

## USER GUIDE

# CE Online Diary

**Thank you** for agreeing to participate in the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE). We understand that this task takes time; however, your information is very important to us and will be used for many purposes that affect all Americans. Among the most important, it is used to help calculate the Consumer Price Index, or CPI, which is a basic measure of the rate of inflation. For more information about the survey, visit <http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cex/>.

By law (Title 13, U.S. Code), we must keep your information confidential; we use it for statistical purposes only. If you have comments regarding this survey, please send them to: Division of Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Room 3985, Washington, DC 20212.

**Log in to your CE Online Diary at:** <https://respond.census.gov/lstf>

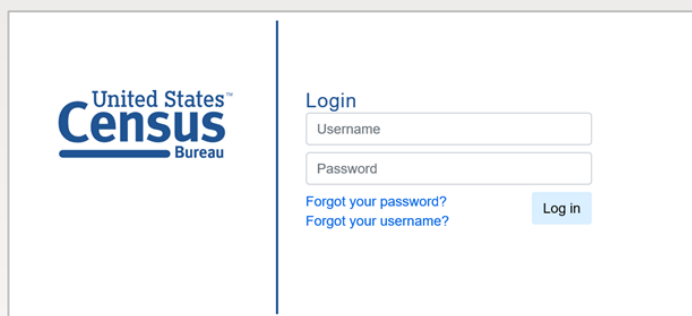
### Username and Password

Logging in to the diary requires a unique and secure username and password that is assigned to each household. For security reasons, your password is provided separately by your Field Representative.

**Respondent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Username:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Note:** It may be helpful to create a shortcut from your computer desktop or home screen. This will make it easier to access your diary each day as you are entering expenses. See the instructions on the back of this user guide for how to create a shortcut.

### Questions?

Field Representative's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Help Desk: 1 (877) 744-1522 (Monday-Friday 9am-10pm, Saturday 9am-9pm, Sunday 11am-9pm Eastern)  
[Census.CE.Helpdesk@census.gov](mailto:Census.CE.Helpdesk@census.gov)

## What Should I Enter in the Diary?

Complete the CE Diary for the entire week. Enter EVERYTHING you spend money on each day (see exceptions below) – the products you buy, the services you use, and the household expenses you have during the week – no matter how large or small they are. Do NOT use abbreviations for any item descriptions.

The only items you should **not** include in your diary are:

- Expenses while you were away from home overnight
- Business or farm operating expenses
- Sales tax, except for Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home

## Start Date and Email Address

After the first time you log in, you will select your scheduled start date listed on the front of this user guide. You will also have the option to enter your email address to receive reminders regarding your participation in the survey.

Select the date you are scheduled to begin entering expenses into your Diary:

Email address (optional):

We will not share your email address with any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. We ask for your email address only to send reminders regarding your participation in this survey.

## Help

To access Help tools, click the “Help” button on the top right of the screen. In the mobile version, the Help link will appear after you click on Menu. Here you will have the following options: General Instructions, How to Fill Out Your Diary, Diary Examples, FAQs, and Definitions.

## User Settings

You will be logging into the diary several times throughout your diary week. You may find it helpful to customize your username and password so they are easier to remember. To change your username or password, click on the “User Settings” button on the top right of the Desktop version. In the mobile version, the User Settings option can be accessed by clicking on Menu on the top right. Make sure your new username and password meets all of the requirements that are specified on the Change Username and Change Password pages. You will also be required to enter your email address and select and answer a security question.

## No Expenses

If you had no expenses during your diary week, login to the diary on or after the last day of your diary week and you will see the following checkbox. Check the box to confirm that you had no expenses during the week.

You haven't entered any expenses for Week 1 – Feb 02 to Feb 08. If you had no expenses during this week, check here:

## Logout

To protect your privacy, the CE Diary will automatically log you out if there is no activity for more than 15 minutes. You can also logout at any time by clicking on the “Logout” button. To log back in each time, you will need to re-enter your username and password. To prevent losing data you have entered, please remember to save your entries.

## Entering Expenses

Below are examples of your home screen where you will be able to view a summary of your entered expenses and add new expenses. Please refer to Page 4 for more detailed instructions on how to add an expense.

### Desktop Version

To add an expense, you will enter information by first selecting the appropriate week and then the date of the expense on the left side of the screen.

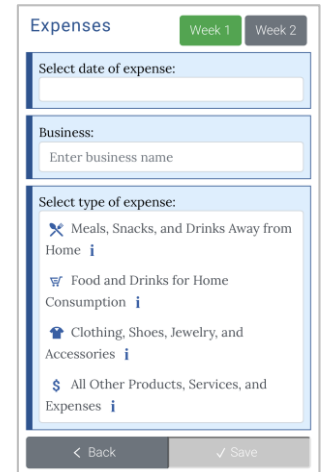


### Mobile Version

To add an expense, tap on the “Add Item” icon on the bottom right of the summary screen. An expense entry screen will appear allowing you to add a new expense.



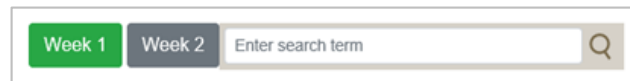
(mobile summary screen)



(mobile expense entry screen)

## View, Edit, or Delete an Expense

To help you find a particular entry, you can enter a search term in the search box on the top right of your desktop version. In the mobile version, tap on the “Search” icon on the bottom left of the summary screen. You can view your expenses by selecting Week 1 or Week 2 and clicking on a specific date to expand the selection and view the expenses entered for that date.



### Desktop Version

To delete an expense, click on the trashcan icon to the right of the expense. To view or edit an expense, click on the pencil icon to the far right of the expense. In the left entry space, you will be able to make any changes and select “Save” or “Back” to cancel.



### Mobile Version

To delete an expense, click on the trashcan icon to the right of the expense. To view or edit an expense, click on the pencil icon to the far right of the expense. When you click on edit, you will be taken to the expense entry screen where you will be able to make any changes and select “Save” or “Back” to cancel.



# Adding Expenses to Your CE Diary

The Expense Entry screen on the mobile version is on a separate screen, but the entry fields are the same.

Select the date the purchase was made.

Enter the name of the business.

Select the category.

To cancel and return to your home screen, select Back.

To save the expense entry, select Save.

## Category Specific Questions

After you select a category, additional questions specific to that category will appear for you to complete. See examples below:

### Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home

- Enter the total cost (include tax and tip)
- Select the meal type
- Indicate if alcohol was included and the cost of alcohol, if applicable

Select type of expense:

- Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home
- Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
- Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
- All Other Products, Services, and Expenses

Total cost (include tax and/or tip)

\$

What meal was this?

Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Snack/Other

Select any alcohol included:

Wine

Beer

Other

None

Enter the total cost of the alcohol:

\$

< Back    ✓ Save

### Food and Drinks for Home Consumption

- Describe the item or expense
- Enter the cost (do not include tax)
- Select the type of packaging

Select type of expense:

- Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home
- Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
- Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
- All Other Products, Services, and Expenses

Describe item or expense

Total cost (do not include tax)

\$

How was the item packaged

Fresh  Frozen  Bottled/Canned

Other

< Back    ✓ Save

### Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories

- Describe the item or expense
- Enter the cost (do not include tax)
- Select the gender and age

Select type of expense:

- Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home
- Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
- Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
- All Other Products, Services, and Expenses

Describe item or expense

Total cost (do not include tax)

\$

Was this item for:

Child under 2  Boy 2-15  Girl 2-15

Man 16 & over  Woman 16 & over

< Back    ✓ Save

### All Other Products, Services, and Expenses

- Describe the item or expense
- Enter the cost (do not include tax)

Select type of expense:

- Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home
- Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
- Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
- All Other Products, Services, and Expenses

Describe item or expense

Total cost (do not include tax)

\$

< Back    ✓ Save

## Meals Snacks and Drinks Away from Home vs. All Other Categories

Something you should keep in mind when entering your expenses is that the Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home category is different from the other categories. See below for examples with entries in the Mobile version.

### Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home

In the Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home category, you will enter the entire meal/purchase as one entry and enter the total cost of the meal including tax and tip.

**Green Onion Bistro**

Artichoke dip	8.00
Beef short rib ravioli	18.00
Ginger lemon chicken	16.00
Berry lemon pie	6.00
Chocolate pudding	6.00
Soda	3.00
Red wine	9.00
Subtotal	66.00
Sales Tax	6.60
Total	72.60
Gratuity	15.00
Total	87.60

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
986 Divine Way  
Washington, DC 20964

**Mobile App Interface:**

- Select date of expense: Thursday, Feb 28
- Business: Green Onion Bistro
- Select type of expense:
  - Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home
  - Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
  - Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
  - All Other Products, Services, and Expenses
- Total cost (include tax and/or tip): \$ 87.60
- What meal was this?
  - Breakfast
  - Lunch
  - Dinner
  - Snack/Other
- Select any alcohol included:
  - Wine
  - Beer
  - Other
  - None
- Enter the total cost of the alcohol: \$ 9.00

### All Other Categories

For all of the other three categories, you will enter each item purchased as a separate entry and enter the cost of the item without tax.

**VALU MART**  
FALLS CHURCH, VA 23156 - 703.893-8934

267198321	VM WHOLE MILK	3.29
986945631	6-PK SOCKS	7.99
063022838	PAPER TOWELS	11.99
073965782	LAUNDRY DETERGENT	18.99
037121340	SHAMPOO	2.94
037121345	CONDITIONER	2.94
256971531	SZ 3 DIAPERS	41.99
SUBTOTAL		99.30
VA TAX 5.0%		4.97
TOTAL		104.27

SIGN UP FOR A VALUMART CARD  
AND SAVE 5% ON EVERY PURCHASE!

**Mobile App Interface (Multiple Screens):**

- Screen 1: Select date of expense: Thursday, Feb 28; Business: ValuMart; Select type of expense:  Meals, Snacks, and Drinks Away from Home; Describe item or expense: Whole Milk; Total cost (do not include tax): \$ 3.29; How was the item purchased:  Fresh; Was this item for:  Girl 2-15.
- Screen 2: Select date of expense: Thursday, Feb 28; Business: ValuMart; Select type of expense:  Food and Drinks for Home Consumption; Describe item or expense: 6 pack socks; Total cost (do not include tax): \$ 7.99; Was this item for:  Woman 16 & older.
- Screen 3: Select date of expense: Thursday, Feb 28; Business: ValuMart; Select type of expense:  All Other Products, Services, and Expenses; Describe item or expense: Paper Towels; Total cost (do not include tax): \$ 11.99.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What should I do if I forget my Username or Password?**

Click on the "Forgot Username" and/or "Forgot Password" links on the login screen. Follow the relevant directions. If you have any issues, call the CE Help Desk at 1 (877) 744-1522 or email [Census.CE.Helpdesk@census.gov](mailto:Census.CE.Helpdesk@census.gov).

### **2. How detailed should my descriptions be?**

Refer to the Diary Examples page in the Help menu for examples of the level of detail needed in each part. Do not rely solely on brand names.

### **3. How can I delete or make changes to an expense that I've saved?**

Locate the saved expense listed under the relevant date in the Expenses section of the main page. Click on the saved expense and make any changes. Click the 'Save' button to save your changes. Click the 'Delete' button to delete your expense.

### **4. How should I record multiple quantities?**

You may group identical items on the same entry and enter a total cost of all the items, or you may write each item on a separate entry with the individual cost.

### **5. How should I record pre-payments such as a subway fare card?**

Record the expense when you pay for it, not when you use it.

### **6. How should I record credit card purchases?**

Record the individual expense the day that you use your credit card to pay for something, not the day you pay your credit card bill.

### **7. Should I record automatic deductions taken from my paycheck or bank account?**

Yes, record automatic deductions (such as health insurance premiums taken out of your account or paycheck) only if they are deducted that week. Write them in the section called All Other Products, Services, and Expenses.

### **8. Should I record typical monthly bills?**

Yes, record typical monthly bills only if you pay them during the week that you have the diary. Enter them in the section called All Other Products, Services, and Expenses.

### **9. What should I do when I use coupons, discount cards, or loyalty cards?**

Subtract the discount from the original price and enter the amount that you paid.

### **10. Can I just give you receipts instead of entering the information online?**

No, we need you to enter the information into the online diary. We encourage you to save your receipts to review them with your Field Representative when they return.

**11. How should I record items if I don't know whether it includes tax?**

Write down the amount paid.

**12. What if I make a contribution or charitable donation?**

Record money contributions or donations in the section called All Other Products, Services, and Expenses.

**13. What about gift certificates or gift cards?**

If you buy a gift certificate to give to someone, write down the cost of it under the appropriate section (e.g., a certificate to a clothing store would go under Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories and a certificate to a department store would go under All Other Products, Services, and Expenses. If you use a gift card, enter the full amount for your purchase as if paid with cash.

**14. What do I do about returns and exchanges?**

If an item is bought and returned during the diary period, it can be deleted (see FAQ 3). If it was bought outside the diary period and returned during the period, do not make any entry. If an item is exchanged during the diary period, change or edit the item that was returned to the new item and its cost on the day the exchange was made (see FAQ 3).

**15. Should I record subsidized/reimbursed expenses?**

Yes, but if someone not in your household pays for or helps pay for an expense or if you will be reimbursed for an expense, only record the amount that you or someone in your household has to pay.

**16. What should I do about shipping & handling costs?**

Include the shipping & handling cost in the total price of the item. If the shipping & handling covered multiple items, include the shipping & handling in the total price of one item from the order.

**17. How do I know what items to report for each type of expense?**

Click or tap on the icon next to each expense type category.

# Adding a CE Diary Shortcut

This will make it easier to access your diary each day as you are entering expenses. Although web browsers vary across brands and versions, the steps for creating a shortcut are usually similar.

## Adding a CE Diary Shortcut to your Computer Desktop Screen

1. Open the web browser and enter the URL: <https://respond.census.gov/lsf>
2. Once you have opened the website, hold down “ctrl” and “s” on the keyboard at the same time.
3. A new window will pop-up. The default File name will be “CE Diary”.
4. Make sure “Desktop” is selected as the save location and then click on Save.
5. When you close the browser and return to your desktop, you will see an icon for the shortcut labeled CE Diary. To quickly access your CE Diary in the future, simply double click on this shortcut.

## Android Smartphones

1. Tap on the Browser icon:

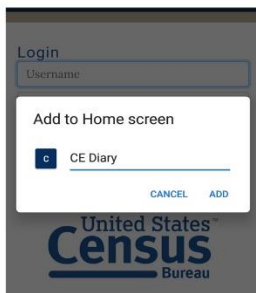


2. Enter the website address for the CE Diary:  
<https://respond.census.gov/lsf>

3. Once the website opens, tap on the menu icon at the top right of the screen:



4. A number of options will appear. Tap on “Add to Home Screen”. The screen below should pop-up. Tap on ADD.



5. When you close the browser and return to your home screen, you will see an icon labeled CE Diary. To quickly access your CE Diary in the future, simply tap on this shortcut.



## iPhone

1. Tap on the Safari icon:

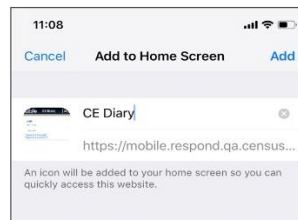


2. Enter the website address for the CE Diary:  
<https://respond.census.gov/lsf>

3. Once the website opens, tap on the share icon at the bottom of the screen:



4. A number of options will appear. Scroll to the right in the bottom row of options and tap on “Add to Home Screen”. The screen below should pop-up. Tap on Add.



5. When you close the browser and return to your home screen, you will see an icon labeled CE Diary. To quickly access your CE Diary in the future, simply tap on this shortcut.



Have a QR code reader?  
Access the CE Diary quickly  
by scanning this QR code





