

Overview of the Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program

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Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program

CE Microdata Users' Workshop

July 22, 2020



Topics

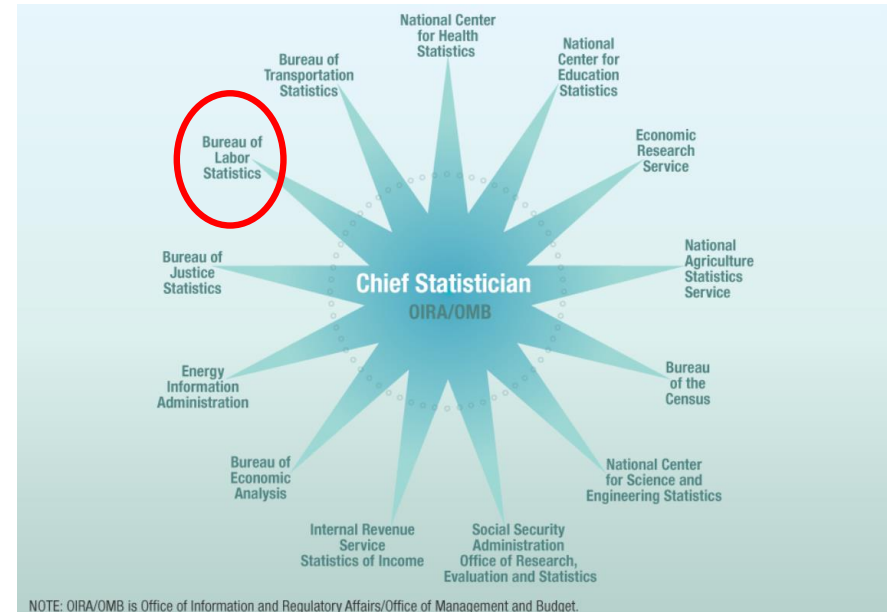
1. CE Program Overview
2. Annual Program Activities
3. CE Data Use



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Overview

- Principal fact-finding agency for the U.S. government in the field of labor economics
- Established in the Department of the Interior in 1884, to collect information about employment and labor; now part of Department of Labor



Core Values

- “Just the Facts”
- Gold standard data
- Transparency & confidentiality

CE Program Mission

- The mission of the CE is to collect, process, and disseminate information that presents a statistical picture of consumer spending for the Consumer Price Index, government agencies, and private data users.
- This mission encompasses analyzing CE data to produce socio-economic studies of consumer spending, and providing CE data users with assistance, education, and tools for working with the data.



CE Survey Overview

- CE data consist of estimates derived from two separate surveys
- The **Quarterly Interview Survey** is designed to collect data on large and recurring expenditures that consumers can be expected to recall for a period of 3 months or longer, such as rent and utilities (approximately 6,000 interviews/quarter)
- The **Diary Survey** is designed to collect data on small, frequently purchased items, including most food and clothing (approximately 3,000 diaries/quarter)
- Together, the data from the two surveys cover the complete range of consumers' expenditures



CE Survey Overview

- CE data are collected for BLS by the U.S. Census Bureau, from consumer units (CUs), in other words people living at one address who share living expenses (in most cases, CUs are the same as households)
- The sample frame is a national probability sample of households designed to be representative of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population
- Respondents report dollar amounts for all non-investment purchases; business expenses and reimbursements are excluded

CE Program Staffing Structure

Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys

- Branch of Information & Analysis
- Branch of Production & Control
- Branch of Research & Program Development
(incl. **Office of Survey Methods Research** consultants)

Division of Consumer Expenditure Information Systems

- Publication & Information Management Systems
- Expenditure & Income Processing Systems

Statistical Methods Division

- Consumer Expenditure Branch

CE Program Workflow

1. Sampling (SMD, P&C, Census)
2. Questionnaire Design and Revisions (P&C, Census)
3. Field Procedures and Training (P&C, Census)
4. Data Collection (P&C, Census)
5. Data Processing and Estimation (P&C, BIA, SMD, CEIS)
6. Data Dissemination, Publications, and Outreach (All)
7. Methods Research, Development, and Evaluation (BRPD, P&C, BIA, SMD)



CE Program Data Products

- CPI Cost Weights
- LABSTAT Database
- Publications
- Public-Use Microdata
- Restricted Microdata
- Tables



CE History – Highlights

- **1888:** First BLS expenditure survey
- **1972:** First use of weekly Diary & 3-month recall Interview
Census Bureau begins survey collection for BLS
- **1979:** Continuous data collection starts
- **2003:** Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) begins
- **2004:** Imputation for missing income data implemented
- **2013:** Model-based estimation of income taxes introduced
- **2013:** 1st publication of midyear tables (July 2011 - June 2012)
- **2015:** Elimination of the first (bounding) interview in Interview
- **2018:** State-level weights released for 2016 and 2017 data,
regular publication of the Data Quality Profile begins
- **2020:** Pre-1996 PUMD & state-level research tables posted



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FY20 Program Activities

Data Collection

- Inputs for Interview and Diary Survey data collection protocol changes, training, and questionnaires

Data Processing

- Interview and Diary Survey processing (2019 & 2020)
- Interview and Diary Survey changes (2019 & 2020)

Data Dissemination

- Midyear Tables released in April 2020 (July 2018–June 2019 data)
- Annual Tables/Public-Use Microdata release in September 2020 (2019 data)

FY20 Program Activities

Publications

- Beyond the Numbers
- Data Comparisons (PCE, CPS, ACS)
- Monthly Labor Review
- Spotlight on Statistics
- Data Quality Profile

Outreach

- Conference Presentations
- Microdata Users' Workshop
- Survey Methods Symposium

Consumer Expenditure Survey Anthology, 2005



U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
April 2005
Report 561



FY20 Program Activities

Research

- Continue CE redesign activities, including fielding, processing, and analysis of the Large Scale Feasibility test of an online diary
- Investigate additional methods to evaluate and reduce measurement error in the CE Survey
- Work with Census to evaluate matched administrative data for potential production use in nonresponse adjustments or imputation models

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CE Customers

- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Census Bureau
- Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Consumer Price Index
- Depts of Agriculture; Defense; Health & Human Services
- Internal Revenue Service
- Media, Market Research, & Academic Research
- *YOU!*



CE Data in Recent External Publications

Generational Spending

- [Why Do Millennials Hate Groceries?](#), The Atlantic

Regional Spending

- [San Diego ranked No. 1 booziest city in America](#), FOX 5 San Diego

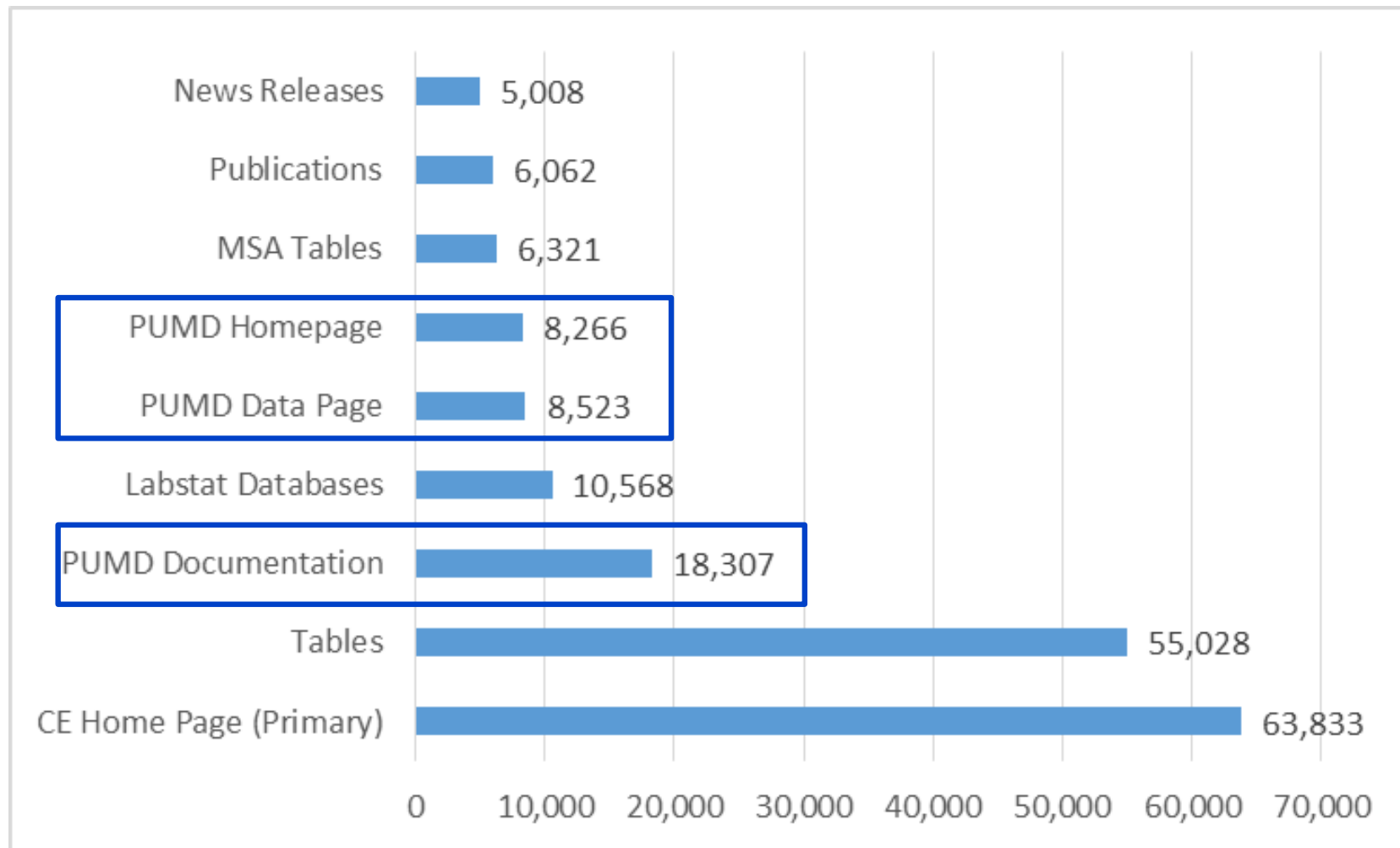
Health Care Spending

- [The Financial Burden of Health Care Spending](#), Kaiser Family Foundation

Policy Analysis

- [Tax Cuts And Jobs Act Begins To Have Positive Impact On Spending Intentions](#), Forbes
- [Annual report on US consumption poverty: 2017 - AEI](#), AEI

Top CE Webpages by Views, Jan-Jun 2019



Contact Information

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