

SURVEY AREAS

COLA and reference areas	Survey areas and geographic coverage
Anchorage	City of Anchorage. ¹
Fairbanks	Fairbanks/North Pole area. ¹
Juneau	Juneau/Mendenhall/Douglas area. ¹
Rest of Alaska	See paragraph (c) of this section.
Honolulu	City and County of Honolulu.
Hawaii County	Hilo area. ¹
	Kailua Kona/Waimea area.
Kauai	Kauai Island.
Maui	Maui Island.
Guam & CNMI	Guam.
Puerto Rico	San Juan/Caguas area. ²
U.S. Virgin Islands	St. Croix.
	St. Thomas/St. John area. ³
Washington, DC-DC	District of Columbia. ¹
Washington, DC-MD.	Montgomery County and Prince Georges County. ¹
Washington, DC-VA	Arlington County, Fairfax County, Prince William County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Manassas, and City of Manassas Park. ¹

¹ For selected items, such as golf, snow skiing, and air travel, these survey areas may include additional geographic locations beyond these jurisdictions.

² OPM may collect housing data in other areas in Puerto Rico that have a significant concentration of Federal employees stationed in those areas.

³ OPM collects housing data in St. John. OPM also may collect non-housing data from selected outlets in St. John.

(b) *Rest of the State of Alaska COLA area.* OPM may collect survey data onsite, use alternative indicators of relative living costs (e.g., price and cost information published by the University of Alaska), or both. If the use of alternative indicators would result in a COLA rate reduction, OPM will conduct onsite surveys in one or more locations in the Rest of the State of Alaska COLA area, before making a reduction, to ensure that the reduction is warranted.

(c) *Determining Survey Coverage.* To aid OPM in determining survey coverage, OPM may from time to time conduct surveys of Federal employees in the COLA areas and/or the Washington, DC, area to determine where employees shop and what they spend on certain goods or services and to collect other information related to the price surveys and the calculation of price indexes.

[67 FR 22340, May 3, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 59762, Oct. 6, 2004]

§ 591.216 How does OPM combine survey data for the DC area and for COLA areas with multiple survey areas?

(a) *Washington, DC, area.* For each survey item except shelter, OPM aver-

ages separately the prices collected in each of the DC survey areas identified in § 591.215(a) and then averages these average prices together using equal weights to compute an overall average by item for the DC area.

(b) *COLA areas with multiple survey areas.* OPM computes weighted average indexes at the item, PEG, MEG, and/or overall level by using the corresponding indexes and Federal employment weights from each survey area within the COLA area.

[67 FR 22340, May 3, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 59763, Oct. 6, 2004]

§ 591.217 In which outlets does OPM collect prices?

OPM collects prices in popular outlets in each survey area. OPM selects these outlets based on their proximity to the housing data collection areas, accessibility by road, physical size, advertising, and other characteristics that reflect sales volume. To the extent practical, OPM prices like items in the same types of outlets in the COLA areas and the Washington, DC, area. As warranted, OPM also may conduct point-of-purchase surveys and select outlets based on the results of those surveys.

§ 591.218 How does OPM compute price indexes?

Except for shelter and energy utilities, OPM averages by item the prices collected in each survey area. For the Washington, DC, area, OPM computes a simple average for each item based on the average prices from each DC survey area. On an item-by-item basis, OPM divides the COLA survey area average price by the DC average price and produces a price index.

§ 591.219 How does OPM compute shelter price indexes?

(a) In addition to rental and rental equivalence prices and/or estimates, OPM obtains for each unit surveyed information about the important characteristics of the unit, such as size, number of bathrooms, and other amenities that reflect the quality of the unit.

(b) OPM then uses these characteristics and rental prices and/or estimates in hedonic regressions (a type of multiple regression) to compute for each