



A Message 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. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, and Title 29, United States Code. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214). Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

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 the following:

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**15350 SHERMAN WAY STE 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,

Steven D. Dillingham



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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**6950 W JEFFERSON AVE STE 250**  
**LAKWOOD CO 80235-2377**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 852-6159**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**101 MARIETTA ST NW STE 3200**  
**ATLANTA GA 30303-2711**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 424-6974**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**1111 W 22ND ST STE 400**  
**OAK BROOK IL 60523-1918**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 865-6384**

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Steven D. Dillingham

CE-803(L)(NY)  
(7-2019)



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**

Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**32 OLD SLIP 9<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR**  
**NEW YORK NY 10005-3504**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 991-2520**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**100 S INDEPENDENCE MALL W #410**  
**PHILADELPHIA PA 19106-2320**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 262-4236**

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## **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 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. In some instances, we will ask you to record details about where an item was purchased.

### **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 10 minutes to record your expenditures daily; in addition, it will take about 20 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 or send any comments regarding the burden or any other aspect of this 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 [www.bls.gov/respondents/cex](http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cex).

This survey could not be conducted without a valid OMB Control Number. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned it Control Number 1220-0050.