



**THE COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH**



PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

COST OF LIVING INDEX QUARTERLY UPDATE

Among the 273 urban areas that participated in the third 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 Harlingen, TX.** The *Cost of Living Index* is published quarterly by C2ER – The Council for Community and Economic Research.

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

Third Quarter 2020

National Average for 273 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	New York (Manhattan) NY	248.6	1	Harlingen TX	75.6
2	Honolulu HI	199.3	2	McAllen TX	77.6
3	San Francisco CA	194.5	3	Kalamazoo MI	77.9
4	New York (Brooklyn) NY	180.2	4	Amarillo TX	80.4
5	Washington DC	159.5	5	Pittsburg KS	80.6
6	Seattle WA	156.7	6	Tupelo MS	80.9
7	Oakland CA	154.7	7	Richmond IN	81.3
8	Boston MA	151.7	8	Muskogee OK	81.3
9	Arlington VA	150.0	9	Joplin MO	81.5
10	Orange County CA	148.5	10	Conway AR	81.6

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 still being a big part of the national conversation, 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) Third Quarter 2020 Average for 273 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	Index
1	Honolulu HI	176.8	1	Kalamazoo MI	77.7
2	New York (Manhattan) NY	151.7	2	Temple TX	78.7
3	New York (Brooklyn) NY	138.2	3	Harlingen TX	80.2
4	Juneau AK	136.6	4	Waco TX	81.7
5	Oakland CA	133.2	5	Cedar Park TX	82.1

The Most Expensive and Least Expensive Cities to Purchase Gasoline

From the beginning of this year, the price of gas has shifted a significant amount from previous quarters. With the ongoing pandemic more people are relying on personal transport than public transportation options to commute and taking more trips via car instead of flying. As a result of these factors, we are interested in comparing the top five most expensive and five least expensive cities to buy gasoline.

The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for A Gallon of Gasoline Third Quarter 2020 Average for 273 Urban Areas = \$2.123

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price	Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price
1	San Francisco CA	\$3.329	1	Green Bay WI	\$1.505
2	Oakland CA	\$3.284	2	Casper WY	\$1.646
3	Sacramento CA	\$3.236	3	Baton Rouge LA	\$1.683
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach CA	\$3.159	4	Texarkana TX-AR	\$1.697
5	Honolulu HI	\$3.141	5	Wichita Falls TX	\$1.701

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 12546, Arlington VA 22209, or subscribe on the Internet at 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 or by phone at 703-522-4980.