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(6-2016)

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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

We need your help with an important survey, the Consumer Expenditure Survey. The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this survey sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). We need your help to ensure accurate data collection. Soon a field representative will contact you for an interview and show you an official Census Bureau identification card. Please welcome him or her.

Your responses help to improve the quality of the data used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is the most important tool used to measure the inflation rate, or how fast 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; however, you may choose to decline to answer any particular question. Federal law authorizes the collection of this information (Title 13, Section 8, and Title 29, Section 2, of the United States Code), and Sections 9 and 214 of Title 13 require us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential, and to use that information for statistical purposes only."

Included in this letter, you'll find a \$5 bill as an expression of our appreciation for your time and participation in the survey. Additional incentives are also available, up to \$40 in total.

On the back of this letter are answers to questions you may have about this survey. Learn more about the survey at the BLS web site: <http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cex/>. For more information, contact:

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**6950 W JEFFERSON AVE STE 250**  
**DENVER CO 80235-2377**  
**Telephone: 1 (800) 852-6159**

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

## 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 about the country's economy.

### **What is this survey about? What kinds of questions will I be asked?**

The Consumer Expenditure Survey measures how people in the United States spend their money. We will ask questions about things you already own like cars or property. We'll also ask about spending that your household has done over the past three months.

### **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 will happen during the interview?**

An interviewer will come to your home for two interviews. During the first interview, we'll ask questions about your household and ask about your recent purchases.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview, we encourage you to utilize your financial records as you answer additional questions about your expenses, income and assets. During the week between the interviews, we will ask all household members 15 years and older to keep a diary with all the purchases made during that week.

### **What will I get for completing the survey?**

In addition to playing a critical role in this important Survey, you will receive a \$20 debit card after you've finished each interview. An extra \$20 is available, if you collect financial records for the second interview. Finally, each eligible household member that completes a diary will receive a \$20 debit card.

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

Through a scientific process, we selected your address. 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 Americans 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.

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

We expect each interview to take about 45-50 minutes. Additionally, we expect it to take about 40 minutes per week for each household member completing an expenditure diary.

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

You can learn more about the survey by contacting the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Room 3985, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20212. The Consumer Expenditure Survey Website also has information about the survey. The address is: <[www.bls.gov/respondents/cex](http://www.bls.gov/respondents/cex).>

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned it Control Number 1220-0050.