



Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/cex> USDL-06-1944
Technical information: 202-691-6900 FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. EST
Media information: 202-691-5902 Wednesday, November 8, 2006

CONSUMER EXPENDITURES IN 2005

Average annual expenditures per consumer unit rose 6.9 percent in 2005, following an increase of 6.3 percent in 2004, 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 2004 to 2005 was more than the 3.4 percent rise in the annual average Consumer Price Index (CPI) over this period.

Statistically significant increases in spending on housing (9.0 percent) and transportation (7.0 percent), the largest components of spending, contributed to the overall increase in 2005. Increases for food (2.6 percent) and personal insurance and pensions (7.9 percent) also were statistically significant. Spending on apparel and services (3.9 percent), health care (3.5 percent), and entertainment (7.7 percent) also rose in 2005, but these increases were not statistically significant. As a result of changes made in 2004, average annual expenditures and expenditures for personal insurance and pensions for 2004 and later years are not strictly comparable to previous data. See "Changes in 2004" on page 2.

Average annual expenditures and characteristics of all consumer units and percent changes, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2003-2005

Item	2003	2004	2005	Percent change	
				2003-2004	2004-2005
Number of consumer units (000's)	115,356	116,282	117,356		
Income before taxes ¹	\$51,128	\$54,453	\$58,712		
Average age of reference person	48.4	48.5	48.6		
Average number in consumer unit:					
Persons	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Earners	1.3	1.3	1.3		
Vehicles	1.9	1.9	2.0		
Percent homeowner	67	68	67		
Average annual expenditures	\$40,817	\$43,395	\$46,409	6.3	6.9
Food	5,340	5,781	5,931	8.3	2.6
At home	3,129	3,347	3,297	7.0	-1.5
Away from home	2,211	2,434	2,634	10.1	8.2
Housing	13,432	13,918	15,167	3.6	9.0
Apparel and services	1,640	1,816	1,886	10.7	3.9
Transportation	7,781	7,801	8,344	.3	7.0
Healthcare	2,416	2,574	2,664	6.5	3.5
Entertainment	2,060	2,218	2,388	7.7	7.7
Personal insurance and pensions	4,055	4,823	5,204	18.9	7.9
Other expenditures	4,094	4,461	4,823	9.0	8.1

¹ Income values are derived from "complete income reporters" prior to 2004.

Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data include the expenditures and income of consumers, as well as the demographic characteristics of those consumers. Tables with more expenditure detail than is shown in this news release will be available November 9, 2006 by accessing the BLS website (<http://www.bls.gov/cex>). Tables show 2005 CE data by standard classifications that include income quintile, income class, age of reference person, size of consumer unit, number of earners, composition of consumer unit, region of residence, housing tenure, type of area (urban-rural), race, Hispanic origin, occupation, and education. Other tables available on the website include expenditures by age, region, size, or gender cross-tabulated by income before taxes and other demographic variables. Historical tables back to 1984 and tabulations by Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) are also available.

Other available data

A forthcoming annual report will include a brief discussion of expenditure changes in 2005 and tables with data classified by the standard characteristics listed above. Detailed reports that include CE data are published at two-year intervals and include the standard tabulations and cross-tabulations at the same level of expenditure detail as shown on the website. MSA tables are also included. All data published in the reports and posted to the website are integrated from the two CE components—the quarterly Interview Survey and weekly Diary Survey.

Other survey information available on the Internet includes answers to frequently asked questions, a glossary, order forms for survey products, and analytical articles that use CE data. Beginning with the 2000 data, standard error tables for integrated data are available on the BLS site.

The 2005 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 EXPN files cover different time periods depending on the specific questions asked, and the files also contain relevant non-expenditure information not found on the MTAB files. The CE 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. (See www.bls.gov/cex/csxmico.htm for details.)

Changes in 2004

Beginning in 2004, the Consumer Expenditure Survey tables included imputed income estimates. While the imputed data provide more reliable income estimates because they allow the inclusion of households for which income data are not otherwise available, income data from 2004 and 2005 are not strictly comparable to data from 2003 and earlier years.

This change also affected those expenditure items in the personal insurance and pensions component that are derived from income data. As a result of the changes that started in 2004, income data, personal insurance and pensions, and average annual expenditures are not strictly comparable to data from previous years. Data for 2004 and 2005 are comparable to each other.

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.