Information Dissemination and Data Users
Outline

- Disseminating CE Products and Services:
  - Expenditure tables
  - Public use microdata
  - Reports and analysis

- Data Users of the CE and their needs
CE: the Face of America

How you spend your money matters.

As the leader of the American Demographic project, the Bureau of Labor Statistics director of the National Economic Research Center for the New England Economic Research Center, the Census Bureau, and the American Demographic project, the Census Bureau and the National Economic Research Center, it is critical to understand spending behavior trends of America’s households. The project provides comprehensive data on consumer spending for various demographic groups. The BLS survey data provide a detailed understanding of the household spending patterns that are relevant for various purposes such as policy formulation, financial planning, and economic analysis.

Denver

“Households in the Denver area spent less in 2003-2004 than in the previous 2 years but still exceed the typical U.S. household by 18.8 percent.”

Robert Koehler, BLS, 5/15/2005

Atlanta

“...Atlantaans are spending 18.7 percent of annual household expenditures on transportation. Atlantaans spend more on housing, 36.8 percent.”

Jane Perkins, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 8/1/2005

Seattle


Stephen H. Gump, BLS, 3/14/2004

New York City

“The New York family’s expenses in 2003 were about 25 percent higher at $30,330, than the national average. The bulk of that money went toward housing, transportation and food, in that order.”

Published expenditures come from combining Interview and Diary items:

- The two surveys have approximately 225 overlapping detailed expenditure categories (UCC’s) out of 900
- The CE publishes integrated data, selecting just one source for a published expenditure
- In general, the source with the higher mean is selected
- Exceptions are based on insufficient sample size and the need for including reimbursements
We publish Standard Tables on the Web using integrated data from both surveys.

Expenditures by Age, Income, Household size,
Standard Tables on the Web

Expenditures by Education level, Race, Ethnicity, Region,
By income quintile, by Urban/Rural, by family size and age of children, and owner/renter.
Additional on-line CE Tables

In addition, the CE publishes:

- Annual Expenditure Share tables for the same categories
- Aggregate Expenditure Share Tables
- Annual Standard Error Tables – variance data available starting in 2000
- 2-Year cross-tabulated tables, such as consumer unit size by income
- 2-Year Metropolitan Statistical Area tables
Contains the most detailed subcategories.

Table 1782. Housing tenure and type of area: Average annual expenditures and characteristics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Homeowner</th>
<th>Homeowner</th>
<th>Renter</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Central City</th>
<th>Other Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117,719</td>
<td>78,796</td>
<td>50,122</td>
<td>23,300</td>
<td>30,284</td>
<td>79,077</td>
<td>6,589</td>
<td>44,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
<td>59,712</td>
<td>48,032</td>
<td>11,680</td>
<td>6,743</td>
<td>11,483</td>
<td>44,108</td>
<td>4,989</td>
<td>34,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of persons</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age in owner-occupied units</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
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</table>
Public Use Microdata CDs

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics sells CD-ROMs containing annual CE Survey public use microdata
- The CD-ROMs contain Interview survey data, Diary survey data, summary variables, and sample programs
The microdata CDs contain a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of each consumer unit and a description of the reported expenditures and dollar amounts.

Care is taken to protect the confidentiality of the respondents through topcoding or adding noise to the data, and by suppressing some geographic and other details.
Public Use Microdata

- The CE sells approximately 300 of these CDs annually

- Each summer the CE hosts a free workshop for microdata users to learn how to correctly use the data. First held in July 2006

- Hands-on training in the BLS computer labs and information sessions conducted by staff and microdata users
Other CE Data Products

- Press Releases and Annual Report
- Biannual Reports
- CE Research Anthologies
- MLR articles, Quarterly Focus articles, & more
Data Users of the CE and their needs

- CPI
- Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)
- IRS
- U.S. Defense Department
- U.S. Bureau of the Census
- Other Federal Agencies
- State governments
- Businesses
- Researchers
- General Public
The CPI has been moving towards a cost of living index with more frequently updated relative shares.

The weights make a difference – the 2006 Social Security payments indexed to the CPI were higher because the CPI-W showed inflation increased faster for wage earners’ expenditures than for the overall CPI-U.
BEA use of CE data

- The CE provides data on Owners’ Equivalent Rent used in calculating the Group Health Insurance component of Employer Contributions for Employee Pension and Insurance Funds for the national income estimates.
- Used to estimate tenants’ unreimbursed expenditures for major replacements and for maintenance and repairs.
- Used for estimates of motor vehicle leasing and taxicab expenditures.
The CE produces special data tabulations on the purchase of taxable items for use in calculating the sales tax deductions.

The IRS also uses CE data in evaluating standard expenditures and income for targeted groups.
The Defense Department uses CE data in calculating cost-of-living allowances for military personnel not living on military bases.

The CE annually provides 3-year compilations of expenditures by these personnel.
US Census Bureau and Poverty Measures

- US Census Bureau with the BLS Division of Price Index Number Research (DPINR) has done extensive research on alternative and supplemental measures of poverty using CE data.
- These measures are based on recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and observations of a 2010 Interagency Technical Working Group.
- More information is at: http://www.bls.gov/pir/spmhome.htm
US Census Bureau and Construction Put in Place

The Census Bureau uses annual CE data to estimate improvements in residences for their PFEI "Construction Put in Place"
Other Customers

- Federal agencies
- State governments
- Reporters
- Businesses and Attorneys
- Research Firms
- Universities and Students
- General Public
Examples of General Research Needs

- Total expenditures in one time period for a household
- Detailed demographic data – number and ages of persons, education, race, income, taxes, work status and occupation (especially farmer/military, wage earner & clerical) urban/rural, Hispanic origin, etc.
- 12-months of spending for one consumer unit
- Assets and liabilities and accurate savings information
- Housing description
- Information about vehicles
- Supporting information for poverty calculations regarding near-cash income and public transfers
Our most popular web pages according to the number of hits in 2010 were:

- Reports on annual spending
- Research anthologies
- Standard tables by age, income, or household composition
- Our online information about the surveys
Publication Schedule

- CE Data are released annually and are final upon release
- No preliminary estimates