

Overview of the Consumer Expenditures Surveys

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BLS Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program

USITC Symposium: The Distributional Effects of Trade and Trade Policy on U.S. Workers

Session F: Government Datasets for Analyzing Distributional Effects of Trade among Different Subgroups

Group 2: Individual and Household Level Microdata

April 6, 2022

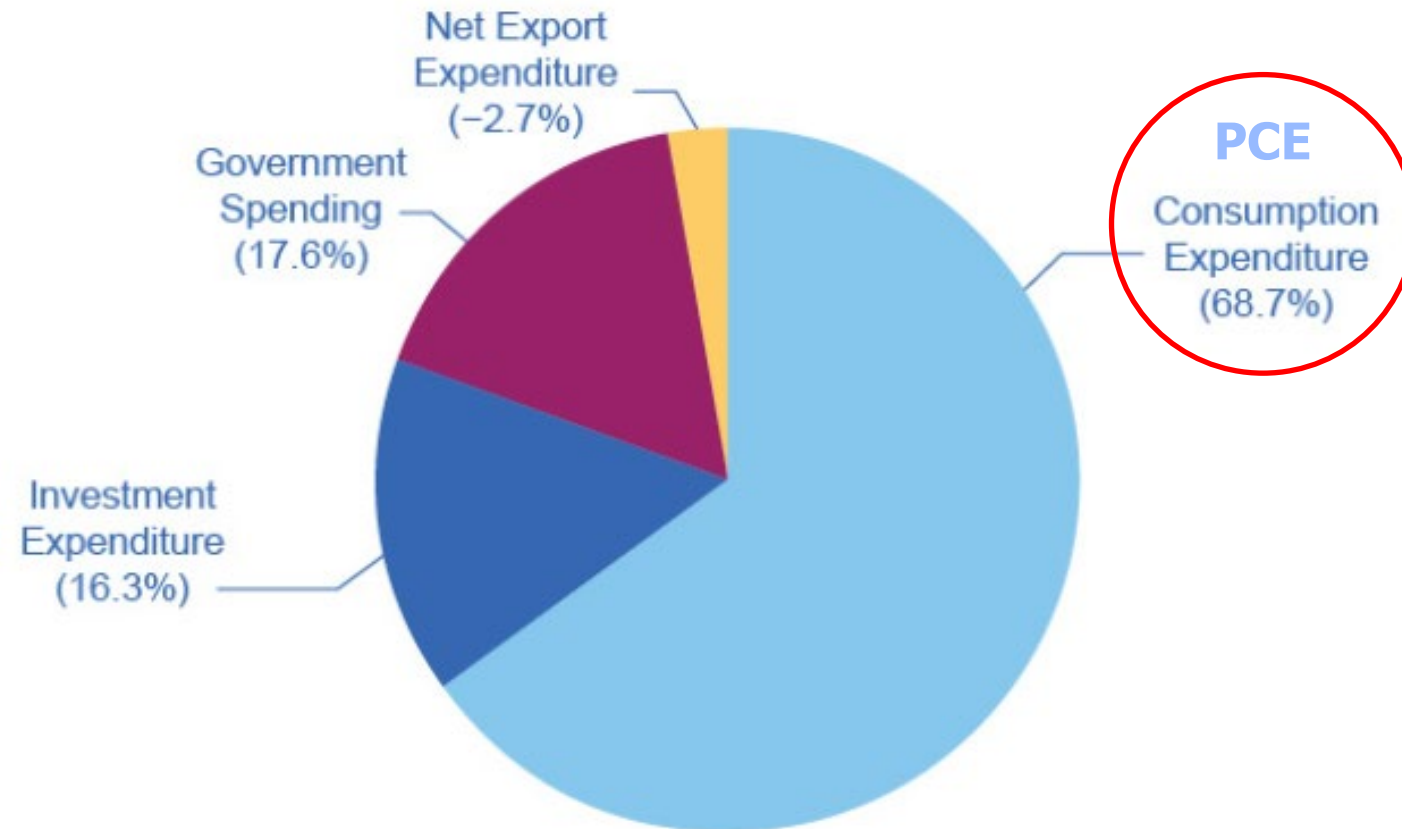


CE Program Mission

- The mission of the CE program is to collect, process, and disseminate information that presents a statistical picture of consumer spending for the Consumer Price Index, government agencies, and private data users.
- This mission encompasses analyzing CE data to produce socio-economic studies of consumer spending, and providing CE data users with assistance, education, and tools for working with the data.



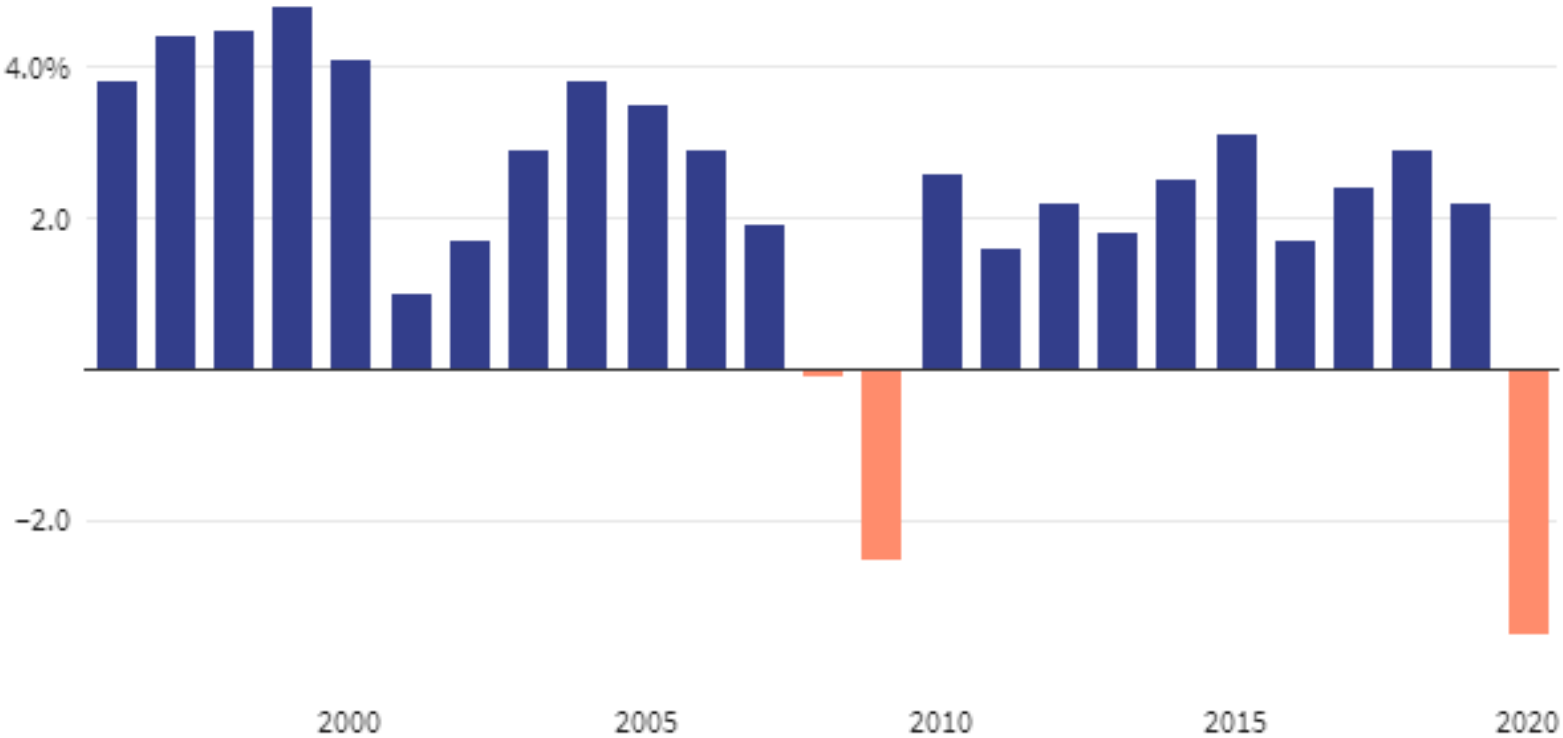
BLS Data Provide a Detailed Breakdown of ~70 Percent of GDP (estimated by BEA)



Percentage of Components of U.S. GDP on the Demand Side Consumption makes up over half of the demand side components of the GDP. (Source: http://bea.gov/ITable/Index_nipa.cfm)



Changes in Real GDP can be Explained by CE Data



Percent change from preceding period, not seasonally adjusted.

Source: [Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](https://www.frb.org)



CE Data Products

- BLS provides CE data on expenditures, income, and demographic characteristics of consumers in the United States.
- These data are available in [news releases](#), [tables](#), [LABSTAT database](#), [reports](#), and [public use microdata files](#).
- These data allow us to shed light on U.S. household spending habits across all ages, locations, and backgrounds.



CE Data Products

■ Economic Analysis

- ▶ News Release: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/news.htm>
- ▶ Beyond the Numbers: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxwebarticles.htm>
- ▶ Monthly Labor Review: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxart.htm>
- ▶ Spotlight on Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxspotlight.htm>
- ▶ The Economics Daily: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/consumer-expenditure-survey.htm>

■ CE Tables

- ▶ Data Tables: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm>
- ▶ LABSTAT database: <https://www.bls.gov/cex/data.htm>

■ CE Public Use Microdata (PUMD)

- ▶ Data Files: https://www.bls.gov/cex/pumd_data.htm



Economic Analysis

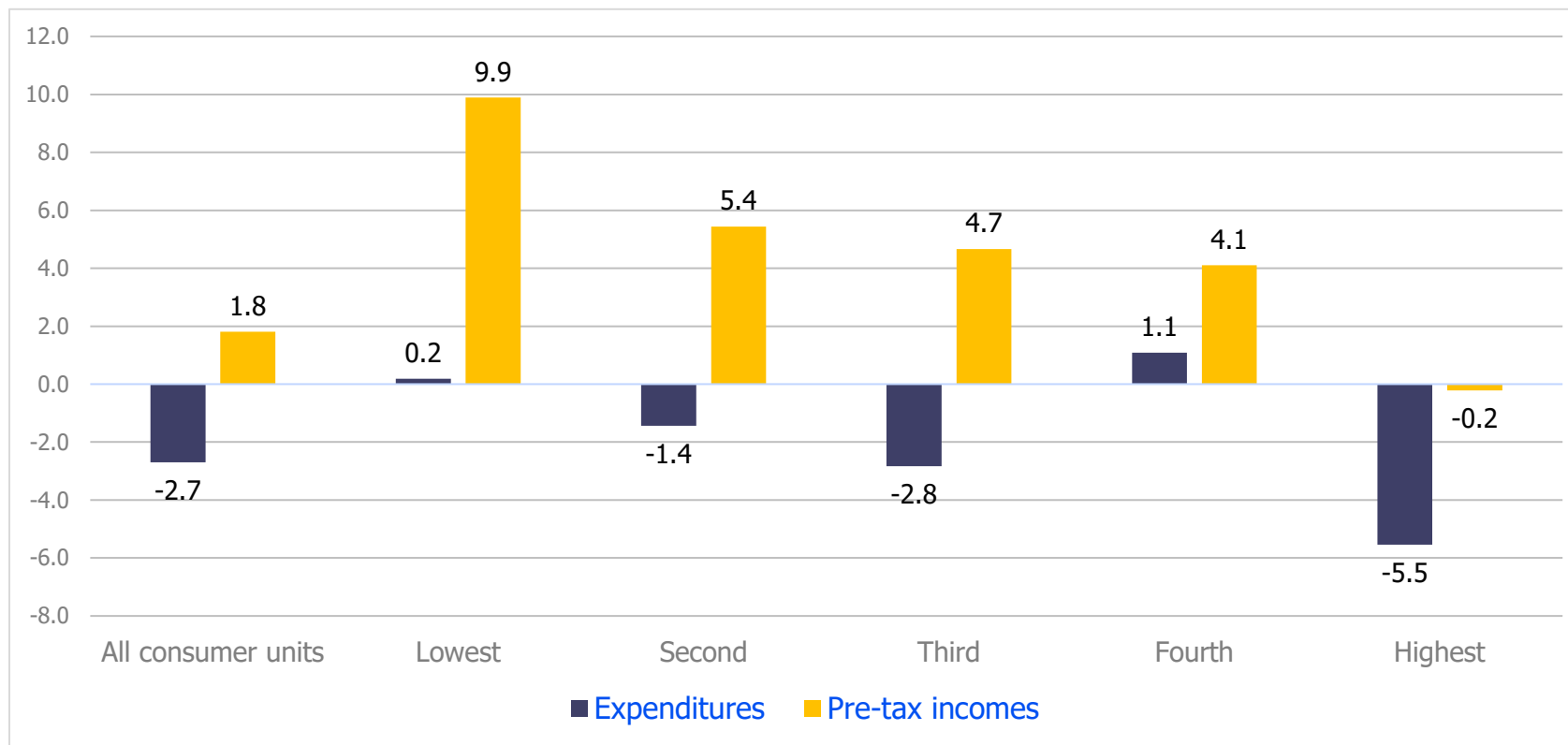
- News release
 - ▶ Published in September for the annual release
 - ▶ Contains notable changes in consumer expenditures
 - Selected demographic groups
 - Income quintiles
 - ▶ Contains charts and tables that focus on spending differences between the current and prior year

“Average expenditures per consumer unit for 2020 were \$61,334, a 2.7-percent decrease from 2019 levels, and average pretax income increased by 1.8 percent”



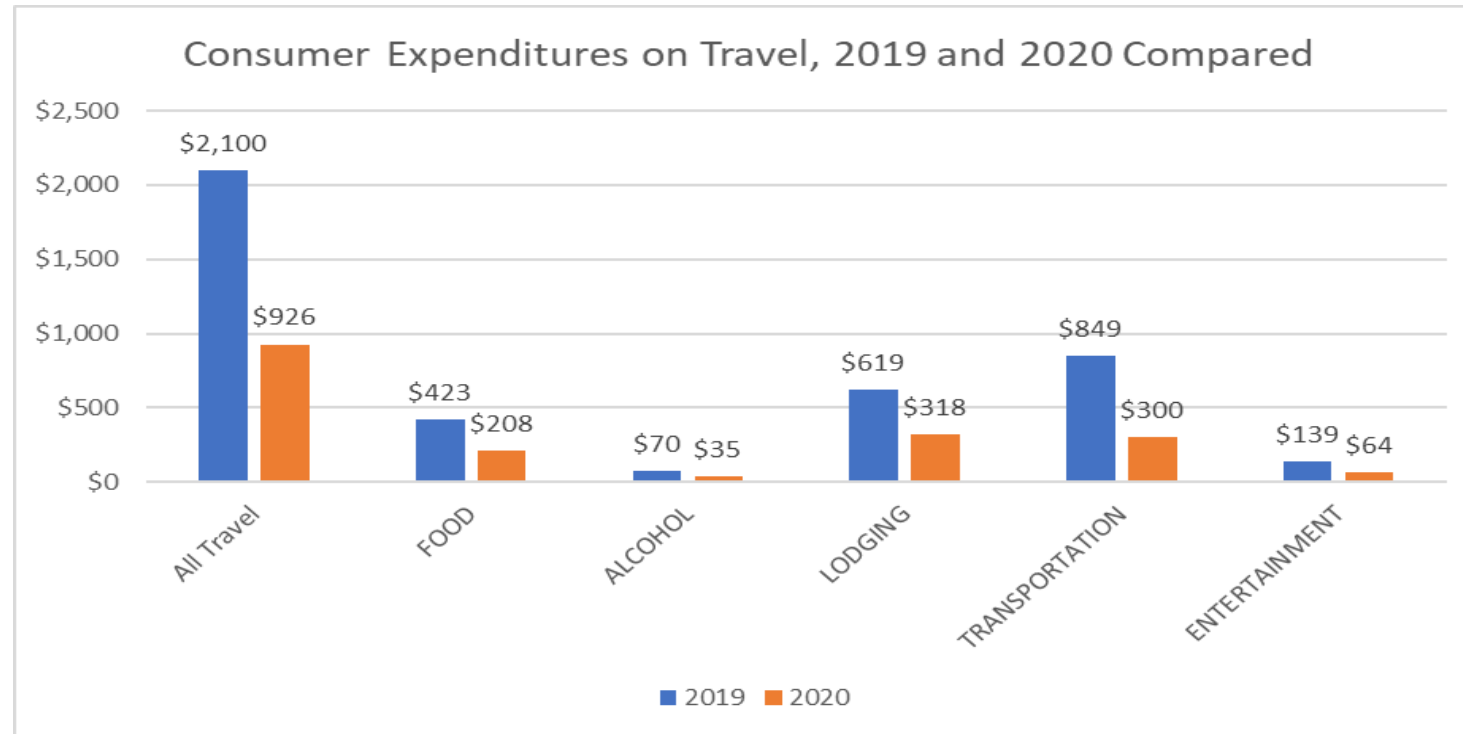
Economic Analysis

- Percent change in expenditures and income before taxes by income quintiles, 2019-2020



Economic Analysis

- What the Consumer Expenditure Surveys tell us about travel in the COVID-19 pandemic



CE Tables

Tables provide expenditure estimates by demo breakdown:

■ CU (11 tables)

- ▶ Income, income quintiles, income deciles
- ▶ Region, population size, area type (urban/rural)
- ▶ CU composition, education, tenure, earners, CU size

■ Reference person (6 tables)

- ▶ Age, selected age ranges, generation
- ▶ Ethnicity, occupation, race

CE Public Use Microdata (PUMD)

■ Data files:

- ▶ File types available include:
SAS (*.sas7bdat), STATA (*.dta), SPSS (*.sav), comma-delimited (*.csv)

■ Documentation:

- ▶ Getting Started Guide

■ Supplementary resources:

- ▶ Provide information regarding PUMD disclosure methods and requirements

CE Public Use Microdata (PUMD)

■ What's new?

▶ Historical PUMD

▶ State weights, which allow users to develop weighted means for specific states

- California
- Florida
- New Jersey
- New York
- Texas



CE Public Use Microdata (PUMD)

PUMD allow users to conduct more detailed analyses, answering questions such as:

- What are the spending patterns of the American middle class?
- What are the effects of various policy initiatives on spending?
- How does grocery spending relate to U.S. dietary recommendations?
- What are the effects of SNAP benefits on spending?
- What are changes in ride hailing/ride sharing expenditures?



Summary Information about the CE Surveys

Dataset name	Consumer Expenditure Surveys; Interview Survey and Diary Survey
Website	https://www.bls.gov/cex/
Microdata access	https://www.bls.gov/cex/pumd.htm
Survey coverage	Civilian noninstitutional population
Survey frequency	Annual survey
Longitudinal component	Yes; four quarterly interviews



Summary Information about the CE Surveys

Demographics for underserved communities

Yes – Race, ethnicity, rural

No – Religion, SOGI, disability, poverty level of surrounding community

Access to restricted use microdata

<https://www.bls.gov/rda/home.htm>

Information about content or design changes

https://www.bls.gov/cex/pumd_doc.htm

<https://www.bls.gov/cex/ce-improvements.htm>

Value added

Provides information on the complete range of consumers' expenditures as well as their incomes and demographic characteristics

Examples of research applications

<https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxreport.htm>

https://www.bls.gov/cex/research_papers/research-paper-catalog.htm



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