

## BLS national and regional offices

### Washington, DC

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20212  
(202) 691-7000 CPI\_info@bls.gov

### Atlanta

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Room 7T50  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 893-4222 BLSInfoAtlanta@bls.gov

### Boston

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
JFK Federal Bldg., E-310  
Boston, MA 02203  
(617) 565-2327 BLSInfoBoston@bls.gov

### Chicago

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
J.C. Kluczynski Federal Office Building  
230 South Dearborn Street, Room 960  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 353-1880 BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov

### Dallas

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
525 South Griffin Street, EA&I, Room 221  
Dallas, TX 75202  
(972) 850-4800 BLSInfoDallas@bls.gov

### Kansas City

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Two Pershing Square Building  
2300 Main Street, Suite 1190  
Kansas City, MO 64108  
(816) 285-7000 BLSInfoKansasCity@bls.gov

### New York

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
New York-New Jersey Information Office  
201 Varick Street, Room 808  
New York, NY 10014  
(646) 264-3600 BLSInfoNY@bls.gov

### Philadelphia

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Suite 610 East – The Curtis Center  
170 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov

### San Francisco

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
90th 7th Street, Suite 14-100  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 625-2270 BLSInfoSF@bls.gov

## Questions?

If you have any questions or comments regarding any aspect of the survey, send them to the Division of Consumer Prices and Price Indexes (OMB #1220-0039), Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington DC 20212, (202) 691-6991, or e-mail: [CPI\\_info@bls.gov](mailto:CPI_info@bls.gov).

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the questionnaire and has assigned 1220-0163 as the control number. Without OMB approval and this number, we would not be able to conduct this survey.

The Consumer Price Index

## Commodities and Services Survey: Questions & Answers



## Your input is important!

We need your help measuring the rate of inflation in the U.S. economy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is asking for your voluntary participation in the Consumer Price Index survey to help provide an accurate measurement of the changes in the cost of the many goods and services normally purchased by urban consumers. Your cooperation in this important survey will help provide the “big picture” of the U.S. economy.

## What is the CPI?

The CPI is the nation’s chief measure of inflation at the retail level. It measures changes over time in the cost of buying a fixed market basket of goods and services needed for day-to-day living. Calculated and published by BLS, the CPI is used by business, labor, and government for making informed economic decisions. It is widely used to adjust payments under collective bargaining agreements and other contracts. The federal government uses the CPI to adjust Social Security payments, personal income taxes, and other program payments for the effects of inflation.

## What does the CPI include?

The CPI measures price changes for all types of goods and services that are purchased by urban consumers, whether costly or inexpensive and whether purchased often or infrequently. Each item is represented in the index in proportion to consumer spending on it. Items are divided into eight major groups: Food and beverages, apparel, transportation, medical care, recreation, education and communication, other goods and services, and housing. Investments, such as purchases of stocks, bonds, or homes, are not priced in the CPI, because they do not represent consumption of goods and services by consumers.

## How does BLS get the information on the price change in the CPI?

BLS employees visit selected retail stores, houses, apartments, and other establishments in urban areas on a regular basis to collect prices of sample items. Prices are collected monthly in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. In all other areas, food, fuel, and other selected items are priced monthly; the rest of the items are priced every other month.

## Who is covered by the CPI?

There are, in effect, two CPIs. One represents the expenditures of all urban consumers (CPI-U); the other represents expenditures of urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W). These indexes do not take into account the buying habits of persons living on farms or in rural areas, persons in military service, or those in institutions.

## How was my establishment selected to participate?

Your establishment was selected primarily from information obtained from a household survey. In this survey, households reported on where they purchased various types of goods and services and the dollar amounts of these purchases. From these data, a sample of establishments was selected for pricing of various categories of items.

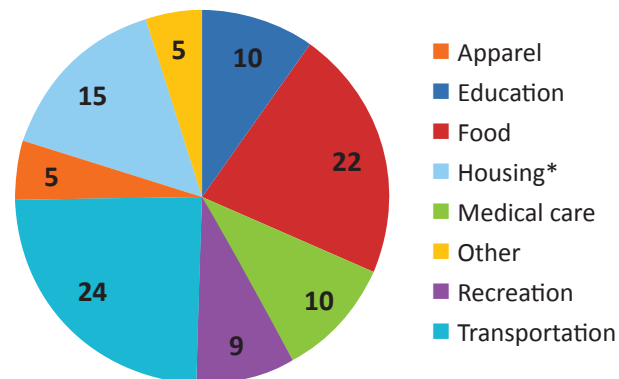
## When and how is the CPI published?

CPI data appear in a news release usually issued around the 15th of the month, reporting the data for the previous month. Generally, the CPI is reported in the newspapers and on television at this time.

## How can I get CPI data?

Information is available on the BLS-CPI homepage at <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/home.htm> shortly after release of the CPI data. The most comprehensive report on the CPI is the periodical *CPI Detailed Report*, issued monthly.

## CPI: Commodities and services components, Dec. 2011, in percent



\*Excludes rent of primary residence and owners' equivalent rent of residences

## Confidentiality and burden concerns

### Confidentiality statement:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent required by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent.

### Voluntary nature:

This report is authorized by law, 29 U.S.C.2. Your voluntary cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate and timely.

### Public burden statement:

- We estimate it will take an hour to determine your eligibility and, if eligible, complete the survey.
- Either monthly or bimonthly follow up should take about 20 minutes.