

Moneywise, the most important functions are education, highways, public welfare, and health and hospitals, in this order. As can be seen from table 3, education expenditures are responsible for an increasingly large part of all expenditures. Their share increased from about 25 percent in 1902 to 33 percent in 1922; then a gradual decline took place to about 26 percent in 1934. From that time on, education has accounted for an increasingly large share of all expenditures, reaching a peak of 36 percent in 1956.

TABLE 3.—Percent of general expenditures by service function

Year	Education	Primary and secondary education	Highways	Public welfare	Health and hospitals	Other services
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1902.....	25.2	23.5	17.3	3.7	5.9	47.9
1913.....	28.0	25.3	20.3	2.5	5.2	44.0
1922.....	32.7	29.5	24.8	2.3	4.9	35.3
1927.....	31.0	28.0	25.1	2.1	4.9	30.9
1932.....	29.8	26.3	22.4	5.7	5.9	30.2
1934.....	25.5	22.5	21.0	12.4	5.8	35.3
1936.....	28.5	24.8	18.6	10.8	6.1	30.0
1938.....	28.4	24.7	18.8	12.2	6.3	34.3
1940.....	28.6	24.7	17.0	12.5	6.6	35.3
1942.....	28.1	24.1	16.2	13.3	6.4	30.0
1944.....	31.5	26.3	13.5	12.8	7.4	34.8
1946.....	30.4	26.0	15.2	12.8	7.4	34.2
1948.....	30.4	24.6	17.2	11.9	6.9	33.6
1950.....	31.5	25.8	16.7	12.9	7.7	31.2
1952.....	31.9	26.5	17.8	10.7	8.4	31.2
1953.....	33.6	28.2	17.9	10.4	8.2	29.9
1954.....	34.4	29.3	18.0	10.0	7.8	29.8
1955.....	35.3	30.2	19.1	9.4	7.5	28.7
1956.....	36.0	30.6	18.9	8.6	7.6	28.9
1957.....	35.0	29.3	19.3	8.4	7.9	29.4
1958.....	35.0	¹ 29.3	19.3	8.3	8.0	29.4

¹ Estimate.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

General expenditure for primary and secondary education behaved about the same way as did that for all education. Yet, its share has grown less rapidly during 1902-58 than has that of all education. For instance, between 1902 and 1956 the share of all education increased by about 40 percent while that of primary and secondary education rose by only 30 percent. Thus, higher education expenditures have increased more rapidly than the rest.

The relative share of highway expenditures showed great fluctuations but no clear trend over the years. Until 1927 their share had steadily increased to reach an all time high of 25 percent. From then on, it rapidly declined and by 1944 it had lost almost half its earlier importance. The postwar period has shown a slow but steady advance to 19 percent in 1958.

During 1902-58, public welfare expenditures grew relatively more rapidly than those of any other major State and local government service. But most of the advance took place during the early days of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, when their share jumped from about 2 percent in 1927 to 6 percent in 1932 and 12 percent in 1934. From then on, speaking in rough terms, a decline set in, leading to a low of 8.3 percent in 1958.