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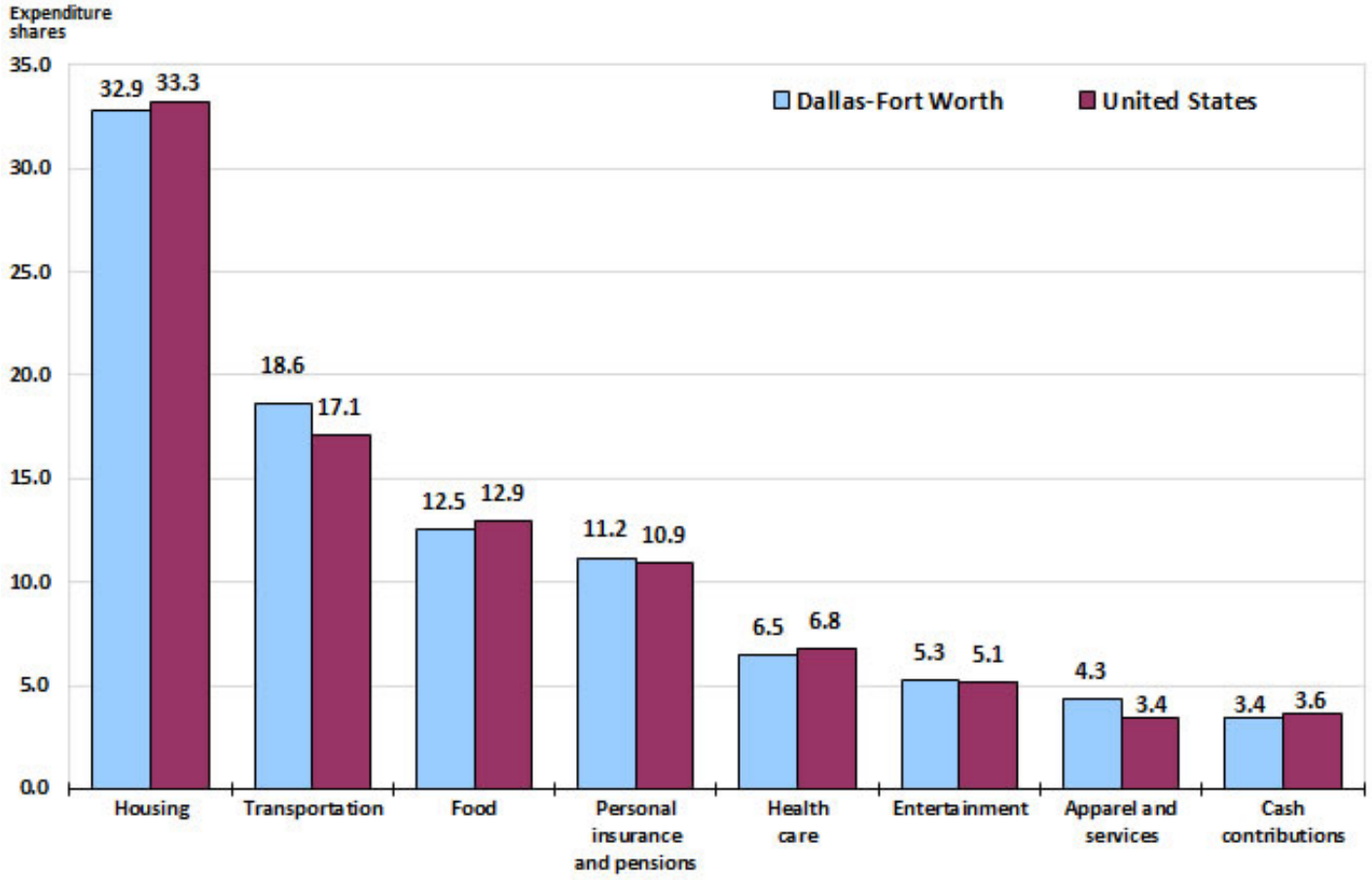
Consumer Expenditures for the Dallas-Fort Worth Area: 2011-2012

Consumer units [1] (households) in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas metropolitan area spent an average of $57,144 per year in 2011–2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that this figure was 13 percent higher than the $50,581 average expenditure level for a typical household in the United States. Although households in the Dallas area spent more than the U.S. average, they allocated their dollars similarly among the largest expenditure categories, differing significantly in only one. Specifically, expenditures for apparel accounted for 4.3 percent of a typical household budget in the Dallas area, significantly greater than the nationwide average of 3.4 percent. (See chart 1 and table 1.)

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Housing in the Dallas metropolitan area averaged $18,810 annually and was the largest expenditure category, accounting for 32.9 percent of a Dallas area household's total budget. This share was not significantly different from the 33.3-percent national average. (See tables 1 and 2.) Overall, 8 of the 18 published metropolitan areas had expenditure shares for housing measurably above the U.S. average, while 3 had significantly lower-than-average shares. (See chart 2.) Among the 18 areas, housing shares ranged from 39.7 percent in New York to 31.7 percent in Detroit. (See table 3.)

The majority of total housing expenditures in Dallas, 56.2 percent, went toward shelter which includes mortgage interest, property taxes, repairs, and rent, among other items; this was significantly below the 58.5-percent share allocated toward shelter nationwide. (See table A.) Utilities, fuels, and public services expenses accounted for 23.2 percent of the housing budget locally; nationally, it made up 21.9 percent. The rate of homeownership in Dallas, at 61 percent, was less than the U.S. average of 65 percent.

Table A. Percent distribution of housing expenditures, United States and Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Dallas-Fort Worth
Total Housing	100.0%	100.0%
Shelter	58.5	56.2
Utilities, fuels, and public services	21.9	23.2
Household operation	6.8	7.6
Housekeeping supplies	3.6	3.8
Household furnishings and equipment	9.2	9.2

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

At 18.6 percent of the total budget, transportation was the second-largest expenditure category in the Dallas area, and was not statistically different from the national average of 17.1 percent. Among the 18 published areas nationwide, eight had transportation shares that were below the national average; only one, Houston, had a share that was significantly above the average. (See chart 3.)

Of the $10,653 in annual expenditures for transportation in Dallas, 95.9 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles, compared to the national average of 93.9 percent. The remaining 4.1 percent of a Dallas household's transportation budget was spent on public transit, which includes fares for taxis, buses, trains, and planes; this allocation was significantly below the 6.1-percent national average. (See table B.) The number of vehicles per household in Dallas (1.8) was close to the national average (1.9).

Table B. Percent distribution of transportation expenditures, United States and Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Dallas-Fort Worth
Total Transportation	100.0%	100.0%
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	34.0	38.4
Gasoline and motor oil	31.3	29.9
Other vehicle expenses	28.6	27.6
Public transportation	6.1	4.1

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The portion of a Dallas consumer unit's budget spent on food, 12.5 percent, was not significantly different from 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. In the four remaining areas, three had food shares significantly below the national average, while one, Los Angeles, was significantly above average.

Dallas households spent 57.9 percent ($4,141) of their food dollars on food prepared at home, not statistically different from the 59.4-percent national share. Locally, the remaining food expenditure dollars ($3,009) went to food prepared away from home, such as restaurant meals, carry-out, board at school, and catered affairs. These expenditures accounted for 42.1 percent of total household food expenditures in Dallas compared to the typical U.S. household average of 40.6 percent.

As noted, Dallas 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 and the United States are available on our website at www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm. Metropolitan area CE news releases are available at www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.htm.

Additional Information

Data contained in this report are from the CE survey, which is collected on an ongoing basis by the U.S. Census Bureau for BLS. The CE data were averaged over a two-year period, 2011 and 2012, 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 Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, which consists of Collin, Dallas, Delta, Denton, Ellis, Henderson, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, and Wise Counties.

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 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.

Footnote

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

Table 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures, United States and Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Dallas-Fort Worth
Average annual expenditures	$50,581	$57,144
Percent distribution:	100.0	100.0
Food	12.9	12.5
Alcoholic beverages	0.9	0.8
Housing	33.3	32.9
Apparel and services	3.4	4.3*
Transportation	17.1	18.6
Health care	6.8	6.5
Entertainment	5.1	5.3
Personal care products and services	1.2	1.4
Reading	0.2	0.2*
Education	2.2	1.4*
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	0.7	0.7
Miscellaneous	1.6	0.9*
Cash contributions	3.6	3.4
Personal insurance and pensions	10.9	11.2

* Statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.
Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 2. Average annual expenditures and characteristics, United States and Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011-2012

Category	United States	Dallas-Fort Worth
Consumer unit characteristics:		
Income before taxes	$64,649	$70,990
Age of reference person	49.9	47.0
Average number in consumer unit:		
Persons	2.5	2.7
Children under 18	0.6	0.8
Persons 65 and over	0.3	0.3
Earners	1.3	1.4
Vehicles	1.9	1.8
Percent homeowner	65	61
Average annual expenditures:		
Average annual expenditures	$50,581	$57,144
Food	6,529	7,150
Food at home	3,880	4,141
Cereals and bakery products	534	569
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	843	980
Dairy products	413	416
Fruits and vegetables	723	735
Other food at home	1,367	1,442
Food away from home	2,649	3,009
Alcoholic beverages	454	447
Housing	16,846	18,810
Shelter	9,858	10,565
Owned dwellings	6,101	6,334
Rented dwellings	3,109	3,728
Other lodging	648	504
Utilities, fuels, and public services	3,687	4,364
Household operations	1,141	1,429
Housekeeping supplies	612	716
Household furnishings and equipment	1,547	1,735
Apparel and services	1,738	2,474
Transportation	8,649	10,653
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	2,942	4,087
Gasoline and motor oil	2,706	3,189
Other vehicle expenses	2,472	2,939
Public transportation	529	439
Health care	3,436	3,690
Entertainment	2,589	3,025
Personal care products and services	631	799
Reading	112	104
Education	1,130	784
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	341	382
Miscellaneous	802	488
Cash contributions	1,818	1,947
Personal insurance and pensions	5,508	6,390
Life and other personal insurance	335	351
Pensions and Social Security	5,173	6,039

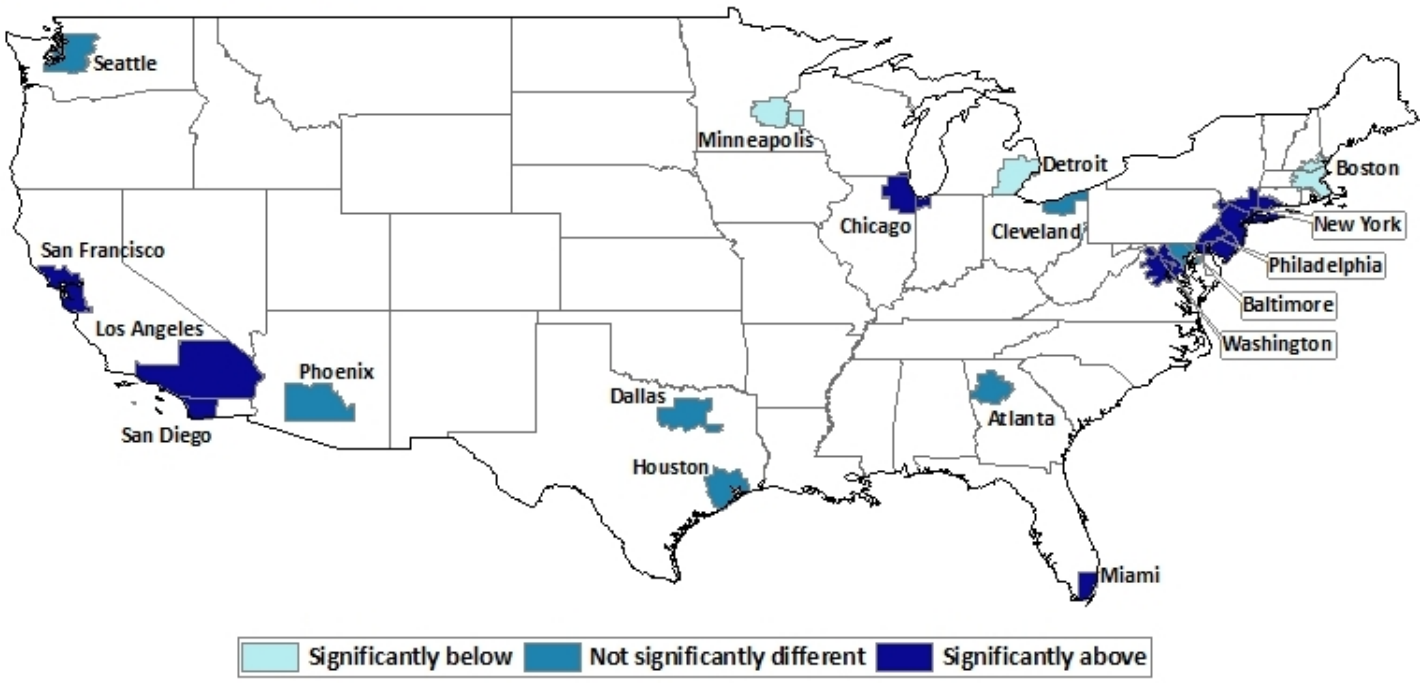
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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*

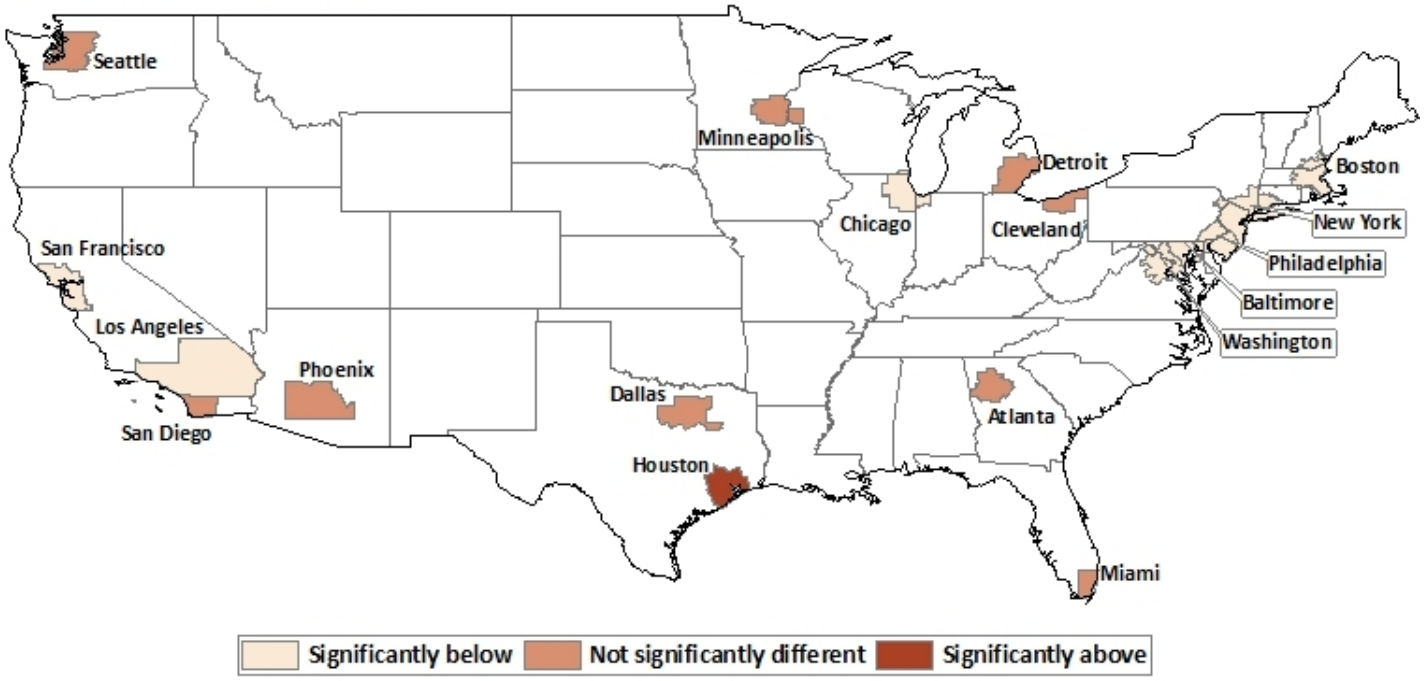
* Statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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.