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# Information on Your Participation in the Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey



# Frequently Asked Questions About the Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey

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## What Is the Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey?

The Consumer Expenditure (CE) Diary Survey collects information on expenditures and income of individual households. We attempt to collect data from approximately 1,000 households per month. Your information is combined with responses from throughout the country. The combined information shows how the economy is affecting the various parts of the population such as the young, the old, the retired, and the disabled. The Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned the Control Number 1220-0050. We cannot conduct this survey unless we display this number. We are conducting this survey for the Department of Labor under authority of Title 29, United States Code.

## Why Did You Choose Me for This Survey?

We selected your address, not you personally, as part of a sample throughout the country.

## What Guarantee Do I Have That the Information I Give to You About My Personal Business Is Not Reported to Other Persons or Organizations?

Every Census Bureau employee takes an oath and is subject to a jail penalty, a fine, or both, if he or she discloses any information that would identify you as an individual. We release the information for statistical purposes only, and we never release information that would disclose your identity. The information you give is confidential by law (Section 9 of Title 13, United States Code).

## What Will You Ask Me?

Your cooperation will help us collect accurate data. You will be asked to record your expenditures, such as for food at home, food while away from home, household products, house-keeping products, and personal care items on a diary that we will leave with you. We will visit your household three times over a 2-week period for this survey, to place and pick up the diaries. We expect that it will take about 15 minutes to record your expenditures daily in addition to about 15 minutes for each of our visits over this 2-week period. Your participation in this survey, while voluntary, is extremely important. If you have any questions or recommendations for reducing its length, send them to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Management Systems, Project 1220-0050, Washington, DC 20212.

## Who Uses the CE Data?

Your responses will help to update the Consumer Price Index which measures inflation and directly affects wages, pensions, and the cost for goods and services. The Federal Government also uses the data in trying to understand how government policy affects different kinds of families. For example, the CE data show the effects of tax changes on various groups such as those of different ages, income levels, and marital status.

In addition, many people in your community and the Nation use the information to make important decisions that can help to create jobs. For example, shopkeepers or persons wanting to expand or start a business use it to decide where to locate based on consumer spending habits. State governments also use CE data to estimate their revenue. For example, when states increase gasoline taxes, they can calculate the amount of additional funds they will receive by using CE data.