



news release

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Experian ranks top 20 major U.S. metropolitan areas by average debt per consumer
Seattle leads with the highest debt, but its residents are managing credit well

Costa Mesa, Calif., May 13, 2010 — Experian®, the global information services company, released its findings today on average debt* per consumer in the top 20 major U.S. metropolitan areas. Approximately 65 percent of these areas exceeded the national average consumer debt, which was \$24,775 in March.

Within the top 20 major U.S. metropolitan areas, Seattle is the most debt-burdened city, coming in at almost \$2,000 above the national average debt per consumer, while Los Angeles has the lowest average debt.

Metropolitan areas	Average debt per consumer
1. Seattle	\$26,646
2. Dallas	\$26,599
3. Denver	\$26,428
4. Atlanta	\$26,063
5. Phoenix	\$26,035
6. Houston	\$25,790
7. Washington, D.C.	\$25,702
8. Tampa	\$25,603
9. Philadelphia	\$25,544
10. Orlando	\$25,316
11. Minneapolis	\$25,115
12. Detroit	\$24,995
13. Sacramento	\$24,826
14. Chicago	\$24,781
15. Boston	\$24,670
16. Cleveland	\$24,669
17. New York	\$24,444
18. San Francisco	\$24,429
19. Miami	\$24,334
20. Los Angeles	\$24,009

**Debt for this study is calculated using all credit cards, auto loans and personal loans. It does not include mortgages.*

“It’s important to look at the whole picture when evaluating how consumers are actually managing their credit,” said Maxine Sweet, vice president, public education, Experian. “Seattle ranks the highest in terms of average debt per consumer. However, additional data shows that Seattle’s consumers have very few late payments and are not maxing out their credit cards, so they are using their credit wisely and maintaining higher credit scores.”

Below are some tips for consumers on how to better manage their debt:

- Pay your bills on time. If you have an overdue bill, an unpaid debt or a tax lien, pay it off.
- Set up a budget and live within it. In the age of self-help and empowerment, managing your finances should top your list.
- Use your credit cards responsibly to demonstrate that you can manage credit well, but keep balances low on all of your cards and revolving credit.
- Review your [credit report](#) 60 to 90 days before making a major purchase. Do not open or close accounts, but concentrate on paying down balances.
- Pay off debt rather than moving it around. Also, do not close unused cards as a short-term strategy to [improve your credit score](#). Owing the same amount but having fewer open accounts may lower your utilization ratios and your credit scores.

For more information on managing credit, visit <http://www.experian.com/crediteducation>.

Methodology

The data was pulled and analyzed by Experian Decision Sciences using a statistically relevant sampling of Experian’s File OneSM consumer credit database. Credit files analyzed had all personal identification information removed. They then were filtered through Premier AttributesSM, the credit industry’s most robust, accurate and comprehensive set of credit attributes that provides consumer data at the most granular level, facilitating enhanced modeling opportunities. Experian’s credit study data score averages are based on VantageScore[®].

About Experian

Experian is the leading global information services company, providing data and analytical tools to clients in more than 65 countries. The company helps businesses to [manage credit risk](#), [prevent fraud](#), target marketing offers and automate decision making. Experian also helps individuals to check their [credit report](#) and [credit score](#) and protect against [identity theft](#).

Experian plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange (EXPN) and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 index. Total revenue for the year ended March 31, 2009, was \$3.9 billion. Experian employs approximately 15,000 people in 40 countries and has its corporate headquarters in Dublin, Ireland, with operational headquarters in Nottingham, UK; Costa Mesa, California; and São Paulo, Brazil.

For more information, visit <http://www.experianplc.com>.

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