Debt Burden

The capacity to pay back debt is a critical gauge of consumer credit conditions. On a short-term basis, this capacity is best measured by the minimum monthly payments due on debts as a share of monthly household income.

About 11 percent of monthly household income is required to cover minimum monthly debt payments for the average Oklahoma consumer, including payments on mortgages, credit cards, and auto loans. Oklahomans are considerably less debt-burdened than the average Tenth District consumer (12.5 percent) and U.S. consumer (13.2 percent). Oklahoma debt service burden also was much lower in the third quarter than in 2006, when it was 12.4 percent. The total amount of debt (including mortgages) held by the average Oklahoma consumer increased over the period (from about $36,300 to about $42,200), but interest rates fell. Unless debt levels fall significantly, any future rise in interest rates above their current historically low rates will raise debt burdens, putting additional financial pressure on Oklahoma households. For more information, see the Tenth District Consumer Credit Report.
Chart 3: Mortgage Delinquencies

Map: Serious Delinquency Rates by County

Notes

The Consumer Credit Report series is published quarterly by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City to provide a summary view of consumer credit standing in each Tenth District state. For questions or comments, contact Kelly Edmiston, senior economist, at kelly.edmiston@kc.frb.org.