

# Preface

This is the first in a series of reports presenting both analytical articles that use data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Expenditure (CE) Survey and methodological articles that discuss ongoing research and issues pertaining to the survey. In the past, the CE Survey Division published a biennial report that included analytical articles, standard tables of the most recent CE Survey data, a discussion of expenditure changes, and a description of the survey and its methods. The most recent of these was *Consumer Expenditure Survey, 1998–99 Report 955*, published in November 2001. The biennial report will be replaced by two separate biennial reports that will be published in alternating years. One will continue the practice of publishing tables with recent survey data, a brief discussion of recent changes in expenditures, and a description of the survey and its methods. The first of this type of report is *Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2000–2001, Report 969*, published in September 2003. The other, of which this is the first, includes both methodological and analytical articles. The methodological articles are intended to provide data users with greater insight into both ongoing improvements in the survey and issues that are faced in collecting, processing, and publishing information from such a complex survey. The analytical articles furnish information on topics of interest pertaining to CE Survey data.

The CE Survey program provides a continuous and comprehensive flow of data on the buying habits of American consumers for use in a variety of economic analyses and in support of periodic revisions of the Consumer Price Index. BLS makes data available in news releases, reports, bulletins, and articles in the *Monthly Labor Review*, as well as on CD-ROMs and on the Internet.

This report was prepared in the Office of Prices and Liv-

ing Conditions (OPLC), Division of Consumer Expenditure Survey (DCES), under the general direction of Steve Henderson, Chief of the Branch of Information and Analysis, and was produced and edited by John M. Rogers, Section Chief. Articles on research and methodology were contributed by Sioux Groves, Chief of the DCES, Jeff Blaha and Sally Reyes-Morales of the Division of Price Statistical Methods, Geoffrey Paulin of the Branch of Information and Analysis, Linda Stinson of the Office of Survey Methods Research (OSMR), and Nhien To and Jeanette Davis of the Branch of Research and Program Development. Analytical articles were contributed by Abby Duly, George Janini, Eric Keil, Laura Paszkiewicz, and Geoffrey Paulin of the Branch of Information and Analysis and Neil Tseng of the Branch of Production and Control.

The material that follows is divided into two sections: section 1 contains articles on survey research and methodology, and section 2 presents analyses of topics of interest based on CE Survey data. An appendix includes a general description of the survey and its methods and a glossary of terms.

Current and historical CE Survey tables classified by standard demographic variables are available at the BLS Internet site <http://www.bls.gov/cex>. Other survey information, including answers to frequently asked questions, a glossary of terms, order forms for survey products, and *Monthly Labor Review* and other research articles, also is available on the Internet.

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