



Collecting Data to Set Cost of Attendance Component Amounts

U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics Tutorial

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics tutorial provides an example of how to use a one screen-data search to get the consumer price index (CPI) for all urban customers

Access the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics tutorial at: http://www.bls.gov/tutorial/one_screen/

- Turn off all pop-up blockers or select allow pop-ups for this site only.
- Turn up the volume.
- Select the play button on the media player.
- Listen to the tutorial, which takes approximately two minutes.

Example: Adjusting Off-Campus Housing Costs Data Collected in 2008 to Reflect 2010 Costs

The Financial Aid Director at University located in the greater Baltimore – Washington D.C. metro area worked collaboratively with the University's institutional research office to develop the student budget questionnaire in the *Cost of Attendance Survey Template* handout several years ago. The institutional research office conducted a Web survey; collected, compiled, and analyzed the data; and provided the financial aid office with an average annual cost of \$6,742.40 for off-campus housing for the local area in 2008. To obtain the CPI information needed to adjust the off-campus housing amount:

Access the Bureau of Labor Statistic website at: <http://www.bls.gov/>

- Click on the Databases and Tables tab.
- Scroll down to the *All Urban Consumers (Current Series)* database under *Inflation and Prices*.
- Click on the one-screen data search icon.
- The default view is automatically set to *View items within an area*. We will use this setting for our example. If the view is set to *View areas within an item*, change it by selecting the *View items within an area* radio button.

After you have selected the correct view, complete the following steps:

Step 1 - Select the geographical location for your school. For example, if your school is located in Washington, D.C., you would select *Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV*, which is what we will use for the purpose of our example.

Step 2 - Select *Housing*.

Step 3 - *Both Seasonally Adjusted and Not Seasonally Adjusted* are the defaults for *Select Seasonal Adjustment*. We will use this default for our example. If one or both items are not selected by default, select them now.

Step 4 - Select *Get Data*.

When the results appear, change the output date range to reflect *From: 2008 To: 2010*.

You should get the following results:

Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers Original Data Value

Series Id: CUUSA311SAH,CUURA311SAH

Not Seasonally Adjusted

Area: Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV

Item: Housing

Base Period: NOVEMBER 1996=100

Years: 2008 to 2010

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	HALF1	HALF2
2008	145.925		147.801		148.653		152.356		151.671		150.305		149.648	147.993	151.304
2009	150.681		151.674		152.349		153.811		152.940		151.131		152.120	151.828	152.411
2010	151.224		151.484		151.863		153.215							151.689	

Step 5 - Calculate the change in the CPI for the first half of 2008 to first half of 2010 as follows:

$$151.689 - 147.993 = 3.696 \text{ or } 3.696\%$$

Step 6 - Adjust our housing amount from 2008 to reflect 2010 as follows:

$$\$6,742.40 \times 3.696\% = \$249.20 \text{ adjustment amount for inflation}$$

$$\$6,742.40 + 249.20 = \$6,991.60$$