

## LA PLATA COUNTY

## County Seat – Durango

Historically, La Plata County developed as a result of "traditional west" commodities such as minerals, cattle and timber. Since the 1970's La Plata County has been in transition from a traditional rural county to a more urban environment in which tourism is the number one industry. People moving in for quality of life issues or "amenity migration" drove population growth in the 1990's, a trend continuing today.

### Population

Between 2010 and 2017, La Plata County grew 1.1% annually, with most of the growth occurring in Bayfield and

	2010	2017	Ann. Avg % Change 2010-17
La Plata	51,441	55,619	1.1%
Bayfield	2,357	2,702	2.0%
Durango	16,901	18,518	1.3%
Ignacio	699	725	0.5%
Unincorporated	31,484	33,674	1.0%

Source: Colorado State Demography Office

Durango. Ignacio saw slower growth, as did unincorporated areas of the county, including the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, headquartered in Ignacio. More information about the Southern Ute Tribe is on page 18 of this report. These population figures do not reflect the large number of seasonal visitors, many of whom own second homes in the county. The State Demographer estimates an increase of about 23,425 residents in the county in the next 20 years.

### Employment and Income

La Plata County 2017 Total Employment	# of Jobs	% of Jobs	*Avg. ann. wage	# Jobs % Change 2015-2017
Agriculture	946	3%	\$ 28,762	-1%
Mining	626	2%	\$ 108,810	-16%
Utilities	148	0.4%	\$ 81,076	6%
Construction	3,264	9%	\$ 50,777	-5%
Manufacturing	880	3%	\$ 40,556	14%
Wholesale Trade	695	2%	\$ 54,172	2%
Retail Trade	3,724	11%	\$ 29,522	4%
Transportation & Warehousing	799	2%	\$ 59,005	10%
Information	487	1%	\$ 61,508	0%
Finance Activities	1,103	3%	\$ 78,913	1%
Real Estate	1,336	4%	\$ 46,975	4%
Professional & Business Services	2,225	6%	\$ 64,859	3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	88	0.3%	\$ 90,417	49%
Administration and Waste Management	1,346	4%	\$ 32,087	2%
Private Education	544	2%	\$ 43,956	7%
Health Services	4,156	12%	\$ 49,369	9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,392	4%	\$ 20,777	14%
Accommodation and Food	3,511	10%	\$ 19,327	4%
Other Services, except Public Administration	1,771	5%	\$ 30,731	3%
Government	5,967	17%	\$ 57,017	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,008</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 44,789</b>	<b>3%</b>

In 2017, county unemployment rates (2.5%) were lower than the state (2.8%) and the nation (4.4%).

This table includes wage earners as well as proprietors (owners). About 80% of total employment is by wage earners, while 20% is through proprietors.

The service sector (including all 8 highlighted fields) employs about 43% of workers in the county. The service sector is composed of many types of jobs, and very different wage scales. Many of the service jobs in La Plata County are technical, educational or in health services.

The management of companies and enterprises sector has grown 49% since 2015.

### 2017 Employment Share by Wage

<sup>1</sup> Avg. Annual Wage	<sup>2</sup> Low Wage	<sup>3</sup> Mid Wage	<sup>4</sup> High Wage	<sup>5</sup> Livable Wage
\$45,790	< \$35,830	\$35,831 - \$53,300	>\$53,300	\$68,120
	36%	29%	35%	5%

See glossary for wage thresholds

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2015 there were 5,494 wage and salary workers commuting out of the county for work, primarily to San Juan County, NM (5%), and to Montezuma County (3%). In contrast, 6,102 people were commuting in for work, primarily from San Juan County, NM (5%) and Montezuma County (4%). These estimates only reflect those jobs covered by unemployment insurance <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

La Plata 2017 Base Industries	# of Jobs	% of Jobs
Agribusiness	1,681	7%
Mining	720	3%
Manufacturing	276	1%
Government	2,415	10%
Regional Services	4,310	17%
Tourism	6,351	26%
Households	4,888	20%
Indirect Unassigned	4,195	17%
Total	24,836	100%

**Base analysis** distinguishes which industries are responsible for overall growth and change. These activities *bring in outside dollars* to circulate within the local economy. For more information regarding base analysis please refer to the *Glossary (p. 19)*.

In La Plata, the largest base employment industries are tourism and households that spend money earned elsewhere (i.e. retirees). More information on base industries in La Plata is available at [https://scan.org/uploads/2018\\_Region\\_9\\_Base\\_Industries\\_Analysis.pdf](https://scan.org/uploads/2018_Region_9_Base_Industries_Analysis.pdf).

**Top employers** are ranked based on the numbers of people that they employ. These numbers were collected from each employer if available, estimated based on information collected from past years, or provided by state agencies. Employers include local governments as well as private employers.

Top Employers - La Plata County 2018	# of Jobs
Mercy Regional Medical Center	1,321
Durango School Dist. 9R	1,011
Southern Ute Indian Tribe	980
Fort Lewis College	611
City of Durango	595
Crossfire LLC	474
La Plata County	458
Sky Ute Casino Resort	400
Worldpay	360
Walmart	322

La Plata 2017 Total Personal Income (\$000)		% of Total
Employment Earnings	\$1,673,644	58%
Residency Adjustment	\$ (30,453)	-1%
Dividends, Interest & Rent	\$ 892,896	31%
Transfer Payments	\$ 366,275	13%
<b>Estimated TPI</b>	<b>\$2,902,362</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Total Personal Income (TPI)** is the sum of all income paid to residents of La Plata County from various sources. Retirees (60+) brought in \$241 million (8%) of TPI through transfer payments. **A negative residency adjustment means that more people are commuting into the county for employment than are commuting out.**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Per Capita Income (PCI)** of La Plata County is 102% of the National PCI and is 96% of Colorado's PCI.

Per Capita Income 2017		
	PCI 2017	% of USA
<b>USA</b>	\$ 51,640	100%
<b>Colorado</b>	\$ 54,646	106%
<b>La Plata</b>	\$ 52,759	102%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Enterprise Zones** – Nineteen of the 33 census blocks in the county are designated enterprise zones. [https://scan.org/uploads/LPC\\_Detailed\\_Areas\\_-\\_Effective\\_2016.pdf](https://scan.org/uploads/LPC_Detailed_Areas_-_Effective_2016.pdf)

**Opportunity Zones** – Census Tracts 9404 and 9711 are eligible in La Plata County. [https://scan.org/uploads/Durango\\_enlarged.pdf](https://scan.org/uploads/Durango_enlarged.pdf)

More detailed information regarding La Plata County is available at [www.scan.org](http://www.scan.org) under regional data.

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

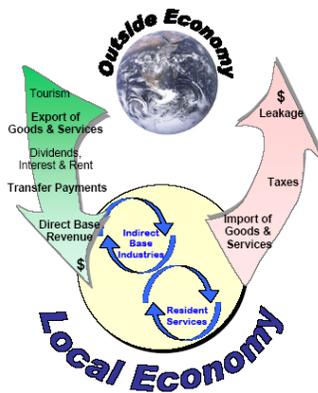
**Economic Base Analysis** is a tool to describe economic activity by the source of revenue, whether the money generated by sales comes from outside the local economy, or from within the local economy. This type of analysis is designed to define those economic activities that drive or sustain the local economy. Base Analysis distinguishes which industries and factors are responsible for overall growth and change. There are two types of regional industries:

**Base industries** produce exports or derive their sales or income *directly* from outside sources, or *indirectly* by providing supplies to export industries. These activities **bring in outside dollars** to circulate within the local economy. These industries include agriculture, mining, manufacturing, national and regional services, state and federal government jobs, and tourism. Another base industry is created by households that spend money earned elsewhere. For example, a retiree whose income comes from outside of the county is supporting many traditional local resident services jobs; however, since their income is basic (from outside the local economy), the local resident service jobs are also considered basic.

**Local resident services** provide services to residents and also **re-circulate dollars** within the local economy. Resident services include industries that take care of the local community, such as health services, education, and employment at the local grocery store. Residential industries are *industries* because they create jobs . . . which, in turn, create demands for worker housing and services.

Outside money enters the local economy through a variety of sources, circulates through the local area, and then leaves the local economy when we purchase goods or services from outside the area, or pay federal and state taxes.

A common confusion with this type of analysis is that it focuses on the source of revenue as opposed to specific industries. Tourism is considered a direct base economic activity because the visitors are bringing their money from the outside economy and spending it in the local economy.



Looking at restaurants for example, when the person buying a meal is from outside the area (a tourist), it is a **direct base economic activity** and when the person is a resident using money earned in the local economy, it is a **local resident service activity**. So restaurants are both direct based and a local resident service.

The office of the Colorado State Demographer performs various statistical estimates, including actual surveys of businesses (calling the restaurant and asking them for estimates of how much of their sales are to residents versus tourists) to provide a percentage in various sectors of how much of their activity is direct or local resident based.

**Amenity Migration** is another source of direct base revenue in terms of money coming from the outside economy to buy real estate and construct homes in the local economy.

The term comes from the fact that people migrate to southwest Colorado because of the amenities, i.e. quality of life and environment. Some of these people are second home owners and some are telecommuters, meaning that they work from home, making use of the Internet, email and the telephone.

### Commuter Data

The U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates for the numbers of workers commuting in to, and out of, each of the counties in the region. These estimates only reflect those jobs covered by unemployment insurance. The last update was in 2015. <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

**Population** - Census data is collected every 10 years (i.e. 2000, 2010) and is considered an actual count of people within a region or county. The years in between are estimates made by the State Demographer. Projections are made using an assumed growth rate to predict future growth. <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/population/>

**Wage thresholds** – The average annual wage<sup>1</sup> is drawn from the Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW Program): low wage<sup>2</sup> = 80% or less than the average annual wage; mid wage<sup>3</sup> = greater than 80% and less than 120% of the average annual wage; high wage<sup>4</sup> is greater than 120% of the annual average wage. Livable wage<sup>5</sup> is provided for a family of four renting a two bedroom unit.

**Total Personal Income** is another important tool to understand our local economy. Total personal income (TPI) is divided into four main components. These numbers come from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

1. **Employment earnings** are derived from wage and salary employment as well as from business proprietor's income.
2. **Dividends, Interest & Rent - Dividend** income is cash and other assets paid to stockholders who are residents of the area. **Interest** income consists of monies received by local residents from money market mutual funds and other sources. **Rental** income consists of the rental of real property, royalties received from patents, copyrights, and from the rights to natural resources paid to local residents.
3. **Transfer payments** consist primarily of retirement and disability benefit payments, medical payments (i.e. Medicare and Medicaid), income maintenance benefits, unemployment insurance, veteran's benefits and payments to local residents.
4. **Residency adjustments** are made when a person is paid for work performed from outside their place of residency, i.e. commuters. Negative numbers indicate that more people are commuting into the county for employment than are commuting out for employment.

When we divide Total Personal Income (TPI) by the number of people in each county we get an estimate of **Per Capita Income (PCI)**. This allows us to compare the per capita income between counties in our region, the state and the nation. <http://www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm>

**Total Employment** includes estimated employment from wages, salaries and proprietors income.

**Employment by Sector** - Employment (jobs) generates most of the earnings in our region, so it is important to look at the types and numbers of jobs in each of our counties. An employment "sector" groups jobs into industries that are alike. This information allows us to see how many people are employed in each sector, comparing the "strength" of that industry in each of our counties.

**Unemployment** - Labor force statistics allow us to see how many people are in the workforce, and how many are unemployed. We can use this information to compare unemployment rates at county, state, and national levels. <http://www.colmigateway.com/gsipub/index.asp>

**Enterprise Zones** – This program provides state income tax credits and other incentives for private enterprise to expand, or new businesses to locate within a state designated EZ area. Learn more about tax credits in Enterprise Zones at [www.choosecolorado.com/ez](http://www.choosecolorado.com/ez).

**Opportunity Zones** – This economic and community development tax incentive program provides a new impetus for private investors to support designated distressed areas through private equity investments in businesses and real estate ventures. More details regarding the Opportunity Zone can be found at <https://choosecolorado.com/opportunity-zones/>.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

For business and relocation assistance contact Region 9, or one of the community economic development organizations, listed below. If your business needs technical assistance, the Southwest Colorado Small Business Development Center at Fort Lewis College offers numerous services.

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### Economic Development Organizations

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Region 9 Economic Development District  
135 Burnett Dr. Unit 1  
Durango, CO 81301  
Phone (970) 247-9621  
[www.scan.org](http://www.scan.org)



Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box JJ  
Towaoc, CO 81334  
[www.utemountainutetribes.com](http://www.utemountainutetribes.com)

Southwest Colorado Small Business  
Development Center  
1000 Rim Dr.  
Durango, CO 81301  
Phone (970) 247-7009  
[www.sbdcfortlewis.org](http://www.sbdcfortlewis.org)



San Juan Development Association  
P.O. Box 722  
Silverton, CO 81433  
Phone (970) 387-5654  
[www.silvertoncolorado.com](http://www.silvertoncolorado.com)



Pagosa Springs Community Development Corp.  
PO Box 1859  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147  
Phone (970) 264-2360  
[www.pagosaspringscdc.org](http://www.pagosaspringscdc.org)  
[cdcinfo@pagosaspringscdc.org](mailto:cdcinfo@pagosaspringscdc.org)



Dolores County Development Corp.  
P.O. Box 860  
Dove Creek, CO 81328  
[www.dolorescounty.org](http://www.dolorescounty.org)



Southern Ute Entrepreneur and Economic  
Development Program (SEED)  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box 737  
365 Ouray Dr.  
Ignacio, CO 81137  
Phone (970) 563-2463



Montezuma Community Economic  
Development Association  
PO Box 968  
Cortez, CO 81321  
Phone (970) 560-5581  
[www.montezumaceda.org](http://www.montezumaceda.org)  
[info@montezumaceda.org](mailto:info@montezumaceda.org)



La Plata Economic Development Alliance  
2301 Main Ave.  
Durango, CO 81301  
Phone (970) 259-1700  
[www.yesLPC.com](http://www.yesLPC.com)

