

**CE-303-L1 (CA)  
(8-2010)**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

We are contacting you to request your help with an important survey—the Consumer Expenditure Survey. The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this survey for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Your responses help 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 response is a service to your community and the country.

Your participation in this survey is essential; however, you may choose to decline to answer any particular question. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Titles 13 and 29 of the United States Code), and Sections 9 and 214 of Title 13 require us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only.

Soon a field representative will contact you for an interview and show you an official identification card. Please welcome him or her.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. If you would like more information, please contact:

**Regional Director**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
**15350 Sherman Way Suite 400**  
**Van Nuys CA 91406-4203**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 992-3530**

Thank you for your cooperation in this important survey. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves

**U S C E N S U S B U R E A U**

*Helping You Make Informed Decisions*

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the Census Bureau doing? I thought they only operated every ten years.**

In addition to the decennial census, we collect data on a monthly basis. We collect these data to provide up-to-date information on topics such as unemployment, spending, family income, housing, manufacturing, and business activities to track the country's economy.

### **What is this survey 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 survey important?**

The information you provide will affect 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?

### **Why me? Why not interview someone else?**

Through a scientific sampling process, we selected your address, not you personally. Your household represents hundreds of other households in your region, so it is important that we talk to you. Only you can accurately report how you spent your money.

### **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?**

The average interview takes about 60 minutes.

### **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.

**CE-303-L2  
(11-2009)**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

About three months ago, you completed an interview for the Consumer Expenditure Survey. We are contacting you again to request your ongoing help with this very important survey. Soon a field representative with official identification will contact you again for an interview.

Your responses help update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or declining and directly affects wages and pensions. Your response is a service to your community and the country.

To help shorten the interview, you may want to have some records of expenses available for reference. On the back of this letter are examples of records that may reduce the interview time and improve the quality of survey results.

Your participation in this survey is essential; however, you may choose to decline to answer any particular question. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Titles 13 and 29 of the United States Code), and Sections 9 and 214 of Title 13 require us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important survey. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves  
Director

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The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this voluntary survey  
for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Collecting bills, receipts, or bank statements before the field  
representative arrives may help reduce the interview time.**

**Examples of useful documents are shown below.**

**Billing statements (paper or on-line) for:**

- Utilities, such as electricity or natural gas
- Residential and cellular telephone service
- Insurance payments
- Medical expenses
- Education expenses
- Home repair and improvement expenses
- Cable or satellite television or satellite radio
- Internet services

**Receipts, bill of sales, or contracts for:**

- Vehicle Purchases
- Vehicle leases
- Furniture purchases
- Appliance purchases
- Service contracts, such as for pest control or appliance maintenance

**Pay stubs showing:**

- Insurance premiums
- Retirement deductions including 401Ks
- Social Security deductions
- Federal taxes deducted
- State and local taxes deducted
- Other deductions, such as union dues or charitable contributions

**Credit card statements for:**

- Expenses charged automatically to your credit card
- Credit card membership fees
- Any expenditures with no receipt or statement

**Bank statements or check books for:**

- Expenses automatically deducted from your bank account
- ATM fees and other banking fees
- Any expenditures with no receipt or statement

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Control Number 1220-0050.



FROM THE DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

About three months ago, we contacted you to request your help with an important survey—the Consumer Expenditure Survey. Although you were not able to participate at that time, we are writing again to ask for your cooperation.

The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this voluntary survey for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Your responses help update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or declining and directly affects wages and pensions. Your response is a service to your community and the country.

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Soon a field representative will contact you for an interview and show you an official identification card. Please welcome him or her.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important survey. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the Census Bureau doing? I thought they only operated every ten years.**

In addition to the decennial census, we collect data on a monthly basis. We collect these data to provide up-to-date information on topics such as unemployment, spending, family income, housing, manufacturing and business activities to track the country's economy.

### **What is this survey 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 survey important?**

The information you provide will affect 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.

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### **How long will the interview take?**

The average interview takes about 60 minutes.

### **Where can I find out more about the survey?**

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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.

CE-303-L5  
(12-2009)



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Very soon a field representative will visit you again to conduct the final interview for your household for the Consumer Expenditure Survey. In this interview, as in previous ones, we will ask about your household expenditures during the past three months.

The Consumer Price Index is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or declining and directly affects wages and pensions. Your response is a service to your community and the country.

To help shorten the interview, you may want to have some records of expenses available for reference. On the back of this letter are examples of records that may reduce the interview time and improve the quality of survey results.

Your participation in this survey is essential; however, you may choose to decline to answer any particular question. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Titles 13 and 29 of the United States Code), and Sections 9 and 214 of Title 13 requires us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only.

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Residential and cellular telephone service  
Insurance payments  
Medical expenses  
Education expenses  
Home repair and improvement expenses  
Cable or satellite television or satellite radio  
Internet services

**Receipts, bill of sales, or contracts for:**

Vehicle purchases  
Vehicle leases  
Furniture purchases  
Appliance purchases  
Service contracts, such as for pest control or appliance maintenance

**Pay stubs showing:**

Insurance premiums  
Retirement deductions, including 401Ks  
Social security deductions  
Federal taxes deducted  
State and local taxes deducted  
Other deductions, such as union dues or charitable contributions

**Credit card statements for:**

Expenses charged automatically to your credit card  
Credit card membership fees  
Any expenditures with no receipt or statement

**Bank statements or check books for:**

Expenses automatically deducted from your bank account  
ATM fees and other banking fees  
Any expenditures with no receipt or statement

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





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U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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### **What kinds of questions will I be asked?**

We will ask you to record in a diary information about all the purchases you make. We will also ask the people who live in your household to record their purchases.

### **Why me? Why not interview someone else?**

Your address was selected, not you personally, as part of a scientifically determined sample. Your household represents hundreds of other households in your region. We need to talk with you because only you can accurately report how you spent your money.

### **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?**

We expect that it will take about 15 minutes to record your expenditures daily; in addition, it will take about 25 minutes for each of our visits over this two-week period.

### **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/home.htm>.

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