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Consumer Expenditure Survey Microdata Users' Workshop, July 2009

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EXCERPT

The Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) is the most detailed source of expenditure, demographic, and income data collected by the Federal Government. The data are collected in two component surveys: the (quarterly) Interview Survey and the Diary Survey. Each year, the CE program releases topcoded microdata from these surveys, which are used by researchers in a variety of areas, including academia, government, market research, and other private industries.

In 2006, the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys began conducting a workshop each July for users of the ce microdata. Held in the conference facilities of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) headquarters in Washington, DC, the workshops have included speakers demonstrating features of the data, as well as reports from researchers who have used the data in their work. The BLS recognizes the workshop, which averages 50 participants, as a "bls Best Practice." Each year, the format has changed to incorporate suggestions from participants, but the basic framework has remained intact.

This excerpt is from an article published in the April 2010 issue of the *Monthly Labor Review*. The full text of the article is available in Adobe Acrobat's Portable Document Format (PDF). See [How to view a PDF file](#) for more information.

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Footnotes

¹ Examples included how to merge data from the FMLY and MEMB files. The FMLY file contains information about the consumer unit as a whole, such as region of residence and summary variables for expenditure categories, including total expenditures, housing, and apparel. (For the definition of a consumer unit, see "About the CE data," in the appendix.) The MEMB files contain information about each member of the consumer unit, such as the member's age, ethnicity, and educational attainment. Data on expenditures are collected for the consumer unit as a whole; therefore, expenditure data on specific members are not available, except in single-member consumer units.

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