



**For Release: Friday, December 22, 2017**

**17-1443-KAN**

MOUNTAIN-PLAINS INFORMATION OFFICE: Kansas City, Mo.

Technical information: (816) 285-7000 BLSInfoKansasCity@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains

Media contact: (816) 285-7000

## Consumer Expenditures for the Denver metropolitan area: 2015-16

Households in the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO., metropolitan area spent an average of \$69,742 per year in 2015–16, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that this figure was significantly different from the \$56,648 average expenditure level for households in the United States. Denver-area households allocated their dollars similarly to the nation among six of the eight major categories, with two differing significantly from their U.S. averages. For example, the share of expenditures for food, which accounted for 11.3 percent of the average household’s budget in the Denver area, was lower than the national average of 12.6 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures for eight major categories in the United States and Denver metropolitan area, 2015–16**

Expenditure

shares

40.0

35.0

30.0

25.0

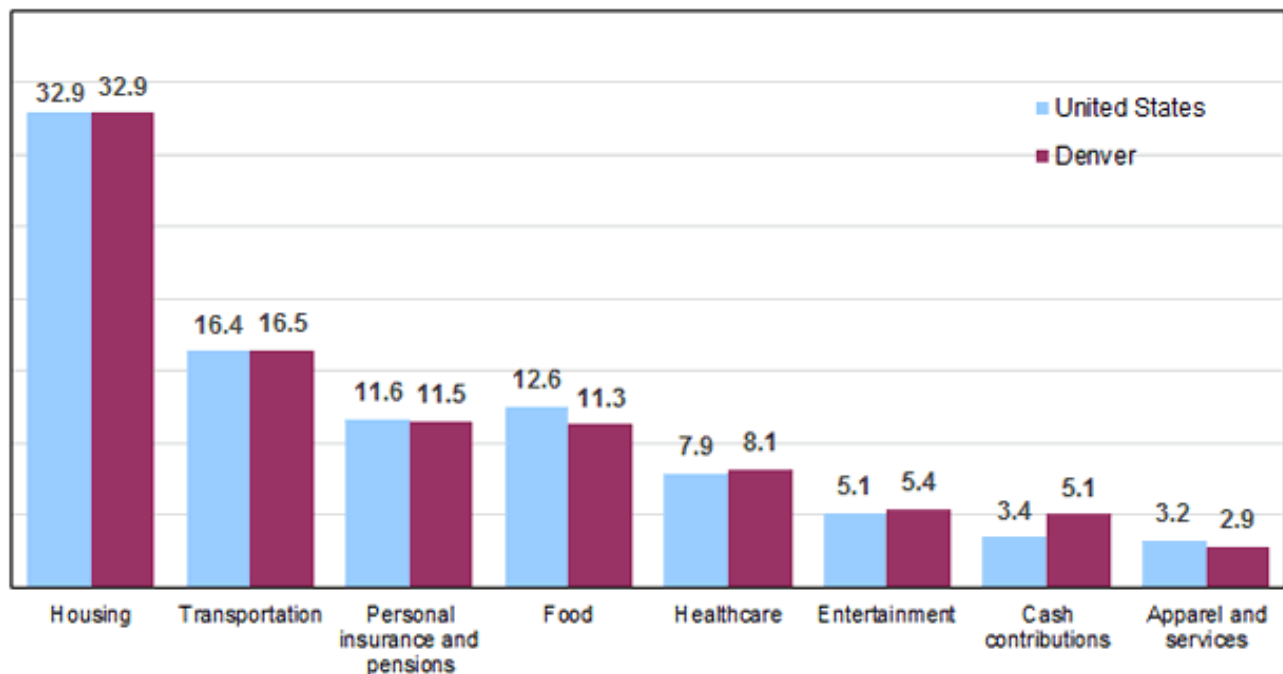
20.0

15.0

10.0

5.0

0.0



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Highlights of the Denver area’s 2015–16 spending patterns:**

- **Housing:** This was the largest expenditure category for Denver-area households and averaged \$22,949. Housing accounted for 32.9 percent of the area's household budget, the same as the U.S. average. (See [table 1](#).) The share of housing expenditures among the published 22 metropolitan areas nationwide for which data were available ranged from 40.3 percent in San Francisco to 30.3 percent in Detroit. (See [table 2](#).)
- **Transportation:** Denver-area households spent 16.5 percent of their budgets on transportation, not significantly different from the national average of 16.4 percent. Of the \$11,483 in annual transportation expenditures in Denver, 88.6 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to the national average of 93.1 percent.
- **Personal Insurance and Pensions:** This was the third-largest category for Denver area households, which averaged \$8,022. Personal insurance and pensions accounted for 11.5 percent of the area's household budget, similar to the U.S. average 11.6 percent.
- **Food:** The portion of a Denver household's budget spent on food, 11.3 percent, was significantly lower than the 12.6-percent U.S. average. Denver-area households spent \$4,262 (54.2 percent), of their food dollars on food at home and \$3,606 (45.8 percent) on food away from home. In comparison, the average U.S. household spent 56.7 percent of its food budget on food at home and 43.3 percent on food away from home.

### **Additional Information**

Data in this release are from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE), which the U.S. Census Bureau conducts for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data in this release were averaged over a 2-year period, 2015 and 2016.

A household in the CE survey is defined as a consumer unit which include families, single persons living alone or sharing a household with others but who are financially independent, or two or more persons living together who share expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

Differences in spending among metropolitan areas may reflect differences in the cost of living, but they also may reflect other causes. Spending differences may result from different consumer preferences or variations in demographic characteristics, such as household size, age, or income levels. However, expenditure shares, or the percentage of a household'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.

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. A large difference between two values may not be statistically significant, while a small difference could be significant; both the sample size and the variation among the values in the sample affect the relative error of the estimates.

For additional technical and related information, see [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch16.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch16.htm). Data for the nation, the four geographic regions of the U.S., and 22 metropolitan areas nationwide are available at [www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm). Metropolitan definitions used in the survey are available at [www.bls.gov/cex/ce\\_msa\\_201516.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/ce_msa_201516.htm). The metropolitan area discussed in this release is Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area which comprises Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park Counties in Colorado. Metropolitan area news releases for the Consumer Expenditure Survey are available at [www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.htm](http://www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.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. Average annual expenditures, characteristics, and percent distributions, United States and Denver metropolitan area, 2015–16**

Category	United States	Denver
<b>Consumer unit characteristics:</b>		
Income before taxes .....	\$72,156	\$105,447
Age of reference person .....	50.7	47.4
<b>Average number in consumer unit:</b>		
People .....	2.5	2.5
Children under 18 .....	0.6	0.6
Adults 65 and over .....	0.4	0.3
Earners .....	1.3	1.4
Vehicles .....	1.9	2.0
Percent homeowner .....	62	65
Average annual expenditures .....	\$56,648	\$69,742*
<b>Percent distribution</b>		
Total .....	100.0	100.0
Food .....	12.6	11.3*
Alcoholic beverages .....	0.9	0.9
Housing .....	32.9	32.9
Apparel and services .....	3.2	2.9
Transportation .....	16.4	16.5
Healthcare .....	7.9	8.1
Entertainment .....	5.1	5.4
Personal care products and services .....	1.2	1.4
Reading .....	0.2	0.2
Education .....	2.3	1.5
Tobacco products and smoking supplies .....	0.6	0.5
Miscellaneous .....	1.6	1.9
Cash contributions .....	3.4	5.1*
Personal insurance and pensions .....	11.6	11.5

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.

**Table 2. Percent share of average annual expenditures for housing, transportation, and food, United States and 22 metropolitan areas, 2015–16**

Area	Housing	Transportation	Food
United States.....	32.9	16.4	12.6
Anchorage.....	31.7	19.1	11.8
Atlanta.....	34.1	18.3	10.2*
Baltimore.....	34.5	16.6	12.1
Boston.....	39.2*	12.4*	11.2*
Chicago.....	35.2*	14.5*	13.2
Dallas-Fort Worth.....	34.2	16.0	11.9
Denver.....	32.9	16.5	11.3*
Detroit.....	30.3*	16.4	12.9
Honolulu.....	36.3*	14.2	15.4*
Houston.....	31.8	21.0*	14.2*
Los Angeles.....	36.2*	15.6	12.4
Miami.....	36.4*	14.8	12.3
Minneapolis-St. Paul.....	30.9	15.4	11.0*
New York.....	38.8*	11.4*	10.7*
Philadelphia.....	33.8	14.4*	11.7
Phoenix.....	32.2	15.1	12.1
San Diego.....	35.1*	13.7*	11.4
San Francisco.....	40.3*	11.9*	11.5
Seattle.....	33.4	13.4*	13.6
St. Louis.....	31.7	16.1	13.2
Tampa.....	33.7	17.7	12.6
Washington, D.C.....	35.7*	12.8*	10.8*

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.