

budgets for any period later than June 1947. Changes in the consumers' price index of the BLS do not reflect accurately changes in the budget costs, since there are differences in the items included in the budgets and in the index as well as variations in the relative importance of the various items. Between March 1946 and June 1947, the two periods for which accurate budget costs are available, the cost of the budgets rose less rapidly than the index. In other economic situations the relationship might be reversed.

To derive an approximate estimate of the current cost of the budget for an elderly couple, it has been assumed, however, that from June 1947 to the present the relationship between changes in the cost of the budget and changes in the index has been the same as in the period March 1946-June 1947. On this assumption, estimates have been made (table 3) of the cost of the total budget for each of the 13 cities for which earlier cost figures are available, in the latest month for which the consumers' price index for that city has been computed. Data are not available on which to base similar estimates for the several items in the budget.

Table 3.—Annual cost of budget for elderly couple in 13 selected cities in March 1946 and June 1947 and approximate cost in early 1949

City	Annual cost of budget		
	March 1949	June 1947	March 1946
Boston, Mass.....	\$1,720	\$1,638	\$1,455
Chicago, Ill.....	1,720	1,618	1,419
Denver, Colo.....	¹ 1,620	1,519	1,336
Detroit, Mich.....	1,720	1,643	1,456
Houston, Tex.....	1,440	1,365	1,169
Indianapolis, Ind.....	¹ 1,640	1,553	1,378
Minneapolis, Minn.....	1,580	1,476	1,291
Mobile, Ala.....	1,520	1,444	1,265
New York, N. Y.....	1,780	1,692	1,483
Portland, Oreg.....	¹ 1,630	1,539	1,387
St. Louis, Mo.....	1,620	1,540	1,374
San Francisco, Calif.....	1,710	1,605	1,420
Washington, D. C.....	² 1,830	1,767	1,573

¹ Based on consumers' price index for January 1949.
² Based on consumers' price index for February 1949.

Family Benefits

At the end of 1948, monthly benefits under old-age and survivors in-

surance were being paid to at least one member of almost 1.6 million families (table 1). Almost two-thirds of the families receiving benefits were retired worker families. The relative number of survivor families, which in 1944 made up 39 percent of all beneficiary families, has dropped continuously since then and at the end of 1948 was 34 percent of the total. While the proportion of other types of survivor families decreased, the proportion of families in which only an aged widow was receiving benefits increased from 10.9 percent at the end of 1944 to 13.2 percent at the end of 1948.

Payments to retired workers with no dependents receiving benefits averaged \$25.80 for men and \$20.10 for women. The average for a retired worker and his wife was \$40.40. For survivor families, the average benefits ranged from \$13.40 for a family in which only one child was receiving benefits to \$53.00 for a family consisting of a widowed mother and three or more children receiving benefits.

A comparison of family benefits in current-payment status at the end of 1948, 1946, and 1944 (the first year for which such information is available) is presented in table 1. For each fam-

ily classification—except families with a retired worker, wife, and child receiving benefits, for which the sample is too small to be significant—the average benefit increased, mainly because each year the average award was larger.

This increase in the average amount awarded was due to the change in the method of computing primary benefit amounts, as authorized by the 1946 amendments to the Social Security Act; the higher wages on which the benefits were based; and the increased number of annual increments used in computing benefit amounts. Awards to survivors of certain veterans of World War II, under section 210 of the Social Security Act as amended in 1946, and awards under the 1946 amendments to the Railroad Retirement Act also contributed to the increase. Other provisions of the 1946 amendments to the Social Security Act authorized procedures for recomputing and thereby increasing certain benefits already on the rolls. The amendments also provided for recomputation of benefits to take into account wages earned by a primary beneficiary after entitlement to benefits.

A distribution of the relative num-

Table 1.—Number of families and beneficiaries in receipt of benefits at end of 1948, and average monthly benefit in current-payment status at end of 1948, 1946, and 1944, by family group

[Based on 20-percent sample; average benefits shown to the nearest 10 cents; data corrected to June 6, 1949]

Family classification of beneficiaries	Number of families (in thousands)	Number of beneficiaries (in thousands)	Average monthly amount per family		
			1948	1946	1944
Total.....	1,590.8	2,314.6	-----	-----	-----
Retired worker families.....	1,048.0	1,394.7	-----	-----	-----
Worker only.....	708.4	708.4	\$24.60	\$23.90	\$23.00
Male.....	560.1	560.1	25.80	24.90	24.10
Female.....	148.4	148.4	20.10	19.60	19.30
Worker and wife.....	320.7	641.5	40.40	39.00	37.90
Worker and 1 child.....	12.1	24.2	39.10	37.20	35.70
Worker and 2 or more children.....	6.5	20.0	48.60	47.40	44.60
Worker, wife, and 1 or more children ¹2	.6	53.10	51.30	48.50
Survivor families.....	542.8	919.9	-----	-----	-----
Aged widow.....	210.1	210.1	20.60	20.20	20.20
Widowed mother only ²	4.7	4.7	20.80	19.90	19.90
Widowed mother and 1 child.....	72.6	145.2	36.00	34.60	34.40
Widowed mother and 2 children.....	41.2	123.6	49.80	48.20	47.30
Widowed mother and 3 or more children.....	23.9	97.5	53.00	51.40	50.10
1 child only.....	95.9	95.9	13.40	13.00	12.90
2 children.....	43.4	86.7	26.20	25.10	24.90
3 children.....	17.5	52.5	37.10	35.50	35.10
4 or more children.....	22.5	91.8	48.60	46.80	45.80
1 aged parent.....	10.1	10.1	13.70	13.20	13.20
2 aged parents.....	.9	1.8	26.70	25.60	24.70

¹ Figures subject to large probable sampling error because too few cases in sample.

² Benefits of child or children were being withheld at end of 1948.

ber of families in each classification, by the amount of the monthly benefit they receive, shows concentration at amounts corresponding to primary benefit amounts of \$20-30 and at the minimum benefit amounts (table 2). There is also some concentration at the maximum amounts.

The maximum benefit of \$85 went to about 1,000 families. This number is low because of the necessary combination of conditions governing the primary benefit amount and family classification of beneficiaries. The maximum benefit can now be paid only to families consisting of a retired worker and two or more dependents, or of four or more children, or of a widowed mother and three or more children. Before 1943 it was impossible for a family to receive the \$85 maximum because a family benefit is limited to twice the primary benefit amount, and the maximum primary benefit possible in 1942 was \$42.40. At the end of 1944, only about 300 families were receiving benefits totaling \$85; by the end of 1946, the number had increased to almost 700 families.

In families in which only the re-

tired worker was receiving benefits, 6 percent of the men and almost 15 percent of the women were receiving the minimum of \$10. Less than 6 percent of the families consisting of a retired worker and wife and 5 percent of those with a retired worker and one child receiving benefits were receiving the minimum family benefit of \$15.

The distribution of all retired workers receiving benefits, by amount of primary benefit, is as follows:

Primary benefit	Total	Men	Women
Total number.....	1,047,985	899,632	148,353
Total percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
\$10.00.....	7.4	6.2	14.6
10.01-14.99.....	8.2	7.0	15.3
15.00-19.99.....	9.0	8.0	14.9
20.00-24.99.....	25.6	24.6	32.2
25.00-29.99.....	20.8	21.7	15.4
30.00-34.99.....	14.2	15.7	4.7
35.00-39.99.....	8.4	9.5	1.7
40.00-44.80.....	6.4	7.3	1.1

The proportion of primary beneficiaries receiving the \$10 minimum has shown a downward trend during the past 4 years, dropping from 8.4 percent at the end of 1944 to 7.4 percent at the close of 1948. Almost 46 percent of the men and 77 percent of the

women were receiving benefits of less than \$25 at the end of 1948. Less than 3 percent of the women were receiving benefits of \$35 or more, as compared with 17 percent of the men.

Applicants for Account Numbers, 1948

The year-to-year decline in the number of social security account-number applicants that began in 1943 came to a virtual halt in 1948. Though fewer account numbers (2,720,000) were issued than in any previous year, the year's decline was only 0.3 percent, as compared with declines of 9 percent and 10 percent, respectively, in 1946 and 1947 (table 1). The relatively small drop in the number of applicants in 1948 is attributable chiefly to the unusually large seasonal expansion of job opportunities in April-June and July-September and the consequent extraordinary rise in the number of account-number applicants during those 2 quarters. Applicants

Table 2.—Percentage distribution of beneficiary families by monthly amount of family benefit in current-payment status at end of 1948, for each specified family group in receipt of benefits

[Based on 20-percent sample; average benefits shown to the nearest 10 cents; data corrected to June 6, 1949]

Monthly family benefit amount	Retired worker only		Retired worker and wife	Retired worker and 1 child	Aged widow	Widowed mother and children			Children only			
	Male	Female				1 child	2 children	3 or more children	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 or more children
Total number ¹	560,100	148,400	320,700	12,100	210,100	72,600	41,200	23,900	95,900	43,400	17,500	22,500
Total percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than \$10.00.....					² 0.9				³ 4.5	³ 0.1		
10.00-14.99.....	⁴ 13.9	⁵ 29.9			16.2	4.2			65.9	10.7	⁶ 0.9	⁷ 0.1
15.00-19.99.....	8.4	14.9	⁸ 9.8	⁸ 8.8	31.4	3.6	4.3		25.1	8.0	10.2	⁸ 2
20.00-24.99.....	25.3	32.2	4.7	4.6	27.0	4.5	2.6		⁹ 8.1	24.5	5.0	12.1
25.00-29.99.....	21.9	15.4	4.9	5.6	14.1	15.7	2.9		¹⁰ 4.4	24.7	6.5	5.4
30.00-34.99.....	15.2	4.7	14.6	17.1	⁹ 10.5	18.3	3.8			19.8	18.4	5.2
35.00-39.99.....	8.9	1.7	16.0	19.9		18.2	9.8			8.1	18.6	5.1
40.00-44.99.....	¹⁰ 6.4	¹⁰ 1.1	13.9	14.2		16.6	12.7			¹⁰ 4.1	15.5	9.1
45.00-49.99.....			11.8	11.2		9.8	13.4				12.8	14.4
50.00-54.99.....			9.1	7.8		8.6	11.9				7.4	13.0
55.00-59.99.....			6.4	5.4		¹¹ 2.4	14.0				2.8	9.7
60.00-64.99.....			5.7	3.3			9.7				1.6	8.8
65.00-69.99.....			¹² 3.2	¹² 2.0			6.3				¹³ 3	7.9
70.00-74.99.....							5.4					4.3
75.00-79.99.....							¹³ 3.2					2.3
80.00-84.99.....												1.2
85.00.....												.9
Average monthly amount per family.....	\$25.80	\$20.10	\$40.40	\$39.10	\$20.60	\$36.00	\$49.80	\$53.00	\$13.40	\$26.20	\$37.10	\$48.60

¹ Families with retired worker, wife, and child, or retired worker and 2 or more children, or widowed mother only, or 1 or 2 aged parents not shown because too few cases in sample.

² Widow's benefit reduced to less than \$10 by primary benefit to which widow was concurrently entitled.

³ Family benefit is less than minimum amount because 1 or more additional family members were entitled to benefits which were being withheld at end of 1948.

⁴ 6.5 percent at \$10 minimum.

⁵ 14.6 percent at \$10 minimum.

⁶ 5.6 percent at \$15 minimum.

⁷ 4.8 percent at \$15 minimum.

⁸ \$22.40 maximum possible in 1948.

⁹ \$33.60 maximum possible in 1948.

¹⁰ \$44.80 maximum possible in 1948.

¹¹ \$56.00 maximum possible in 1948.

¹² \$67.20 maximum possible in 1948.

¹³ \$78.40 maximum possible in 1948.