Office of Personnel Management

§ 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

(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.

§ 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 averages 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.

§ 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.

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