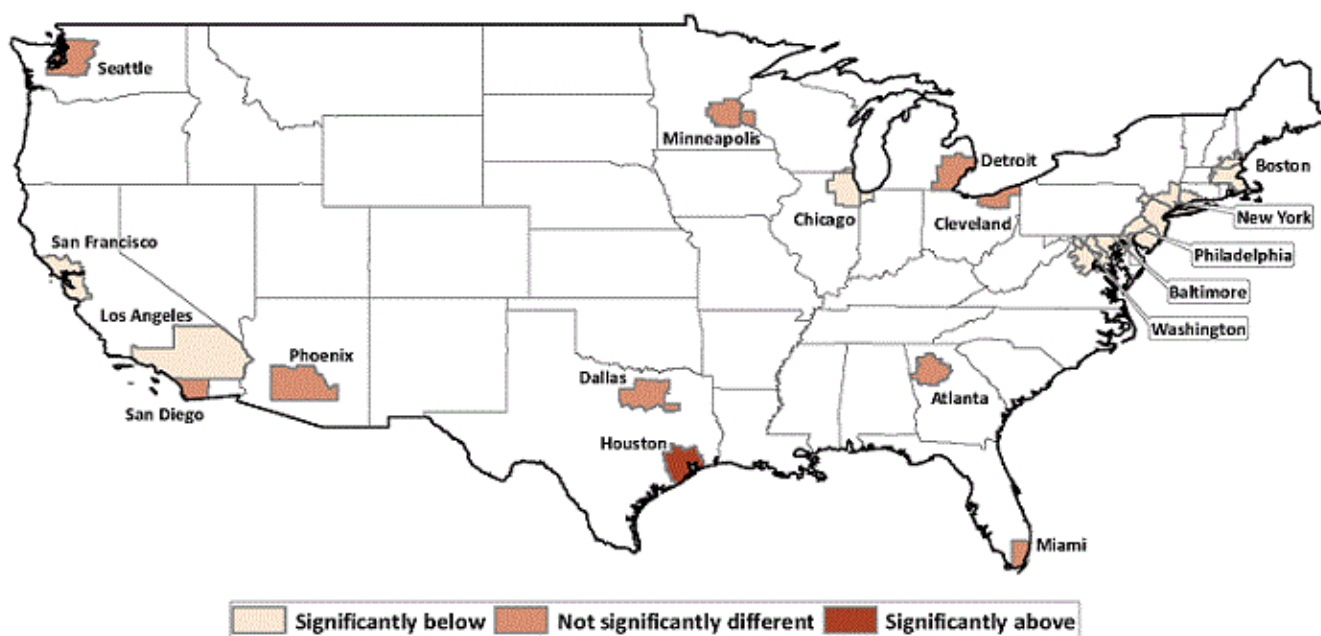
Chart 2. Expenditure shares spent on housing in 18 metropolitan statistical areas compared to the U.S. average, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012



Note: Statistical significance testing at the 95-percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Chart 3. Expenditure shares spent on transportation in 18 metropolitan statistical areas compared to the U.S. average, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012



Note: Statistical significance testing at the 95-percent confidence interval.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics