

Dear [FILL NAME],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study to improve the Consumer Expenditure Survey. RTI International is conducting this study on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Census Bureau. Responses to this research study will help inform BLS and the Census Bureau on the use of records in the Consumer Expenditure Survey.

The Consumer Expenditure Survey helps update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or declining. It directly affects wages, pensions, and the cost of goods and services. Your participation in this study is a service to your community and the country.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may choose to decline to answer any particular question. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Title 29 of the United States Code). In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347), all information about you and your household will be kept strictly confidential, and will be used for statistical purposes only.

This is a two-part study. Your first interview is scheduled for [FILL TIME] on [FILL DATE]. A field representative will come to your home for the interview. Your second interview will take place approximately one week later and will be scheduled at the completion of your first interview.

Thank you for participating in this important study. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Emily Geisen
RTI International
Project Manager
Consumer Expenditure Records Study

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is this study about?

The Consumer Expenditure Survey measures how people in the United States spend their money on items such as housing, food, education, transportation, and healthcare.

Why is this study important?

The information you provide will help inform BLS and the Census Bureau about how people answer the Consumer Expenditure Survey, so that the survey can be improved. Information collected in the survey affects wages, pensions, and the cost of goods and services. In addition, people in your community and throughout the country use the survey results for planning public services and addressing consumer needs. Your voluntary response is essential for ensuring that this survey's results are complete and accurate.

What kinds of questions will I be asked?

We will ask you to recall information about recent purchases you have made. We will also ask you questions about the people who live in your household, such as their ages, and questions about things you already own like cars or property. A partial list includes:

- How much money do you spend on clothing?
- How much money do you spend on housing?
- What are your out-of-pocket costs for medical care for consumers?
- Do you spend more money on electricity or natural gas?

What if I am retired, ill, unemployed, or just don't spend much money?

We are interested in how all Americans spend their money. We can only have a complete picture if we talk to people with different situations.

It is very important to know the purchasing habits of people of all ages and of all levels of spending. This is especially true for medical spending and spending on entertainment.

How long will the interview take?

This is a two-part study. The first survey interview takes about 1 ½ hours. The second survey interview takes about 2 hours.

Where can I find out more about the survey?

You can learn more about the survey by writing to the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Room 3985, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20212. The Consumer Expenditure Survey Web site also has information about the survey. The address is <<http://www.bls.gov/cex>>.

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned it Control Number 1220-0050.