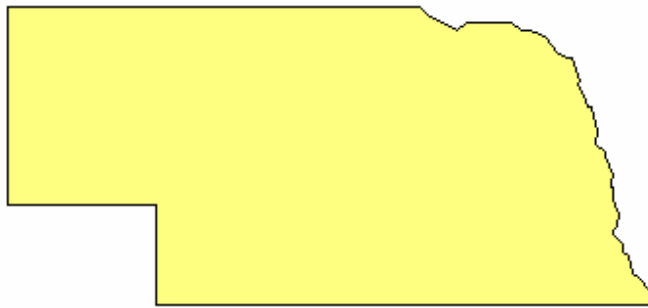


State Handbook of Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Indicators 2006

Nebraska



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**PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE
AARP**

Introduction

The *State Handbook of Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Indicators 2006* represents the sixth edition of the state handbook series. We produce a new updated handbook biennially. It is an easy-to-use reference book for anyone in search of up-to-date information about state economic, demographic, and fiscal conditions. Policymakers, public officials, and policy analysts will find useful data on such topics as population, poverty rates, per capita state personal income, state and local revenues, expenditures, tax rates, and property tax relief programs. Gender and age comparisons are provided for some of the data. Throughout the book we use the most current data available.

This handbook facilitates state-by-state and state-national comparisons, which can serve a variety of purposes. For example, a state's tax burden can be compared with the national average or with that of other states in the region. Per capita state personal income, unemployment, and median household income can be used to assess how residents in one state fare vis-à-vis those in another.

State Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Summaries

This part of the book features economic, demographic, and fiscal summaries of the entire United States, each state, and the District of Columbia, along with summaries for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Most of the book's information is presented in this section. Users will find statistics on several major economic indicators, such as state personal income, median household income, and employment, as well as on population and poverty, distribution of household income, revenues, expenditures, tax rates, and debt ratio measures.

A section on state-specific property tax relief summarizes homestead exemptions and credits, circuit breakers, and tax deferral programs, all of which are defined in the source notes and explanations section at the end of the book. We did not include all of the property tax rates, because they can vary within states, and because data on the varying rates are not easily available. In addition, nominal rates often do not equal effective rates.

Homestead exemptions are reductions in the amount of assessed property value subject to taxation. When reporting homestead exemptions, we note the assessed property value; however, the value of the tax reduction depends not only on the assessed property value but also on the fractional assessment level. For example, the fractional assessment percentage in Alabama is 10 percent for residential property, so the *reported* exemption value of \$4,000 translates into an exemption of \$40,000 in fair market value (\$4,000 divided by 0.1). For this reason, assessed values must first be converted into fair market values before comparing homestead exemptions among states.

The section on state and local general revenues and expenditures shows revenues and expenditures per capita and as a percentage of state personal income, as well as average annual changes from 1992 to 2002. The year 2002 was the most current year that we could obtain revenue and expenditure data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Comparisons can be made between each state and the national average of the amounts spent on expenditure programs. State and local debt information is provided on a per capita basis and per \$1,000 of personal income. The composition of short-term and long-term debt is also presented.

We have made some changes in the contents of the economic, demographic, and fiscal summaries since the 2003 *Handbook*. First, we now provide more current information on poverty rates by age and gender and the percent of households by age and income, thanks to the new American Community Survey (ACS) by the Census Bureau. The ACS features a much larger sample size (about 800,000 households that will increase to 3 million households in 2005) than the Current Population Survey (CPS) (about 100,000 households). State data are available on a more timely basis; instead of having to wait for the decennial census, users can obtain new data yearly.

Since we are now collecting poverty rate data from the ACS instead of the CPS, we no longer report the poverty rate in the economic indicators table (the first table in the state summaries). This is because we cannot make a 10-year comparison of state poverty rates until ACS has 10 years of poverty data.

Second, we added health and long-term care state income tax exemptions and credits. We describe only those state tax exemptions and credits that are more generous than what are available on the federal return. Therefore, we exclude tax exemptions, e.g., medical savings account deductions, which are found in federal adjusted gross income. Further, we exclude state itemized deductions, since we only want to describe tax exemptions and credits that benefit all taxpayers, not just those who itemize. Therefore, all the state health and long-term care tax provisions described here are available to all state filers, whether they itemize or not. Finally, since we are only interested in the general population, we exclude state health and long-term care tax breaks that are targeted specifically for self-employed persons.

Third, we described how the state tax income base is related to the federal income tax base, such as federal adjusted gross income. The state income tax base may be unrelated to the federal base; it may link to federal adjusted gross income (AGI), federal taxable income, or to federal gross income. If state taxable income is unrelated to federal income, we say that the state's income tax base is not directly related to federal income.

Fourth, we highlighted the minimum income levels at which taxpayers must file their state income taxes. Fifth, because some states have local expenditure limits which may affect the amount of property taxes collected, we describe how localities limit the growth of their expenditures.

Tables and U.S. Maps

The handbook provides tables and maps of selected state economic, demographic, and fiscal data (found primarily in the economic, demographic, and fiscal summaries part). This presentation of the data makes it easy to compare any or all states and the District of Columbia on such economic indicators as per capita income or gross state product. The tables provide state rankings for easy comparisons. We do not include Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands because the data are either unavailable or not as current as state data, in the tables.

Data Sources and Explanations

Data sources and explanations of concepts or terms can be found in this part of the handbook. Most of the information in the handbook comes from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, including poverty rate by age group and household income by age group from the American Community Survey, median household income from the Current Population Survey, population estimates by age group based on decennial census data, and revenues and expenditures from the Census of Governments.

We collected economic data, such as per capita income and gross state product, from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition, we obtained tax rate and property tax relief information from a survey of state and local government offices, such as state legislative offices and state and local assessors' offices.

For Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, we collected household income, poverty rate, and population data from U.S. decennial census data. Employment data came from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Puerto Rico) and the Virgin Island's Bureau of Economic Research. Per capita income came from Puerto Rico's Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Census Bureau (Virgin Islands). Tax rates, general revenue, and general expenditure data came from Puerto Rico's Department of the Treasury, the Virgin Islands Office of Management and Budget (revenues), the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (income tax data), and the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue (miscellaneous tax data).

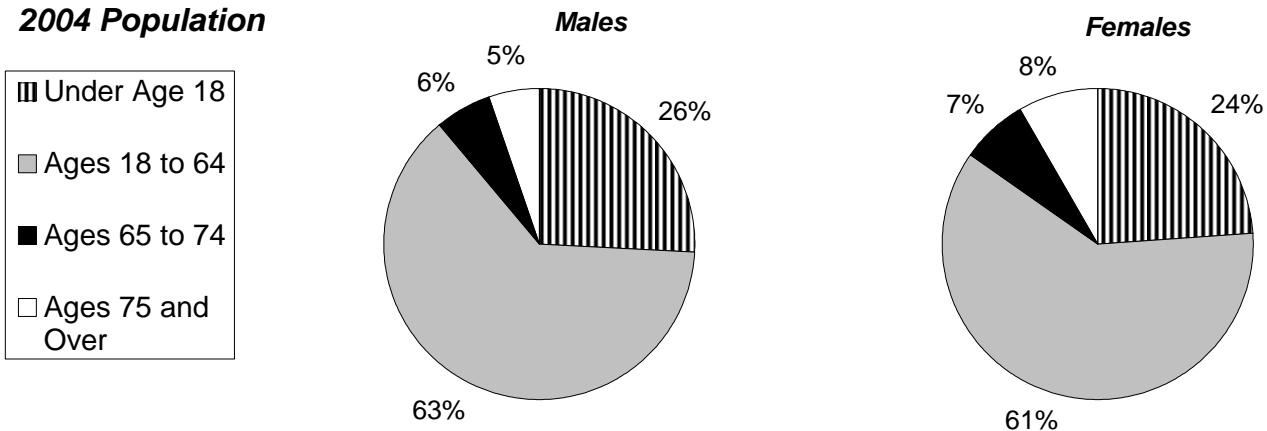
As state and local economic conditions and demographic patterns change, policymakers may consider adjusting their policies on taxes and spending programs. These adjustments become more difficult when economic and demographic changes depart from historical trends. It is our belief that this publication will contribute to more informed public policy decisions by identifying significant economic, demographic, and fiscal changes.

Nebraska

| Economic Indicators | 1994 | | 2004 | | Average Annual Change 1994-2004 | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------|--------------|---------------------------------|------|
| | NE | US | NE | US | NE | US |
| | Per Capita Income..... | \$20,751 | \$22,172 | \$32,276 | \$33,041 | 4.5% |
| Median Household Income..... | \$31,794 | \$32,264 | \$43,761 | \$44,389 | 3.2% | 3.2% |
| Gross State Product (in millions)..... | \$42,838 | \$6,865,513 | \$68,183 | \$11,665,595 | 4.8% | 5.4% |
| Full- and Part-Time Positions (in thousands)..... | 1,068 | 145,224 | 1,202 | 170,104 | 1.2% | 1.6% |
| Employed Persons (in thousands) | 863 | 123,060 | 948 | 139,251 | 0.9% | 1.2% |
| Unemployment Rate..... | 2.6% | 6.1% | 3.8% | 5.5% | n/a | n/a |

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

2004 Population



| Population and Poverty | Population | | | | Poverty Rate | |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | 1994 | 2004 | Percentage Change 1994-2004 | | 2004 | |
| | NE | NE | NE | US | NE | US |
| Total Population..... | 1,621,551 | 1,747,214 | 7.7% | 12.8% | 11.0% | 13.1% |
| Males..... | 791,883 | 863,628 | 9.1% | 13.8% | 10.2% | 11.6% |
| Under Age 18..... | 225,805 | 222,433 | -1.5% | 7.8% | 14.0% | 18.3% |
| Ages 18 to 64..... | 473,305 | 544,684 | 15.1% | 16.7% | 9.6% | 9.6% |
| Ages 65 to 74..... | 53,890 | 50,376 | -6.5% | 1.6% | 3.4% | 6.5% |
| Ages 75 and Over..... | 38,883 | 46,135 | 18.7% | 28.8% | 5.8% | 6.8% |
| Females..... | 829,668 | 883,586 | 6.5% | 11.9% | 11.8% | 14.5% |
| Under Age 18..... | 213,839 | 212,133 | -0.8% | 8.1% | 12.1% | 18.6% |
| Ages 18 to 64..... | 480,508 | 536,161 | 11.6% | 14.6% | 12.0% | 13.6% |
| Ages 65 to 74..... | 64,226 | 60,976 | -5.1% | -3.6% | 6.8% | 9.7% |
| Ages 75 and Over..... | 71,095 | 74,316 | 4.5% | 19.6% | 13.2% | 13.3% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

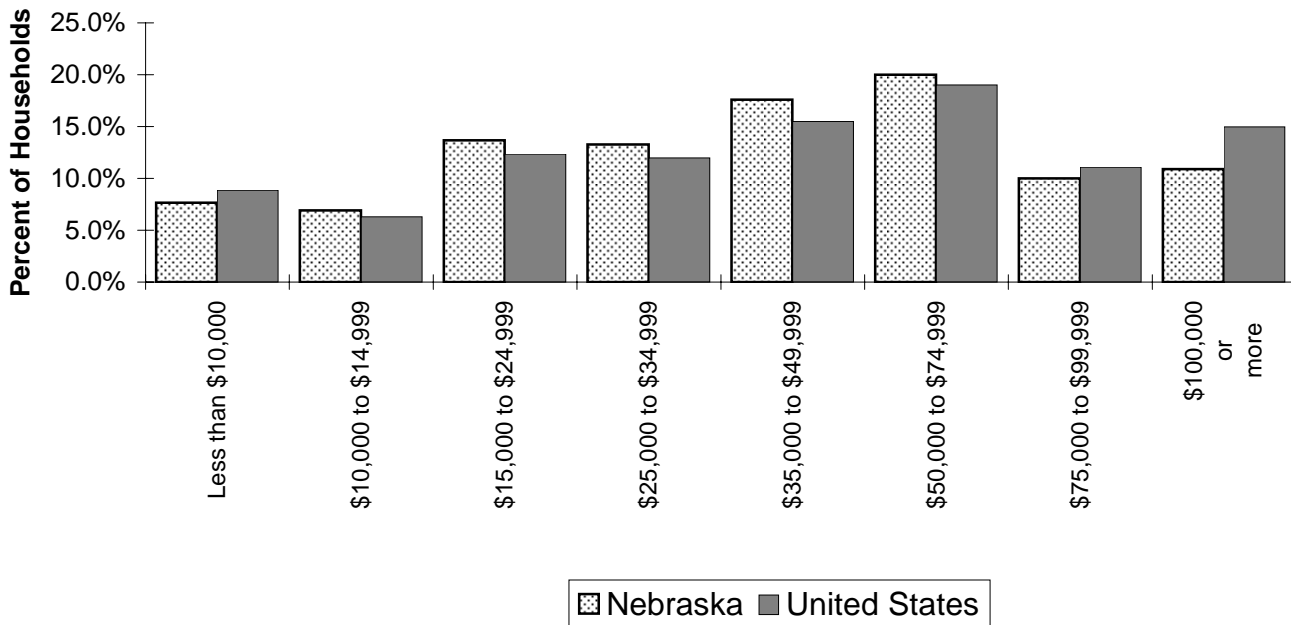
Nebraska

Percent Distribution of Households by Age of Householder and Income, 2004

| Age of Householder | Less than \$10,000 | \$10,000 to \$14,999 | \$15,000 to \$24,999 | \$25,000 to \$34,999 | \$35,000 to \$49,999 | \$50,000 to \$74,999 | \$75,000 to \$99,999 | \$100,000 or more | All Households |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Under 25 years..... | 14.8% | 10.7% | 20.9% | 22.4% | 19.0% | 9.5% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 100.0% |
| 25 to 44 years..... | 6.5% | 4.2% | 11.4% | 12.7% | 17.9% | 24.9% | 11.9% | 10.5% | 100.0% |
| 45 to 64 years..... | 5.9% | 4.3% | 9.0% | 11.0% | 17.0% | 22.2% | 13.4% | 17.3% | 100.0% |
| 65 years and over..... | 10.0% | 14.6% | 22.9% | 14.8% | 17.5% | 11.4% | 4.2% | 4.5% | 100.0% |
| Nebraska (all ages)..... | 7.7% | 6.9% | 13.7% | 13.3% | 17.6% | 20.0% | 10.0% | 10.9% | 100.0% |
| United States (all ages). | 8.9% | 6.3% | 12.3% | 12.0% | 15.5% | 19.0% | 11.1% | 15.0% | 100.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Percent of Households by Household Income Bracket, 2004



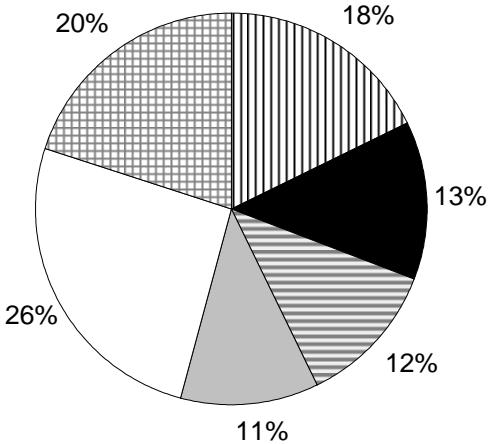
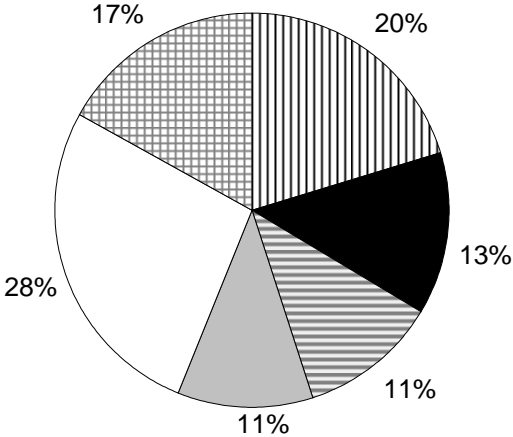
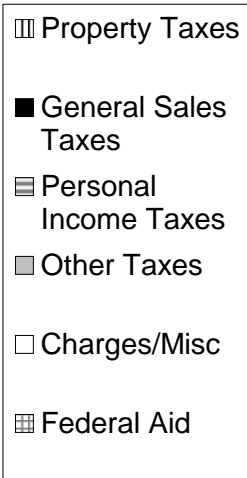
Nebraska

| State and Local General Revenues, FY 2002 | General Revenues (millions) | Per Capita | | Percent of Personal Income | | Average Annual Revenue Change 1992-2002 | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| | | NE | US | NE | US | NE | US |
| | | Total General Revenues..... | \$9,821 | \$5,689 | \$5,851 | 19.9% | 19.3% |
| Own Sources..... | \$7,848 | \$4,546 | \$4,599 | 15.9% | 15.2% | 5.1% | 5.2% |
| Taxes..... | \$5,316 | \$3,079 | \$3,143 | 10.8% | 10.4% | 5.1% | 4.9% |
| Property Taxes..... | \$1,749 | \$1,013 | \$969 | 3.5% | 3.2% | 4.2% | 4.5% |
| General Sales Taxes..... | \$1,287 | \$746 | \$774 | 2.6% | 2.6% | 5.2% | 5.4% |
| Personal Income Taxes..... | \$1,153 | \$668 | \$705 | 2.3% | 2.3% | 5.9% | 5.8% |
| Other Taxes..... | \$1,127 | \$653 | \$695 | 2.3% | 2.3% | 5.7% | 4.3% |
| Charges/Miscellaneous..... | \$2,532 | \$1,466 | \$1,456 | 5.1% | 4.8% | 5.1% | 5.7% |
| Federal Aid..... | \$1,973 | \$1,143 | \$1,252 | 4.0% | 4.1% | 7.3% | 7.2% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2002 data are the most current available.)

1992 General Revenue

2002 General Revenue



Nebraska

I. Personal Income Tax (2004)

State Income Tax Base

Nebraska's income tax base is linked to federal adjusted gross income.

Filing Requirements

Taxpayers must file if they are required to file a federal return and report a federal liability or if they have \$5,000 or more in Nebraska adjustments to federal adjusted gross income.

Table 1*
(for those with adjusted gross income less than \$142,700)

| Rate Structure | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Single | | Married, Filing Jointly | |
| <u>Taxable Income</u> | <u>Rate</u> | <u>Taxable Income</u> | <u>Rate</u> |
| First \$2,400 | 2.56% | First \$4,000 | 2.56% |
| \$2,400 - \$17,000 | 3.57% | \$4,000 - \$30,000 | 3.57% |
| \$17,000 - \$26,500 | 5.12% | \$30,000 - \$46,750 | 5.12% |
| Over \$26,500 | 6.84% | Over \$46,750 | 6.84% |

*The tax liability for taxpayers whose adjusted gross income is more than \$1 equals the tax calculated from table 1 plus the tax calculated from table 2.

Table 2
(for those with adjusted gross income more than \$142,700)

| Rate Structure | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Single | | Married, Filing Jointly | |
| <u>Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)</u> | <u>Tax to add is:</u> | <u>Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)</u> | <u>Tax to add is:</u> |
| Over \$142,701 - \$166,700 | 0.428% of AGI over \$142,700 | Over \$142,701 - \$182,700 | 0.428% of AGI over \$142,700 |
| \$166,701 - \$312,700 | \$102.72 + 0.327% of AGI over \$166,700 | \$182,701 - \$442,700 | \$171.2 + 0.327% of AGI over \$188,700 |
| \$312,701 - \$407,700 | \$580.14 + 0.172% of AGI over \$312,700 | \$442,701 - \$610,200 | \$1,021.4 + 0.172% of AGI over \$442,700 |
| Over \$407,700 | \$743.54 | Over \$610,200 | \$1,309.50 |

Sources: AARP 2005 telephone survey of state legislative staff, state departments of revenue, state controllers' offices, state assessors' offices, and state treasury offices.

Nebraska

Public and Private Pension Exemption None

Social Security Benefits

Only taxpayers whose provisional income* is \$25,000 or higher (single) or \$32,000 or higher (married, filing jointly) are subject to taxation of their Social Security benefits.

*Provisional income consists of federal adjusted gross income, tax-exempt interest, certain foreign-source income, and one-half of the taxpayer's Social Security or Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefit (U.S. House Committee on the Budget, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, 103rd Congress, 1st sess., 1993, Conference Report 103-213, p. 594).

Standard Deductions*

Under age 65 \$4,850 (single); \$8,140 (married, filing jointly)
Age 65 or older \$6,030 (single); \$10,100 (married, filing jointly;
both spouses are age 65 or older)

*Standard deductions start phasing out for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of \$137,300 or higher.

Personal Exemption Tax Credits

\$101 (single); \$202 (married, filing jointly) for those whose federal adjusted gross income is \$72,000 or less (single) or \$119,000 or less (married, filing jointly); taxpayers with higher income are eligible for a lower tax credit until it phases out at over \$172,000 (single) and over \$219,000 (married, filing jointly) in federal adjusted gross income.

Elderly or Disabled Tax Credit

Taxpayers age 65 or older or disabled may qualify for the credit. The credit equals the amount of the federal elderly tax credit. Usually taxpayers do not qualify if their federal adjusted gross income is \$17,500 or more (single) or \$20,000 or more (married, filing jointly, if only one spouse is eligible) or \$25,000 or more (married, filing jointly, if both spouses are eligible).

Local Income Taxes None

II. General Sales Tax Rates (2004)

State 5.5%
Combined state/local tax rates 5.5% to 7%

III. Miscellaneous Tax Rates (2004)

Corporate income (highest marginal rate)..... 7.81% On income over \$50,000
Gasoline (per gallon) \$0.254
Cigarette (per pack of 20) \$0.64
Beer (per gallon)..... \$0.31

Sources: AARP 2005 telephone survey of state legislative staff, state departments of revenue, state controllers' offices, state assessors' offices, and state treasury offices.

Nebraska

IV. Real Property Tax Relief Programs (2005)

Homestead Exemption or Credit..... None

Circuit Breaker

Requirements

Homeowners age 65 or older whose income is \$25,700 or less (single) or \$30,300 or less (married couples). In addition, the homestead value cannot exceed \$95,000 or 150% of the county's average assessed value (whichever is greater) plus \$20,000

Benefits

Up to \$40,000 assessed value or 80% of the county's average assessed value (whichever is greater)

Circuit Breaker

Requirements

Disabled homeowners whose income is \$28,300 or less (single) or \$32,600 or less (married couples). In addition, the homestead value cannot exceed \$110,000 or 175% of the county's average assessed value (whichever is greater) plus \$20,000

Benefits

\$50,000 assessed value or 100% of the county's average assessed value (whichever is greater)

Deferral Program None

V. Real Property Tax Limits, Caps, or Freezes (2005)

Tax Rate Limits

Rural local areas..... \$1.74 per \$100 of assessed value*
Municipalities \$2.19 to \$2.24 per \$100 of assessed value*

*Voters can decide to approve property tax rates exceeding these limits. These tax rate limits do not pertain to bonded indebtedness, capital lease contracts approved prior to July 1, 1998, or to levies used to pay for liability judgments.

Sources: AARP 2005 telephone survey of state legislative staff, state departments of revenue, state controllers' offices, state assessors' offices, and state treasury offices.

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Local political subdivisions, other than school districts, cannot annually increase various revenue funds by more than 2.5% as part of their budgetary process. These funds include property taxes, local sales taxes, and state aid (includes homestead exemption reimbursement, insurance premiums tax receipts, and street and roads funds).

The 2.5% limit does not pertain to growth in real property valuation due to improvements (to the extent that such growth exceeds 2.5%). The 2.5% limit does not apply to bonded indebtedness. An additional 1% growth rate can apply if approved by at least a three-fourths majority vote of the governing body, and voters can approve higher revenue increases.

VI. Local Expenditure Limits (2005)

School districts cannot annually increase general expenditures by more than 0% to 3% (2003-05); above average or average spending school systems are limited to 0%; other school systems can have increases of up to 3%. School districts can increase their spending limit by an additional percentage point with a three-fourths approval vote of the school board. Voters can approve higher expenditure growth.

Sources: AARP 2005 telephone survey of state legislative staff, state departments of revenue, state controllers' offices, state assessors' offices, and state treasury offices.

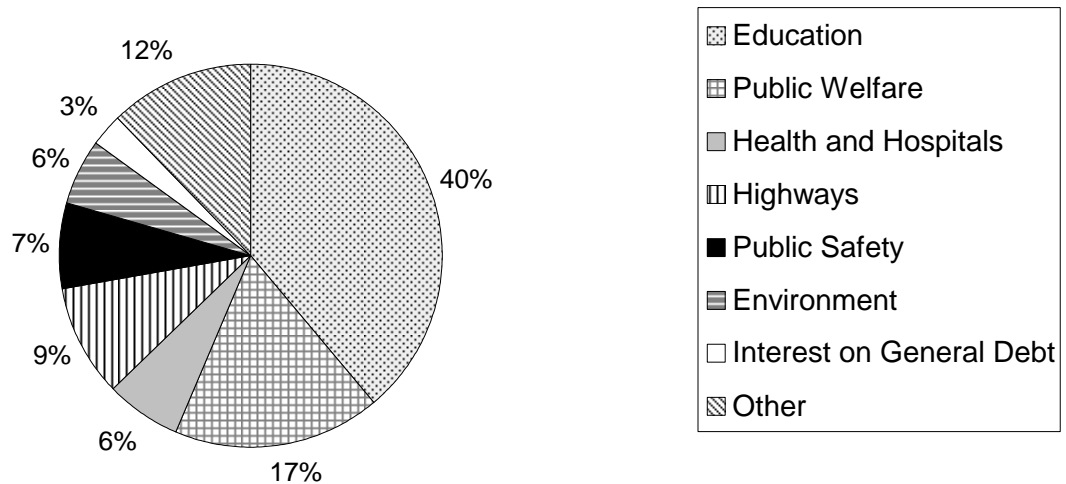
Nebraska

| State and Local General Expenditures, FY 2002 | General Expenditures (millions) | Per Capita | | Percent of Personal Income | | Average Annual Expenditure Change 1992-2002 | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| | | NE | US | NE | US | NE | US |
| | | State/Local Direct General Expenditures | \$9,759 | \$5,653 | \$6,026 | 19.8% | 19.9% |
| To State/Local Government | \$9,745 | \$5,645 | \$6,011 | 19.8% | 19.9% | 5.9% | 5.9% |
| Education* | \$3,797 | \$2,199 | \$2,065 | 7.7% | 6.8% | 5.4% | 6.2% |
| Public Welfare | \$1,703 | \$986 | \$971 | 3.5% | 3.2% | 8.8% | 6.1% |
| Health and Hospitals | \$607 | \$351 | \$508 | 1.2% | 1.7% | 2.2% | 5.2% |
| Highways | \$924 | \$535 | \$401 | 1.9% | 1.3% | 5.1% | 5.5% |
| Public Safety* | \$712 | \$412 | \$545 | 1.4% | 1.8% | 7.8% | 6.3% |
| Environment | \$551 | \$319 | \$356 | 1.1% | 1.2% | 5.8% | 5.1% |
| Interest on General Debt | \$256 | \$148 | \$262 | 0.5% | 0.9% | 1.8% | 3.1% |
| Other | \$1,196 | \$693 | \$904 | 2.4% | 3.0% | 7.2% | 6.5% |
| To Federal Government | \$14 | \$8 | \$15 | 0.0% | 0.1% | 11.1% | 1.9% |

*Education includes higher and lower education; public safety includes police, fire, corrections, and protection and inspection.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2002 data are the most current available.)

State and Local General Expenditures, FY 2002
(excluding payments to federal government)



| 2002 Debt Ratio Measures | Total Debt Outstanding | | | Long-term Debt | | Short-term Debt | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Debt (billions) | Per Capita | Per \$1,000 of Personal Income | Debt (billions) | Percent of Total | Debt (billions) | Percent of Total |
| Nebraska (State and Local) | \$7.9 | \$4,579 | \$160.35 | \$7.9 | 99.8% | \$0.01 | 0.2% |
| United States | \$1,681.4 | \$5,839 | \$192.88 | \$1,638.1 | 97.4% | \$43.24 | 2.6% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census