

1 Sample description

The Consumer Expenditure Survey was begun in the late 1880's as a way to monitor the spending patterns of American consumers. From its inception until 1980, the survey was conducted about every ten years. In 1980, the Census Bureau began administering the CE for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) as a continuous survey, in which a new sample of consumer units (CUs) were drawn every year and interviewed every three months over the twelve-month period. As part of the survey, each CU also completes a diary of expenses for two consecutive 1-week periods. The Interview Survey component is designed to capture larger or regularly occurring expenditures that can be easily remembered over a period of time. The Diary Survey component is designed to capture smaller, more frequent purchases that may not be easily remembered. ** This Measures Snapshot is limited to questions found in the Interview Survey component of the CE.*

2 Project website

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>

Persistent URL through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR):

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR29884>

3 Years covered

Began in the late 1880s and was conducted about every ten years
1980-2010, conducted yearly as a continuous survey

** The year 2009 only, is included in this Family Structure Measures Snapshot*

4 Longitudinal

Yes, data are collected for each quarter of each calendar year.

5 Publicly available

Yes, public data are available from two sources:

1. Data and documentation for 1960-62, 1972-73, and 1980-2009 are available through ICPSR. The data for years 1960-62, 1972-73, and 1980-1995 are available in ASCII text format (column-parameter). The data for years 1996-2006 are available in ASCII and SAS formats. Beginning in 2007, the data are available in SAS, SPSS, Stata, ASCII, and Comma-delimited formats. **To download data, you must belong to a member institution.*

[Link of available Consumer Expenditure Survey files available via ICPSR](#)

2. Public Use Microdata for 2009 are available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for a fee of \$165 (other years are also available and pricing depends on the data product). The data come in SAS, SPSS, Stata, and ASCII (Column-Parameter and Comma-Delimited) formats. Included are Interview, EXPN, and Diary survey data and Interview paradata.

**Note for 2009: Historical paradata (2005-2008) are included with the 2009 release of paradata.*

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxmicro.htm>

Publically available CE data from 1980-1983 are of urban populations **only. Beginning in 1984, all public data includes both urban and rural CUs. The year 1984 also marks the first year in which the interview and diary data were integrated.*

6 Restricted access data available

No

7 Web-accessible analysis

No, but users can create custom tables using the CE Database, One-Screen Data Search tool or the Multi-Screen Data Search tool:

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/data.htm>

8 FAQ page

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxfqs.htm>

9 Data specific bibliography

At ICPSR:

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/biblio/resources?collection=DATA&q=consumer+expenditure+survey>

Other associated publications:

<http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm#publications>

10 Data citation (for most recent available data)

The microdata files are in the public domain and, with appropriate credit, may be reproduced without permission. A suggested citation is: "U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, Interview Survey, 2009".

Citation for data acquired from ICPSR:

United States Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2009: Interview Survey and Detailed Expenditure Files [Computer file]. ICPSR29884-v2. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2011-01-03. doi:10.3886/ICPSR29884

11 List serve/user group/help line

Submit questions regarding CE here:

<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/forms/cex?/cex/csxcont.htm>

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