



Municipal Spending Report

Franco Terrazzano
Alberta Director

Canadian Taxpayers Federation

JUNE 2020

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.



Canadian Taxpayers Federation

PO Box 14063 Richmond Road PO,
Calgary, AB T3E 7Y7

Franco Terrazzano,
Alberta Director

fterrazzano@taxpayer.com | 403-918-3532

Introduction

With property tax bills being mailed to taxpayers, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation analyzed which Alberta municipal governments are spending the most and least per person, based on data published by the Alberta government. Taxpayers can use this report to see how much their municipal governments are spending per resident, which is proxy for the overall tax burden to fund the municipal government, and compare their municipal governments with similar cities and towns in Alberta.

Alberta taxpayers should also be aware that Alberta municipal governments tend to spend more than their counterparts in other provinces. As the Blue Ribbon Panel explained:

“Alberta’s municipal per capita expenses were the second highest among provinces (behind Ontario where municipalities also deliver a range of social services). Per capita capital spending in Calgary and Edmonton is among the highest for comparable cities across Canada.”

Big cities (population: 30,000+)

The three cities that are spending the **most** per person are:

1. Medicine Hat = \$6,243 annually
2. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo = \$5,246 annually
3. Lethbridge = \$3,965 annually

The three cities that are spending the **least** per person are:

1. Airdrie = \$2,172 annually
2. Lloydminster = \$2,422 annually
3. Rocky View County = \$2,556 annually

*** The appendix compares Calgary and Edmonton with other major Western Canadian cities. Calgary and Edmonton spend more per person than other major Western Canadian cities.

Big Cities (population: 30,000+)		
Rank (Highest to lowest spending)	City	Spending/Person
1	Medicine Hat	\$6,243
2	Regional Municipality Of Wood Buffalo	\$5,246
3	Lethbridge	\$3,956
4	Strathcona County	\$3,787
5	Red Deer	\$3,544
6	Leduc	\$3,206
7	Edmonton	\$3,116
8	Calgary	\$3,044
9	St. Albert	\$2,896
10	Grande Prairie	\$2,779
11	Spruce Grove	\$2,645
12	Rocky View County	\$2,556
13	Lloydminster	\$2,422
14	Airdrie	\$2,172
Average		\$3,401

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

The three mid-sized municipalities that are spending the **most** per person are:

1. Municipal District of Greenview = \$14,911 annually
2. Yellowhead County = \$6,177 annually
3. Lac La Biche County = \$6,088 annually

The three mid-sized municipalities that are spending the **least** per person are:

1. Chestermere = \$1,687 annually
2. Didsbury = \$1,970 annually
3. Coaldale = \$1,972 annually

Medium-sized municipalities (population: 5,000–30,000)		
Rank (Highest to lowest spending)	Municipality	Spending/Person
1	Municipal District of Greenview	\$14,911
2	Yellowhead County	\$6,177
3	Lac La Biche County	\$6,088
4	Kneehill County	\$5,358
5	County of Vermilion River	\$5,321
6	Municipal District of Bonnyville	\$5,290
7	Leduc County	\$5,253
8	Banff	\$5,008
9	Lacombe County	\$4,722
10	Wheatland County	\$4,488
11	Clearwater County	\$4,459
12	Country of Grande Prairie	\$4,337
13	County of Stettler	\$4,199
14	County of St. Paul	\$4,198
15	Brazeau County	\$4,184
16	Canmore	\$4,120
17	Cypress County	\$4,116
18	Red Deer County	\$4,050
19	County of Newell	\$4,021
20	Drayton Valley	\$3,954
21	Peace River	\$3,813
22	Athabasca County	\$3,662
23	Vegreville	\$3,655
24	Slave Lake	\$3,614
25	Municipal District of Willow Creek	\$3,510

Medium-sized municipalities ranking continued

Rank	Municipalities	Spending/Person
26	Lethbridge County	\$3,409
27	Edson	\$3,322
28	Cold Lake	\$3,312
29	Whitecourt	\$3,306
30	Bonnyville	\$3,303
31	Beaver County	\$3,206
32	Sturgeon County	\$3,165
33	Mackenzie County	\$3,112
34	Municipality of Crowsnest Pass	\$3,093
35	Taber	\$3,075
36	Westlock	\$3,031
37	Municipal District of Taber	\$2,961
38	Rocky Mountain House	\$2,959
39	Hinton	\$2,948
40	Mountain View County	\$2,948
41	St. Paul	\$2,873
42	Fort Saskatchewan	\$2,855
43	Devon	\$2,739
44	Olds	\$2,726
45	Camrose County	\$2,718
46	Wainwright	\$2,692
47	High River	\$2,687
48	Parkland County	\$2,673
49	Ponoka	\$2,654
50	Stettler	\$2,563
51	Stony Plain	\$2,517
52	Camrose	\$2,515
53	Innisfail	\$2,504
54	Morinville	\$2,491
55	Lacombe	\$2,469
56	Wetaskiwin	\$2,452
57	Drumheller	\$2,446
58	County of Wetaskiwin	\$2,446
59	Sylvan Lake	\$2,409
60	Lac Ste. Anne County	\$2,352
61	Strathmore	\$2,338
62	Ponoka County	\$2,336
63	Westlock County	\$2,304
64	Blackfalds	\$2,293
65	Brooks	\$2,251
66	Redcliff	\$2,224
67	Foothills County	\$2,205
68	County of Barrhead	\$2,195
69	Beaumont	\$2,187
70	Okotoks	\$2,013
71	Cochrane	\$1,980
72	Coaldale	\$1,972
73	Didsbury	\$1,970
74	Chestermere	\$1,687
	Average	\$3,397

Small Towns (population: less than 5,000)

The three small towns that are spending the **most** per person are:

1. Municipal District of Ranchland = \$23,151 annually
2. Municipal District of Opportunity = \$22,013 annually
3. Northern Sunrise County = \$16,964 annually

The three mid-sized municipalities that are spending the **least** per person are:

1. Spring Lake = \$1,113 annually
2. Lamont = \$1,258 annually
3. Barnwell = \$1,329 annually

Small Towns (population: less than 5,000)		
Rank (Highest to lowest spending)	Town	Spending/Person
1	Municipal District of Ranchland	\$23,151
2	Municipal District of Opportunity	\$22,013
3	Northern Sunrise County	\$16,964
4	Saddle Hills County	\$15,582
5	Special Areas Board	\$10,958
6	Valleyview	\$9,301
7	Gadsby	\$8,975
8	Municipal District of Provost	\$8,883
9	Starland County	\$8,267
10	Municipal District of Lesser Slave River	\$8,241
11	Big Lakes County	\$8,122
12	Municipal District of Wainwright	\$7,671
13	Municipal District of Bighorn	\$7,456
14	Nampa	\$7,254
15	Rainbow Lake	\$7,166
16	County of Paintearth	\$7,015
17	Municipal District of Spirit River	\$7,008
18	Municipal District of Smoky River	\$6,995
19	Smoky Lake County	\$6,823
20	Edberg	\$6,668
21	Birch Hills County	\$6,442
22	Flagstaff County	\$6,311
23	Rockyford	\$6,175
24	Clear Hills County	\$6,074

Small towns ranking continued

Rank	Town	Spending/Person
25	Milo	\$5,977
26	Woodlands County	\$5,814
27	Ferintosh	\$5,589
28	Vulcan County	\$5,542
29	Thorhild County	\$5,524
30	Cereal	\$5,333
31	Lamont County	\$5,185
32	Fox Creek	\$5,138
33	County of Two Hills	\$5,114
34	Municipal District of Pincher Creek	\$5,018
35	County of Northern Lights	\$5,014
36	County of Minburn	\$4,887
37	Municipal District of Acadia	\$4,555
38	Hines Creek	\$4,526
39	Manning	\$4,513
40	Viking	\$4,496
41	Hussar	\$4,379
42	Alliance	\$4,268
43	Municipal District of Fairview	\$4,187
44	Girouxville	\$4,137
45	Municipality of Jasper	\$4,022
46	Grande Cache	\$4,009
47	Coutts	\$3,995
48	Halkirk	\$3,979
49	Wabamun	\$3,966
50	High Prairie	\$3,951
51	Castor	\$3,918
52	Youngstown	\$3,912
53	High Level	\$3,892
54	Rycroft	\$3,878
55	Empress	\$3,854
56	Consort	\$3,854
57	Oyen	\$3,838
58	Smoky Lake	\$3,792
59	Redwater	\$3,780
60	Swan Hills	\$3,728
61	Boyle	\$3,725
62	Chauvin	\$3,705
63	Champion	\$3,645
64	County of Forty Mile	\$3,563
65	Foremost	\$3,524
66	Innisfree	\$3,496
67	Granum	\$3,444
68	Hardisty	\$3,434
69	Alix	\$3,416
70	Mayerthorpe	\$3,406
71	Spirit River	\$3,390
72	Dewberry	\$3,341
73	Vermilion	\$3,328
74	Thorsby	\$3,320

Small towns ranking continued

Rank	Town	Spending/Person
75	Falher	\$3,317
76	Vilna	\$3,275
77	Trochu	\$3,275
78	Lomond	\$3,274
79	Longview	\$3,262
80	Vulcan	\$3,258
81	Forestburg	\$3,226
82	Lougheed	\$3,223
83	Veteran	\$3,215
84	Breton	\$3,206
85	Warner	\$3,168
86	Sundre	\$3,158
87	Onoway	\$3,136
88	Daysland	\$3,118
89	Caroline	\$3,085
90	Edgerton	\$3,081
91	Coronation	\$3,079
92	Chipman	\$3,074
93	Elk Point	\$3,025
94	Mannville	\$3,011
95	Glendon	\$3,010
96	Donnelly	\$2,986
97	Fort Macleod	\$2,949
98	Killam	\$2,924
99	Claresholm	\$2,893
100	Heisler	\$2,893
101	Standard	\$2,880
102	Carbon	\$2,867
103	Ryley	\$2,846
104	Hanna	\$2,824
105	Mclennan	\$2,821
106	Athabasca	\$2,814
107	Barrhead	\$2,809
108	Cowley	\$2,807
109	Pincher Creek	\$2,793
110	Turner Valley	\$2,793
111	Sedgewick	\$2,783
112	Beiseker	\$2,778
113	Irma	\$2,772
114	Carmangay	\$2,762
115	Waskatenau	\$2,756
116	Beaverlodge	\$2,754
117	Provost	\$2,748
118	Mundare	\$2,717
119	Black Diamond	\$2,677
120	County of Warner	\$2,666
121	Paradise Valley	\$2,653
122	Penhold	\$2,642

Rank	Town	Spending/Person
123	Fairview	\$2,638
124	Milk River	\$2,620
125	Alberta Beach	\$2,615
126	Cremona	\$2,610
127	Nanton	\$2,603
128	Bashaw	\$2,570
129	Three Hills	\$2,546
130	Holden	\$2,544
131	Calmar	\$2,537
132	Glenwood	\$2,498
133	Elnora	\$2,486
134	Delia	\$2,478
135	Cardston	\$2,471
136	Donalda	\$2,463
137	Tofield	\$2,458
138	Acme	\$2,450
139	Andrew	\$2,449
140	Myrnam	\$2,429
141	Warburg	\$2,428
142	Eckville	\$2,398
143	Bittern Lake	\$2,389
144	Arrowwood	\$2,383
145	Carstairs	\$2,359
146	Rosalind	\$2,343
147	Bruderheim	\$2,338
148	Morrin	\$2,334
149	Hythe	\$2,295
150	Bentley	\$2,293
151	Crossfield	\$2,293
152	Linden	\$2,292
153	Rosemary	\$2,270
154	Municipal District of Peace	\$2,262
155	Bowden	\$2,243
156	Picture Butte	\$2,239
157	Gibbons	\$2,237
158	Barons	\$2,229
159	Bon Accord	\$2,229
160	Hughenden	\$2,223
161	Bassano	\$2,212
162	Vauxhall	\$2,209
163	Wembley	\$2,186
164	Grimshaw	\$2,179
165	Raymond	\$2,177
166	Munson	\$2,152
167	Marwayne	\$2,152
168	Millet	\$2,141
169	Irricana	\$2,108
170	Big Valley	\$2,104

Small Towns ranking continued

Rank	Town	Spending/Person
171	Rimbey	\$2,103
172	Legal	\$2,081
173	Berwyn	\$2,063
174	Bow Island	\$2,055
175	Duchess	\$2,035
176	Hay Lakes	\$2,019
177	Hill Spring	\$2,008
178	Amisk	\$2,005
179	Sexsmith	\$2,005
180	Delburne	\$1,989
181	Czar	\$1,955
182	Clive	\$1,954
183	Stavely	\$1,942
184	Cardston County	\$1,929
185	Two Hills	\$1,919
186	Stirling	\$1,836
187	Magrath	\$1,812
188	Clyde	\$1,812
189	Bawlf	\$1,773
190	Kitscoty	\$1,648
191	Coalhurst	\$1,455
192	Nobleford	\$1,343
193	Barnwell	\$1,329
194	Lamont	\$1,258
195	Spring Lake	\$1,113
	Average	\$3,797

Appendix: Major Western Canadian Cities

Calgary and Edmonton's per person spending are higher than other major Western Canadian cities. If Calgary brought its per person spending to the average in the other cities, it would spend about \$656 million less every year. If Edmonton brought its per-person spending to the average in other cities, it would spend about \$566 million less every year.

Major Western Canadian Cities		
Rank (Highest to lowest spending)	City	Spending/Person
1	Edmonton	\$3,116
2	Calgary	\$3,044
3	Saskatoon	\$2,998
4	Regina	\$2,558
5	Vancouver	\$2,429
6	Winnipeg	\$2,148
	Average (outside alberta)	\$2,533

Source: Most recent city annual reports