The US government is a giant money machine that takes in billions in taxes and disburse billions in grants and payments. According to the 2000 Census, the national per capita spending was $5,562.

The Megalopolis per capita figure is $6,902, well above the national average. Across the region there are substantial differences from $52,088 in Washington DC to $1,264 in Manassas Park VA. The variation from the national average reflects two factors. First, a significant element of government spending is on transfer payments to retired, disabled and poor people though such things as housing assistance, food stamps and Medicare. The cities, where there are more poor people thus stand out as areas of increased federal spending, such as Baltimore City, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Second, government spending also includes compensation to federal workers as well as specific grants for such things as scientific research. This pattern of spending is particularly evident in the federal capital of Washington DC and surrounding areas. As we have noted, the growth of this southern part of Megalopolis is based on federal employment and spending.

Within Megalopolis the amount of total federal spending is in rough parity with population distribution. Values peak in the cities and falls away toward the less populated peripheral areas of the region.