



NEWS ADVISORY



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Orlando, FL Selected as New Sample Area for the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics will begin collecting data for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the Orlando, FL, area in April 2016. According to Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin, the communities of Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties make up one of six new areas in which CPI data will be collected beginning this year, the first addition of new areas to the CPI sample since its 1998 revision. The other areas to be added in 2016 are Clarksburg, WV; Rochester, NY; Flint, MI; Meridian, MS; and Santa Rosa, CA.

The CPI is one of the nation's most important economic indicators. It is a principal gauge of inflation used widely in the formulation and evaluation of economic policy; adjusting COLA payments under many government programs including payments to Social Security beneficiaries, retired military and federal civil service employees and survivors; and adjusting agreements including rentals/leases, collective bargaining and wages and pensions. It is a measure of the average change in prices paid by urban consumers for a fixed market basket of goods and services. It is an estimate based on a group of representative prices paid for items including food, clothing, shelter, fuels, transportation, medical services, and other goods and services people buy for day-to-day living.

The Consumer Price Index periodically updates the geographic areas across the country in which prices are collected. The new design reflects shifts in the U.S. population based on the 2010 Decennial Census. The CPI will transition from the current 87-area design to a new 75-area design over a period of about 5 years. During this time, 21 new areas will be added, and work in 31 current areas will be discontinued. The counties covered in other areas may change as well based on updated information from the Office of Management and Budget.

Representatives from the CPI will make personal visits to explain the voluntary survey to retail establishments selected as a result of telephone surveys conducted last year that asked local residents where they bought various goods and services. They will also visit housing units chosen using statistical methods to represent the local housing market. The interviews are brief and no one will be asked to fill out any forms. Data collected from businesses and households by BLS are held in strict confidence and used for statistical purposes only.

Representatives will carry official identification and are U.S. Department of Labor employees. Local staff members will be part-time Economic Assistants who will be trained to collect data in person and by telephone using hand-held tablet computers. Job announcements for Economic Assistant positions can be found on www.usajobs.gov.

Further information regarding the CPI or the broad range of economic data available from the BLS may be obtained by contacting the Atlanta Regional Office at (404) 893-4222 or by visiting the BLS website at www.bls.gov/.