

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE POINT OF PURCHASE SURVEY?

The purpose of the Point of Purchase Survey is to provide information on the stores and businesses where people shop and the products they buy. This information is used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the "cost of living index." This index directly affects almost everyone at one time or another.

The President, the Congress, and the Federal Reserve use trends in the cost of living to aid in formulating fiscal and monetary policies. Adjustments to wages, Social Security payments, retirement benefits and other compensation such as child support and payments received by millions of Americans are based on changes in the CPI. In addition, businesses, labor organizations and private citizens use the index as a guide in making economic decisions.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

In order for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to update the CPI, it is necessary to maintain an up-to-date list of the stores and businesses where people shop. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Point of Purchase Survey to provide statistical data needed to update this list.

WHY WAS I SELECTED?

While participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for not answering questions, it is very important that we have your cooperation in the survey to ensure the validity and accuracy of the information. Your household was selected randomly from a list of phone numbers. Information that you provide will be used only to identify the stores and businesses where Americans shop and the products they buy.

WHAT CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION DO I HAVE?

The confidentiality of the information you provide is assured to the full extent permitted by law in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347). The information you provide will only be used for statistical purposes.

WHAT LAWS AUTHORIZE YOU TO CONDUCT THIS SURVEY?

This survey is authorized by the Office of Management and Budget under Project 1220-0044. Title 29, Section 2 of the United States Code authorizes the BLS to conduct household studies. Title 15 of the United States Code authorizes the Census Bureau to conduct surveys for other federal agencies.

HOW LONG DOES THIS INTERVIEW TAKE?

The typical interview lasts between 7 and 15 minutes.