



# FACTSHEET

*CONSUMER EXPENDITURE SURVEY (CE)*

Issued August 2010  
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Internet sites:  
**Bureau of Labor Statistics,  
CE Survey**

[www.bls.gov/cex](http://www.bls.gov/cex)

**Census Bureau**

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

## Examples of Users

- Business establishments
- Private researchers
- Market researchers
- Colleges and universities
- Local, state, and U.S. government agencies

## Uses of CE Data

The only Federal survey providing information on the full range of consumer spending.

- Allows the Department of Defense to determine cost-of-living allowances for U.S. military personnel.
- Provides information to entrepreneurs looking to start a business or allocate resources.
- Provides business and consumer groups with information to study consumer demand on a variety of items.
- Allows researchers to study the demand for goods and services and the shifts in spending patterns over time.

**CONTINUE ON REVERSE SIDE**

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



▶ **Contributes to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).**

The CPI —

- Affects interest rates, wages, pensions, Social Security benefits, dollar amount of tax exemptions, income tax brackets, etc.
- Measures changes in the prices of consumer goods and services.
- Is the only measure compiled by the U.S. government designed to assess change in the purchasing power of consumer dollars.

▶ **Changes to the CPI items are based on information collected in the CE Survey.**

- Adds new items as spending patterns change, for example, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and GPS navigational systems.
- Deletes items that become unimportant, e.g., record players and typewriters.
- Adjusts for changes in spending.

▶ **Used by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to estimate the cost of raising a child for various categories like health care, education, and transportation. Foster care and child support payments are based on CE data.**

▶ **Used by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to help estimate what Americans are spending on health care and who's paying for the care. The CE is one of the few sources in government or private industry to provide information on out-of-pocket health care expenses.**

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

*Helping You Make Informed Decisions*

