



A Message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau...

We are contacting you to request your help with an important survey—the Consumer Expenditure Survey. The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this survey for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Your responses help update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is one of the most important tools used to measure how fast consumer prices are rising or declining. It directly affects wages, pensions, and the cost of goods and services. Your response is a service to your community and the country.

Your participation in this survey is essential. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, and Title 29, United States Code. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214). Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

Soon a field representative will contact you for an interview and show you an official identification card. Please welcome him or her.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. If you would like more information, please contact:

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**2300 W EMPIRE AVENUE SUITE 300**  
**BURBANK CA 91504-3399**  
**TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 992-3530**

Thank you for your cooperation in this important survey. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Santos".

Robert L. Santos  
Director



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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
US CENSUS BUREAU  
6950 W JEFFERSON AVENUE SUITE 250  
LAKEWOOD CO 80235-2377  
TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 852-6159**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
US CENSUS BUREAU  
101 MARIETTA STREET NW SUITE 3200  
ATLANTA GA 30303-2700  
TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 424-6974**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
US CENSUS BUREAU  
1111 W 22<sup>ND</sup> STREET SUITE 400  
OAK BROOK IL 60523-1918  
TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 865-6384**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
US CENSUS BUREAU  
32 OLD SLIP 9<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
NEW YORK NY 10005-3504  
TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 991-2520**

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**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**100 S INDEPENDENCE MALL W SUITE 410**  
**PHILADELPHIA PA 19106-2320**  
**TELEPHONE: 1 (800) 262-4236**

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the Census Bureau doing? I thought they only operated every ten years.**

In addition to the decennial census, we collect data on a monthly basis. We collect these data to provide up-to-date information on topics such as unemployment, spending, family income, housing, manufacturing, and business activities to track the country's economy.

### **What is this survey about?**

The Consumer Expenditure Survey measures how people in the United States spend their money on items such as housing, food, education, transportation, and healthcare.

### **Why is this survey important?**

The information you provide will affect wages, pensions, and the cost of goods and services. In addition, people in your community and throughout the country use the survey results for planning public services and addressing consumer needs. Your voluntary response is essential for ensuring that this survey's results are complete and accurate.

### **What kinds of questions will I be asked?**

We will ask about expenses within the last 3 calendar months, such as utilities, maintenance and repairs, home furnishings and electronics, clothing, education, vacations and entertainment, healthcare, and insurance. In some instances, we will ask for details about where an item was purchased. We will also ask you questions about the people who live in your household, such as their ages, and questions about things you already own like cars and property. Collecting bills, receipts, or online statements before the field representative arrives may help reduce the interview time.

### **Why me? Why not interview someone else?**

Through a scientific sampling process, we selected your address, not you personally. Your household represents hundreds of other households in your region, so it is important that we talk to you. Only you can accurately report how you spent your money.

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

We are interested in how all people in the United States spend their money. We can only have a complete picture if we talk to people with different situations. It is very important to know the purchasing habits of people of all ages and of all levels of spending. This is especially true for medical spending and spending on entertainment.

### **How long will the interview take?**

The average interview takes about 65 minutes.

### **Where can I find out more about the survey?**

You can learn more about the survey at the Consumer Expenditure Survey website. The address is [www.bls.gov/respondents/cex](http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cex). Send any comments regarding the time estimate or any other aspect of this survey by email to [CEcomments@bls.gov](mailto:CEcomments@bls.gov).

This survey could not be conducted without a valid OMB Control Number. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned it Control Number 1220-0050.