



**THE COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY  
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH**



PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

## COST OF LIVING INDEX QUARTERLY UPDATE

Among the 257 urban areas that participated in the first quarter 2020 *Cost of Living Index*, the after-tax cost for a professional/managerial **standard of living ranged from more than twice the national average in New York (Manhattan) NY to more than 20 percent below the national average in McAllen, TX.** The *Cost of Living Index* is published quarterly by C2ER – The Council for Community and Economic Research. Quarter 1, 2020 marks the 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the publication.

### The Ten Most and Least Expensive Urban Areas in the Cost of Living Index (COLI)

First Quarter 2020

National Average for 257 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	New York (Manhattan) NY	245.7	1	McAllen TX	75.2
2	Honolulu HI	197.6	2	Harlingen TX	75.6
3	San Francisco CA	194.7	3	Kalamazoo MI	78.4
4	New York (Brooklyn) NY	180.5	4	Muskogee OK	80.0
5	Washington DC	160.7	5	Richmond IN	80.2
6	Seattle WA	156.7	6	Joplin MO	80.4
7	Oakland CA	153.9	7	Pittsburg KS	80.6
8	Arlington VA	150.5	8	Tupelo MS	81.4
9	Orange County CA	150.2	9	Amarillo TX	81.4
10	Boston MA	148.8	10	Statesboro-Bulloch County GA	81.7

The *Cost of Living Index* measures regional differences in the cost of consumer goods and services, excluding taxes and non-consumer expenditures, for professional and managerial households in the top income quintile. It is based on more than 90,000 prices covering 60 different items for which prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and university applied economic centers in each participating urban area. Small differences should not be interpreted as showing a measurable difference.

The composite index is based on six component categories – housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services.

## What Do Groceries Cost?

Each quarter, C2ER collects more than 90,000 prices from communities across the US for the Cost of Living Index. With food prices a big part of the national media attention, C2ER decided to once again feature those communities with the most and least expensive food costs as measured by the grocery item index number. C2ER collects data on twenty-six items from a variety of surrogate categories to represent the grocery item component of the index.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Grocery Items by Index Number  
in the Cost of Living Index (COLI)  
First Quarter 2020  
Average for 257 Urban Areas = 100**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	Index
1	Honolulu HI	169.3	1	Kalamazoo MI	74.6
2	New York (Manhattan) NY	144.0	2	Temple TX	78.4
3	Juneau AK	139.2	3	Waco TX	78.6
4	Oakland CA	135.5	4	Harlingen TX	80.4
5	New York (Brooklyn) NY	133.9	5	Cedar Park TX	81.5

## The Most Expensive and Least Expensive Cities to Access Newspapers Digitally

Starting this year, the Index updated several items to better reflect goods and services readily available to people across the United States. Part of this update included shifting the collection of monthly newspaper prices from home delivery to digital access only. With this new data, we thought users would be interested to compare the top five most and five least expensive cities to access newspapers digitally per month.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Monthly Digital Access to a Local Newspaper  
First Quarter 2020  
Average for 257 Urban Areas = \$10.66**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price	Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price
1	Fayetteville AR	\$34.00	1	Stockton CA	\$2.08
2	Little Rock-N. Little Rock AR	\$34.00	2	Rockford IL	\$2.08
3	Boston MA	\$30.03	3	Spartanburg SC	\$2.50
4	Chattanooga TN	\$27.67	4	Peoria IL	\$2.92
5	Texarkana TX-AR	\$25.00	5	Columbus OH	\$3.33

The quarterly Cost of Living Index is available by subscription for \$175 per year for the print version and \$165 per year for the PDF. The electronic version is available for \$275 per year. Be sure and ask about our new Expanded Excel version which covers more household and income types. Send check, payable to C2ER, P.O. Box 100127, Arlington VA 22210-0407, or subscribe on the Internet at [www.coli.org](http://www.coli.org).

If you need additional information on the Cost of Living Index or other COLI-related products such as the COLI Web Calculator and the COLI Historical Index, please contact Jennie Allison at [jallison@crec.net](mailto:jallison@crec.net) or by phone at 703-522-4980.