

Overview of the Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program

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Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program

CE Microdata Users' Workshop

July 18, 2023

Topics

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



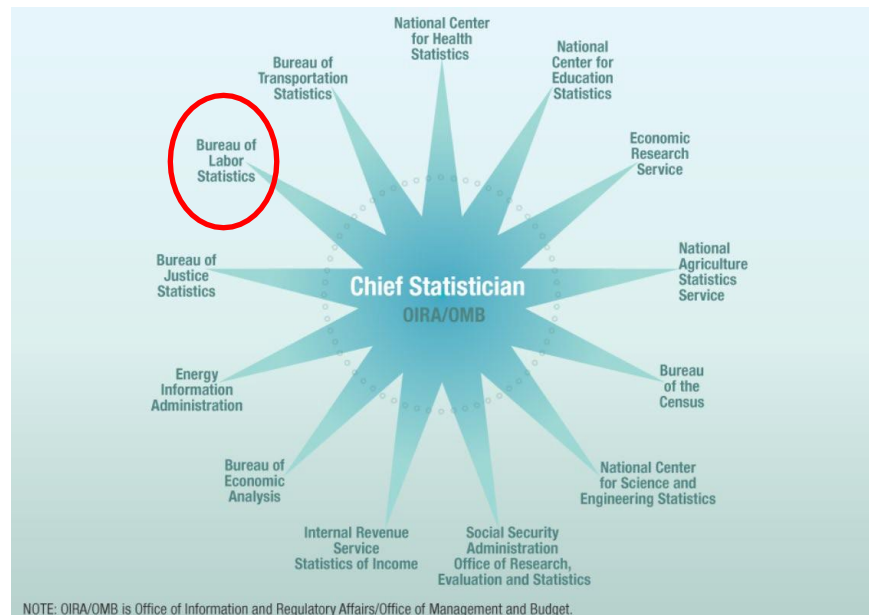
Bureau of Labor Statistics

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 5,000 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
- **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
- **2021:** Midyear PUMD published for the first time
- **2022:** Official implementation of the online diary



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FY23 Program Activities

Data Collection

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

Data Processing

- Interview and Diary Survey changes (2022 & 2023)
- Interview and Diary Survey processing (2022 & 2023)

Data Dissemination

- PUMD released in May 2023 (July 2021– June 2022 data)
- Calendar year tables and PUMD to be released September 8 2023 (2022 data)

FY23 Program Activities

Publications

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

Outreach

- Conference Presentations
- Microdata Users' Workshop

Consumer Expenditure Survey Anthology, 2005



U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
April 2005
Report SA 1



FY23 Program Activities

Research & Development

- CE redesign activities, including revisions related to the phased implementation of the streamlined questionnaire
- Ongoing assessment of Computer Assisted Recorded Interviewing (CARI) results
- Research into split-questionnaire design and alternative modes for the Interview Survey
- Development and planning for the upcoming 2025 sample redesign based on the 2020 Decennial Census
- Research and development for a comprehensive consumption measure



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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

Inflation & Cost of Living

- [Inflation does vary between rural and urban Minnesota](#), Center for Rural Policy and Development
- [Grocery Inflation is Finally Showing Signs of Cooling](#), Whitehouse.gov
- [Diverging Cost of Living](#), Wesleyan University

Spending by Demographic

- [The economic disparity between Hispanic and non-Hispanic White households: An analysis of middle-class achievement](#), American Journal of Economics and Sociology
- [Educational Expenditure of Asian American Families](#), Research in Social Stratification and Mobility
- [An Updated Estimation Model of the Cost of Raising Children in Texas](#), Child & Family Research Partnership

Spending on Goods & Services

- [How to pick the 'right' amount to spend on holiday gifts – according to an economist](#), Oklahoma News
- [Who spends the most time \(and money\) on pets?](#) The Washington Post



Contact Information

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