Consumer Price Index (CU)

cu.txt

Section Listing

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Section 1

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The following is a definition of: CONSUMER PRICE INDEX - All Urban Consumers (CU)

Survey Description: The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a statistical measure

of change, over time, of the prices of goods and services in major

expenditure groups--such as food, housing, apparel, transportation, and

medical care--typically purchased by urban consumers. Essentially, it

compares the cost of a sample "market basket" of goods and services in a

specific month relative to the cost of the same "market basket" in an

earlier reference period. This reference period is designated as the base

period.

The CPI publishes indexes for two

populations; all urban consumers (CU) and urban wage earners and clerical workers (CW).

To construct the two indexes, thousands of prices for commodities and services purchased by consumers

are collected in a sample of 75 urban places. Rent data is collected in a separate sample of thousands

of rental units. Comparison of indexes for individual CMSA's or cities show only the relative

change over time in prices between locations. These indexes cannot be used

to measure interarea differences in price levels or living costs.

Summary Data Available: U.S. average indexes for both populations are

available for several hundred consumer items and groups of items. In addition,

many of the indexes have been adjusted for seasonality. The indexes are monthly. Different indexes

go back to different years, with the earliest, including all items, dating to 1913. Semi-annual

indexes have been calculated for many items for comparison with

semi-annual areas mentioned below. Semi-annual indexes are available from 1984 forward.

Area indexes for both populations are available for 23 urban places. For

each area, indexes are published for a subset of items and groups. The indexes

are published monthly for three areas and bimonthly for twenty areas. Regional and division level

indexes for both populations are available for a subset of items and groups published. Indexes are

published for four regions and nine divisions. Regional indexes date to 1966; divisional indexes

are newer, dating to 2018. Indexes are monthly, with Semi-annual indexes

also calculated for selected items.

City-size class indexes for both populations are available for two size classes

with a similar subset of groups and items.

Region/city-size indexes (for example, Midwest size class B/C)for both populations are also available monthly.

Frequency of Observations: U.S. city average indexes, regional indexes,

division indexes, size class indexes, and three metro area indexes are monthly. 20 metro area indexes are bimonthly.

Annual Averages: Annual averages are available for all unadjusted series

in the CW and CU.

Base Periods: Most indexes have a base period of 1982-1984 = 100. Other

indexes, mainly newer indexes, are based more recently. The base period value is generally 100.0,

with rare exceptions where the base is set to 1000 to avoid loss of precision. The index

for the "Purchasing Power" values (AAOR and SAOR) have a base period value of 1.000.

Data Characteristics: Indexes are published to three decimal places.

Updating Schedule: Updates become available with the release of new data, typically between the 10th and 14th of the month

following the reference month.

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Section 2

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The following Consumer Price Index (All Urban Consumers) files are on the BLS

internet in the sub-directory pub/time.series/cu:

cu.data.0.Current - All current year-to-date

cu.data.1.AllItems - All items (item\_code AA0, SA0)

cu.data.2.Summaries - Summaries (item\_code SA0, SAF,

SAH, SAA, SAT, SAM, SAR, SAE, SAG,

SAS, SAC)

cu.data.3.AsizeNorthEast - A-Size areas in Northeast

(area\_code A1 ...)

cu.data.4.AsizeNorthCentral - A-size areas in North Central

(area\_code A2 ...)

cu.data.5.AsizeSouth - A-Size areas in South

(area\_code A3 ...)

cu.data.6.AsizeWest - A-Size areas in West

(area\_code A4 ...)

cu.data.7.OtherNorthEast - All other Northeast

(area\_code 01, X1, D1)

cu.data.8.OtherNorthCentral - All other North Central

(area\_code 02, X2, D2)

cu.data.9.OtherSouth - All other in South

(area\_code 03, X3, D3)

cu.data.10.OtherWest - All other in West

(area\_code 04, X4)

cu.data.11.USFoodBeverage - All US Food and Beverage

(area\_code 0000, item\_code SAF, SEF)

cu.data.12.USHousing - All US Housing (area\_code 0000,

item\_code SAH, SEH)

cu.data.13.USApparel - All US Apparel (area\_code 0000,

item\_code SAA, SEA)

cu.data.14.USTransportation - All US Transportation (area\_code

0000, item\_code SAT, SET)

cu.data.15.USMedical - All US Medical (area\_code 0000,

item\_code SAM, SEM, SS57)

cu.data.16.USRecreation - All US Recreation (area\_code 0000,

item\_code SAR, SER, SS31, SS61, SS62)

cu.data.17.USEducationAndCommunication - All US Education and Communication

(area\_code 0000, item\_code SAE,

SEE, SS27)

cu.data.18.USOtherGoodsAndServices - All US Other Goods and Services

(area\_code 0000, item\_code SAG, SEG;

SS33)

cu.data.19.PopulationSize - All Population-size (area\_code

A000, X000, D000)

cu.data.20.USCommoditiesServicesSpecial - All US Commodity and Services and

Special(area\_code 0000, item\_code

SA0, SAC, SAN, SAS)

cu.area - Area codes mapping file

cu.contacts - Contacts for cu survey

cu.footnote - Footnote codes mapping file

cu.item - Item codes mapping file

cu.MapErrors (TBR) - Map error codes mapping file

cu.period - Period codes mapping file

cu.series - All series and their beginning and end dates

cu.txt - General information

Note: TBR = File that will be removed.

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Section 3

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The definition of a time series, its relationship to and the interrelationship

among series, data and mapping files is detailed below:

A time series refers to a set of data observed over an extended period of time

over consistent time intervals (i.e. monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually).

BLS time series data are typically produced at monthly intervals and represent data

ranging from a specific consumer item in a specific geographical area whose price

is gathered monthly to a category of worker in a specific industry whose employment

rate is being recorded monthly, etc.

The download.bls.gov files are organized such that data users are provided with the following

set of files to use in their efforts to interpret data files:

a) a series file (only one series file per survey)

b) mapping files

c) data files

The series file contains a set of codes which, together, compose a series

identification code that serves to uniquely identify a single time series.

Additionally, the series file also contains the following series-level information:

a) the period and year corresponding to the first data observation

b) the period and year corresponding to the most recent data observation

The mapping files are definition files that contain explanatory text descriptions

that correspond to each of the various codes contained within each series

identification code.

The data file contains one line of data for each observation period pertaining to a

specific time series. Each line contains a reference to the following:

a) a series identification code

b) year in which data is observed

c) period for which data is observed (M13, Q05, and S03 indicate annual averages)

d) value

e) footnote code (if available)

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Section 4

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File Structure and Format: The following represents the file format used to define

cu.series. Note that the Field Numbers are for reference only; they do not exist

in the database. Data files are in ASCII text format. Data elements are separated

by spaces; the first record of each file contains the column headers for the data

elements stored in each field. Each record ends with a new line character.

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. series\_id 17 CUSR0000SA0

2. area\_code 4 0400

3. item\_code 8 SA0E

4. seasonal 1 S or U

5. periodicity\_code 1 R

6. base\_code 1 S

7. base\_period 20 1982-84=100

8. begin\_year 4 1947

9. begin\_period 3 M01

10. end\_year 4 2002

11. end\_period 3 M02

The series\_id (CUSR0000SA0) can be broken out into:

Code Value

survey abbreviation = CU

seasonal(code) = S

periodicity\_code = R

area\_code = 0000

item\_code = SA0

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Section 5

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File Structure and Format: The following represents the file format used to define

each data file. Note that the field numbers are for reference only; they do not

exist in the database. Data files are in ASCII text format. Data elements are

separated by spaces; the first record of each file contains the column headers for

the data elements stored in each field. Each record ends with a new line character.

The cu.data file is partitioned into a number of separate files: See Section 2

All of the above-referenced data files have the following format:

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. series\_id 17 CUUR0400AA0

2. year 4 1966

3. period 3 M12

4. value 12 53.3

5. footnote\_codes 10 It varies

The series\_id (CUUR0400AA0) can be broken out into:

Code Value

survey abbreviation = CU

seasonal(code) = U

periodicity\_code = R

area\_code = 0400

item\_code = AA0

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Section 6

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File Structure and Format: The following represents the file format used to define

each mapping file. Note that the field numbers are for reference only; they do not

exist in the database. Mapping files are in ASCII text format. Data elements are

separated by tabs; the first record of each file contains the column headers for the

data elements stored in each field. Each record ends with a new line character.

File Name: cu.area

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. area\_code 4 0100

2. area\_name 80 Text

File Name: cu.footnote

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. footnote\_code 1 R

2. footnote\_text 100 Text

File Name: cu.item

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. item\_code 8 AA0

2. item\_name 100 Text

File Name: cu.period

Field #/Data Element Length Value(Example)

1. period 3 M02

2. period\_abbr 5 FEB

3. period\_name 20 Text (e.g. February)

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Section 7

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CU) DATABASE ELEMENTS

Data Element Length Value(Example) Description

area\_code 4 N or S, ,000-999 Unique code used to identify

Ex: A100 a specific geographic area.

area\_name 80 Text Name of specific geographic

Ex: MIAMI, FLA area.

base\_code 1 S=Standard reference Code identifying the type of

base base period used in index.

A=Alternate reference

base

base\_period 20 Identifies the base The actual base period used

period in calculating the index.

Ex: 1982-84=100

begin\_period 3 M01-M13 or S01-S03 Identifies first data observation

Ex: MO6=June within the first year for which

(M=Monthly, M13=Annual data is available for a given

Avg, S=Semi-Annually) time series.

begin\_year 4 YYYY Identifies first year for which

Ex: 1975 data is available for a given

time series.

end\_period 3 M01-M13 or S01-S03 Identifies last data observation

Ex: M06=June within the last year for which

(M=Monthly, M13=Annual data is available for a given

Avg, S=Semi-Annually) time series.

end\_year 4 YYYY Identifies last year for which

Ex: 1980 data is available for a given

time series.

footnote\_code 1 R Identifies footnote for the data

series.

footnote\_text 100 Text Contains the text of the footnote.

item\_code 8 SA0E Identifies item for which

data observations pertain.

item\_name 100 Text Full names of items.

period\_abbr 5 Text Abbreviation of period name.

Ex: JUN

period 3 M01-M13 or S01-S03 Identifies period for which

Ex: M06=June data is observed.

(M=Monthly, M13=Annual

Avg, S=Semi-Annually)

period\_name 20 Text Full name of period to which

Ex: June the data observation refers.

periodicity\_ 1 S=Semi-Annual Frequency of data

code R=Regular observation.

seasonal 1 S=Seasonally Code identifying whether the

Adjusted data are seasonally adjusted.

U=Unadjusted

series\_id 17 CUSR0000SA0 Code identifying the specific

series.

value 12 53.3 Price index for item.

year 4 YYYY Identifies year of observation.

Ex: 1990