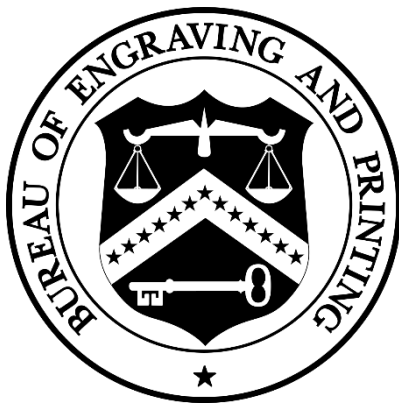


Where Does Money Come From?

People earn money in exchange for work they perform. People can also receive money as a gift sometimes. Money is always changing hands. But have you ever thought about where money comes from? In the United States, it all begins in the U.S. Treasury.

The U.S. Treasury has the very important job of ensuring the financial security of the United States. One way they do this is by producing the coins and bills people use. They do this through two departments, or bureaus: Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the U.S. Mint.



The **Bureau of Engraving and Printing** (BEP) prints billions of dollars each year.

According to the Federal Reserve, the central bank for the United States, there is more than \$1 trillion in paper bills in circulation. The BEP, with locations in Washington, DC and Fort Worth, Texas, is one of the largest currency printing operations in the world. Printing currency is not an easy task. Can you guess why? If it were simple, people would print as much as they wanted themselves and that would cause money to lose its value. Printing our paper bills requires highly trained and skilled craftspeople, specialized equipment, and a combination of traditional old-world printing techniques merged with sophisticated, cutting-edge technology.

First, banknote designers use their ideas to sketch the overall look, layout, and artistic details of a bill that reflects the strength of the American economy. When new bills are being designed, many different concepts are drawn and considered before the Secretary of the Treasury approves the final design. Next engravers create three-dimensional engravings of the approved design. The engravings are then transferred to a printing plate. The printing plates are used to print the image onto paper. Throughout the printing process, currency sheets are inspected using state-of-the-art computer technology to ensure that only the highest quality sheets move to the numbering process, where serial numbers are added to each bill. The sheets are cut, stacked, and packaged before being shipped to the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve then distributes the bills to banks where they eventually make their way into the hands of people.





The **U.S. Mint** makes all of the coins we use. Its main task is to make sure the U.S. people have enough coins to carry on a daily business. To do this, they make up to 28 billion coins each year! The U.S. Mint has six different locations. The Mint headquarters is located in Washington, DC. No coins are made at the headquarters, but research and other important business functions take place there. The first U.S. Mint facility, the Philadelphia Mint (PA), makes circulating

and commemorative coins (special coins made to honor a person or event). The Denver (CO) Mint Facility makes circulating and commemorative coins, and stores gold and silver. The Fort Knox Bullion Depository (KY) does not make any coins but is important because it stores gold. The San Francisco Mint (CA) and West Point Mint (NY) make commemorative coins.

Like the printing of bills, the process of making coins is also fairly complicated and requires skilled workers and specialized machines. Coin designers hand-carve and mold their design which is eventually turned into a die for the printing press.

Unlike bills which are made of paper, coins are made of different metals. The U.S. Mint uses long rolled up sheets of metal to make coins. The metal rolls are fed into machines that cut out disks, also called blanks, specially sized to the coin being produced. The printing presses then stamp or squeeze each coin to get the image to appear on the disks.

