

LA PLATA COUNTY

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

	2010	2018	Ann. Avg % Change 2010-18
La Plata	51,441	56,402	1.2%
Bayfield	2,357	2,728	1.8%
Durango	16,901	19,059	1.5%
Ignacio	699	723	0.4%
Unincorporated	31,484	33,892	0.9%

Source: Colorado State Demography Office

Between 2010 and 2018, La Plata County grew 1.2% annually, with most of the growth occurring in Bayfield and Durango. Ignacio saw slower growth, as did unincorporated areas of the county, including the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, headquartered near Ignacio. More information about the Southern Ute Tribe is on page 8 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 11,800 residents in the county in the next 10 years.

Employment and Income

La Plata County 2018 Total Employment	# of Jobs	% of Jobs	*Avg. ann. wage	# Jobs % Change 2017-2018
Agriculture	906	3%	\$ 32,248	-4%
Mining	614	2%	\$ 119,612	-2%
Utilities	145	0.4%	\$ 86,484	-2%
Construction	3,263	9%	\$ 51,278	0%
Manufacturing	868	2%	\$ 42,284	-1%
Wholesale Trade	676	2%	\$ 57,015	-3%
Retail Trade	3,783	11%	\$ 30,095	2%
Transportation & Warehousing	806	2%	\$ 78,910	1%
Information	471	1%	\$ 62,576	-3%
Finance Activities	1,040	3%	\$ 88,196	-6%
Real Estate	1,408	4%	\$ 50,093	5%
Professional & Business Services	2,345	7%	\$ 69,435	5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	139	0.4%	\$ 112,499	58%
Administration and Waste Management	1,356	4%	\$ 33,605	1%
Private Education	564	2%	\$ 37,966	4%
Health Services	4,046	11%	\$ 49,564	-3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,374	4%	\$ 20,979	-1%
Accommodation and Food	3,473	10%	\$ 20,164	-1%
Other Services, except Public Administration	1,810	5%	\$ 31,819	2%
Government	6,108	17%	\$ 59,210	2%
Total	35,195	100%	\$ 46,820	1%

In 2019, county unemployment rates (2.5%) were lower than the state (2.8%) and the nation (3.9%).

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 58% since 2017.

*Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

2018 Employment Share by Wage

¹ Avg. Annual Wage	² Low Wage	³ Mid Wage	⁴ High Wage	⁵ Livable Wage
\$46,820	< \$37,450	\$37,451 - \$56,180	>\$56,181	\$68,120
	36%	29%	35%	5%

The county average annual wage (\$46,820) is 79% of the state average annual wage (\$58,942).

See Glossary for wage thresholds

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2017 there were 5,505 wage and salary workers commuting out of the county for work. In contrast, 6,550 people were commuting in for work. These estimates only reflect those jobs covered by unemployment insurance <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

La Plata 2018 Base Industries	# of Jobs	% of Jobs
Agribusiness	1,613	8%
Mining	707	3%
Manufacturing	262	1%
Government	2,472	12%
Regional Services	4,376	20%
Tourism	6,358	30%
Households	5,661	26%
Total	21,449	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 the Region 9 website www.scan.org.

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 2019	# of Jobs
Southern Ute Indian Tribe	1,545
Mercy Regional Medical Center	941
Purgatory Recreation Management LLC	850
Durango School Dist. 9R	788
Fort Lewis College	680
La Plata County	395
Bayfield School District #10	390
City of Durango	354
Walmart	322
Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory	190

La Plata 2018 Total Personal Income (\$000)	% of Total
Employment Earnings	\$1,734,855 56%
Residency Adjustment	\$ (34,705) -1%
Dividends, Interest & Rent	\$1,006,919 32%
Transfer Payments	\$ 400,715 13%
Estimated TPI	\$3,107,784 100%

Total Personal Income (TPI) is the sum of all income paid to residents of La Plata County from various sources. Retirees (60+) brought in \$261 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 95% of Colorado's PCI.

Per Capita Income 2018		
	PCI 2018	% of USA
USA	\$ 54,446	100%
Colorado	\$ 58,456	107%
La Plata	\$ 55,807	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

Opportunity Zones – Census Tracts 9404 and 9711 are eligible in La Plata County. https://scan.org/uploads/Durango_enlarged.pdf

More detailed information regarding La Plata County is available at www.scan.org under regional data.