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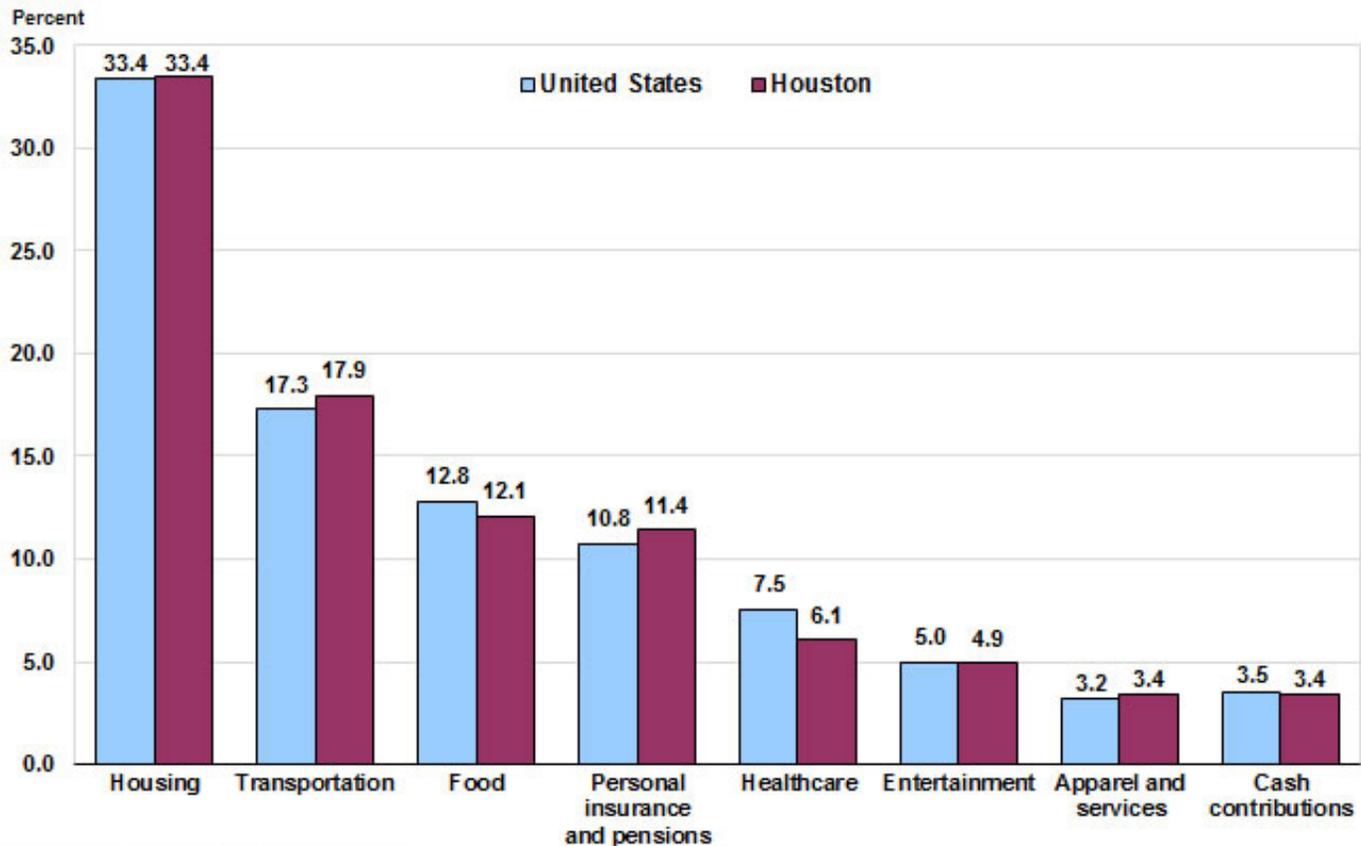
ERRATA

Table 2 contained two errors. The asterisk (*) used to indicate whether or not a metropolitan area expenditure share is significantly different from the U.S. average was incorrect for the Boston and Cleveland housing shares. The Boston housing share is not significantly different, but the Cleveland housing share is significantly different; changes have been made in the release.

Consumer Expenditures for the Houston Area: 2013–14

Households in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Texas, metropolitan area spent an average of \$66,237 per year in 2013–14, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that this figure was significantly higher than the \$52,284 average expenditure level for households in the United States. Despite a higher spending level, Houston area households allocated their dollars similarly among most of the eight major spending categories, with only one (healthcare) differing significantly from the U.S. average. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures for selected categories in the United States and Houston metropolitan area, 2013–14



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Highlights of the Houston area’s 2013–14 spending patterns:

- Housing:** This was the largest expenditure category for area households and averaged \$22,155. Housing accounted for 33.4 percent of the household budget in the Houston area, the same as the national share. (See [table 1](#).) Houston was among the eight metropolitan areas nationwide where housing expenditure shares were not significantly different from the national average. Eight other metropolitan areas had shares that were significantly above the U.S. average. Two areas, Cleveland and Detroit, had housing expenditure shares that were significantly below the nationwide average. Housing expenditures among the 18 areas nationwide for which data were available ranged from 39.6 percent in New York to 30.2 percent in Detroit. (See [table 2](#).)
- Transportation:** Transportation-related spending accounted for 17.9 percent of the household budget in Houston, not significantly different from the national average of 17.3 percent. Of the \$11,873 in annual transportation expenditures in the local area, 92.8 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to the national average of 93.8 percent.
- Food:** The portion of a Houston-area household’s budget spent on food, 12.1 percent, was not significantly different from the 12.8-percent U.S. average. However, the share of the food budget spent on food prepared at home was significantly lower in Houston compared to the national average. Area households spent 6.6 percent (\$4,362) of the total household budget on food prepared at home,

significantly below the 7.6-percent U.S. average. Almost 55 percent of the Houston food budget went toward expenditures for food prepared at home; this compared to the nearly 60-percent share allocated nationally.

- **Healthcare:** When compared to the national average, area households registered a significantly different expenditure share for healthcare. Locally, households allocated 6.1 percent of total expenditures towards healthcare, significantly less than the national 7.5-percent share.

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, 2013 and 2014.

A household in the CE survey is defined as a consumer unit which consists of members 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.

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/pdf/homch16.pdf. Data for the nation, the four geographic regions of the U.S., and 18 metropolitan areas nationwide are available at www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm. Metropolitan definitions used in the survey are available at www.bls.gov/regions/ce_areadef.pdf. The metropolitan area discussed in this release is Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Texas, which consists of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, and Waller Counties. Metropolitan area news releases for the Consumer Expenditure Survey are available at www.bls.gov/regions/consumerspending.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 Houston metropolitan area, 2013–14

Category	United States	Houston
Consumer unit characteristics:		
Income before taxes	\$65,339	\$95,103
Age of reference person	50.2	47.3
Average number in consumer unit:		
People	2.5	2.7
Children under 18	0.6	0.7
Adults 65 and over	0.4	0.2
Earners	1.3	1.4
Vehicles	1.9	1.7
Percent homeowner	63.0	64
Average annual expenditures	\$52,284	\$66,237*
Percent distribution:		
Food	12.8	12.1
Alcoholic beverages	0.9	0.9
Housing	33.4	33.4
Apparel and services	3.2	3.4
Transportation	17.3	17.9
Healthcare	7.5	6.1*
Entertainment	5.0	4.9
Personal care products and services	1.2	1.2
Reading	0.2	0.1*
Education	2.3	2.9
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	0.6	0.6
Miscellaneous	1.3	1.6
Cash contributions	3.5	3.4
Personal insurance and pensions	10.8	11.4

Note: * 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 18 metropolitan areas, 2013–14

Area	Housing	Transportation	Food
United States.....	33.4	17.3	12.8
Atlanta.....	33.2	16.4	12.8
Baltimore.....	33.9	15.0	11.5
Boston.....	33.3	15.1*	11.7*
Chicago.....	35.1*	15.2*	12.7
Cleveland.....	31.0*	18.0	13.7
Dallas.....	33.1	18.3	12.7
Detroit.....	30.2*	19.2*	12.4
Houston.....	33.4	17.9	12.1
Los Angeles.....	38.7*	15.0*	13.1
Miami.....	39.4*	16.8	13.0
Minneapolis.....	32.4	17.9	11.3*
New York.....	39.6*	13.4*	11.6*
Philadelphia.....	35.4*	16.4	12.5
Phoenix.....	34.2	19.4	13.9
San Diego.....	37.6*	16.3	11.0*
San Francisco.....	37.3*	13.7*	11.9
Seattle.....	35.0	15.4*	12.3
Washington.....	35.8*	18.0	10.0*

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