

Municipal Labour Cost Report

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Canadian Taxpayers Federation

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About the Canadian Taxpayers Federation

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation is a federally incorporated, not-for-profit citizens' group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste and accountable government.

The CTF was founded in Saskatchewan in 1990 when the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers and the Resolution One Association of Alberta joined forces to create a national organization. At the end of 2019, the CTF had 235,000 supporters nationwide.

The CTF maintains a federal office in Ottawa and regional offices in British Columbia, Alberta, Prairie (Saskatchewan and Manitoba), Ontario, Québec and Atlantic Canada. Regional offices conduct research and advocacy activities specific to their provinces in addition to acting as regional organizers of Canada-wide initiatives.

CTF offices field hundreds of media interviews each month, hold press conferences and issue regular news releases, commentaries, online postings and publications to advocate on behalf of CTF supporters. CTF representatives speak at functions, make presentations to government, meet with politicians and organize petition drives, events and campaigns to mobilize citizens to effect public policy change. Each week CTF offices send out Let's Talk Taxes commentaries to more than 800 media outlets and personalities across Canada.

Any Canadian taxpayer committed to the CTF's mission is welcome to join at no cost and receive emailed Action Updates. Financial supporters can additionally receive the CTF's flagship publication *The Taxpayer* magazine, published three times a year.

The CTF is independent of any institutional or partisan affiliations. All CTF staff, board members and representatives are prohibited from donating to or holding a membership in any political party. In 2018-19 the CTF raised \$5.1 million on the strength of 30,517 donations. Donations to the CTF are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution.



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Alberta’s ballooning municipal labour costs

Labour costs make up a significant portion of municipal government budgets. If municipal governments are going to significantly reduce costs to provide necessary tax relief, many will need to address their growing labour costs.

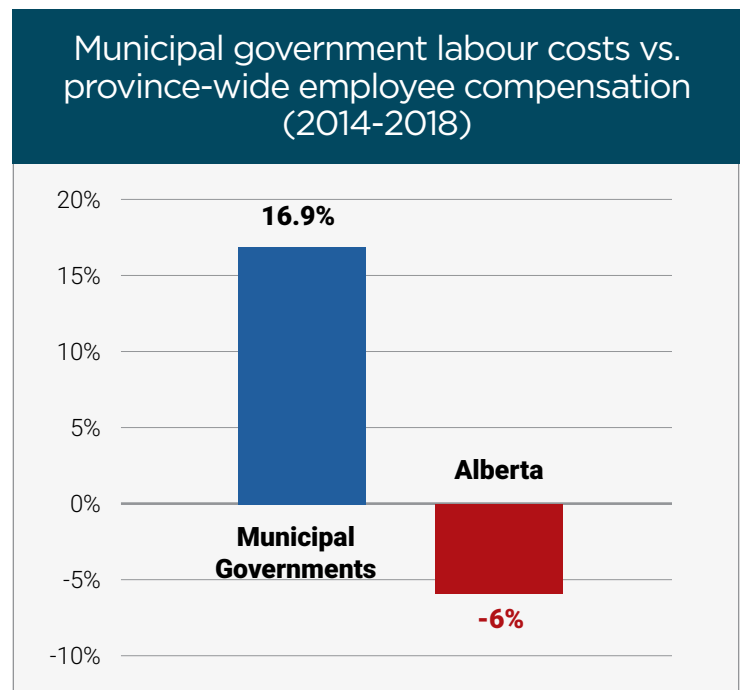
Based on [data](#) published by the Alberta government, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation analyzed how municipal government labour costs have increased between 2014 (the beginning of the oil price collapse) and 2018 (most recent data for all municipal governments). As illustrated in the table below, Alberta’s municipal government labour costs have increased by about \$873 million, or 16.9 per cent, between 2014 and 2018.

Increasing municipal labour costs				
Type of Municipality	2014	2018	Increase	% Change
Big city (30,000+ people)	\$4,178,817,451	\$4,838,659,414	\$659,841,963	15.8%
Mid-sized municipality (5,000 – 30,000 people)	\$680,798,485	\$840,378,668	\$159,580,183	23.4%
Small town (less than 5,000 people)	\$305,648,304	\$358,910,671	\$53,262,367	17.4%
All	\$5,165,264,240	\$6,037,948,753	\$872,684,513	16.9%

This is in stark contrast to the realities facing Alberta workers outside of government. According to [Statistics Canada data](#), total compensation for Alberta employees has declined by six per cent between 2014 and 2018. The difference between municipal government labour costs and the province-wide change in compensation is illustrated in the figure to the right.

The rest of the report will highlight how government labour costs have increased in large, medium and small Alberta municipalities.

Note: The provincial government’s labour costs have increased by 12.7 per cent or \$3 billion between 2014 and 2018, according to budget documents.



Big cities (population: 30,000+)

Labour costs for the big Alberta cities increased by 15.8 per cent between 2014 and 2018.

The three cities with the fastest growing labour costs between 2014 and 2018 are:

1. Leduc = 33.3 per cent increase
2. Spruce Grove = 31.9 per cent increase
3. Airdrie = 30.9 per cent increase

Big Cities (population: 30,000+)				
Rank	City	Labour Costs Growth (%)	Labour Costs Increase (\$)	Labour/Budget (%)
1	Leduc	33.3%	\$10,160,974	38.4%
2	Spruce Grove	31.9%	\$8,623,640	38.4%
3	Airdrie	30.9%	\$13,420,222	39.0%
4	Rocky View County	25.1%	\$7,799,692	38.6%
5	Strathcona County	23.8%	\$34,130,921	47.7%
6	Grande Prairie	22.2%	\$16,411,669	47.0%
7	St. Albert	21.5%	\$14,852,371	45.5%
8	Lloydminster	20.4%	\$4,631,424	36.0%
9	Edmonton	17.8%	\$243,422,000	53.3%
10	Lethbridge	17.2%	\$25,020,000	46.1%
11	Red Deer	15.0%	\$19,085,616	40.9%
12	Wood Buffalo, Regional Municipality of	13.8%	\$30,704,434	43.3%
13	Calgary	12.9%	\$225,419,000	50.9%
14	Medicine Hat	5.0%	\$6,160,000	33.8%
	Total	15.8%	\$659,841,963	

Medium-sized municipalities (population: 5,000–30,000)

Labour costs for the mid-sized Alberta municipalities increased by 23.4 per cent between 2014 and 2018.

The three mid-sized municipalities with the fastest growing labour costs between 2014 and 2018 are:

1. Municipal District of Taber = 56.1 per cent
2. Municipal District of Greenview = 54.8 per cent
3. Blackfalds = 52.8 per cent

Medium-sized municipalities (population: 5,000–30,000)				
Rank	Municipality	Labour Costs Growth (%)	Labour Costs Increase (\$)	Labour/Budget (%)
1	Taber, M.D. of	56.1%	\$3,127,280	37.0%
2	Greenview No. 16, M.D. of	54.8%	\$4,961,973	15.6%
3	Blackfalds	52.8%	\$2,865,919	35.7%
4	Cypress County	45.5%	\$2,528,175	27.2%
5	Taber	44.5%	\$3,318,313	41.4%
6	Stony Plain	43.3%	\$4,263,746	32.6%
7	Sylvan Lake	42.8%	\$3,729,038	34.8%
8	Coaldale	41.4%	\$1,664,898	33.9%
9	St. Paul	40.2%	\$1,842,772	37.5%
10	Banff	38.9%	\$4,543,098	36.5%
11	Rocky Mountain House	37.8%	\$1,864,021	34.6%
12	Strathmore	36.6%	\$2,855,290	33.7%
13	Yellowhead County	36.2%	\$3,056,308	19.3%
14	Beaumont	33.7%	\$3,784,033	35.7%
15	Clearwater County	33.6%	\$3,012,176	22.5%
16	Okotoks	33.4%	\$5,672,010	38.8%
17	Morinville	32.9%	\$2,161,624	35.4%
18	Parkland County	32.3%	\$8,489,396	40.5%
19	Whitecourt	30.9%	\$3,113,674	39.1%
20	Cochrane	30.4%	\$5,129,780	39.7%
21	Fort Saskatchewan	30.3%	\$6,550,585	36.6%
22	Cold Lake	29.0%	\$3,293,655	29.6%
23	Red Deer County	28.2%	\$2,819,354	16.8%
24	Mackenzie County	27.2%	\$2,071,428	24.9%
25	Brazeau County	26.9%	\$1,890,200	27.3%
26	Chestermere	26.4%	\$2,819,787	38.6%
27	Canmore	26.4%	\$3,870,708	32.2%
28	Edson	26.1%	\$1,792,351	31.0%

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Medium-sized municipalities ranking continued

Rank	Municipality	Growth (%)	Increase (\$)	Budget (%)
29	Lacombe	25.9%	\$2,725,273	38.4%
30	Kneehill County	25.5%	\$1,640,908	30.1%
31	Grande Prairie No. 1, County of	25.1%	\$6,620,469	33.8%
32	Devon	24.5%	\$1,337,319	37.7%
33	Redcliff	24.4%	\$735,987	30.9%
34	Drayton Valley	24.3%	\$1,827,974	32.7%
35	Westlock	24.0%	\$1,061,170	35.4%
36	Lac La Biche County	23.9%	\$4,169,841	37.3%
37	Camrose County	23.5%	\$1,451,303	34.5%
38	Peace River	23.0%	\$1,495,888	30.6%
39	Stettler	22.2%	\$1,054,292	29.8%
40	Wheatland County	21.6%	\$2,059,873	29.4%
41	Olds	21.5%	\$1,259,686	28.4%
42	Sturgeon County	21.2%	\$4,043,455	39.9%
43	Ponoka County	21.1%	\$950,844	26.9%
44	Lac Ste. Anne County	21.1%	\$1,378,205	33.5%
45	Wetaskiwin	20.5%	\$2,147,795	40.6%
46	Lacombe County	20.5%	\$1,915,814	23.0%
47	Ponoka	19.7%	\$930,558	29.5%
48	St. Paul No. 19, County of	19.4%	\$1,437,590	32.6%
49	Bonnyville	18.5%	\$926,202	28.2%
50	Crows Nest Pass, Municipality of	17.9%	\$1,028,065	39.1%
51	Brooks	16.7%	\$1,318,496	28.4%
52	Bonnyville No. 87, M.D. of	16.6%	\$2,948,243	30.7%
53	Wetaskiwin No. 10, County of	16.2%	\$1,396,911	36.6%
54	Leduc County	16.0%	\$3,008,841	30.2%
55	Willow Creek No. 26, M.D. of	16.0%	\$782,154	29.9%
56	Lethbridge County	14.2%	\$1,199,864	37.2%
57	Drumheller	13.3%	\$764,520	33.3%
58	Foothills County	13.1%	\$1,802,882	31.0%
59	Wainwright	13.0%	\$570,947	30.3%
60	Mountain View County	11.5%	\$1,121,233	30.6%
61	Westlock County	11.3%	\$505,047	29.9%
62	Innisfail	11.1%	\$572,814	29.2%
63	Camrose	10.8%	\$2,073,052	45.1%
64	Athabasca County	10.5%	\$874,217	32.0%
65	Stettler No. 6, County of	10.0%	\$670,975	34.0%
66	Slave Lake	8.7%	\$550,943	28.8%
67	Hinton	8.6%	\$845,201	36.7%
68	Beaver County	8.2%	\$356,205	24.8%
69	Newell, County of	7.0%	\$516,290	25.0%
70	Vermilion River, County of	2.7%	\$249,250	21.8%
71	Vegreville	2.4%	\$208,421	40.7%
72	Barrhead No. 11, County of	0.0%	-\$1,175	28.3%
73	Didsbury	-0.2%	-\$7,438	37.7%
74	High River	-12.2%	-\$2,037,813	40.1%
Total		23.4%	\$159,580,183	

Small Towns (population: less than 5,000)

Labour costs for the small Alberta municipalities increased by 17.4 per cent between 2014 and 2018.

The three mid-sized municipalities with the fastest growing labour costs between 2014 and 2018 are:

1. Gadsby = 169.4 per cent
2. Edberg = 156.7 per cent
3. Lougheed = 146.0 per cent

Small towns (population: less than 5,000)				
Rank	Town	Labour Costs Growth (%)	Labour Costs Increase (\$)	Labour/Budget (%)
1	Gadsby	169.4%	\$28,473	27.7%
2	Edberg	156.7%	\$124,461	20.3%
3	Lougheed	146.0%	\$169,019	34.5%
4	Hussar	125.0%	\$146,056	31.6%
5	Longview	118.3%	\$160,400	29.6%
6	Myrnam	105.4%	\$144,942	34.3%
7	Carmangay	105.1%	\$91,480	25.8%
8	Ferintosh	97.1%	\$132,799	23.9%
9	Wembley	78.5%	\$582,035	39.9%
10	Cremona	77.5%	\$192,856	38.1%
11	Clyde	71.8%	\$99,108	30.4%
12	Fox Creek	70.4%	\$1,800,594	43.0%
13	Valleyview	65.2%	\$1,946,760	41.5%
14	Czar	60.9%	\$30,451	20.4%
15	Glenwood	59.3%	\$94,809	32.3%
16	Saddle Hills County	58.7%	\$2,943,204	27.9%
17	Duchess	58.5%	\$226,819	23.8%
18	Hay Lakes	58.0%	\$121,595	33.2%
19	Viking	56.1%	\$376,379	25.3%
20	Rockyford	49.5%	\$126,000	20.2%
21	Gibbons	48.9%	\$797,431	34.3%
22	Edgerton	44.7%	\$124,398	29.3%
23	Rosemary	44.6%	\$72,863	30.8%
24	Elnora	43.6%	\$83,833	37.2%
25	Spring Lake	42.9%	\$104,503	44.8%
26	Hughenden	42.6%	\$57,687	35.7%
27	Arrowwood	41.3%	\$47,347	32.8%
28	Caroline	39.9%	\$131,072	29.1%
29	Rycroft	39.9%	\$157,028	23.2%

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Small towns ranking continued

Rank	Town	Growth (%)	Increase (\$)	Budget (%)
30	Amisk	38.5%	\$32,320	28.4%
31	Paradise Valley	37.4%	\$37,752	29.7%
32	Rosalind	37.3%	\$18,263	15.3%
33	Barrhead	35.8%	\$1,196,351	34.6%
34	Vauxhall	35.3%	\$233,436	33.2%
35	Onoway	35.2%	\$203,946	21.2%
36	Bighorn No. 8, M.D. of	34.3%	\$683,293	26.9%
37	Jasper, Municipality of	33.9%	\$2,105,692	45.0%
38	Barnwell	33.7%	\$84,479	26.6%
39	Carbon	33.0%	\$94,635	26.6%
40	Glendon	32.6%	\$84,559	31.8%
41	Bawlf	32.5%	\$59,613	32.5%
42	Raymond	32.5%	\$976,370	43.0%
43	Thorhild County	32.3%	\$1,672,622	38.1%
44	Champion	31.7%	\$60,634	21.8%
45	Stirling	31.4%	\$176,158	31.6%
46	Crossfield	31.4%	\$493,653	29.0%
47	Big Lakes County	31.1%	\$1,753,271	22.2%
48	Falher	30.8%	\$256,571	31.3%
49	Grande Cache	30.5%	\$1,394,725	41.7%
50	Daysland	30.2%	\$182,445	30.6%
51	Hythe	28.7%	\$125,621	29.7%
52	Mayerthorpe	28.3%	\$321,125	33.3%
53	Sexsmith	28.1%	\$377,100	32.7%
54	Ranchland No. 66, M.D. of	27.8%	\$201,243	43.4%
55	Penhold	27.8%	\$752,724	40.0%
56	Trochu	27.1%	\$235,415	34.1%
57	Lamont County	26.7%	\$1,485,161	34.6%
58	Redwater	26.6%	\$540,753	32.2%
59	Castor	26.4%	\$256,481	33.7%
60	Eckville	26.4%	\$172,269	31.2%
61	Provost	26.3%	\$373,895	32.7%
62	Irma	26.2%	\$78,777	29.6%
63	Coalhurst	26.2%	\$248,597	28.7%
64	Linden	26.0%	\$110,653	28.3%
65	Provost No. 52, M.D. of	25.7%	\$961,907	24.0%
66	Beaverlodge	25.3%	\$455,390	33.2%
67	Turner Valley	25.1%	\$540,344	37.6%
68	Athabasca	24.5%	\$421,204	25.6%
69	Three Hills	23.4%	\$576,953	37.2%
70	Nampa	22.6%	\$144,811	29.8%
71	Bittern Lake	22.4%	\$21,191	22.1%
72	Rainbow Lake	22.3%	\$261,721	26.9%
73	Pincher Creek	22.0%	\$673,802	36.9%
74	Nobleford	21.9%	\$83,342	28.7%
75	Milk River	21.8%	\$99,675	25.7%
76	Black Diamond	21.8%	\$396,996	34.3%
77	High Level	21.6%	\$869,002	31.5%
78	Lamont	21.3%	\$216,376	30.3%

Rank	Town	Growth (%)	Increase (\$)	Budget (%)
79	Birch Hills County	20.9%	\$457,440	28.5%
80	High Prairie	20.7%	\$563,160	32.5%
81	Mclennan	20.3%	\$110,392	32.0%
82	Acme	20.3%	\$74,471	28.2%
83	Bruderheim	20.2%	\$176,609	32.2%
84	Halkirk	20.2%	\$13,069	18.5%
85	Magrath	19.9%	\$240,033	32.8%
86	Andrew	19.3%	\$51,657	27.3%
87	Spirit River No. 133, M.D. of	19.2%	\$195,723	22.8%
88	Paintearth No. 18, County of	19.1%	\$808,106	35.5%
89	Woodlands County	18.8%	\$1,073,011	24.6%
90	Fairview No. 136, M.D. of	18.7%	\$364,468	34.5%
91	Picture Butte	18.1%	\$184,186	29.7%
92	Sundre	17.6%	\$422,230	32.7%
93	Starland County	17.6%	\$782,904	25.2%
94	Holden	17.5%	\$36,052	27.2%
95	Calmar	17.3%	\$289,901	36.0%
96	Sedgewick	17.0%	\$80,049	24.4%
97	Empress	17.0%	\$31,194	35.4%
98	Smoky River No. 130, M.D. of	16.8%	\$492,930	28.9%
99	Veteran	16.6%	\$27,256	20.8%
100	Two Hills No. 21, County of	16.5%	\$729,917	27.6%
101	Pincher Creek No. 9, M.D. of	16.4%	\$625,409	29.8%
102	Northern Sunrise County	15.9%	\$999,259	22.6%
103	Alliance	15.0%	\$23,517	27.4%
104	Millet	14.9%	\$201,579	37.3%
105	Spirit River	14.7%	\$114,189	28.9%
106	Tofield	14.7%	\$201,500	30.8%
107	Minburn No. 27, County of	14.5%	\$661,021	32.3%
108	Coutts	14.3%	\$30,646	25.0%
109	Bow Island	13.9%	\$173,105	33.7%
110	Hines Creek	13.9%	\$55,282	28.9%
111	Claresholm	13.7%	\$345,499	35.3%
112	Foremost	13.6%	\$60,025	31.1%
113	Peace No. 135, M.D. of	13.4%	\$149,037	30.8%
114	Vermilion	13.3%	\$461,979	28.4%
115	Cardston County	13.0%	\$367,802	34.8%
116	Girouxville	13.0%	\$18,549	18.2%
117	Kitscoty	12.9%	\$43,998	24.0%
118	Carstairs	12.9%	\$342,587	33.9%
119	Marwayne	12.4%	\$41,093	28.6%
120	Vulcan	12.3%	\$169,789	24.8%
121	Barons	12.1%	\$19,892	25.1%
122	Clive	11.8%	\$47,212	31.9%
123	Oyen	11.7%	\$99,822	27.6%
124	Coronation	11.4%	\$87,410	29.6%
125	Bentley	11.3%	\$80,348	32.0%
126	Bowden	11.3%	\$63,692	22.6%

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Small towns ranking continued

Rank	Town	Growth (%)	Increase (\$)	Budget (%)
127	Legal	11.1%	\$104,880	38.6%
128	Waskatenau	11.0%	\$14,461	24.9%
129	Warburg	10.9%	\$41,199	19.9%
130	Special Areas Board	10.8%	\$1,763,547	39.4%
131	Clear Hills County	10.6%	\$208,694	11.9%
132	Killam	10.4%	\$71,286	26.1%
133	Innisfree	10.0%	\$14,411	20.3%
134	Elk Point	9.9%	\$100,693	24.1%
135	Granum	9.8%	\$25,034	26.0%
136	Dewberry	9.8%	\$11,020	19.8%
137	Cardston	9.6%	\$243,053	28.8%
138	Wabamun	9.4%	\$57,266	24.7%
139	Fairview	9.0%	\$193,433	29.5%
140	Vulcan County	8.6%	\$496,879	28.4%
141	Delburne	8.6%	\$44,131	31.6%
142	Wainwright No. 61, M.D. of	8.4%	\$517,843	20.1%
143	Grimshaw	8.2%	\$144,594	32.6%
144	Flagstaff County	7.9%	\$553,598	32.0%
145	Berwyn	7.9%	\$30,007	37.1%
146	Warner No. 5, County of	7.7%	\$297,105	38.8%
147	Bashaw	7.6%	\$42,153	27.9%
148	Forty Mile No. 8, County of	7.4%	\$372,335	41.8%
149	Morrin	7.3%	\$10,310	27.0%
150	Delia	7.2%	\$11,283	31.3%
151	Hanna	7.0%	\$150,459	30.4%
152	Mannville	7.0%	\$48,499	29.8%
153	Beiseker	7.0%	\$31,301	21.1%
154	Smoky Lake County	6.9%	\$440,541	43.2%
155	Heisler	6.4%	\$8,092	28.9%
156	Swan Hills	6.4%	\$97,717	33.7%
157	Lesser Slave River No. 124, M.D. of	6.1%	\$308,577	23.2%
158	Chipman	6.1%	\$11,942	24.7%
159	Consort	6.1%	\$43,179	26.8%
160	Forestburg	5.5%	\$35,740	24.3%
161	Opportunity No. 17, M.D. of	4.1%	\$1,167,084	42.0%
162	Fort Macleod	4.0%	\$112,327	32.8%
163	Northern Lights, County of	3.9%	\$141,764	20.6%
164	Cereal	3.7%	\$5,284	24.8%
165	Big Valley	3.1%	\$4,950	21.3%
166	Stavely	2.6%	\$7,942	32.4%
167	Breton	2.4%	\$12,629	30.0%
168	Boyle	2.0%	\$19,399	28.8%
169	Youngstown	0.7%	\$703	17.8%
170	Milo	0.2%	\$276	25.6%
171	Bon Accord	0.1%	\$1,550	36.3%
172	Donnelly	0.1%	\$111	21.3%
173	Lomond	-0.5%	-\$298	11.7%
174	Standard	-0.6%	-\$1,414	23.9%
175	Vilna	-1.3%	-\$2,903	23.9%

Rank	Town	Growth (%)	Increase (\$)	Budget (%)
176	Bassano	-1.4%	-\$9,253	25.9%
177	Munson	-2.3%	-\$2,424	25.3%
178	Manning	-2.4%	-\$29,902	23.3%
179	Acadia No. 34, M.D. of	-2.4%	-\$14,494	25.2%
180	Irricana	-2.6%	-\$17,403	25.9%
181	Alberta Beach	-3.1%	-\$27,397	31.9%
182	Hardisty	-5.6%	-\$31,945	28.2%
183	Smoky Lake	-6.0%	-\$59,006	25.2%
184	Thorsby	-6.2%	-\$69,599	31.2%
185	Chauvin	-7.9%	-\$25,255	25.5%
186	Mundare	-8.3%	-\$38,601	16.5%
187	Ryley	-11.3%	-\$49,501	28.4%
188	Two Hills	-11.5%	-\$85,746	23.9%
189	Rimbey	-11.7%	-\$225,085	31.6%
190	Hill Spring	-12.8%	-\$7,809	16.3%
191	Cowley	-13.8%	-\$24,539	26.2%
192	Nanton	-15.3%	-\$291,878	28.4%
193	Warner	-21.0%	-\$60,836	19.4%
194	Alix	-21.0%	-\$207,888	30.4%
195	Donalda	-50.4%	-\$80,455	14.9%
	Total	17.4%	\$53,262,367	