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Technical information: (202) 691-6900 • CEXInfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cex

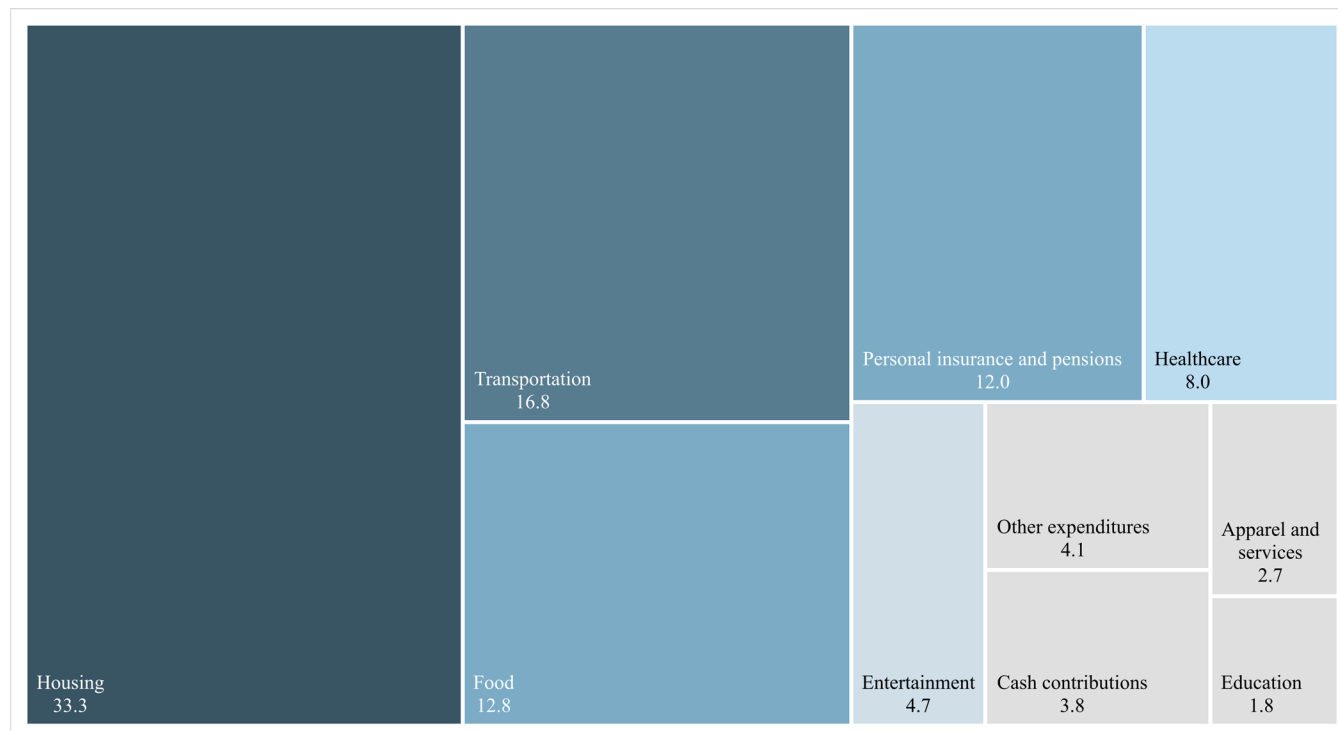
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## CONSUMER EXPENDITURES – 2022

Average annual expenditures for all consumer units<sup>1</sup> in 2022 were \$72,967, a 9.0-percent increase from 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (See table A.) During the same period, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) rose 8.0 percent, and average income before taxes increased 7.5 percent.

The average annual expenditures for 2022 were broken down into 14 major components (table B), nine of which are shown in chart 1. The other expenditures category shown in chart 1, is the aggregate of the five smallest components which are miscellaneous (1.4 percent), personal care products and services (1.2 percent), alcoholic beverages (0.8 percent), tobacco products and smoking supplies (0.5 percent), and reading (0.2 percent). Overall, housing accounted for the largest share (33.3 percent), followed by transportation (16.8 percent), food (12.8 percent), personal insurance and pensions (12.0 percent), and healthcare (8.0 percent). Each of the remaining categories contributed less than 5.0 percent of total expenditures.

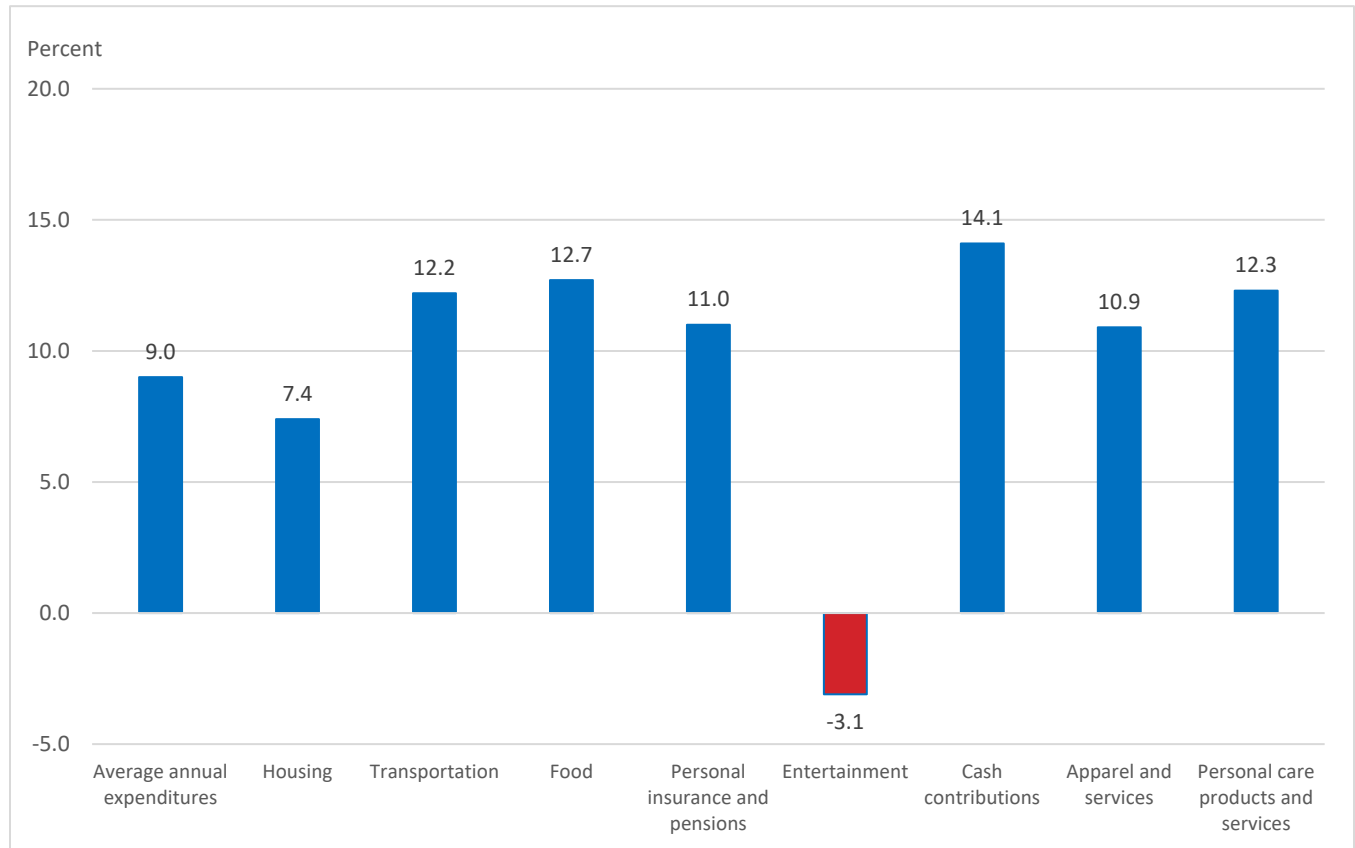
**Chart 1. Annual expenditure shares (percentage) by major components, 2022**



<sup>1</sup> Consumer units consist of 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 major expenses.

Among the 14 major components of household spending, the largest percent increase in expenditures was in cash contributions (+14.1 percent). The next largest increase was in food (+12.7 percent), followed closely by a 12.3-percent rise in personal care products and services spending, and a 12.2-percent increase in transportation spending. The only major component to decrease from 2021 to 2022 was entertainment (-3.1 percent). (See chart 2).

**Chart 2. Annual percent change in expenditures and selected components, 2021-22**



### Selected spending changes, 2022

- Housing** expenditures increased 7.4 percent in 2022, after a 5.6-percent increase in 2021. Expenditures on both rented dwellings and owned dwellings increased by 6.5 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively. (For more information on how owned dwellings is defined see the methodology section). The largest housing-related spending increase in all major components of housing was in other lodging, up 30.9 percent, due largely in part to a 38.6-percent increase in lodging on out of town trips.
- Transportation** expenditures increased 12.2 percent in 2022, after an increase of 11.6 percent in 2021. This increase was driven by the component category public and other transportation spending (+86.9 percent), followed by a 45.3-percent increase in gasoline, other fuels, and motor oil. Average expenditures for vehicle purchases (net outlay) were down 6.9 percent in 2022, after a 6.7-percent increase in 2021. A net outlay is defined as the household's total payment or purchase amount of a good or service minus any reimbursements. A net outlay is commonly referred to as the total out of pocket spending. Vehicle purchases (net outlay) includes the purchase price minus trade-in value on new and used domestic and imported cars and trucks and other vehicles, such as motorcycles.

- Spending on **food** increased 12.7 percent in 2022, compared to an increase of 13.4 percent in 2021. The increase was driven by food away from home spending, up 20.1 percent, accompanied by an increase in food at home spending, up 8.4 percent. Expenditures for food away from home in 2022 exceeded 2019 levels, marking the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that this has happened.
- **Personal insurance and pensions** spending increased 11.0 percent in 2022, after increasing 8.7 percent in 2021. This was driven by an 11.1-percent increase in contributions to pensions and Social Security. Within contributions to pensions and Social Security, there was a 28.8-percent increase in expenditures on non-payroll deposits to retirement plans. At the same time, spending on life and other personal insurance increased by 9.7 percent.
- **Entertainment** expenditures decreased 3.1 percent in 2022, after exhibiting an increase of 22.7 percent in 2021. This decrease was driven by a 24.5-percent decrease in other entertainment supplies, equipment, and services expenditures, which contrasts with the 60.6-percent increase in 2021. Toys, hobbies, and playground equipment also decreased from 2021 to 2022 (-16.1 percent). Although there was a 27.4-percent increase on fees and admissions, this was offset by the previously stated declines.
- Spending on **cash contributions** increased 14.1 percent in 2022, after a 5.8-percent increase in 2021. This increase in 2022 was driven by a 36.3-percent increase in other cash gifts.<sup>2</sup> Cash contributions includes cash contributed to persons or organizations outside the consumer unit, including alimony and child support payments; care of students away from home; and contributions to religious, educational, charitable, or political organizations.
- Spending on **apparel and services** increased 10.9 percent in 2022, after an increase of 22.3 percent in 2021. All major components of apparel and services exhibited increases, the largest being an 18.8-percent increase in footwear. With this 10.9-percent growth in apparel and services, spending has surpassed 2019 levels, before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Personal care products and services** increased 12.3 percent in 2022, which follows the large increase of 19.3 percent from 2021. Personal care products increased by 15.5 percent after a 1.0-percent decrease in 2021. Personal care services increased by 9.1 percent, particularly notable since this follows the 50.4-percent rise from 2021.

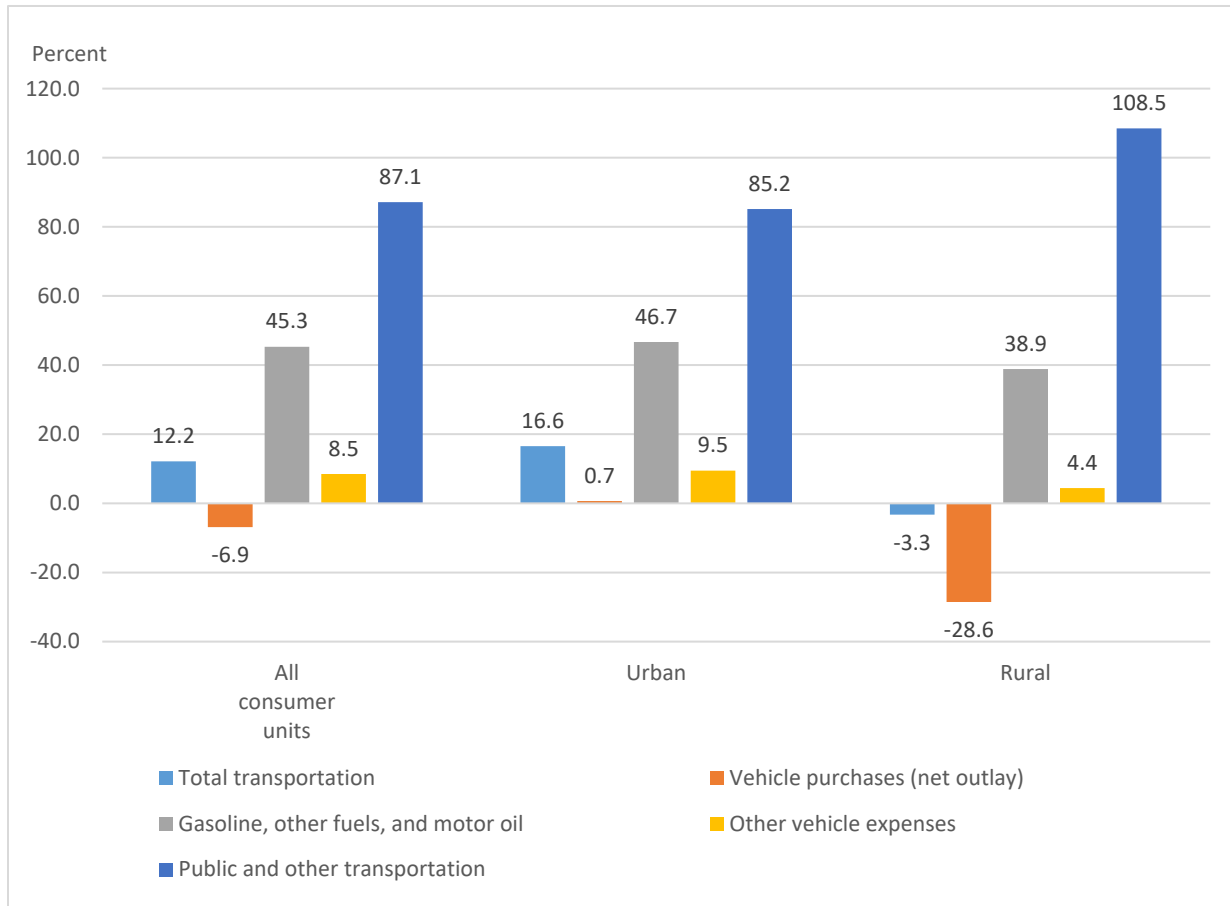
### Transportation spending by type of area, 2022

Chart 3 shows the percent changes in transportation expenditures for urban and rural areas. As gas prices climbed and more workers continued to go back into the office in 2022, this led to an increase in expenditures for public transportation as well as gasoline, other fuels, and motor oil. Rural consumer units saw a decrease in total transportation spending (-3.3 percent), while consumer units in urban areas increased their total transportation spending by 16.6 percent. Consumer units living in urban areas had a bigger increase in gasoline, other fuels, and motor oil spending (+46.7 percent compared to +38.9 percent for rural consumer units). Consumer units located in rural areas had a bigger increase in public transportation spending (+108.5 percent compared to +85.2 percent for urban consumer units). Public transportation includes fares for mass transit, buses, trains, airlines, taxis, school buses for which a fee is charged, and boats. Rural consumer unit spending on vehicle purchases (net outlay) decreased from

<sup>2</sup> Estimate has a high Relative Standard Error (RSE) and is suppressed in the published tables. See the methodology section below for more information.

2021 to 2022 (-28.6 percent). Rural consumer units also had a smaller increase in other vehicle expenses (+4.4 percent compared to +9.5 percent for urban consumer units), which includes items such as vehicle finance charges, maintenance and repairs, and rented vehicles.

**Chart 3. Annual percent change in average transportation expenditures by type of area, 2022**

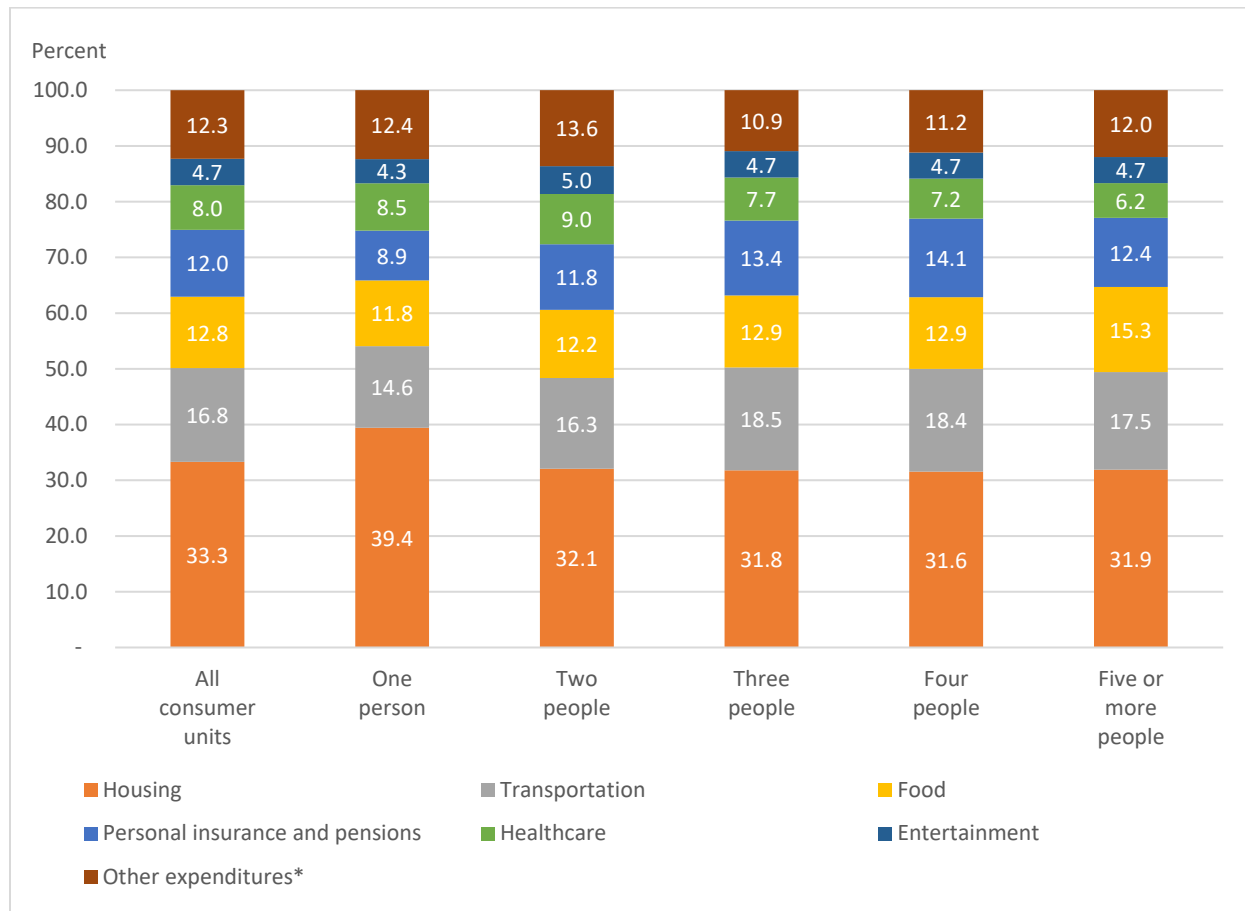


### Spending by size of consumer unit, 2022

Chart 4 and table C compare the shares allocated to selected expenditures by size of consumer unit. In particular, they show that the percentage of total expenditures allocated to food increases as the size of the consumer unit increases, with the largest increase occurring between consumer units with four people to consumer units with five or more people (12.9 percent compared to 15.3 percent). In contrast, the percent of total expenditures allocated to housing decreases as the consumer unit size increases, until the consumer unit increases to five or more people, which spends slightly more than consumer units with four people (31.9 percent compared to 31.6 percent). Allocation of entertainment spending was consistent regardless of the size of the consumer unit, with the biggest difference observed between one- and two-person consumer units (4.3 percent and 5.0 percent, respectively).

Compared to all sizes of consumer units, one-person consumer units allocated the highest shares to housing (39.4 percent), but the lowest shares to transportation (14.6 percent), food (11.8 percent), and entertainment (4.3 percent). In contrast, households with five or more people allocated the lowest shares to healthcare (6.2 percent) and the highest shares to food (15.3 percent). Consumer units with four people had the highest shares in personal insurance and pensions (14.1 percent), while having the lowest shares in housing (31.6). Three-person consumer units had the highest shares in transportation (18.5 percent).

**Chart 4. Shares of average annual expenditures on selected major components by size of consumer unit, 2022**



\*Other expenditures include alcoholic beverages, apparel and services, personal care products and services, reading, education, tobacco products and smoking supplies, miscellaneous, and cash contributions.

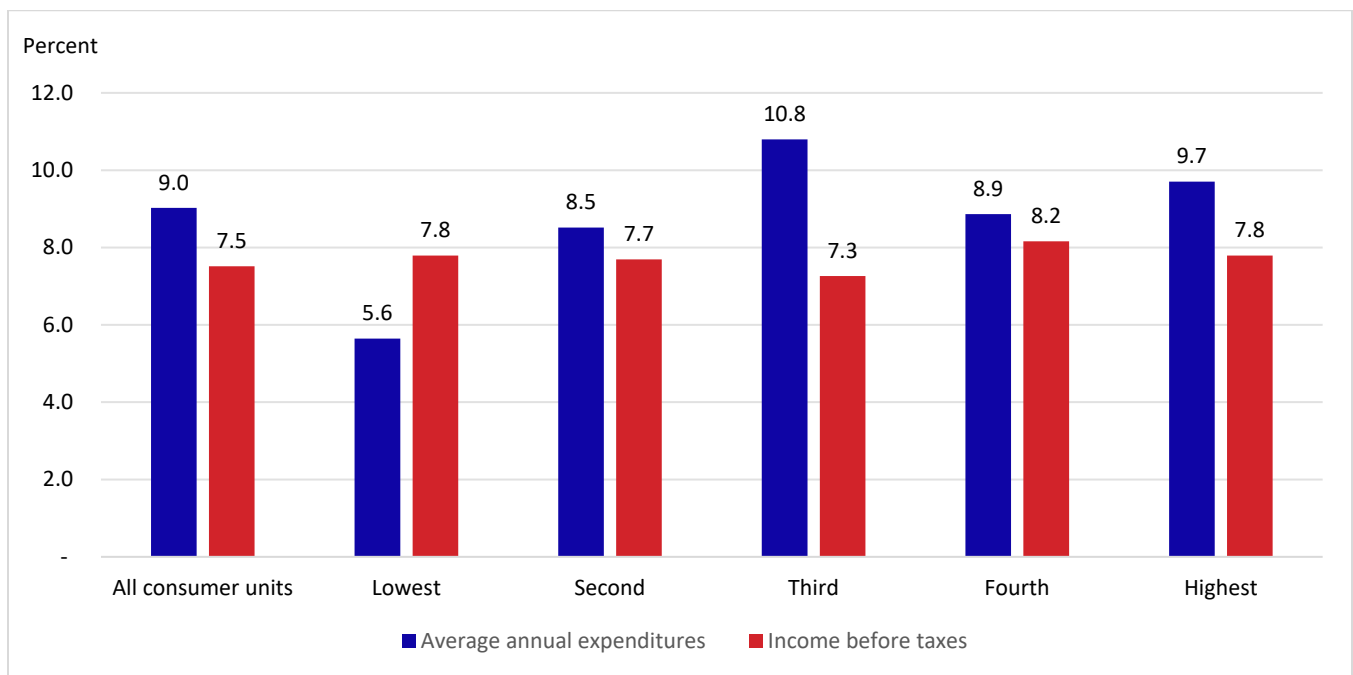
## Spending and income before taxes by income quintile, 2022

Chart 5 and table D show the annual percent change in expenditures and income before taxes by income quintile. Overall spending increased in all five quintiles, with the largest increase in the third quintile (+10.8 percent) and the smallest increase in the lowest quintile (+5.6 percent). These major components of spending—food, alcoholic beverages, housing, transportation, and personal care products and services—all increased for each of the five quintiles.

Overall, expenditures increased faster than income in 2022. That is, average annual income before taxes rose 7.5 percent in 2022, while expenditures increased 9.0 percent. This general finding held for all but the lowest quintile, where expenditures rose 5.6 percent while income rose 7.8 percent. The fourth quintile experienced the largest increase in income (+8.2 percent). The third quintile had the lowest increase in income (+7.3 percent), along with the largest increase in spending (+10.8 percent).

This increase in income for all consumer units in 2022 (+7.5 percent) follows a modest increase in 2021 (+3.7 percent). Increases in income before taxes ranged from 7.3 percent for the third quintile to 8.2 percent for the fourth quintile.

**Chart 5. Annual percent change in average expenditures and income before taxes by income quintile, 2022**



**Table A. Average income and expenditures of all consumer units, 2020-22**

Item	2020	2021	2022	Percent change	
				2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
Number of consumer units (000's)	131,234	133,595	134,090	0.0	0.0
Average Income before taxes	\$84,352	\$87,432	\$94,003	3.7	7.5
Average annual expenditures	\$61,332*	\$66,928	\$72,967	9.1	9.0
Food	7,310*	8,289	9,343	13.4	12.7
Food at home	4,935*	5,259	5,703	6.6	8.4
Food away from home	2,375	3,030	3,639	27.6	20.1
Alcoholic beverages	478	554	583	15.9	5.2
Housing	21,417*	22,624	24,298	5.6	7.4
Owned dwellings	7,473	7,591	8,230	1.6	8.4
Rented dwellings	4,408	4,684	4,990	6.3	6.5
Other lodging	722	983	1,287	36.1	30.9
Lodging on out-of-town trips	318	604	837	89.9	38.6
Apparel and services	1,434	1,754	1,945	22.3	10.9
Transportation	9,826	10,961	12,295	11.6	12.2
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	4,523	4,828	4,496	6.7	-6.9
Gasoline, other fuels, and motor oil	1,568	2,148	3,120	37.0	45.3
Public and other transportation	263	452	845	71.9	86.9
Healthcare	5,177	5,452	5,850	5.3	7.3
Health insurance	3,667	3,704	3,843	1.0	3.8
Medical services	864	1,070	1,184	23.8	10.7
Entertainment	2,909*	3,568	3,458	22.7	-3.1
Fees and admissions	425	654	833	53.9	27.4
Pets, toys, hobbies, and playground equipment	859	969	908	12.8	-6.3
Other entertainment supplies, equipment, and services	576*	925	698	60.6	-24.5
Personal care products and services	646	771	866	19.3	12.3
Reading	114	114	117	0.0	2.6
Education	1,271	1,226	1,335	-3.5	8.9
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	315	341	371	8.3	8.8
Miscellaneous	907	986	1,009	8.7	2.3
Cash contributions	2,283	2,415	2,755	5.8	14.1
Personal insurance and pensions	7,246	7,873	8,742	8.7	11.0
Pensions and Social Security	6,760	7,400	8,223	9.5	11.1

\*Due to corrections that occurred post-publication, 2020 numbers are different than those published in the 2020 annual release. These corrections did not meet CE's threshold for republication.

Note: Only selected subcategories are shown; as a result, the subcategories do not sum to their respective major item category.

**Table B. Percent distribution of total annual expenditures by major category for all consumer units, Consumer Expenditure Surveys, 2019-22**

Spending Category	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Average annual expenditures</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Food	13.0	11.9	12.4	12.8
Alcoholic beverages	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8
Housing	32.8	34.9	33.8	33.3
Apparel and services	3.0	2.3	2.6	2.7
Transportation	17.0	16.0	16.4	16.8
Healthcare	8.2	8.4	8.1	8.0
Entertainment	4.9	4.7	5.3	4.7
Personal care products and services	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2
Reading	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.8
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Miscellaneous	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.4
Cash contributions	3.2	3.7	3.6	3.8
Personal insurance and pensions	11.4	11.8	11.8	12.0

**Table C. Shares of average expenditures on selected major components by size of consumer unit, 2022**

Item	All consumer units	One person	Two people	Three people	Four people	Five or more people
Housing	33.3	39.4	32.1	31.8	31.6	31.9
Transportation	16.8	14.6	16.3	18.5	18.4	17.5
Food	12.8	11.8	12.2	12.9	12.9	15.3
Personal insurance and pensions	12.0	8.9	11.8	13.4	14.1	12.4
Healthcare	8.0	8.5	9.0	7.7	7.2	6.2
Entertainment	4.7	4.3	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.7
Other expenditures*	12.3	12.4	13.6	10.9	11.2	12.0

Other expenditures\* includes alcoholic beverages, apparel and services, personal care products and services, reading, education, tobacco products and smoking supplies, cash contributions, and miscellaneous.



**Table D. Change in average annual expenditures of major components by income quintile, 2021-22**

Item	Lowest Quintile		Second Quintile		Third Quintile		Fourth Quintile		Highest Quintile	
	Over-the-year change		Over-the-year change		Over-the-year change		Over-the-year change		Over-the-year change	
	Dollar	Percent	Dollar	Percent	Dollar	Percent	Dollar	Percent	Dollar	Percent
Total	1,743	5.6	3,739	8.5	6,036	10.8	6,673	8.9	12,441	9.7
Food	215	4.4	730	12.6	1,187	16.1	1,397	14.8	1,741	12.5
At home	100	2.8	295	7.3	771	16.2	661	11.3	396	4.9
Away from home	116	8.6	435	24.3	417	16.0	736	20.8	1,345	23.0
Alcoholic beverages	24	11.6	11	3.7	63	15.6	44	7.1	5	0.4
Housing	522	4.1	1,254	7.5	1,603	8.0	1,218	4.9	3,903	10.1
Apparel and services	-39	-4.1	11	0.9	179	11.6	497	28.0	306	9.3
Transportation	655	15.3	168	2.1	463	4.5	1,735	13.4	3,722	19.4
Healthcare	278	9.0	189	4.4	1,148	23.9	335	5.3	76	0.9
Entertainment	-161	-11.5	-90	-4.4	387	15.2	-159	-4.0	-497	-6.3
Personal care products and services	11	2.9	46	8.3	188	30.1	71	7.8	166	12.1
Reading	12	20.4	1	1.7	14	18.3	-12	-8.8	-2	-0.8
Education	142	27.8	80	18.7	126	23.6	136	13.0	79	2.2
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	39	11.6	44	11.9	-12	-3.1	39	10.3	39	16.6
Miscellaneous	24	5.1	48	7.6	20	2.5	23	2.0	3	0.2
Cash contributions	-77	-8.2	1,070**	76.0**	268	16.8	16	0.7	451	7.6
Personal insurance and pensions	97	18.0	177	8.2	402	8.0	1,334	14.1	2,448	11.1

\*\*Estimate has a high Relative Standard Error (RSE) and is suppressed in the published tables. See the methodology section below for more information.

## Additional Information

### Data Products

In addition to expenditures, the BLS Consumer Expenditures Surveys (CE) program also collects data on income, demographics, assets, and liabilities. Tables with more expenditure detail than are presented here are available at [www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm). Published tables provide 2022 CE data by standard classifications that include income quintile, income decile, income range, age of reference person, generation of reference person, size of consumer unit, number of earners, composition of consumer unit, region of residence, Census division of residence, housing tenure, race, Hispanic origin, occupation, highest education level of any member, and type of area (urban or rural). These tables include expenditure means, aggregates, shares, and standard errors. Expenditure tables by age, region, size, or sex cross-tabulated by income before taxes and other demographic variables can also be found on the CE website. Furthermore, a table showing results for all consumer units including the most detailed breakdown of expenditures is available at [www.bls.gov/cex/tables/top-line-means.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/tables/top-line-means.htm). Historical published tables for data dating back to 1984 and for selected metropolitan area tabulations are also available. Unpublished, but releasable, tables of detailed expenditures by demographic can be obtained by sending a request to [cexinfo@bls.gov](mailto:cexinfo@bls.gov).

The CE LABSTAT database provides tools to access CE estimates and can be found at [www.bls.gov/cex/data.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/data.htm). Documentation for how to use the CE LABSTAT database is available at [www.bls.gov/cex/ce-labstat-getting-started-guide.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cex/ce-labstat-getting-started-guide.pdf). Beginning with the 2022 data release, the CE LABSTAT database now includes standard errors and shares of average annual expenditures (2010 onward), and shares of aggregate expenditures (2011 onward). Also, the CE LABSTAT database now

includes a top picks feature. This tool allows users to quickly retrieve BLS time series data from lists of those most commonly requested.

Additionally, CE public use microdata (PUMD) for 1980 through 2022 are available at [www.bls.gov/cex/pumd\\_data.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/pumd_data.htm). The PUMD includes Interview Survey files, Diary Survey files, and paradata (information about the data collection process). The Interview Survey files contain expenditure data in three different formats: MTBI files that present monthly values in an item-coding framework based on the CPI-U pricing scheme, FMLI files that present user-friendly summary expenditure variables (e.g., total expenditures, total expenditures on food, etc.), and detailed data files that organize expenditures by the section of the Interview Survey questionnaire in which they are collected. Expenditure values on detailed data files cover different time periods depending on the specific questions asked, and the files also contain relevant non-expenditure information not found on the MTBI files, such as policy type and number of persons covered by health insurance. The Diary Survey files contain expenditure data in two different formats: EXPD files that present weekly values in the same item-coding framework based on the CPI-U pricing scheme, and FMLD files that present user-friendly summary expenditure variables (e.g., food at home, cereal and bakery products, beef, etc.). Documentation of the CE PUMD, its conventions, files, sample code, and methodology can be found at [www.bls.gov/cex/pumd-getting-started-guide.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/pumd-getting-started-guide.htm).

## **Publications**

The BLS Beyond the Numbers publication series provides analyses of topical economic issues and long-term spending trends. At the time of publication of this release, the most recent Beyond the Numbers article that features CE data (May 2023) is “Four personal tax liabilities trends that have emerged from recent tax legislation” ([www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-12/four-personal-tax-trends.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-12/four-personal-tax-trends.htm)). This and other recent CE-specific articles are available in the Beyond the Numbers publication series at [www.bls.gov/cex/csxwebarticles.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxwebarticles.htm). Additional methodological and analytical articles using CE data will be published in these series as they become available.

The BLS CE program also produces occasional articles for publication in the Monthly Labor Review (MLR) and Spotlight on Statistics series. The flagship publication of the BLS, the MLR publishes scholarly articles on many topics in labor economics. Items in the Spotlight series are meant to be shorter pieces accessible to the general public. A Spotlight generally includes a series of charts or graphs accompanied by a brief explanation of their relevance to the analysis. At the time of publication of this release, the most recent analytical MLR article that features CE data (April 2023) is “Developing a consumption measure, with examples of use for poverty and inequality analysis: a new research product from BLS” ([www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2023/article/developing-a-consumption-measure-with-examples-of-use-for-poverty-and-inequality-analysis-a-new-research-product-from-bls.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2023/article/developing-a-consumption-measure-with-examples-of-use-for-poverty-and-inequality-analysis-a-new-research-product-from-bls.htm)); the most recent Spotlight (December 2022) is “How the COVID-19 Pandemic Changed Urban and Rural Spending Habits” ([www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-changed-urban-and-rural-spending-habits/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-changed-urban-and-rural-spending-habits/home.htm)).

In addition, articles in The Economics Daily (TED) series occasionally feature findings using CE data. Members of the BLS CE program authored the most recent articles, while BLS staff in the publication’s office authored earlier TED articles. The most recent TED articles have described consumer spending for athletic gear, game tables, and exercise equipment ([www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-expenditures-for-athletic-gear-game-tables-and-exercise-equipment-doubled-in-2021.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-expenditures-for-athletic-gear-game-tables-and-exercise-equipment-doubled-in-2021.htm)), consumer expenditures in April-June of 2022 ([www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-expenditures-rise-8-6-percent-in-april-june-2022-quarter-compared-with-year-earlier.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-expenditures-rise-8-6-percent-in-april-june-2022-quarter-compared-with-year-earlier.htm)), and spending on public and other transportation during COVID-19 ([www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-spending-on-public-and-other-transportation-in-metro-areas-before-and-during-covid-19.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/consumer-spending-on-public-and-other-transportation-in-metro-areas-before-and-during-covid-19.htm)).

The 2022 Data Quality Profile, which reports quality metrics and indicators for the Interview and Diary Surveys regarding measurement, nonresponse, and processing error, will be available shortly after this release at [www.bls.gov/cex/cecomparison.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/cecomparison.htm).

The 2022 Annual Report, which includes more detailed information on spending patterns, is planned for publication in late 2023. (See [www.bls.gov/cex/csxreport.htm#annual](http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxreport.htm#annual)). The 2021 Annual Report, published January 2023, is available at [www.bls.gov/pub/reports/consumer-expenditures/2021/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/pub/reports/consumer-expenditures/2021/home.htm).

The CE program is also working on the development of a new research table investigating spending patterns of consumer units with veterans and active-duty military. The program aims to publish this table in September. Please check the notices on the CE home page for updates on this table, as well as other new releases.

For a listing of links to other published reports featuring CE data, see the CE publications page at [www.bls.gov/cex/csxreport.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxreport.htm).

## **Survey Materials**

Also available at [www.bls.gov/cex/csxsurveyforms.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxsurveyforms.htm) are the Diary Survey questionnaire and a modified version of the Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) instrument used to collect the Interview Survey data.

## **Methodology**

The change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) cited in the text was calculated as the percentage change between the 2021 12-month (January to December) average CPI-U for all items (270.970) and the 2022 12-month (January to December) average CPI-U for all items (292.655). The change in the CPI-U for gasoline (all types) was 31.7 percent. This was calculated as the percent change between the 2021 12-month (January to December) average CPI-U for gasoline (all types) (264.017) and the 2022 12-month (January to December) average CPI-U for gasoline (all types) (347.747).

Beginning with the 2022 tables publication, BLS includes data suppressions for estimates with a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 25 percent or more. RSE is defined as the ratio of the mean to its standard error (SE). For any estimate with an RSE that equals or exceeds the 25 percent threshold, the mean expenditure, SE, expenditure share, and RSE will be suppressed. The BLS CE program determined that estimates with RSEs of 25 percent or more were considered unreliable. RSEs tend to be smaller for the nationwide estimates than for smaller demographic groups. This is primarily due to their different sample sizes. In general, RSEs decrease as the sample size “*n*” increases. RSEs often decrease as the frequency of purchases increases. Infrequently purchased items are more susceptible to large RSEs while frequently purchased items tend to have smaller RSEs. For more information on variance estimation please see the Tables Getting Started Guide at <https://www.bls.gov/cex/tables-getting-started-guide.htm>. While data are suppressed in the tables estimates, users can still use the CE Public Use Microdata to obtain estimates suppressed in published tables.

Owned dwellings include interest on mortgages, interest on home equity loans and lines of credit, property taxes and insurance, refinancing and prepayment charges, ground rent, expenses for property management and security, homeowners' insurance, fire insurance and extended coverage, expenses for repairs and maintenance contracted out, and expenses of materials for owner-performed repairs and maintenance for dwellings used or maintained by the consumer unit. Mortgage principal payments and home purchases are excluded from this category.

The Type of Area definitions used in Chart 3 reflect the definitions that were introduced with the 2021 Type of Area table. See the Beyond the Numbers article “Changing how BLS defines “geographic areas” in the Consumer Expenditure Surveys” ([www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-12/changing-how-bls-defines-geographic-areas-in-the-consumer-expenditure-surveys.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-12/changing-how-bls-defines-geographic-areas-in-the-consumer-expenditure-surveys.htm)) for more information.

Reference person is defined as the first member mentioned by the respondent when asked to "Start with the name of the person or one of the persons who owns or rents the home." It is with respect to this person that the relationship of the other consumer unit members is determined.

Size of the consumer unit is defined as the number of persons whose usual place of residence at the time of participation (in either the Interview or Diary Survey) in the sample unit. This and other definitions of CE terms are in the CE glossary at [www.bls.gov/cex/csxgloss.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxgloss.htm).

Income before taxes in the CE includes the following components: Wages and salaries; self-employment income; Social Security; private and government retirement; interest and dividends; rental and other property income; unemployment, workers' compensation, and veterans' benefits; public assistance, supplemental security income, and food stamps; regular contributions for support; and other income.

The CE before-tax income estimates include government transfer payments of these three types: Supplement Security Income; Public Assistance; and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payments. Not included in these estimates are government subsidies for businesses as these are out of scope for the CE survey.

Income quintiles are constructed by sorting consumer units in the sample from lowest to highest income before taxes. The population weight (i.e., the number of consumer units within the population that each sampled unit represents) associated with each consumer is summed with those of the consumer units preceding it in the sorted set, resulting in a cumulative frequency count. The first quintile includes all consumer units for which the cumulative frequency count is less than or equal to 20 percent of the number of consumer units in the population. The second quintile includes all those consumer units for which the cumulative frequency count is greater than 20 percent, but less than or equal to 40 percent of the population, and so forth. Because there were approximately 134 million consumer units in the population in 2022, each quintile includes over 26 million consumer units. In 2022, the lower income bounds for each quintile were: \$25,807 for the second quintile; \$50,092 for the third quintile; \$83,696 for the fourth quintile; and \$140,363 for the highest quintile.

Some expenditures are collected only in one survey. For example, detailed food expenditures (e.g., rice, round roast, and lettuce) are collected only in the Diary Survey. Travel expenditures (goods or services purchased on out-of-town trips) are collected only in the Interview Survey. This makes the source of these data in the published tables obvious. However, several expenditures are collected in both surveys. For these expenditures, the BLS CE program uses a statistical method to select the source used in publication.

Information on the methodology used to calculate and collect CE data is available at [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cex/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cex/home.htm). General articles and research papers using CE data are in the CE research library at [www.bls.gov/cex/research\\_papers/research-paper-catalog.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cex/research_papers/research-paper-catalog.htm).

## **Contact Information**

For further information, contact the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Office of Prices and Living Conditions at (202) 691-6900 or by email at [cexinfo@bls.gov](mailto:cexinfo@bls.gov). If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.