The CPI-U data set is officially titled “Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers” by the BLS and can be accessed using the series ID “CUUR0000SA0”.

When the data are downloaded, these criteria are included in the output and should match what you see here:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Series Id:** | CUUR0000SA0 |
| **Not Seasonally Adjusted** | |
| **Area:** | U.S. city average |
| **Item:** | All items |
| **Base Period:** | 1982-84=100 |
| **Years:** | 2000 to X (whatever the most recent year available is) |

The process of obtaining the data is as follows:

* Go to the **Series Report** interface at the BLS website: <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/srgate>
* Enter the series name in the box (**CUUR0000SA0**)
* Keep the radio button on “**Table Format**” unless you want some other format- no need to make a change.
* Keep the check box on **Original Data value**- no need to make a change.
* Specify year range starting when you want through the latest year. If the data are not yet available it will provide you with everything that is available. We usually pick up back to **2000** just in case there has ever been any revision in any of the underlying data BLS uses to calculate the CPI-U.
* Select the radio button for “**one time period**” then choose “**Annual data**”
* Hit the **retrieve data** button. This will generate output within the browser window. Check to make sure the dates at the top cover what you wanted, and that above the output data it reads:

“Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers

**Series Id:** CUUR0000SA0

**Not Seasonally Adjusted**

**Area:**  U.S. city average

**Item:** All items

**Base Period:** 1982-84=100”

* When you’re sure you’ve  called the right data, click the download link after the words “**Download:**”

This data is then applied to the appropriate years to inflate to consistent same-year dollars.