



U.S. Census Bureau

Washington, DC 20233

Office of the Director

A message from the U.S. Census Bureau:

We at the Census Bureau, on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, request your participation in the **Consumer Expenditure Survey**. Your response is a service to your community and the country. Answering this survey is a great way to tell the government, businesses, and economists how you are doing in this economy.

With your help on this survey, we can measure things like inflation, which impacts wages, pensions, grocery costs, housing, and healthcare.

We specifically want your help. Your response will give a voice to thousands of other U.S. households.

Your information is confidential and protected by law.

The information you give us is secure. We never share anything with law enforcement or other government agencies that can be traced back to you. Our state-of-the-art systems protect your data from cybersecurity risks. Our employees are trained on how to protect your data.

An interviewer will contact you soon to respond to the survey.

Our employees carry official ID cards and will show them to you when they make contact. You can find out more about the survey on the back of this letter. If you have questions about your interview, feel free to call us at 1-800-992-3530.

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your help!



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I've never heard of this survey before. Doesn't the Census Bureau only operate every ten years?

In addition to our ten-year census, the decennial census, we collect data on various topics through different surveys all the time. We do so to provide up-to-date information on unemployment, spending, family income, housing, and business activities to help monitor the country's economy. You can learn more at www.census.gov.

Is this survey legit?

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved this survey and assigned it the Control Number 1220-0050. This survey could not be conducted without approval from the OMB. You can verify that the survey is an official government survey at www.bls.gov/respondents/cex.

How is my information protected?

Our secure systems are designed to protect your information against cyber threats. Per federal law, your information and responses cannot be used against you by any government agency, nor will it be published to the public (Title 13 U.S. Code, Sections 9 and 214).

What kinds of questions will I be asked on this survey?

For this survey, you and your household will record your spending, over a 2 week period, in either a physical or online diary (one will be provided). Entries will include information like store name, cost, and other basic details.

Why me? Why not interview someone else?

We selected your address, not you personally, through a scientific sampling process. Your household represents thousands of other households in your region, so it is essential that we talk to you. Only you can accurately report how you spend your money.

What if I am retired, ill, unemployed, or just don't spend much money?

We are interested in how all types of households in the United States spend their money, even if it's not much. It is essential to know the purchasing habits across all ages, spending levels, and life situations, even for those who don't spend much. This is especially true for medical and entertainment spending.

How long will the interview take?

It will take less than 20 minutes for both the initial interview and a brief visit to pick up the diary after your two-week period. During the diary pick up, your interviewer will review the diary for completion. Recording your daily expenses should take less than 10 minutes. In rare circumstances, you may be selected for a quality control re-interview. That process takes about 10 minutes.

I have more questions, where can I find answers?

You can learn more about the Consumer Expenditure Survey at www.bls.gov/respondents/cex. Send any questions regarding the time estimate or any other aspect of this survey by email to CEcomments@bls.gov.