

# Consumer Price Index User Survey Results

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U.S. Department of Labor  
Alexis M. Herman, Secretary

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Katharine G. Abraham, Commissioner

September 1998

Report 921

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# Preface

This report presents the results of a CPI user survey-study conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in 1996. Staff members of the Bureau's Consumer Price Index program conducted this CPI User Survey; and Thomas Mosimann, based upon the team efforts of Bryan Richardson, Claire Gallagher, Henry Ostman, Gary Gregson, and Thomas Mosimann, prepared this report. Margaret Jones of the Office of Publications and Special Studies designed the cover.

The Office of Management and Budget approved this

survey-study, which was authorized by Public Law 29 U.S.C.2.

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# Background

## Responses

The 1996 CPI User Survey was conducted between March and July 1996. Questionnaires were sent out to over 2600 CPI users. About 1200 responses were received for a response rate of over 40 percent. (For more information on response rates of this survey-study, refer to the appendix at the back of this booklet.)

## User groups

Respondents to the CPI User Survey fit into eight differ-

ent groups defined according to the methods they use to get CPI information. (The eight user groups designated by these methods are listed in the table below, along with estimates of the number of users in each group.) Each user group received a slightly different questionnaire. Each of these eight questionnaires included a section designed specifically for its user group, while the rest of the questionnaire was identical to those for all the other groups. Estimates of group size were developed in 1995, and the sizes of the groups differ significantly. (The sizes for each group have since changed.)

User group	Group size	Definition of core product or service
<b>CPI Detailed Report readers</b>	7,900 on mailing list	The <i>CPI Detailed Report</i> is the most comprehensive report of the CPI. It is a monthly periodical available on a subscription basis.
<b>U.S. summary data news release readers</b>	28,000 on mailing list	The summary data news release is a free, monthly, two-page publication containing some of the most popular indexes.
<b>Regional or local release readers</b>	88,000 on mailing list	BLS regional offices produce news releases that are designed for users of their region, featuring information on cities in the region.
<b>Quickline recording callers</b>	1,500 monthly callers	The CPI Quickline is a 2 ½-minute recording with CPI information for the U.S. and Washington, DC. A touch-tone telephone is not needed.
<b>Telephone callers</b>	32,000 monthly callers	Staff members are available to answer questions directly, via telephone in the Washington office and in the regional offices.
<b>Fax recipients</b>	2,300 monthly recipients	CPI information is available via fax, either from an automated system or from a personal request to a staff member.
<b>Personal (U.S. Postal Service) mail recipients</b>	4,200 monthly recipients	CPI information is mailed to users upon request.
<b>Internet users</b>	not available	CPI information is available through the Internet at <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> . This information is free and available at the scheduled release time.

# Survey-study results

Results of the 1996 CPI User Survey show that CPI users who responded registered a high level of satisfaction with CPI products and services.

The following set of charts, tables, and text summarizes the results of the 1996 CPI User Survey. Information collected in the survey-study was summarized for all respondents and for each specific user group.

The response percentages per question are based on the percent answering that particular question. Response rates for the survey by group are provided in the appendix.

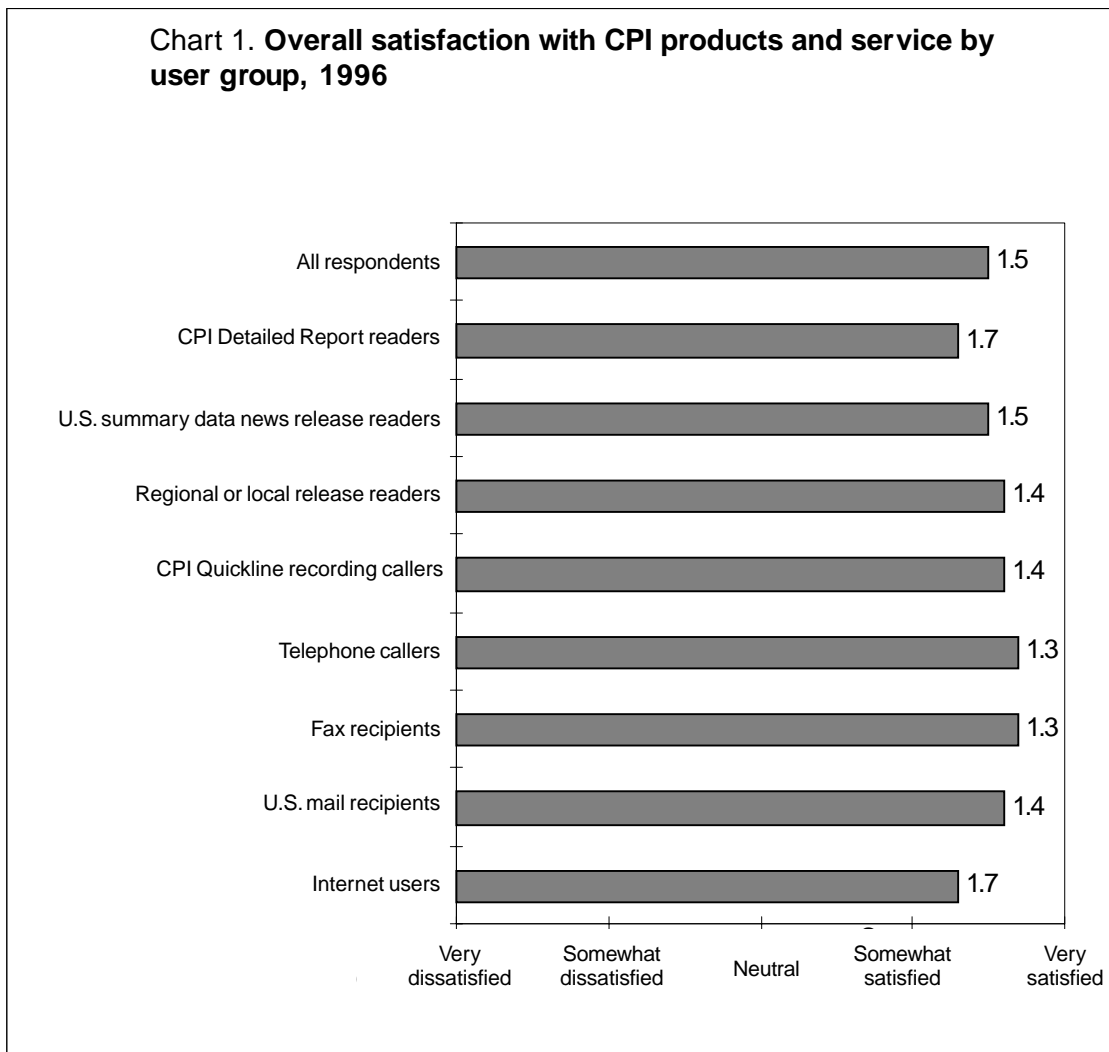
## **Interpreting the results**

The separate questionnaires for each group were intended to be independent, so the results from each group represent the respondents for that group alone. The responses for each group were *not* adjusted to represent the total number of users in each group. Therefore, caution should be exercised when using the combined results from all respondents. These overall results do not represent all CPI information users but only the combined total of all persons who responded to the survey.

## Overall CPI satisfaction by user group

As chart 1 shows, respondents from each of the user groups surveyed gave high satisfaction ratings in response to the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?” On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equaled “Very satisfied,” 2 equaled “Somewhat

satisfied,” 3 equaled “Neutral,” etc., within-group averages ranged between 1 and 2 for all groups. The two respondent groups registering the highest levels of overall satisfaction—each with a level of 1.3—were telephone callers and fax recipients.



## User priorities and satisfaction, all respondents

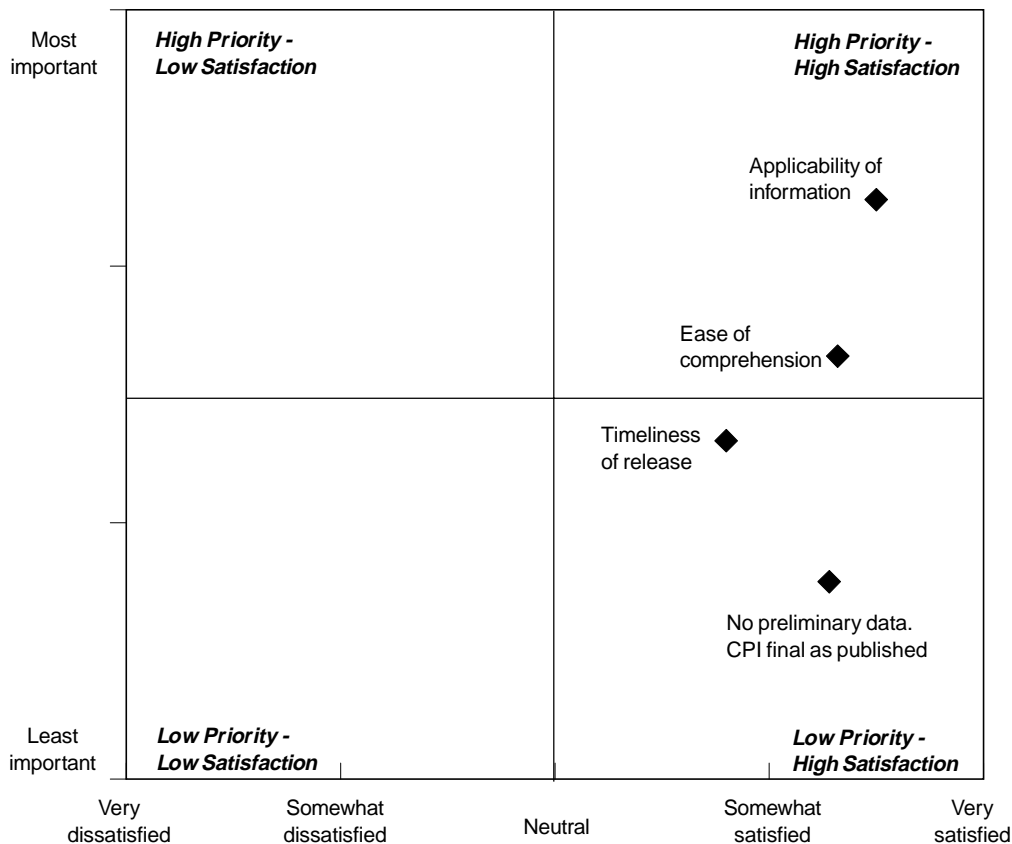
This chart compares user priorities with user satisfaction. The top right quadrant includes factors where users reported a high priority and are satisfied with what they receive. The bottom right box is where there is also high reported satisfaction, higher in fact than the priority given to the factor. The top left quadrant shows factors to be concerned with—factors that have high priority and low satisfaction. The bottom left box shows factors with low priority and low satisfaction.

Factors rated in this chart and in subsequent charts are ones that BLS considers to be vital to customer service. For each, the factors were selected with service for that par-

ticular CPI user group in mind. Other factors could have been selected, but the ones that were chosen, including factors rated by respondents as less important, were thought by BLS to provide the best assessment of service to our customers.

All four factors were rated highly on the satisfaction scale by the group of all respondents while the importance varied for each factor. "Applicability of information" was rated the most important factor and also the one with which respondents were most satisfied. "Timeliness of release," the third most important of four factors, received the lowest satisfaction ratings.

Chart 2. All respondents, importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of CPI information, 1996



## Satisfaction and importance of CPI service factors by user group

Ratings for satisfaction and importance of characteristics of the CPI were similar across respondents of different user groups. Most of the group ratings fell between “satisfied” and “very satisfied” (between 1 and 2). The highest (worst) rating of any factor was given by *CPI Detailed Report* readers to the timeliness of the CPI, but was still on the satisfied portion of the scale, between “neutral” and “satisfied.” All respondent groups, except Internet users, were more satis-

fied with the other three factors than with the timeliness of the CPI.

For every group except *Detailed Report* readers, the applicability of data to the user’s needs was most important, followed by the ease of comprehension, the timeliness, and lastly the CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data. *Detailed Report* readers gave greater importance to timeliness than to ease of comprehension.

Table 1. Satisfaction and importance of CPI information characteristics by CPI user group, average rating, 1996

CPI respondent group	Applicability	Ease of comprehension	Timeliness	No preliminary data
<b>All respondents</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.5	1.7	2.2	1.8
Importance .....	1.7	2.4	2.7	3.2
<b>CPI Detailed Report readers</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.7	1.9	2.8	1.9
Importance .....	1.9	2.4	2.4	3.3
<b>U.S. summary data news release readers</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.6	1.6	2.0	1.6
Importance .....	1.9	2.2	2.8	3.2
<b>Regional or local release readers</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.5
Importance .....	1.6	2.3	2.9	3.2
<b>CPI Quickline recording callers</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.4	1.6	2.2	1.7
Importance .....	1.8	2.4	2.6	3.2
<b>Telephone callers</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.4	1.7	2.1	1.7
Importance .....	1.6	2.4	2.8	3.2
<b>FAX recipients</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.4	1.6	2.2	1.8
Importance .....	1.6	2.3	2.8	3.3
<b>U.S. mail recipients</b>				
Satisfaction .....	1.5	1.6	2.1	1.6
Importance .....	1.7	2.3	2.8	3.1
<b>Internet users</b>				
Satisfaction .....	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
Importance .....	1.8	2.3	2.5	3.3

Note: Satisfaction ratings represent average satisfaction scores for each category and group. In calculating these averages, Very satisfied counted as 1, Somewhat satisfied as 2, Neutral as 3, Somewhat

dissatisfied as 4, and Very dissatisfied as 5.

Also, importance ratings represent the average for each category and group where 1 is the most important and 4 the least.



## Use and awareness of CPI products and services

The CPI is used for many purposes. Survey participants were asked to identify all their uses for CPI data, as well as their single most important use. The results are presented in chart 3. Table 2 shows the same information for each of the user groups, as well as for all respondents.

Measuring general inflation was the most common use of CPI information for the combined group of all respondents, as well as for all individual groups except Quickline callers and telephone callers.

Escalating payments was the most common *primary* use among all respondents. It was also the most common *primary* use among five out of the eight specific user groups.

*Detailed Report* respondents were more likely than persons from other user groups to use the CPI for four of the six purposes listed. The purposes for which other group respondents were more likely to use the CPI were: escalating payments (Quickline and telephone callers were most likely) and deflating other series (fax recipients were most likely).

The CPI program provides a great deal of information. To be able to improve specific areas of customer service, the user survey asked what types of CPI information people use. Chart 4 shows percentages of use for different types of information by all respondents.

The CPI-U is by far the most commonly used type of CPI information available. Eighty-six percent of all respondents use the CPI-U, while 45 percent use the next-highest type, the CPI-W. One additional type of informa-

tion—average price information—is used by more than 10 percent of respondents.

User awareness of CPI information is also crucial to providing good customer service, and the Bureau is committed to increasing this awareness of its information products and services.

Ninety-five percent of all respondents reported being aware of “consumer price indexes.” That percentage is nearly three times as large as the next highest awareness totals of 37 percent for both average prices and seasonal factors. After these two, there is another large gap before awareness of variances is reported at 13 percent.

One interesting observation is that while a fair number of respondents were aware of both seasonal factors and average prices (37 percent for each), only 8 percent used seasonal factors. In contrast, 23 percent used average prices.

More respondents were aware of the *CPI Detailed Report* than any other CPI information source. The second most widely known source was another printed and mailed source of information, the U.S. summary data news release. Among the sources listed here, the Bureau’s automated fax system was known to only 9 percent of respondents (excluding respondents from the fax sample list), the smallest percentage reported.

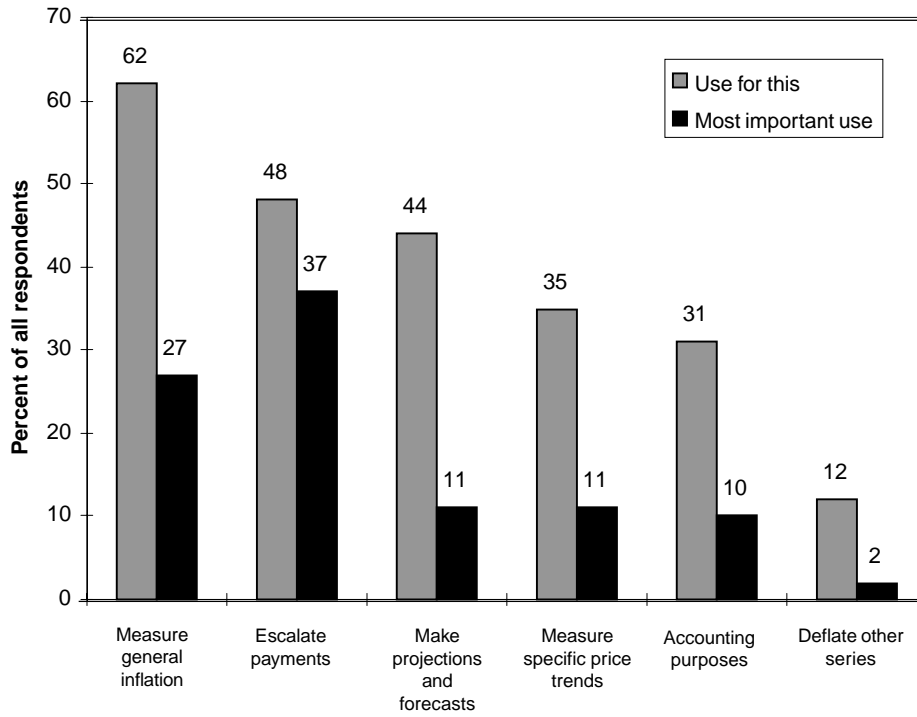
The availability of CPI information on the Internet was known to just 17 percent of non-Internet respondents.

Table 2. Uses and primary uses of CPI information by CPI user group, 1996, in percent

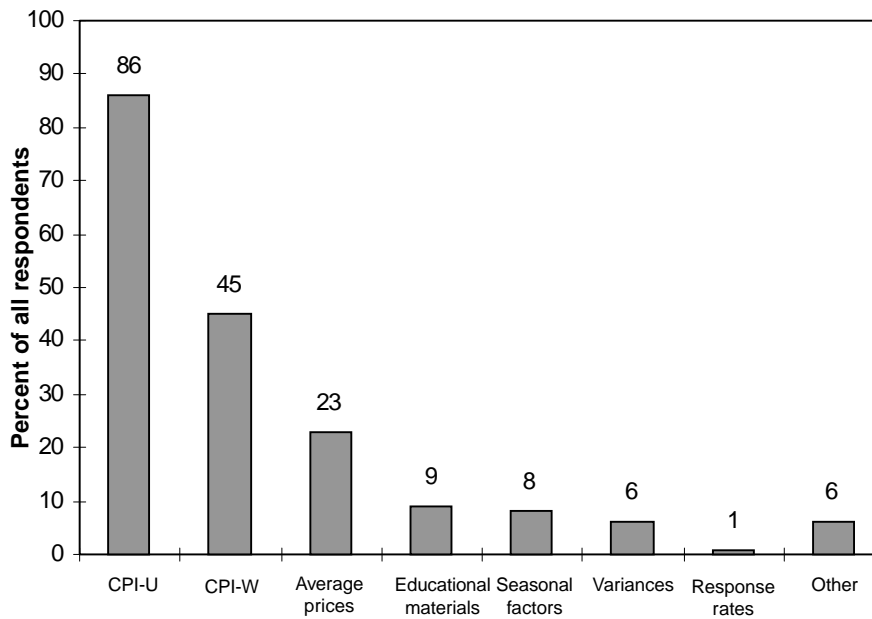
CPI respondent group		Measure general inflation	Escalate payments	Make projections and forecasts	Measure specific price trends	Accounting purposes	Deflate other series
All respondents .....	Use	62	48	44	35	31	12
	Primary use	27	37	11	11	10	2
CPI Detailed Report readers .....	Use	78	42	54	53	38	14
	Primary use	35	23	11	17	8	2
U.S. summary data news release .....	Use	73	45	49	41	29	7
	Primary use	40	36	9	12	8	1
Regional or local release readers .....	Use	61	54	52	33	34	3
	Primary use	22	51	11	6	9	3
CPI Quickline recording callers .....	Use	54	57	39	19	28	11
	Primary use	25	45	9	7	12	3
Telephone callers .....	Use	55	57	35	35	34	12
	Primary use	22	44	11	13	12	2
FAX recipients .....	Use	58	48	44	33	35	15
	Primary use	22	37	11	12	12	2
U.S. mail recipients .....	Use	58	48	26	28	25	8
	Primary use	24	44	8	9	11	2
Internet users .....	Use	60	23	53	33	18	14
	Primary use	31	11	18	11	6	6

Note: Due to rounding, primary use totals do not always add to 100 percent.

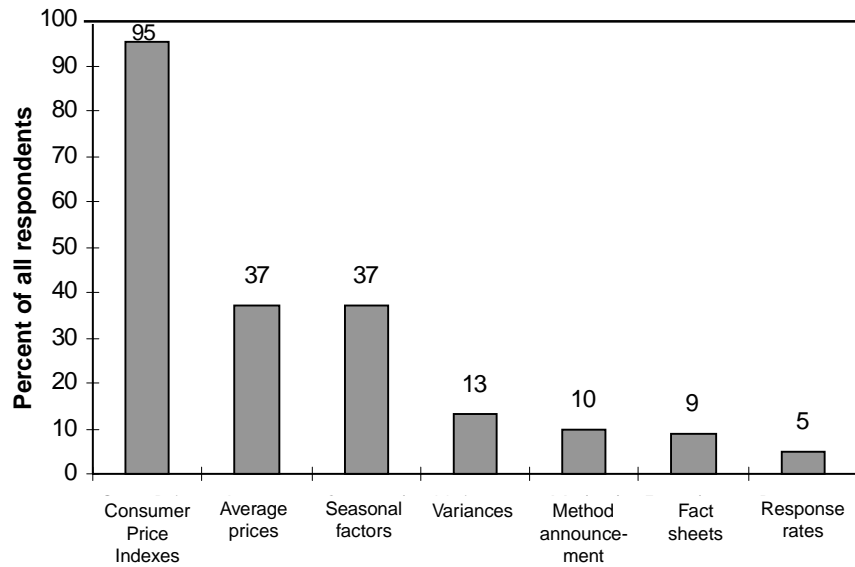
**Chart 3. Uses of CPI information, all respondents 1996**



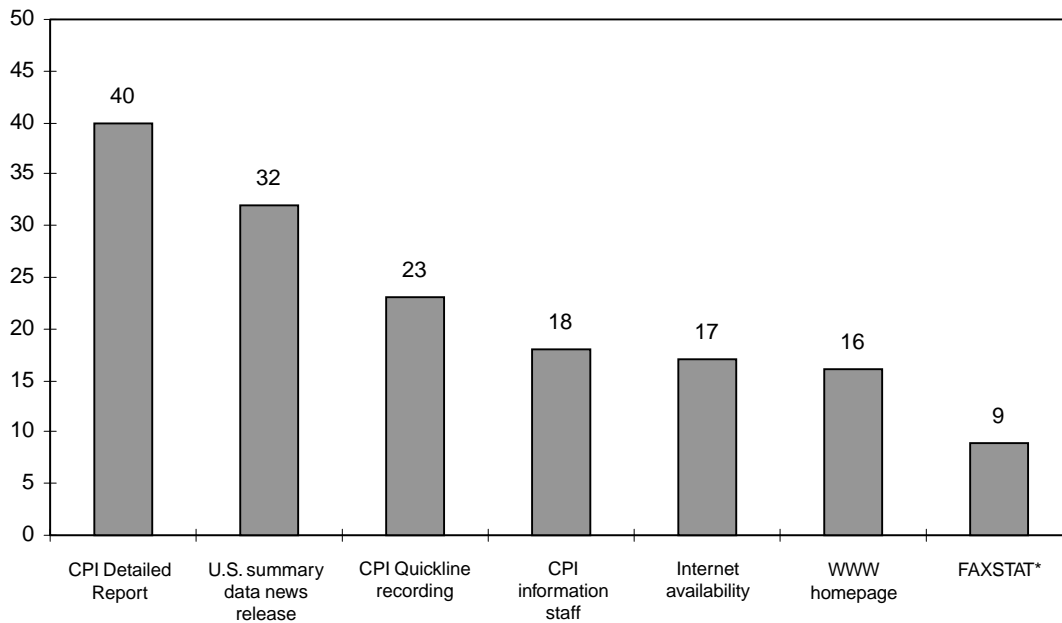
**Chart 4. Types of CPI information used, all respondents 1996**



**Chart 5. Awareness of CPI information available, all respondents, 1996**



**Chart 6. Awareness of CPI information sources, 1996, in percent**



Note: Totals of each CPI source do not include responses from its own sample group. This was done to lessen the bias due to different sample sizes. For example, those persons who received a *CPI Detailed Report* questionnaire were not counted in *CPI Detailed Report* totals for this question. However, people who received a questionnaire designed for one of the other groups, such as Quickline callers or fax recipients, would be counted in *CPI Detailed Report* totals for this question.

\*The automated fax system used by the Bureau is now called BLS Ready Facts.

## Results from respondents of specific user groups

The following section presents information provided by respondents from specific user groups. The respondent groups are:

- CPI Detailed Report* readers
- U.S. summary data news release readers
- Regional and local release readers
- CPI Quickline recording callers
- Telephone callers
- Fax recipients
- Personal U.S. mail recipients
- Internet users

A service improvement chart is shown for each group, comparing user priorities with user satisfaction. Also included is a brief narrative describing some of the major findings about respondents from that group.

Measured in each group's customer service chart are the four or five factors that BLS felt best reflected the quality of customer service for that group. There is some overlap among the factors. For example, timeliness is a factor for five of the eight groups.

The service improvement charts that follow on subsequent pages compare user priorities with user satisfaction. The top right quadrant shows factors where users reported a high priority and are satisfied with what they receive. The bottom right box is where there is also high reported satisfaction—higher, in fact, than is necessary given the priority assigned to the factor. The bottom left quadrant shows factors with low priority and low satisfaction. The top left box shows factors that are of concern—factors that have high priority and low satisfaction.

## CPI Detailed Report readers

The *CPI Detailed Report* is, as the name implies, the single most comprehensive source of CPI data and methodology statements. It includes the complete set of CPI index and average price data released during the month, as well as selected historical data. It is the formal release vehicle for announcements of CPI methodology changes and the annual publication of the CPI variance estimates and response rates. The *Detailed Report* is distributed to approximately 8,000 users each month on a paid subscription basis.

*CPI Detailed Report* respondents are satisfied with the CPI's products and services, but they reported a lower level of satisfaction than did respondents from all groups combined. (See table 3.) While 86 percent of *Detailed Report* respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction as compared with 92 percent of all respondents, only 44 percent were "very satisfied," compared with 63 percent for all respondents.

*CPI Detailed Report* respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the *CPI Detailed Report* and with specific characteristics of the report. Eighty-five percent of these respondents reported that they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the overall quality of the *CPI Detailed Report* and 12 percent were "neutral." None of

the specific factors of the *CPI Detailed Report* scored as high as its overall rating of the *CPI Detailed Report*.

The four rating factors selected specifically for evaluation by *CPI Detailed Report* readers were: Timeliness, ease of locating information, historical information included, and usefulness of articles/explanations. Because the *CPI Detailed Report* is a publication that is printed and then delivered through the mail, it takes longer to arrive than other sources of information. It is by design the CPI's most complete publication and, thus, may be more complex than other sources for some readers to use.

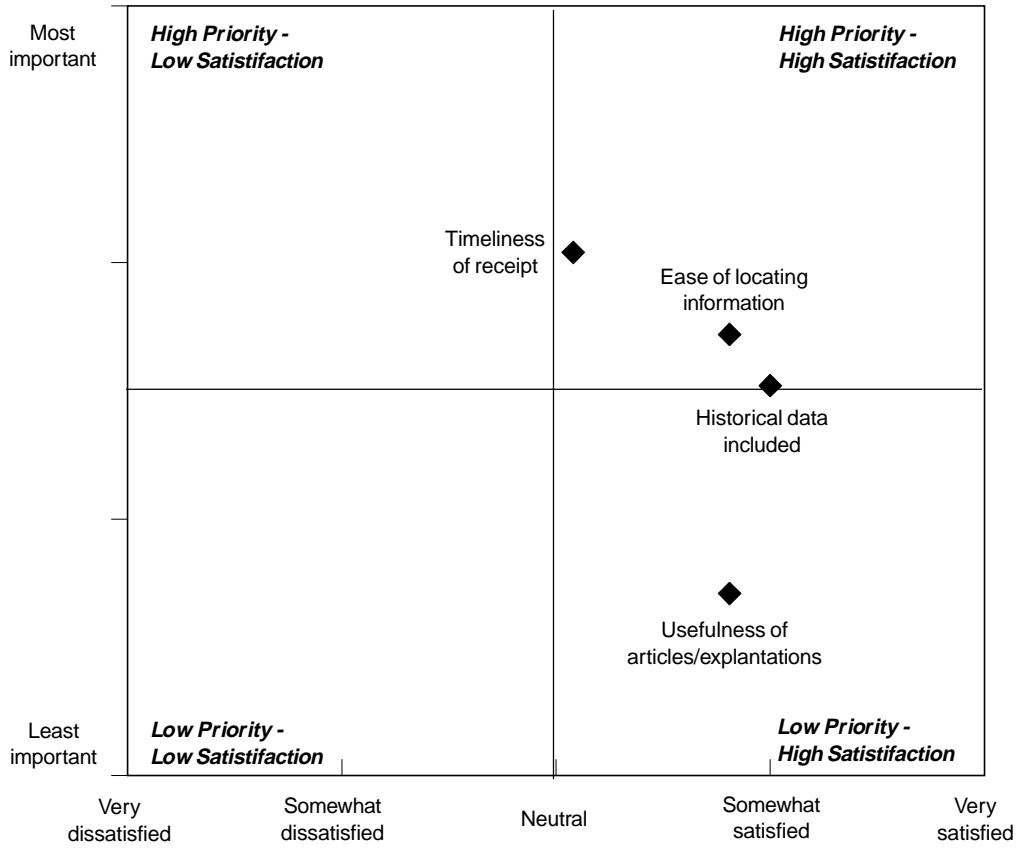
*CPI Detailed Report* readers ranked timeliness as the most important factor. They also registered their lowest level of satisfaction with this factor. The other three rating factors of the *CPI Detailed Report* received higher satisfaction ratings than timeliness but were ranked as less important. Usefulness of articles/explanations ranked as the least important factor even though the inclusion of this type of information is a unique feature of the *CPI Detailed Report*. Forty percent of *CPI Detailed Report* respondents were "neutral" about the usefulness of unique feature of the *CPI Detailed Report* articles/explanations included in the *Detailed Report*.

Table 3. Satisfaction with the CPI and the *CPI Detailed Report*, all respondents and *CPI Detailed Report* respondents, in percent

Question and group	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
CPI Detailed Report readers .....	1	2	10	42	44
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the CPI Detailed Report?</b>					
CPI Detailed Report readers .....	1	2	12	31	54

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 7. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of the CPI Detailed Report, by Detailed Report readers, 1996**



## U.S. summary data news release readers

The U.S. summary data news release is a monthly, two-page release that contains many of the most popular indexes and percent changes. It includes all items data for the U.S. city average, for individual metropolitan areas, and for the four regions, and also includes some detailed indexes at the U.S. level. The summary data news release is mailed free of charge to a list of approximately 28,000 people shortly after the CPI release. Besides several tables of data, the release includes a brief explanation of the CPI, important policy announcements about the CPI, and a short textual analysis of the most recent month's price movements.

Summary data news release respondents are satisfied with the CPI's products and services. They reported levels of satisfaction nearly identical to those of all groups combined. (See table 4.) Ninety-two percent of U.S. summary data news release respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction—the same percentage as the group of all respondents.

Summary news respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the U.S. summary data news release and with specific characteristics of the release. Ninety-two percent of these respondents reported that they were “somewhat

satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of the release, with the remaining 8 percent reporting being neutral.

The five rating factors selected specifically for evaluation by U.S. summary news release readers were: Clarity/readability, indexes included, ease of getting on or off the mailing list, timeliness, and the regular receipt of monthly copies. Since the summary data news release must be printed and delivered through the mail, it takes longer to arrive than most other sources of CPI data. This source is most beneficial to users who either do not need the information right away or who need hard-copy documentation.

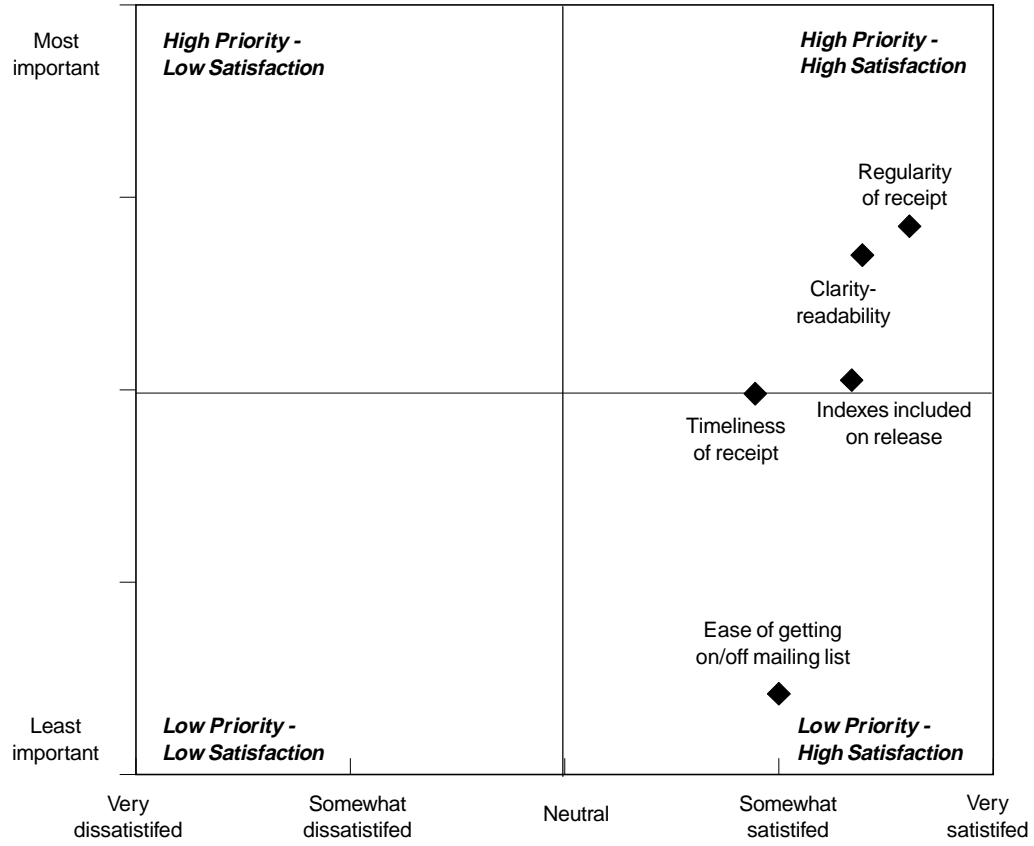
Summary news respondents ranked the regular receipt of monthly copies as the most important factor and also the factor that they were most satisfied with. The second-most important factor was the clarity/readability of the release. The timeliness of the release was the fourth (of five) most important factor and recorded 13 percent dissatisfied responses. By far, the least important factor of the summary data news release was the ease of getting on/off the mailing list. There was minimal dissatisfaction with this factor (3 percent).

Table 4. Satisfaction with the CPI and with the summary data news release, all respondents and summary data respondents, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
U.S. summary data news release readers .....	0	1	8	30	62
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the summary data news release?</b>					
U.S. summary data news release readers .....	0	0	8	21	71

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 8. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of the U.S. summary data news release by summary readers, 1996**





## Regional or local release readers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has regional offices in eight cities across the United States. These regions produce and mail out a number of news releases designed to meet the needs of their users. Types of releases vary from region to region. Some releases are lengthy, while others are as compact as a postcard. Approximately 88,000 people receive news releases through the mail from BLS regional offices.

Recipients of regional or local releases who responded to the survey expressed satisfaction with the CPI’s products and services. They reported levels of satisfaction very close to, and slightly higher than, those of all groups combined. (See table 5.) Ninety-six percent of regional or local release respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction, while none were on the negative side.

Regional or local news release respondents also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the overall quality of the regional or local releases that they receive and with specific characteristics of the releases. Ninety percent of regional or local release respondents reported that they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of their releases. Only 1 percent responded on the

negative side of the scale.

The four rating factors selected specifically for evaluation by regional or local release readers were: Clarity/readability, indexes included, ease of getting on or off the mailing list, and timeliness. As with the *CPI Detailed Report* and the U.S. summary data news release, local releases are printed and mailed. Thus, local releases are unable to provide information as quickly as other sources of CPI data. Additionally, they often focus on supplying information for one particular city or region.

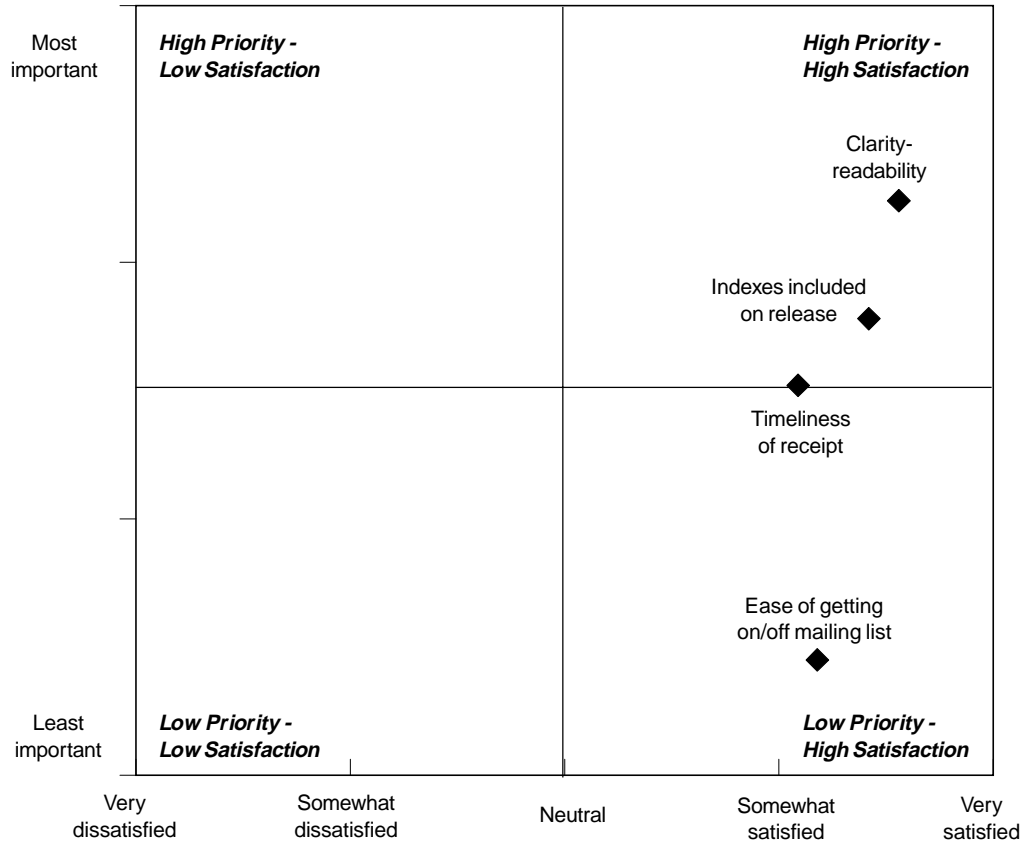
Regional or local release respondents reported importance rankings and satisfaction ratings similar to those of summary data news respondents. The four characteristics that both of the groups evaluated were ranked in the same order of importance: Clarity/readability first, followed by the indexes included, timeliness, and lastly, the ease of getting on or off the mailing list. (Regional or local respondents did not evaluate the regular receipt of monthly copies since some releases are bi-monthly.) The satisfaction ratings of the two groups were similar as well, with clarity/readability receiving the highest ratings and timeliness—although still high—the lowest.

Table 5. Satisfaction with the CPI and with regional and local releases, all respondents and regional and local release readers, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
Regional and local release readers .....	0	0	3	34	63
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the regional or local release you receive?</b>					
Regional and local release readers .....	0	1	9	24	66

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 9. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of regional or local news releases, by regional and local release readers, 1996**



## CPI Quickline recording callers

The CPI Quickline is a relatively short (two and one-half minutes) recording featuring price information on the United States as a whole and on the Washington, DC area. Quickline includes the All Items indexes and percent changes for these two areas. This service does not require a touch-tone telephone and is accessible 24 hours a day. Approximately 1500 people access information via Quickline each month.

Like other groups, Quickline recording callers who responded to the survey are satisfied with the CPI’s products and services. Levels of satisfaction reported by Quickline callers were similar to those of all groups combined. (See table 6.) Ninety-two percent of Quickline caller respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction—the same percentage as all respondents reflected. Nine percent of Quickline respondents said they were neutral, while none were dissatisfied.

Quickline caller respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the Quickline recording service. Ninety-two percent reported that they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of Quickline. Two

percent reported being somewhat dissatisfied.

The CPI Quickline had the following four factors evaluated on the survey by callers: 24-hour availability, direct access to CPI information, indexes included on the recording, and pace of the message on the recording. The Quickline is not nearly the most complete source of CPI information, but it is timely and simple. It is readily available at any time and is just a phone call away. Additionally, Quickline requires no special computer or fax equipment. It is most useful for persons who need a limited amount of information quickly and do not need a hard copy.

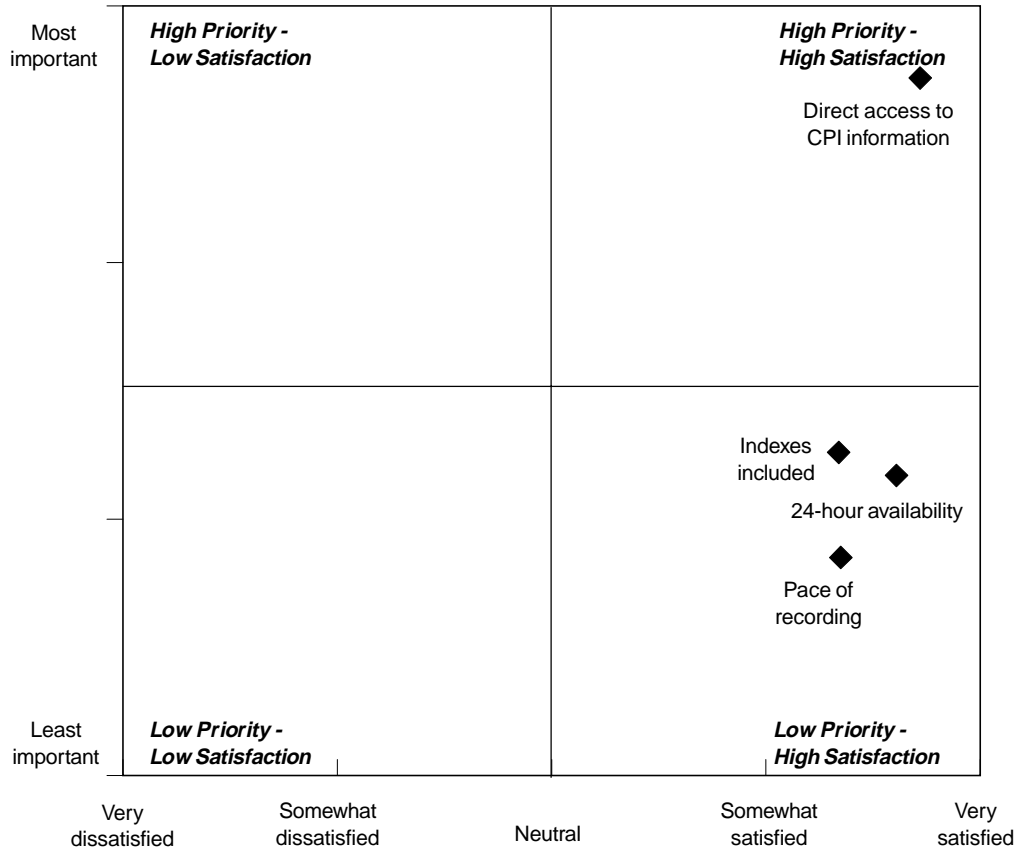
Quickline respondents ranked the direct access to CPI information as the most important factor of Quickline by a wide margin. They are also slightly more satisfied with this factor than with any other. The other three factors were closely grouped—both on the satisfaction scale as well as on the importance scale. The factor, indexes included on the recording, was rated slightly more important than the other two factors. The 24-hour availability was given slightly higher satisfaction ratings than indexes included and pace of recording.

Table 6. Satisfaction with the CPI and with the Quickline recording, all respondents and Quickline callers, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
Quickline callers .....	0	0	9	26	66
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the Quickline recording?</b>					
Quickline callers .....	0	2	7	23	69

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 10. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of the Quickline recording by Quickline recording callers, 1996**



## Telephone callers

Approximately 32,000 people call CPI offices in Washington or in the regions each month to get information over the phone. Professional staff members are available to answer telephone requests and can provide detailed information, general information, and technical assistance. These staff members have the latest available data and will furnish as much information as reasonably possible to do verbally over the phone. (Analysts may also send out faxes or mailings, but this group of survey respondents includes only those persons who get information *verbally* over the telephone. Users who telephone and then get data via fax or through the mail are included in those groups.)

Telephone callers who responded are roughly as satisfied with the CPI's products and services as are users from other groups. The reported levels of satisfaction for the telephone callers group are very close to those of all the groups combined. (See table 7.) Ninety-three percent of telephone caller respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction, compared with 92 percent for all respondents combined.

Almost all telephone callers who responded to the survey are satisfied with the overall quality of the service they receive by telephone. Ninety-four percent of telephone caller

respondents reported that they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the overall quality of their calls for information. They are also satisfied with the four aspects of information calls that were measured. All the individual aspects of information calls received similar high scores.

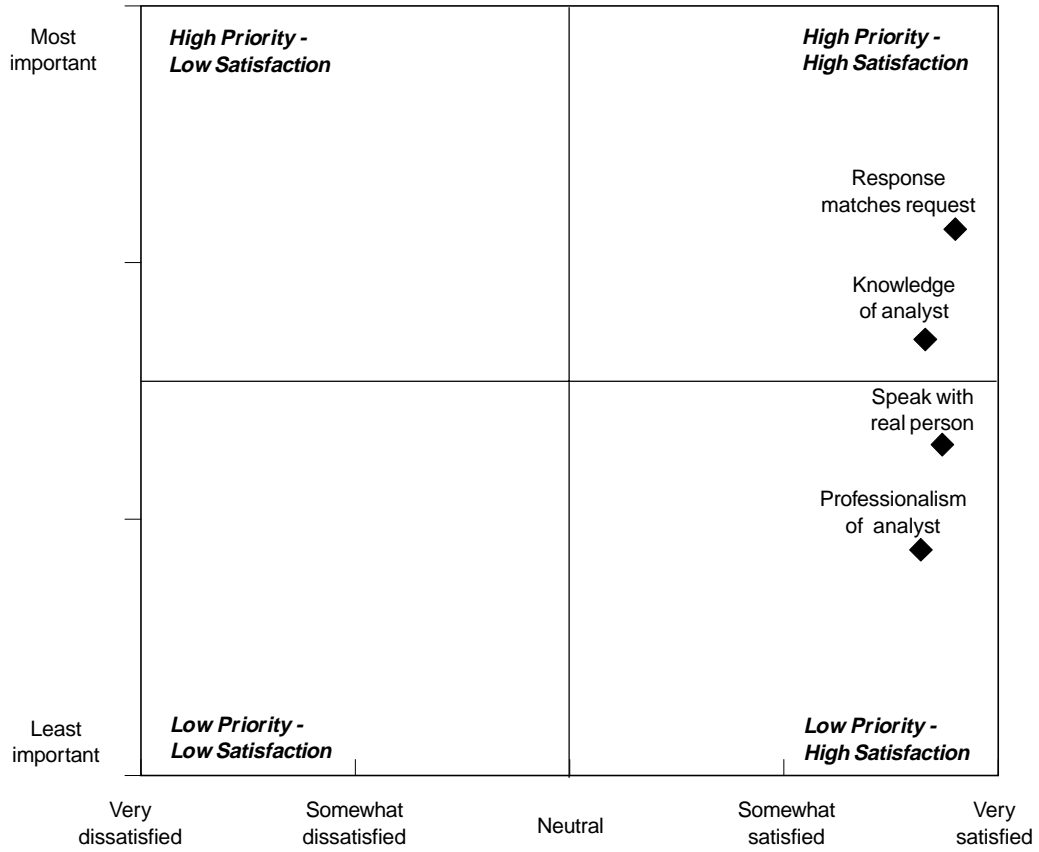
Telephone callers who responded to the survey rated the following four factors: Knowledge of the analyst, professionalism of the analyst, the fact that callers interact with a real person, and the extent to which the information given corresponds to the request. Telephone calls can be a very quick and useful method to get information. While phone calls are not the best way to get lots of data, calling is one of the easiest ways to get clarification or have data explained. Analysts have access to vast quantities of information, both current and archival, and can give personal attention that is not available via fax, a recorded message, or the Internet. Telephone callers ranked having the response match the request as the most important factor of information calls. The professionalism of the analyst was ranked as the least important of the four. All the individual factors were rated closely in terms of satisfaction with service provided. Each factor received ratings of "satisfied" or "very satisfied" from over 90 percent of telephone caller respondents.

Table 7. Satisfaction with the CPI and with voice telephone calls to a CPI office for information, all respondents and telephone callers, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
Telephone callers .....	0	2	5	16	77
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of your voice telephone calls to a CPI office for information?</b>					
Telephone callers .....	1	1	4	17	77

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 11. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of information received via voice telephone call, by telephone callers, 1996**



## Fax recipients

Many CPI data users get information via fax transmission by either having a BLS employee personally fax them a response or by having an automated fax system operated by the Bureau send out a fax. Requests for faxes can be done in several ways. Persons can make telephone calls and request a fax, or they can send requests via the Internet. They can also call fax-on-demand automated systems that immediately fax out the requested information. Approximately 2,300 people get CPI information via fax each month.

CPI users who receive information via fax and responded to the survey are satisfied with the CPI's products and services. They reported levels of satisfaction slightly higher than those of all the groups combined. (See table 8.) Concerning overall CPI satisfaction, 98 percent of CPI fax user respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale—higher than the 92 percent of all respondents combined. One issue that many fax recipients seem concerned with is timeliness, with 66 percent responding as being satisfied and 10 percent being dissatisfied with the release of CPI data.

Fax recipients who responded are satisfied with the over-

all quality of the CPI service and information that they receive via fax. Ninety-six percent of fax respondents reported that they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of their receipt of information via fax.

The four factors evaluated by fax recipients were: Ease of making a request, time between requesting information and receiving a fax, extent to which the information given corresponds to the request, and clarity/readability. Acquiring information by fax is one of the quickest ways to get CPI data. It allows a user to get more information than is feasible verbally over the phone. It is also possible to get a wide variety of information via fax—from press releases and textual fact sheets to tables of indexes.

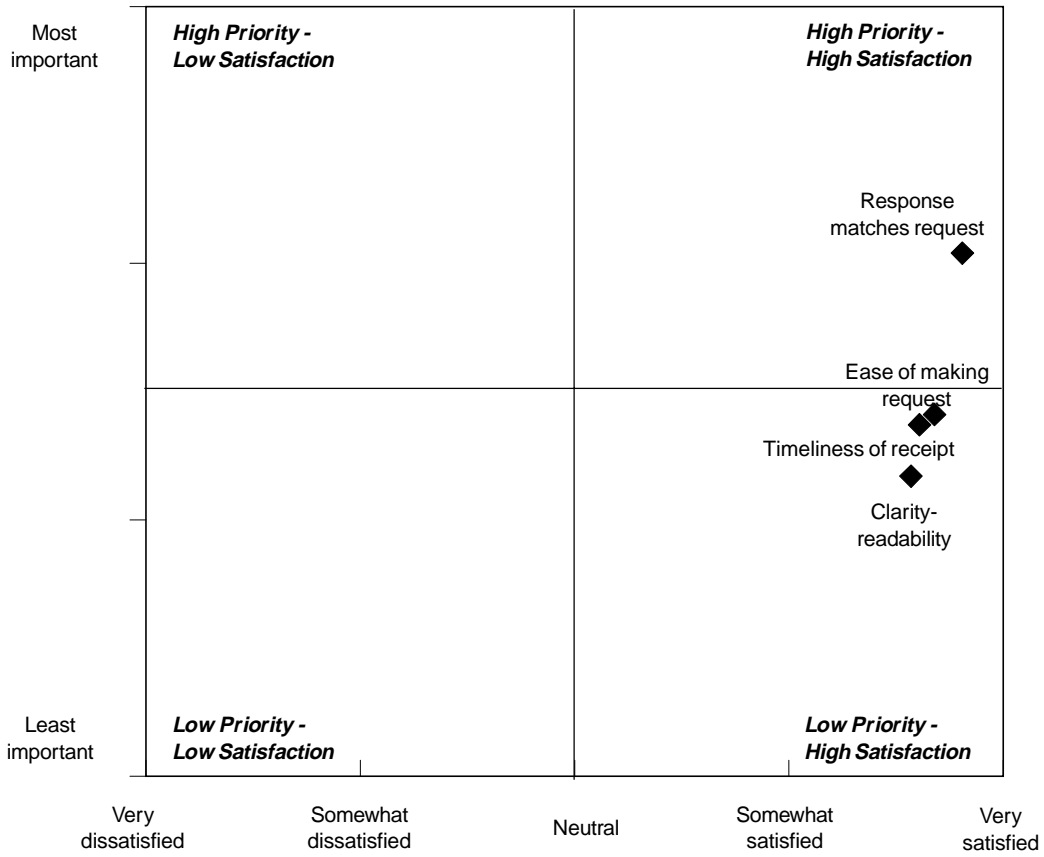
Fax recipients ranked having the response match the request as the most important factor. They rated clarity/readability as the least important. All factors for receiving information via fax received high satisfaction ratings. Each factor received over 90 percent satisfied responses with having the response match the request receiving a slightly higher percentage than the others.

Table 8. Satisfaction with the CPI and with the receipt of CPI information via fax, all respondents and fax recipients, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
Fax recipients .....	0	0	2	28	70
<b>How satisfied are you with the receipt of CPI information via fax?</b>					
Fax recipients .....	0	1	3	17	79

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 12. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of information received via fax recipients, 1996**





## U.S. Postal Service (personal mail) recipients

Approximately 4,200 people receive CPI information through the mail each month. Some of these users receive information through the mail after making a telephone or written request. Often, constituent letters are forwarded to CPI staff from members of Congress, the White House, or the Secretary of Labor’s office. Occasionally, CPI users need to obtain copies of historical tables certified by the Bureau, which requires sending out paper copies. Requests vary from simple press releases and tables to larger packages, which may include many tables, fact sheets, articles, and publications. Some requests require letters be signed by high-level Bureau officials while some need only the appropriate materials inserted into an envelope and mailed.

Personal mail recipients who responded to the survey are approximately as satisfied with the CPI’s products and services as are all respondents. (See table 9.) Ninety-three percent of personal mail respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction—nearly the same percentage as all respondents reflected.

Personal mail respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of receiving information through the mail, although not quite as satisfied as other groups are with their primary

method of receiving data. Eighty-five percent of personal mail respondents reported that they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of their receipt of information through the mail. Two of the specific factors of personal mail scored higher than the overall rating of 85 percent, and 2 scored lower.

The four rating factors evaluated by personal mail respondents were clarity, timeliness, ease of making your request, and the extent to which the information received matches the request. Receiving information through the mail takes longer than many other methods, especially if signed letters are required. However, this method allows thorough and personal responses with complete documentation to questions. Mail is perhaps most useful to persons who do not have access to a fax machine or the Internet.

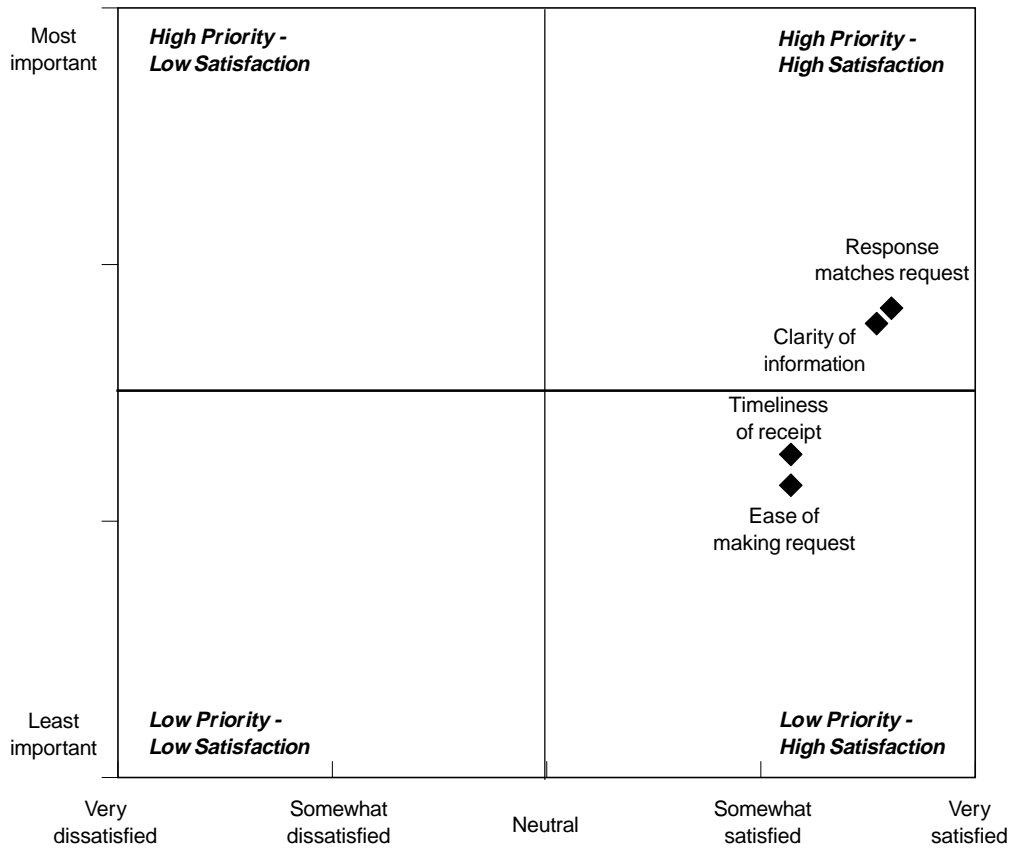
Personal mail recipients who responded ranked clarity and having the response match the request as the two most important factors. They also registered higher levels of satisfaction with these factors than with the others. The other two factors, timeliness and ease of making a request, were ranked as less important and received lower satisfaction ratings.

**Table 9. Satisfaction with the CPI and with the CPI information received through the mail, all respondents and U.S. Postal Service mail recipients, in percent**

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
U.S.P.S. mail recipients .....	1	1	5	26	67
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the CPI information received through the mail?</b>					
U.S.P.S. mail recipients .....	1	5	9	8	77

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 13. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of information received via personal mail, by personal mail recipients, 1996**



## Internet users

Many people use the Internet to access CPI information. The CPI program has a homepage on the BLS Web site. Most of the CPI information available through other sources is also available through the Internet. CPI data can be accessed free of charge, 24 hours a day. Data are updated monthly at the time of release. Information can be viewed and printed or can be downloaded in electronic form. By using the CPI homepage and subsequent Web pages as sources, a tremendous amount of information is available in just a few moments to anyone with Internet access.

Internet users who responded to the CPI survey reported satisfaction with the CPI's products and services. The total percentage of Internet respondents on the satisfied side of the scale is nearly identical to that of all respondents, although Internet users reported more "satisfied" marks and fewer "very satisfied" marks than all respondents. (See table 10.) Ninety-one percent of Internet user respondents were on the satisfied portion of the scale concerning overall CPI satisfaction and 48 percent of those were "very satisfied."

Internet respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the CPI information services they receive through the Internet, as 86 percent of Internet respondents reported that they were either "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Seven percent were neutral, and 7 percent were dissatisfied with the overall information services they receive through the Internet.

Internet respondents evaluated the following 4 factors of receiving information through the Internet: Ease of getting information, usefulness of CPI text provided, the ability to get data electronically, and the 24-hour availability. The Internet allows for quick retrieval of large quantities of information. Included on the CPI homepage are announcements and technical fact sheets about the CPI. It also allows for the printing, downloading, or both of a wide variety of CPI information, at any time of the day or night. For persons comfortable with "surfing" or using the Internet, it is a convenient way to get virtually all of the CPI data they need.

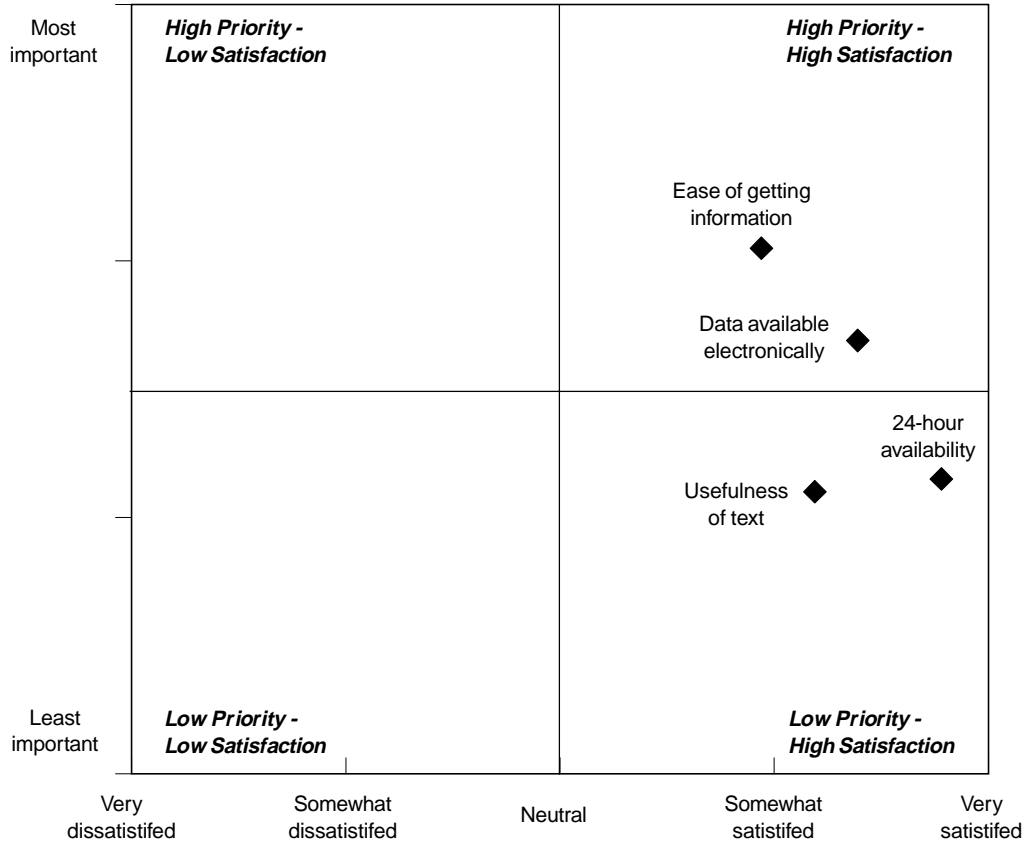
Internet users who responded ranked the ease of getting information as the most important factor. They also gave this factor their lowest level of satisfaction. Seventy-six percent of Internet respondents were satisfied with the ease of getting CPI information while 19 percent were dissatisfied. The 24-hour availability received the highest satisfaction marks and was ranked as the third most important factor.

Table 10. Satisfaction with the CPI and with CPI information acquired via the Internet, all respondents and Internet users, in percent

Question and group	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?</b>					
All respondents .....	0	1	6	29	63
Internet users .....	1	3	4	43	48
<b>How satisfied are you with the overall quality of CPI information acquired via the Internet?</b>					
Internet users .....	1	6	7	33	53

Note: Due to rounding, totals do not always add to 100 percent.

**Chart 14. Importance vs. satisfaction with characteristics of information received via internet, by internet users, 1996**



## Responses to specific questions in the survey-study

This section contains responses to specific questions from the questionnaires. Included are responses from the combined total of all user groups followed by responses from each individual group.

Responses are presented in the format of the questionnaires themselves. That is, the way readers of this publication see the responses is in the format that respondents to the survey saw the questions. (Note: The

automated fax system used by the Bureau is now called BLS Ready Facts.)

Only responses to questions 5 through 15 are represented for the all group totals. Questions 1 through 4 were specific to individual user groups and thus those responses were not combined for all of the groups.

For individual user groups, responses to all questions (1 to 15) are presented.

## Overall respondents

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	63	29	6	1	0

### 6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	61	31	6	3	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	48	37	11	2	1
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	30	34	21	12	2
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	53	22	23	2	1

### 7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important  
... Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)	<u>Avg. rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.7</u>	
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.4</u>	
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.7</u>	
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.2</u>	

### 8. What do you use CPI data for?

(mark ALL that apply)

62  
48  
44  
35  
31  
12  
15

### 9. What is your primary use of CPI data?

(mark only ONE)

27  
37  
11  
11  
10  
2  
8

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

86 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
45 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
23 Average Prices  
9 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
8 Seasonal factors  
6 Variances  
1 Response rates  
6 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

- 51 Each month or more frequently
- 8 Once every 2 months
- 23 Once every 3 to 6 months
- 16 Once a year
- 2 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 29 1 month
- 4 2 months
- 20 Quarterly
- 12 6 months
- 59 12 months
- 57 Annual average to annual average
- 6 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 30 Current period to base period
- 3 Other
- 1 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 41 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 28 Only unadjusted
- 20 Only seasonally adjusted
- 11 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,..)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	65	25	31	6	6
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	30	15	13	3	4
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	17	9	7	2	3
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	16	8	7	2	2
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	19	9	8	3	3
Average price data for food	12	7	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	13	8	5	2	2

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

95	Consumer Price Indexes	49	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
37	Average Prices	35	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
37	Seasonal adjustment factors	33	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
13	Variances	20	CPI Information Staff
5	Response rates	14	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
9	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	20	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
10	Methodology announcements	20	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

Overall respondents

## CPI Detailed Report readers

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) **	
100	72	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
45	7	U.S. Summary Data News Release
22	8	Regional or local release
9	3	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
18	5	Telephone
7 *	2 *	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
1	1	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
17	3	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
16	4	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
8	3	Other

\* The 7 and 2 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

\*\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the	CPI Detailed Report ?				
	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	54	31	12	2	1
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	13	24	31	21	10
The time periods included in historical tables published in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	35	34	26	4	1
The usefulness of articles/explanations included in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	28	30	40	2	1
The ease of locating desired information in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	28	37	25	9	1

4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of the <i>Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ... Please use each number only one time.</i>	CPI Detailed Report .	
	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)	<u>Avg. rank</u>
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	<u>2.0</u>	
The time periods included in historical tables published in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	<u>2.5</u>	
The usefulness of articles/explanations included in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	<u>3.3</u>	
The ease of locating desired information in the <i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	<u>2.3</u>	



5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	44	42	10	2	1

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	48	40	8	2	2
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	34	46	15	4	1
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	15	32	21	23	10
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	43	23	31	2	1

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.  
*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...*  
*Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.9</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.5</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.4</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.3</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for? (mark ALL that apply)	9. What is your primary use of CPI data? (mark only ONE) *	
78	35	Measure general inflation
42	23	Escalate payments
54	11	Perform projections or forecasts
53	17	Measure price trends for specific items
38	8	Accounting purposes
14	2	Deflate other series
16	8	Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)
93 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)
53 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)
35 Average Prices
12 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)
11 Seasonal factors
11 Variances
4 Response rates
8 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)
60 Each month or more frequently
10 Once every 2 months
23 Once every 3 to 6 months
7 Once a year
0 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 31 1 month
- 7 2 months
- 23 Quarterly
- 13 6 months
- 56 12 months
- 64 Annual average to annual average
- 9 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 32 Current period to base period
- 4 Other
- 1 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 46 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 26 Only unadjusted
- 20 Only seasonally adjusted
- 8 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	78	34	39	9	11
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	49	26	25	8	9
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	25	16	10	5	6
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	24	14	14	5	6
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	34	18	18	7	9
Average price data for food	17	9	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	18	10	6	2	4

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

94	Consumer Price Indexes	94	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
51	Average Prices	33	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
49	Seasonal adjustment factors	20	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
21	Variances	13	CPI Information Staff
10	Response rates	7	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
12	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	24	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
15	Methodology announcements	24	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## U.S. summary data news release recipients

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) *	
26	16	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
100	71	U.S. Summary Data News Release
11	7	Regional or local release
12	6	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
6	3	Telephone
0	0	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
0	0	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
2	1	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
8	1	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
8	2	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
2	1	Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Summary Data News Release?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of the Summary Data News Release	71	21	8	0	0
The clarity/readability of the Summary Data News Release	58	27	11	3	1
The group of indexes included	55	27	15	3	0
The ease of getting on or off the mailing list or of having your name or address changed	45	13	38	2	1
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the Summary Data News Release	37	30	20	10	3
The regular receipt of a copy each and every month	77	12	9	1	2

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of the Summary Data News Release.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 5) Avg. rank</u>
The clarity/readability of the Summary Data News Release	<u>2.3</u>
The group of indexes included	<u>2.9</u>
The ease of getting on or off the mailing list or of having your name or address changed	<u>4.6</u>
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the Summary Data News Release	<u>3.1</u>
The regular receipt of a copy each and every month	<u>2.2</u>

5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	62	30	8	1	0

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	56	33	7	3	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	55	35	9	2	0
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	35	37	23	5	1
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	57	23	20	0	0

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.  
*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...*  
*Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.8</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.2</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.8</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.2</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for? (mark ALL that apply)	9. What is your primary use of CPI data? (mark only ONE) *	
73	40	Measure general inflation
45	36	Escalate payments
49	9	Perform projections or forecasts
41	12	Measure price trends for specific items
29	8	Accounting purposes
7	1	Deflate other series
12	3	Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

87	Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)
54	Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)
34	Average Prices
13	Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)
8	Seasonal factors
8	Variances
2	Response rates
3	Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

53	Each month or more frequently
10	Once every 2 months
26	Once every 3 to 6 months
7	Once a year
3	Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 36 1 month
- 8 2 months
- 29 Quarterly
- 20 6 months
- 63 12 months
- 52 Annual average to annual average
- 8 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 29 Current period to base period
- 3 Other
- 2 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 49 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 25 Only unadjusted
- 17 Only seasonally adjusted
- 9 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	82	42	25	13	12
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	39	24	13	8	8
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	23	14	8	6	7
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	16	11	5	4	3
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	21	10	6	6	6
Average price data for food	18	11	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	21	13	4	5	5

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

96	Consumer Price Indexes	49	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
46	Average Prices	54	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
41	Seasonal adjustment factors	17	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
16	Variances	7	CPI Information Staff
5	Response rates	4	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
7	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	11	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
6	Methodology announcements	10	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## Regional or local release recipients

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) **	
25	15	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
16	17	U.S. Summary Data News Release
100	63	Regional or local release
12	2	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
12	4	Telephone
5 *	2 *	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
1	0	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
6	0	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
7	0	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
7	8	Other

\* The 5 and 2 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

\*\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the regional or local release you receive?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of the regional or local release	66	24	9	1	0
The clarity/readability of the regional or local release	68	21	12	0	0
The group of indexes included	61	21	16	1	0
The ease of getting on or off the mailing list or of having your name or address changed	57	8	32	3	0
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the regional or local release	39	38	15	8	0

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of regional or local release you receive.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

**Rank**  
(1 to 4)  
**Avg. rank**

The clarity/readability of the regional or local release	<u>1.8</u>
The group of indexes included	<u>2.2</u>
The ease of getting on or off the mailing list or of having your name or address changed	<u>3.6</u>
The amount of time between release date and receipt of the regional or local release	<u>2.5</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	63	33	3	0	0

### 6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	59	35	5	2	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	51	38	11	0	0

The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	39	38	11	12	0
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	63	23	14	0	0

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4) Avg. rank
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.6</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.3</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.9</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.2</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for?  
(mark ALL that apply)

61  
54  
52  
33  
34  
3  
9

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?  
(mark only ONE) \*

22  
51  
11  
6  
9  
3  
6

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

97 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
45 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
16 Average Prices  
10 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
3 Seasonal factors  
9 Variances  
0 Response rates  
4 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

58 Each month or more frequently  
9 Once every 2 months  
22 Once every 3 to 6 months  
10 Once a year  
1 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 30 1 month
- 4 2 months
- 23 Quarterly
- 14 6 months
- 67 12 months
- 54 Annual average to annual average
- 1 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 36 Current period to base period
- 1 Other
- 3 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 43 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 27 Only unadjusted
- 19 Only seasonally adjusted
- 11 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	68	35	42	8	11
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	25	17	9	3	3
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	18	11	6	3	3
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	8	3	2	0	0
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	9	5	1	0	0
Average price data for food	9	9	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	14	12	5	1	1

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

99	Consumer Price Indexes	35	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
29	Average Prices	32	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
28	Seasonal adjustment factors	18	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
10	Variances	9	CPI Information Staff
3	Response rates	15	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
10	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	10	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
7	Methodology announcements	10	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )



## CPI Quickline callers

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) **	
23	10	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
23	12	U.S. Summary Data News Release
9	3	Regional or local release
100	66	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
21	10	Telephone
6	4	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
3	0	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
4	1	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
10	6	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
6	2	Other

\* The 6 and 4 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

\*\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Quickline recording?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of the Quickline recording	69	23	7	2	0
The 24-hour availability	77	8	15	0	0
The direct access to CPI information	79	15	5	1	0
The group of indexes on the recording	59	18	20	3	0
The pace of the message on the recording	58	24	15	4	0

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of the Quickline recording.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...*

*Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg. rank</u>
The 24-hour availability	<u>2.8</u>
The direct access to CPI information	<u>1.3</u>
The group of indexes on the recording	<u>2.7</u>
The pace of the message on the recording	<u>2.8</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	66	26	9	0	0

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	67	26	4	3	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	52	35	11	1	0
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	30	33	20	16	1
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	58	18	20	3	1

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)	<u>Avg. rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs		<u>1.8</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information		<u>2.4</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent		<u>2.6</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published		<u>3.2</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for?  
(mark ALL that apply)

54  
57  
39  
19  
28  
11  
10

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?  
(mark only ONE) \*

25  
45  
9  
7  
12  
3  
5

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

86 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
45 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
8 Average Prices  
5 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
3 Seasonal factors  
1 Variances  
1 Response rates  
5 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

66 Each month or more frequently  
6 Once every 2 months  
14 Once every 3 to 6 months  
13 Once a year  
1 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 31 1 month
- 4 2 months
- 14 Quarterly
- 9 6 months
- 61 12 months
- 51 Annual average to annual average
- 2 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 27 Current period to base period
- 3 Other
- 1 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 33 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 34 Only unadjusted
- 22 Only seasonally adjusted
- 11 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	83	14	37	2	2
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	19	8	9	3	2
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	9	4	4	1	1
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	10	4	4	2	1
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	11	6	5	2	1
Average price data for food	6	2	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	9	3	3	1	1

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

95	Consumer Price Indexes	37	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
27	Average Prices	36	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
38	Seasonal adjustment factors	79	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
8	Variances	24	CPI Information Staff
2	Response rates	7	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
5	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	15	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
5	Methodology announcements	13	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## Telephone callers

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) **	
19	15	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
17	8	U.S. Summary Data News Release
16	9	Regional or local release
19	11	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
100	51	Telephone
15	12	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
8	5	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
7	3	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
9	4	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
7	2	Other

\* The 15 and 12 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

\*\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your telephone call(s) for information or assistance to the CPI office?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of our response(s) to your telephone call(s)	77	17	4	1	1
The knowledge of the CPI analyst providing you the information	74	20	6	1	0
The professionalism of the CPI analyst providing you the information	74	17	8	1	0
The fact that you interact with a person to get information	83	9	7	0	1
The extent to which the information that you receive corresponds to what you request	86	11	2	1	1

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of your telephone call(s) for information or assistance to the CPI office.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg. rank</u>
The knowledge of the CPI analyst providing you the information	<u>2.3</u>
The professionalism of the CPI analyst providing you the information	<u>3.0</u>
The fact that you interact with a person to get information	<u>2.7</u>
The extent to which the information that you receive corresponds to what you request	<u>1.9</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	77	16	5	2	0

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	66	29	4	1	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	45	39	14	3	0
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	32	35	22	11	1
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	52	26	21	1	0

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)	<u>Avg rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs		<u>1.6</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information		<u>2.4</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent		<u>2.8</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published		<u>3.3</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for?  
(mark ALL that apply)

55  
57  
35  
35  
34  
12  
10

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?  
(mark only ONE) \*

22  
44  
11  
13  
12  
2  
5

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

83 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
42 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
21 Average Prices  
6 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
6 Seasonal factors  
5 Variances  
0 Response rates  
7 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

47 Each month or more frequently  
5 Once every 2 months  
23 Once every 3 to 6 months  
22 Once a year  
4 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 28 1 month
- 3 2 months
- 15 Quarterly
- 12 6 months
- 63 12 months
- 58 Annual average to annual average
- 5 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 30 Current period to base period
- 2 Other
- 1 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 36 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 27 Only unadjusted
- 20 Only seasonally adjusted
- 17 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	66	19	35	4	4
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	30	11	14	2	3
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	12	4	4	1	1
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	13	4	5	2	1
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	18	3	6	1	1
Average price data for food	10	4	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	11	4	2	1	0

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

97 Consumer Price Indexes	36	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
30 Average Prices	28	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
27 Seasonal adjustment factors	29	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
8 Variances	29	CPI Information Staff
7 Response rates	13	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
6 Fact sheets on topics of common interest	13	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
9 Methodology announcements	14	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## Fax recipients

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) *	
23	10	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
19	7	U.S. Summary Data News Release
14	6	Regional or local release
16	5	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
36	14	Telephone
63	39	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
22	23	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
22	-	Via FAX, neither method specified
9	1	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
6	0	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
15	8	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
10	6	Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your receipt of CPI information via FAX transmission?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of your receipt of CPI information via FAX	79	17	3	1	0
The ease of making your request	76	20	2	2	0
The extent to which the information that you receive corresponds to what you request	83	15	1	0	0
The amount of time between requesting information and receiving a FAX	74	17	6	2	0
The clarity/readability of information received	68	25	4	3	0

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of your receipt of CPI information via FAX transmission.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg. rank</u>
The ease of making your request	<u>2.6</u>
The extent to which the information that you receive corresponds to what you request	<u>2.0</u>
The amount of time between requesting information and receiving a FAX	<u>2.6</u>
The clarity/readability of information received	<u>2.8</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	70	28	2	0	0

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	70	26	3	1	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	54	36	10	0	0
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	29	37	24	9	1
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	51	21	25	3	0

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank</u> (1 to 4)	<u>Avg rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	1.6	
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	2.3	
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	2.8	
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	3.3	

8. What do you use CPI data for?  
(mark ALL that apply)

58  
48  
44  
33  
35  
15  
17

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?  
(mark only ONE) \*

22  
37  
11  
12  
12  
2  
11

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

83 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
41 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
20 Average Prices  
7 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
11 Seasonal factors  
5 Variances  
2 Response rates  
9 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

38 Each month or more frequently  
10 Once every 2 months  
26 Once every 3 to 6 months  
25 Once a year  
1 Less than once a year



12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 25 1 month
- 2 2 months
- 16 Quarterly
- 8 6 months
- 58 12 months
- 59 Annual average to annual average
- 9 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 29 Current period to base period
- 4 Other
- 0 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 44 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 26 Only unadjusted
- 18 Only seasonally adjusted
- 12 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas? (mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	69	26	36	4	5
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	34	11	14	2	2
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	19	6	6	1	1
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	19	6	4	0	1
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	20	8	8	1	3
Average price data for food	14	6	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	13	4	4	0	0

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire? (mark ALL that apply)

97	Consumer Price Indexes	42	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
31	Average Prices	31	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
32	Seasonal adjustment factors	33	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
12	Variances	28	CPI Information Staff
3	Response rates	34	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
9	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	24	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
9	Methodology announcements	22	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## U.S. Postal Service (personal mail) recipients

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE) **	
25	21	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
26	18	U.S. Summary Data News Release
18	12	Regional or local release
12	4	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
25	9	Telephone
13	9	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
100	30	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
7	3	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
8	6	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
10	4	Other

\* The 13 and 9 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

\*\* Please note that some responses included more than one source as being the most useful and thus this column does not sum to 100.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the CPI response(s) that you receive through the mail?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of our response to you through the mail	77	8	9	5	1
The clarity of the information received	65	25	9	1	0
The amount of time between requesting information and receiving it	51	23	18	7	1
The extent to which the information you receive corresponds to what you request	71	21	7	1	0
The ease of making your request	53	22	14	8	3

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of the CPI response(s) that you receive through the mail.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...*

*Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg. rank</u>
The clarity of the information received	<u>2.2</u>
The extent to which the information you receive corresponds to what you request	<u>2.2</u>
The amount of time between requesting information and receiving it	<u>2.7</u>
The ease of making your request	<u>2.9</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	67	26	5	1	1

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	66	21	6	6	0
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	55	32	11	1	1
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	36	31	23	9	1
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	62	20	13	1	3

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.7</u>
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.4</u>
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.8</u>
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.1</u>

8. What do you use CPI data for?

(mark ALL that apply)

58  
48  
26  
28  
25  
8  
20

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?

(mark only ONE) \*

24  
44  
8  
9  
11  
2  
5

Measure general inflation  
Escalate payments  
Perform projections or forecasts  
Measure price trends for specific items  
Accounting purposes  
Deflate other series  
Other

\* Please note that some responses included more than one use as being the primary use and thus this column does not sum to 100.

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

80 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)  
42 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)  
23 Average Prices  
6 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)  
6 Seasonal factors  
3 Variances  
1 Response rates  
4 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

37 Each month or more frequently  
4 Once every 2 months  
21 Once every 3 to 6 months  
32 Once a year  
6 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 24 1 month
- 1 2 months
- 15 Quarterly
- 9 6 months
- 52 12 months
- 50 Annual average to annual average
- 6 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 26 Current period to base period
- 5 Other
- 5 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 27 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 38 Only unadjusted
- 19 Only seasonally adjusted
- 16 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas?  
(mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	63	30	31	2	4
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	27	21	12	1	1
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	11	9	7	0	0
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	12	7	9	1	1
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	11	11	6	2	1
Average price data for food	7	9	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	11	11	6	1	1

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire?  
(mark ALL that apply)

98 Consumer Price Indexes	41	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
35 Average Prices	35	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
29 Seasonal adjustment factors	13	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
11 Variances	15	CPI Information Staff
2 Response rates	11	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
10 Fact sheets on topics of common interest	12	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
13 Methodology announcements	12	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## Internet respondents

(Responses to questions are shown in percent, unless otherwise indicated.)

1. How do you get CPI information? (mark ALL that apply)	2. Which of these sources is most useful to you? (mark only ONE)	
20	8	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
14	0	U.S. Summary Data News Release
18	8	Regional or local release
4	1	CPI Quickline Recording [(202) 606-6994]
9	1	Telephone
4	3	Via FAX, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
*	*	Via FAX, using an automated FAX system
0	0	Via U.S. mail, after I telephone, mail, or FAX in a request
6	0	<i>Monthly Labor Review</i>
100	71	Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)
14	6	Other

\* The 4 and 3 figures represent both faxes sent after personal requests and those using an automated fax system.

### 3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of CPI information acquired via Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...)?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The overall quality of CPI information acquired through the Internet	53	33	7	6	1
The ease of getting the CPI information you want	43	33	4	12	7
The usefulness of CPI-related text provided	53	25	12	7	2
The ability to get CPI data in an electronic format	70	14	5	7	5
The 24-hour availability	87	7	3	1	1

### 4. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following aspects of CPI information acquired via Internet (e.g., World Wide Web, Gopher, ...).

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4) Avg. rank</u>
The ease of getting the CPI information you want	<u>2.0</u>
The usefulness of CPI-related text provided	<u>2.9</u>
The ability to get CPI data in an electronic format	<u>2.3</u>
The 24-hour availability	<u>2.8</u>

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with Consumer Price Index products and services?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
	48	43	4	3	1

6. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of the CPI?

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	35	42	14	7	1
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	46	33	9	7	5
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	42	24	24	6	3
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	45	21	29	5	0

7. Please rank, from most important to least important, the following characteristics of CPI information.

*Use 1 to indicate the most important, 2 to indicate the next most important ...  
Please use each number only one time.*

	<u>Rank (1 to 4)</u>	<u>Avg. rank</u>
The applicability of CPI information to my specific data needs	<u>1.8</u>	
The ease of comprehension of CPI information	<u>2.4</u>	
The time between the release of data and the end of the month they represent	<u>2.5</u>	
The CPI practice of not publishing preliminary data; that is, CPI data are final when initially published	<u>3.3</u>	

8. What do you use CPI data for?

(mark ALL that apply)

- 60
- 23
- 53
- 33
- 18
- 14
- 28

9. What is your primary use of CPI data?

(mark only ONE)

- 31
- 11
- 18
- 11
- 6
- 6
- 17

- Measure general inflation
- Escalate payments
- Perform projections or forecasts
- Measure price trends for specific items
- Accounting purposes
- Deflate other series
- Other

10. Which types of CPI information do you use? (mark ALL that apply)

- 83 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)
- 36 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)
- 39 Average Prices
- 18 Educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, articles, methodology announcements)
- 15 Seasonal factors
- 6 Variances
- 1 Response rates
- 8 Other

11. How often do you use CPI information? (mark only ONE)

- 50 Each month or more frequently
- 14 Once every 2 months
- 27 Once every 3 to 6 months
- 7 Once a year
- 2 Less than once a year

12. For what time frames do you compare indexes or percent changes? (mark ALL that apply)

- 30 1 month
- 3 2 months
- 35 Quarterly
- 14 6 months
- 48 12 months
- 58 Annual average to annual average
- 4 Semiannual average to semiannual average
- 33 Current period to base period
- 0 Other
- 1 Don't use indexes or percent changes

13. Which type of indexes or percent changes do you use? (mark only ONE)

- 52 Both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted
- 22 Only unadjusted
- 21 Only seasonally adjusted
- 5 Don't use indexes or percent changes

14. Which index items do you use in which areas? (mark ALL that apply)

Item Groups	U.S. City Average	Region (e.g. South, Northeast,...)	Metropolitan Areas (e.g. Dallas, Chicago,...)	Population size classes (e.g. Size class A,...)	Region-pop size class (e.g. West A-sized,...)
All items	73	46	42	12	15
Major group (The major groups are Food and beverages, Housing, Apparel and upkeep, Transportation, Medical care, Entertainment, and Other goods and services)	56	36	19	2	10
Commodity and service group (for examples of C&S group indexes, see attached colored sheet)	43	26	21	7	8
Special indexes (for examples of Special indexes, see attached colored sheet)	45	25	21	5	8
Detailed indexes (for examples of Detailed indexes, see attached colored sheet)	43	30	24	7	7
Average price data for food	33	27	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Average price data for energy	31	27	21	8	9

15. Which of the following CPI products and services did you know about before you got this questionnaire? (mark ALL that apply)

86	Consumer Price Indexes	47	<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>
57	Average Prices	34	U.S. CPI Summary Data News Release
54	Seasonal adjustment factors	18	CPI Quickline Recording (202 606-6994)
15	Variances	13	CPI Information Staff
9	Response rates	12	FAXSTAT automated FAX system
20	Fact sheets on topics of common interest	58	Internet availability of data and press releases (stats.bls.gov)
16	Methodology announcements	58	World Wide Web home page ( <a href="http://stats.bls.gov">http://stats.bls.gov</a> )

## Comments from respondents

Comments written by respondents to the 1996 CPI User Survey cover a wide variety of topics. More than a third of the respondents provided written remarks.

Many remarks were broad statements, such as “Everything is good as is” or “We really like the fax line.” Other remarks were more specific, complimenting a particular individual or service. Some comments involved specific concerns. For example, a number of respondents commented that they wanted the CPI release and other information services speeded up.

Respondents offered many suggestions. The two most common suggestions involved producing indexes for new

areas and making the information provided clearer and easier to acquire. Other typical comments were “The volume on the Quickline is too low” and “Use more legible and larger print.”

Other respondents noted that they have changed the way they now obtain CPI data as a result of the user survey. These respondents said they were previously unaware of the newer, faster methods of getting CPI information, such as the Internet and the automated fax system; and that the questionnaire itself made them aware of the services they now use.



## Technical note

A CPI user was defined for this study's purpose as a person who uses CPI information and who has direct contact with a Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) office or publication. For example, a person who gets CPI data from the *Wall Street Journal* for contract escalation is not a CPI user according to this study's definition, while someone who gets CPI data from the *CPI Detailed Report* for the same purpose is considered a CPI user.

The Bureau could not survey all persons in the United States who use the CPI, nor could it construct a sample frame that would have reached or represented all persons who use the CPI from any source. However, since the BLS can solicit opinions from those with whom it has direct contact, a CPI user was defined as such, for this survey-study. As the survey-study targeted specific CPI user groups and their needs—and not the more broadly defined user community—findings should be interpreted as a case study; and no attempt should be made to provide inferences to a larger population.

Specifically, the study has provided information on the current level of satisfaction among surveyed customers of

specific CPI products or publications and has identified product changes that should increase customer satisfaction levels among CPI users.

This survey-study was intended to help identify problems and areas where improvement is needed and desired. Samples were designed to be large enough to capture a substantial number of responses so feedback would be varied and useful. Additionally, the survey-study was designed to provide useful information in a timely and economical manner.

Separate surveys for each group were intended to be independent, and results from each group represent the respondents for that group alone. Since responses for each group were not adjusted to represent the population of users in each group, overall results represent the combined total of all persons who responded to the survey and not all CPI information users. Data have not been extrapolated to the greater CPI user community and no estimates of customer satisfaction were made for users outside those who responded to the survey.

# Appendix

## Response rates to 1996 CPI User Survey

User group	Number sent to respondents	Undeliverable	Delivered to respondents	Returned	Response rate (of delivered) (in percent)
<i>CPI Detailed Report</i>	600	1	599	190	32
U.S. summary data news release	400	2	398	123	31
Regional or local news releases	200	3	197	69	35
Phone callers	370	8	362	190	52
Personal (U.S.) mail	256	0	256	104	41
Quickline recording callers	300	1	299	197	66
Fax recipients	541	23	518	234	45
Subtotal	2667	38	2629	1107	42
Internet	-	-	-	99	-
Total	-	-	-	1206	-

Note: Due to the self-selection nature of the Internet sample, its totals are not included in the calculation of the overall response rate.