

## *Expenditures*

Education was the single largest expenditure for state and local governments in the United States. Wyoming was no exception. Wyoming spent almost \$1.7 billion on education in FY 06, or 31.5 percent of total state and local spending. This was a little less than the average for total education spending for other states that year.

Wyoming K-12 spending of \$1.19 billion was 22.2% of total spending. Other states, on average, spent slightly more on K-12 as a percentage of total spending, 25.1%, although Wyoming's cost per pupil is 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation. State and local spending for higher education in Wyoming was \$498 million in FY 06. Wyoming's higher education spending was just slightly higher than other states – 9.3 percent of total spending vs. 9.2 percent on average nationally.

Once again, the second highest spending priority for state and local governments nationwide was social services. Hospitals, health and welfare programs made up 28.1 percent of spending in Wyoming, compared to 26.3 percent for all states. These functions cost \$1.5 billion for Wyoming governments in FY 06. About \$585 million of this was for welfare programs and payments, \$659 million was for hospitals, and other health care programs cost an additional \$265 million.

Highways and transportation was the third largest government-spending category. In FY 06, Wyoming state and local governments spent \$623 million on highways, airports and other transportation-related activities. Wyoming transportation spending made up 11.6 percent of total spending in this category as compared to only 7.5 percent nationally.

Wyoming spending on public safety, however, was below the national average. State and local governments spent \$165 million on police protection in FY 06, \$180 million on corrections, and \$44 million on fire protection. Public safety was 7.3 percent of total state and local spending for Wyoming compared to 8.3 percent average for other states.

“Environmental” spending was a large category that includes a range of areas from on-going natural resource conservation and development to infrastructure management for water and sewer systems. This category covers parks and recreation, museums, housing and community development programs, as well. Wyoming governments spent \$444 million on these areas in FY 06. Wyoming allocated a greater share of resources to these combined functions than other states: 8.3 percent compared to 7.7 percent nationally.

Interest payments on Wyoming state and local government debt totaled \$77.9 million in FY 06, or 1.5 percent of all spending. This percentage has continued to decline in recent years in Wyoming and it is less than other states, which averaged 4 percent.

Finally, Wyoming governments spent \$338 million in FY 06 on combined general administration and judicial expenses. This was 6.3 percent of total spending here while this category was 5.9 percent of spending on average for all states.