

**U.S. Department of Labor**

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20212



I am contacting you to request your help with updating the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most widely used measure of the price change experienced by consumers such as you. To measure that change, the CPI monitors prices at the places where you, and other people like you, shop. We identify those places through the Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS). The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the TPOPS for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and I would like you to participate.

Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Titles 13 and 29 of the United States Code), and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) requires us to keep all information you provide strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only.

Sometime in the next few weeks a Census Bureau representative will call you to ask about a few purchases your household may have made recently and the places where you made these purchases. I hope that you will consider the importance of your answers when you choose to participate. You may choose, of course, to decline to answer any question.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. If you would like more information, please go to the CPI-TPOPS respondent website, for additional details about the types of questions you will be asked:

<http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cpi/tpops/>

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. John Layng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

W. JOHN LAYNG  
Assistant Commissioner for Consumer Prices and Price Indexes

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE POINT OF PURCHASE SURVEY?

The purpose of the Telephone 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 benefits, retirement benefits and other compensation such as child support, are based on changes in the CPI.

### 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?

Your household was selected randomly from a list of phone numbers. It is very important we have your cooperation in the survey to ensure the validity and accuracy of the CPI. Participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for not answering questions. Information you provide will only be used 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, 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 13, Section 8 of the United States Code authorizes the Census Bureau to conduct surveys for other federal agencies.

### HOW LONG DOES THIS INTERVIEW TAKE?

You will be interviewed once a quarter for four quarters; the typical interview lasts between 10 and 20 minutes.

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About three months ago, the U.S. Census Bureau contacted you to request your help with an important survey—the Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS). Very soon, you will be contacted for another interview and we hope that we can gain your cooperation once again. As in the previous interview, you will be asked about certain purchases your household may have made recently.

The survey is used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or falling. Your continued participation in this survey is vital to the accuracy of the CPI and is a valuable service to your community and the country.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. If you would like more information, please go to the CPI-TPOPS respondent website, where you can preview information about the types of questions you will be asked in your next interview:

<http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cpi/tpops/>

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

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Very soon, the U.S. Census Bureau will be calling you to conduct the final interview for the Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS). In this interview, as in previous ones, you will be asked about a few purchases your household may have made recently.

Data collected in TPOPS are used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure how fast prices are rising or falling. It directly affects wages and pensions. Your participation has been a valuable service to your community and the country.

Your continued participation in this survey is vital to the accuracy of the CPI. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Titles 13 and 29 of the United States Code), and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) requires us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. If you would like more information, please go to the CPI-TPOPS respondent website at, where you can preview information about the types of questions you will be asked in the final interview: <http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cpi/tpops/>

Thank you again for your cooperation and continued participation over the past year in this important survey. We appreciate your help.

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