

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

DECEMBER 1953

Continued Stability in Consumer Prices;  
Index Declines Slightly Between November and December

---

: This report presents the Consumer Price Index for :  
: December 1953 for the average of U.S. cities and for :  
: individual cities. The measure of price change from :  
: January 1953 forward is based on the revised index :  
: structure. Information about the index revision is :  
: given in the February 1953 Monthly Labor Review or :  
: is available upon request. :

---

Continued stability marked the Consumer Price Index at the end of 1953. Retail prices of consumer goods and services registered a slight decline (0.1 percent) between November and December 1953, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Decreases of 0.9 percent for Transportation and 0.2 percent for Apparel were responsible for the decline. Food prices rose 0.3 percent during the month; Medical Care and Personal Care were up 0.2 percent, and Other Goods and Services averaged 0.1 percent higher than in November. Housing and Reading and Recreation were unchanged on the average.

The All Items index for December 1953 was 114.9 (1947-49 = 100). It was 0.7 percent higher than a year ago and 12.9 percent above the June 1950 level. Converted to a base of 1935-39 = 100, the December index was 192.1.

FOOD Retail food prices averaged higher in 31 of the 46 cities surveyed as the U.S. Food index rose 0.3 percent between November and December. This halted the decline in food prices which had been in progress since August. The Food index for December was 112.3 (1947-49 = 100), 1.3 percent below December 1952, but 11.7 percent above the June 1950 index.

Prices of Fruits and Vegetables were up 1.7 percent on the average, led by a sharp increase in fresh tomato prices. Oranges and apples also increased while lettuce was generally cheaper. Prices for other fresh produce showed relatively small changes over the month.

Advances in pork prices, averaging around 3 percent, more than offset decreases of about 1 percent or less in average prices of beef and veal, lamb, other meats, poultry and fish. This caused the Meats, Poultry and Fish index to rise 0.7 percent. Bread and flour prices advanced in several cities. Restaurant meal prices were up 0.3 percent.

Egg prices, falling about 5 percent between November and December, largely accounted for the 1.1 percent decline in the Other Foods at Home index. By December 15, coffee prices in retail stores (up 0.1 percent over the month) had not yet reflected the more recent advances in wholesale markets. Prices of Dairy Products averaged 0.3 percent lower as decreases in milk prices were reported for several Midwestern cities.

HOUSING The Housing index remained at the level of November 1953, as increases of 0.2 percent for Rent and 0.1 percent for Household Operation were offset by

decreases of 0.5 percent for Solid Fuels and Fuel Oil (principally fuel oil), 0.2 percent for Housefurnishings, and 0.1 percent for Gas and Electricity. Electricity rates were reduced in one city. Some household durable goods were reported on sale.

APPAREL There was a decline of 0.2 percent in Apparel prices between November and December. Prices were reduced for women's and girls' coats and women's wool suits. Scattered price decreases were reported for men's and boys' apparel, footwear, and other apparel.

OTHER GROUPS The decrease of 0.9 percent in Transportation during the month resulted chiefly from substantial reductions in prices of some 1953 model automobiles just prior to the introduction of the 1954 models. Prices of used cars continued to decline throughout the country. Transit fares were raised in a few cities.

Medical Care prices rose 0.2 percent, as fees for professional services continued upward. The rise of 0.2 percent in Personal Care was due mainly to higher prices for toilet soap and beauty shop services.

Reading and Recreation remained at the level of the previous month. Some reductions were reported in prices of television sets, while motion picture theatre admission charges were higher. The rise of 0.1 percent for Other Goods and Services reflected higher prices for beer.

YEAR-END SUMMARY The Consumer Price Index for all goods and services moved over a narrow range during 1953, declining slightly in January and February, then rising for eight months, and declining again in November and December. Monthly percent changes were small, not exceeding 0.4 percent in either direction. The total rise during the year was 0.7 percent. In the main increases were concentrated in rents and service items; food prices decreased 1.3 percent and some other commodity prices weakened, in keeping with primary market prices.

Food prices were the most volatile, even though the change over the year was less than for many other groups. There were seasonal fluctuations in fresh fruits and vegetables and eggs and significant contrasting price movements of beef and pork. Except for a sharp upturn between July and August, beef prices dropped steadily over the year for a total decrease of nearly 20 percent. Pork rose throughout the first half of the year, reaching a new all time peak in August. The total rise in pork prices over the year was over 16 percent. There was a persistent price decline for potatoes, amounting to nearly 40 percent during the year. Restaurant meal prices were about 2 percent higher than a year earlier.

Housing prices rose steadily, for a total increase of 2.1 percent, due mainly to Rent, which advanced 5.7 percent to new record levels. Rents rose uninterruptedly in 1953, with the largest monthly increase, 1.1 percent, reported in August, immediately following removal of Federal rent controls. The Household Operation index also advanced steadily (3.2 percent) as prices rose for dry cleaning and laundry service, postage, and telephone service. Gas and Electricity and Solid Fuels and Fuel Oil moved up about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  %.

The index for Other Goods and Services was up 3.8 percent, principally because prices of beer and cigarettes, unlike most commodities, rose substantially. Prices of Medical Care increased 3.6 percent, as fees for hospital and professional services continued up gradually throughout most of the year. Reading and Recreation and Personal Care each advanced about 1 percent with higher prices for newspapers, motion picture admissions, television repair services, and beauty and barber shop services. As the result of the substantial year-end decline, the Transportation index in December 1953 was at the same level as in December 1952. Prices of new cars were lower at the year-end and prices of used cars declined steadily throughout the year. Gasoline, motor oil, auto repairs, railroad and transit fares were higher than at the beginning of the year.

Apparel prices in December 1953 were 0.2 percent higher than in December 1952. The largest monthly change, an increase of 1.0 percent, occurred in September when pricing of a number of fall and winter items was resumed for the first time since the end of the previous winter season.

LS 54-2123

TABLE 1. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- U.S. AVERAGE ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS  
Indexes and Percent Changes for Selected Dates

GROUP	December 1953	November 1953	October 1953	December 1952	June 1950	Year 1939
	This Month	Last Month	2 Months Ago	Last Year	Pre-Korea	Pre-World War II
INDEXES (1947-49 = 100)						
ALL ITEMS	114.9	115.0	115.4	114.1	101.8	59.4
FOOD <sup>2/</sup>	112.3	112.0	113.6	113.8	100.5	47.1
Food at home	111.7	111.4	113.3	113.8	100.5	47.1
Cereals and bakery products	120.9	120.6	120.4	117.7	102.7	57.2
Meats, poultry and fish	107.8	107.0	111.1	113.0	106.1	41.6
Dairy products	110.3	110.5	110.1	112.7	92.3	49.8
Fruits and vegetables	109.2	107.4	107.7	115.8	102.5	46.3
Other foods at home	113.5	114.8	117.4	110.6	94.1	6/
HOUSING <sup>3/</sup>	118.9	118.9	118.7	116.4	104.9	6/
Rent	127.6	127.3	126.8	120.7	108.7	86.6
Gas and electricity	107.2	107.3	107.0	105.6	102.7	104.9
Solid fuels and fuel oil	125.3	125.9	125.7	123.2	107.6	56.4
Housefurnishings	108.1	108.3	108.1	108.2	97.4	53.4
Household operation	117.0	116.9	116.6	113.4	99.6	6/
APPAREL <sup>4/</sup>	105.3	105.5	105.5	105.1	96.5	52.5
TRANSPORTATION	128.9	130.1	130.7	128.9	109.9	6/
MEDICAL CARE	123.6	123.3	122.8	119.3	105.4	6/
PERSONAL CARE	113.6	113.4	113.2	112.5	99.2	6/
READING AND RECREATION	108.9	108.9	108.6	108.0	102.5	6/
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <sup>5/</sup>	120.3	120.2	119.7	115.9	103.7	6/

PERCENT CHANGE TO DECEMBER 1953 FROM:

	November 1953	October 1953	December 1952	June 1950	Year 1939
ALL ITEMS	- 0.1	- 0.4	0.7	12.9	23.4
FOOD <sup>2/</sup>	0.3	- 1.1	- 1.3	11.7	133.4
Food at home	0.3	- 1.4	- 1.9	11.1	137.2
Cereals and bakery products	0.2	0.4	2.7	17.7	111.4
Meats, poultry and fish	0.7	- 3.0	- 4.6	1.6	159.1
Dairy products	- 0.2	0.2	- 2.1	19.5	121.5
Fruits and vegetables	1.7	1.4	- 5.7	6.5	135.9
Other foods at home	- 1.1	- 3.3	2.6	20.6	134.5 <sup>7/</sup>
HOUSING <sup>3/</sup>	0	0.2	2.1	13.3	56.2 <sup>7/</sup>
Rent	0.2	0.6	5.7	17.4	47.3
Gas and electricity	- 0.1	0.2	1.5	4.4	2.2
Solid fuels and fuel oil	- 0.5	- 0.3	1.7	16.4	122.2
Housefurnishings	- 0.2	0	- 0.1	11.0	102.4
Household operation	0.1	0.3	3.2	17.5	71.1 <sup>7/</sup>
APPAREL <sup>4/</sup>	- 0.2	- 0.2	0.2	9.1	100.6
TRANSPORTATION	- 0.9	- 1.4	0	17.3	87.1 <sup>7/</sup>
MEDICAL CARE	0.2	0.7	3.6	17.3	70.2 <sup>7/</sup>
PERSONAL CARE	0.2	0.4	1.0	14.5	90.6 <sup>7/</sup>
READING AND RECREATION	0	0.3	0.8	6.2	72.9 <sup>7/</sup>
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <sup>5/</sup>	0.1	0.5	3.8	16.0	70.4 <sup>7/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> See General Explanation at end of tables.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes "Food away from home".

<sup>3/</sup> Includes "Other shelter"; estimates for rent, home purchase, and other home owner costs are reflected monthly in total housing and all items.

<sup>4/</sup> Indexes for subgroups of apparel not yet available.

<sup>5/</sup> Includes tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and "miscellaneous services" (such as legal services, banking fees, burial services, etc.).

<sup>6/</sup> Not available.

<sup>7/</sup> Approximate.

TABLE 2. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- ALL ITEMS INDEXES FOR SELECTED DATES  
U.S. Average and 20 Large Cities

City	( 1 9 4 7 - 4 9 = 1 0 0 )					(1935-39 = 100)
	December 1953	November 1953	October 1953	December 1952	June 1950	December 1953 <sup>2/</sup>
U.S. AVERAGE <sup>3/</sup>	114.9	115.0	115.4	114.1	101.8	192.1
CITIES PRICED MONTHLY:						
Chicago	116.4	116.4	117.1	114.6	102.8	198.2
Detroit	116.4	116.7	117.2	116.0	102.8	196.5
Los Angeles	115.8	116.1	116.3	115.3	101.3	193.5
New York	113.0	112.9	113.3	112.0	100.9	187.0
Philadelphia	115.0	114.7	115.3	114.7	101.6	191.4
CITIES PRICED JAN., APR., JULY, OCT. <sup>4/</sup>						
				October 1952	April 1950	October 1953
Boston			113.8	113.4	101.2	183.2
Kansas City			115.7	115.2	101.4	186.3
Minneapolis			116.6	114.8 <sup>5/</sup>	102.1 <sup>5/</sup>	193.1
Pittsburgh			114.7	113.4	99.9	195.0
Portland, Ore.			116.1	115.0	101.5	201.1
CITIES PRICED IN MAR., JUNE, SEPT., DEC. <sup>4/</sup>						
				December 1952	June 1950	December 1953
Atlanta	117.1			117.1 <sup>6/</sup>	101.3 <sup>6/</sup>	193.6
Baltimore	114.5			114.4	101.6	196.3
Cincinnati	114.6			112.5	101.2	193.0
St. Louis	116.9			114.9	101.1	195.1
San Francisco	116.9			115.6	100.9	199.8
CITIES PRICED IN FEB., MAY, AUG., NOV. <sup>4/</sup>						
				November 1952	May 1950	November 1953
Cleveland		115.5		113.6	100.4	196.8
Houston		117.3		116.0	103.5	198.6
Scranton		113.4		113.1	100.2	188.5
Seattle		116.4		115.6	102.0	198.9
Washington, D. C.		114.3		113.8	101.6	187.7

<sup>1/</sup> See General Explanation at end of tables.

<sup>2/</sup> These are the same indexes shown in columns 1, 2 or 3, converted to a base of 1935-39 = 100.

<sup>3/</sup> The U.S. Average is based on prices collected in 46 cities. In addition to the 20 cities listed individually, 26 cities are included in the national average. Indexes are not calculated for these 26 cities.

<sup>4/</sup> Foods, fuels, rents and a few other items priced monthly; other commodities and services priced quarterly.

<sup>5/</sup> September 1952 and June 1950; formerly priced March, June, September, December.

<sup>6/</sup> November 1952 and May 1950; formerly priced February, May, August, November.

TABLE 3. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- PERCENT CHANGES FROM NOVEMBER 1953 TO DECEMBER 1953  
U.S. Average and Five Cities Priced Monthly  
All Items and Commodity Groups

City	All Items	Food <sup>2/</sup>	Housing <sup>3/</sup>	Apparel <sup>4/</sup>	Trans- portation	Medical Care	Personal Care	Reading & Recreation	Other Goods & Services <sup>5/</sup>
U.S. AVERAGE	- 0.1	0.3	0	- 0.2	- 0.9	0.2	0.2	0	0.1
Chicago	0	0.1	0	- 0.3	0	0	0.1	- 0.5	0.1
Detroit	- 0.3	0	0.2	- 0.2	- 2.9	0	- 0.3	0	- 0.1
Los Angeles	- 0.3	0.6	0	0.2	- 3.2	0.1	0	- 0.2	0.9
New York	0.1	0.2	0	- 0.4	0.1	0	0.4	- 0.3	0.2
Philadelphia	0.3	0.5	- 0.1	0	- 0.1	2.2	0.3	0	0

See footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.

TABLE 4. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 1/ -- ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS  
December 1953 Indexes and Percent Changes, September 1953 to December 1953  
U.S. Average and 10 Cities Priced in December

City	All Items	Total Food	Housing						Apparel	Transportation	Medical Care	Personal Care	Reading & Recreation	Other Goods & Services
			Total	Rent	Gas & Electricity	Solid Fuels & Fuel Oil	House-furnishings	Household Operation						
December 1953 Indexes (1947-49 = 100)														
U.S. AVERAGE	114.9	112.3	118.9	127.6	107.2	125.3	108.1	117.0	105.3	128.9	123.6	113.6	108.9	120.3
Atlanta	117.1	112.7	123.8		111.8	119.5	112.9	128.2	110.5	129.0	119.5	115.9	112.5	118.2
Baltimore	114.5	112.9	113.7		97.5	124.1	102.7	109.1	102.4	139.6	132.9	108.1	113.1	121.0
Chicago	116.4	110.5	124.2		99.9	124.5	109.5	120.3	108.1	132.8	122.7	114.1	108.7	119.3
Cincinnati	114.6	114.8	116.4	126.9	113.2	127.2	103.9	121.3	103.8	130.5	124.6	109.3	99.7	118.1
Detroit	116.4	114.4	121.3		110.5	119.2	110.3	106.7	103.2	122.6	122.0	119.5	112.8	125.1
Los Angeles	115.8	113.4	124.7		109.5		110.6	108.1	104.2	123.4	121.2	117.9	102.8	115.8
New York	113.0	110.9	115.5		108.9	130.1	108.0	119.6	105.5	133.7	123.4	108.1	108.9	121.2
Philadelphia	115.0	114.7	113.2		102.3	123.0	110.1	113.2	106.9	135.3	123.1	117.1	110.8	122.9
St. Louis	116.9	115.1	118.9	130.0	103.8	132.9	109.3	118.2	105.3	136.5	133.6	110.0	99.6	116.7
San Francisco	116.9	114.2	118.0	127.8	130.1		109.1	109.5	105.0	144.1	123.0	113.0	104.5	117.4

Percent Change -- September 1953 to December 1953

U.S. AVERAGE	- 0.3	- 1.3	0.4	1.3	0.3	0.6	0	0.9	0	- 1.4	0.8	0.6	1.0	1.5
Atlanta	- 0.4	- 1.7	- 0.2		2.8	3.1	- 0.8	0.4	- 0.5	- 0.1	2.0	0.8	1.2	0.5
Baltimore	- 0.4	- 1.6	0.1		0.1	- 0.3	- 0.5	- 0.1	- 1.1	- 0.4	0.2	0	0.1	1.7
Chicago	- 0.2	- 1.8	0.5		0	1.3	- 0.3	0.5	- 0.3	- 0.7	1.2	- 0.2	- 2.0	5.6
Cincinnati	- 0.6	- 1.8	- 0.1	6/ 2.8	0	1.6	0	- 0.1	- 1.0	- 0.8	1.3	- 0.4	0	1.6
Detroit	- 0.4	- 2.0	0.7		1.1	0.4	- 0.3	0.3	0	- 3.6	0.5	0	2.9	1.2
Los Angeles	- 0.3	- 0.4	0.6		0		- 0.1	0.4	0	- 3.3	0.7	0.1	- 0.5	1.2
New York	- 0.2	- 1.5	0.3		0.1	1.0	0.3	0.7	- 0.4	- 0.2	1.5	1.1	2.3	1.3
Philadelphia	- 0.2	- 0.9	- 0.1		0.5	0	- 0.3	- 0.2	0.4	0	2.2	0.2	- 0.4	0.6
St. Louis	- 0.2	- 0.5	0.3	6/ 11.0	4.4	1.7	- 0.1	0.9	- 0.7	- 0.4	0.5	0	- 0.2	0
San Francisco	0	0.1	- 0.3	5/ 4.7	0		- 0.5	0.5	- 0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	- 0.2	1.8

1/ through 5/, see footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.  
6/ Change from June 1953 to December 1953

TABLE 5. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 1/ -- FOOD AND ITS SUBGROUPS  
December 1953 Indexes and Percent Changes, November 1953 to December 1953  
U.S. Average and 20 Large Cities  
(1947-49 = 100)

City	Total Index	Food 2/ Percent Change	Total Food at Home		Cereals & Bakery Products		Meats, Poultry & Fish		Dairy Products		Fruits & Vegetables		Other Foods at Home	
			Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change
			U.S. AVERAGE	112.3	0.3	111.7	0.3	120.9	0.2	107.8	0.7	110.3	- 0.2	109.2
Atlanta	112.7	0.5	112.2	0.5	115.1	0.1	115.3	2.2	110.2	- 0.5	110.9	0.5	107.5	- 0.6
Baltimore	112.9	- 0.2	112.1	- 0.3	121.0	0.2	109.9	0.2	112.1	0.2	108.2	0	111.3	- 1.5
Boston	109.3	- 0.6	107.8	- 0.8	119.1	0	104.1	0.2	111.3	- 0.3	102.5	- 0.9	104.1	- 2.9
Chicago	110.5	0.1	109.6	0	117.2	0	103.4	2.0	108.8	- 1.4	107.0	0.6	118.7	- 1.8
Cincinnati	114.2	0.2	114.4	0.1	120.4	0.3	111.9	1.3	112.3	- 0.1	110.3	- 0.5	119.4	- 1.0
Cleveland	110.3	- 0.2	109.5	- 0.2	117.0	0.1	105.2	1.4	108.0	- 0.3	103.7	- 0.9	115.3	- 2.0
Detroit	114.4	0	113.4	- 0.2	118.3	0.3	107.5	- 0.1	109.7	0	116.0	0.4	113.7	- 1.1
Houston	112.4	0.4	111.7	0.6	116.9	1.7	105.8	- 0.6	110.6	- 0.1	113.6	3.6	114.1	- 0.1
Kansas City	109.4	- 0.7	109.0	- 0.8	120.3	0	105.0	0.7	108.2	- 0.3	104.5	- 3.0	109.9	- 1.6
Los Angeles	113.4	0.6	112.1	0.7	122.3	0.1	108.9	1.2	108.7	0.1	107.5	1.9	114.6	0
Minneapolis	111.8	- 0.1	111.2	- 0.1	122.3	- 0.1	100.4	0.5	106.8	- 0.2	117.9	1.0	119.2	- 1.5
New York	110.9	0.2	110.6	0.2	125.3	0.2	108.0	0.2	109.7	0.3	104.7	3.2	111.4	- 2.3
Philadelphia	114.7	0.5	113.9	0.4	121.2	0	110.3	1.7	114.1	- 0.1	113.2	2.4	111.8	- 1.9
Pittsburgh	112.9	- 0.5	112.5	- 0.6	119.2	- 0.2	103.5	- 0.7	112.4	0	110.2	- 0.8	122.9	- 1.0
Portland, Ore.	112.0	0.4	111.6	0.5	117.0	0.1	110.8	1.2	109.3	0.2	106.2	1.9	115.0	- 0.3
St. Louis	115.1	0.5	114.2	0.4	115.9	0.5	108.8	1.9	106.8	- 2.4	118.4	0.7	122.6	0.1
San Francisco	114.2	1.2	113.8	1.2	127.3	0.2	107.8	0.8	110.3	- 0.1	116.6	4.0	113.5	0.9
Saranton	111.3	0.2	111.5	0.2	119.3	0.3	107.6	1.5	112.7	- 0.1	107.3	2.1	111.4	- 2.2
Seattle	111.0	0.2	110.7	0.2	122.0	- 0.1	105.3	- 0.3	107.0	0.1	112.8	3.3	110.8	- 1.2
Washington, D.C.	110.7	0.1	110.0	0.2	115.4	0.1	105.0	0.1	114.4	0.1	106.9	2.6	110.2	- 1.3

See footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.

The Consumer Price Index (revised January 1953) measures the average change in prices of goods and services purchased by city wage-earner and clerical-worker families. The goods and services included in the index "market basket" are those required to maintain the level of living characteristic of such families in 1952. The quantities and qualities of the items in the "market basket" remain the same between consecutive pricing periods, so that the index measures the effect of price change only on the cost of living of these families.

The indexes are presented on a base of 1947-49=100. The index numbers thus show the average increase or decrease in prices from the 1947-49 average. (For convenience of users, these indexes are also shown on the base 1935-39=100. Note that they are calculated using the new samples, items and weights). The city indexes do not indicate whether it costs more to live in one city than in another. Comparisons of city indexes show only whether prices have risen more or less in one city than another since the base period.

The Bureau has been compiling the Consumer Price Index for nearly 40 years. At four different times it has been necessary to bring the "market basket" of goods and services up to date and to modernize the samples and methods of calculation. The indexes in this report are revised as of January 1953. The "market basket" is based on extensive surveys of postwar expenditure patterns of city families, and reflects changes that have occurred since prewar in the amounts, kinds and qualities of things people buy, as well as new things that were not part of our pattern of living a few years ago.

About 300 items are priced to estimate the average change in prices of all items in the "market basket." Among these items are all the important goods and services that wage and clerical workers buy. Prices are collected at regular intervals, and the successive prices are compared to determine price changes. The items priced are described by detailed specifications to insure that as far as possible, the same quality is priced each time, and that differences in reported prices are measures of price change only. Prices are obtained in a sample of 46 cities representative of all cities in the U.S., including the 12 largest urban areas with populations over 1 million, 9 other large cities, 9 medium-sized cities, and 16 small cities. In each city, prices are reported by stores of various kinds and by service establishments and individuals (such as physicians and dentists) from whom wage and clerical workers buy goods and services.

Foods, fuels, rents, and a few other items are priced monthly in all cities. Prices of most other goods and services are obtained on a regular rotating pricing cycle--monthly in the 5 largest cities, every 3 months in 25 large and medium-sized cities, and every 4 months in the 16 smallest cities. In any given month, goods and services other than foods, fuels and rents are priced in 17 or 18 cities out of the 46. Price collection extends over 3 or 4 weeks, centered on the 15th of the month. Prices for a few items (e.g., auto insurance, railroad fares) are computed from published sources.

Food. Food prices are collected monthly from chain and representative independent food stores in all 46 cities, during the first 3 days of the week which includes the 15th of the month. Prices for restaurant meals are based on menus collected on the regular pricing cycle for each city as described above.

Rent. Rents are obtained each month by mail from tenants of representative samples of dwellings in each of the 46 cities, and once every 2 years by personal visit, when local samples of dwellings are also reviewed. The rent index measures changes in rent from one period to another for the same rented dwellings, with the same facilities, furnishings and services.

Other Shelter. Materials and services for house maintenance and repair are priced on the regular city pricing cycle. Prices of houses, fire insurance rates, mortgage interest and taxes, which change only occasionally, are obtained annually or biennially, and changes estimated between pricing dates. Sales prices of houses are obtained from records of mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

Fuels, including Gas and Electricity. Prices prevailing on the 15th of the month are collected monthly by mail from fuel dealers and utility companies in 46 cities.

All Goods and Services other than Foods, Fuels and Rents. Prices are collected in person, on the city cycle described above, from samples of representative department stores, apparel and shoe stores, housefurnishings and appliance dealers, barber shops, beauty shops, doctors, hospitals, moving picture theaters, etc. Prices for such items as newspapers, street car and bus fares, and telephone service are collected by mail. Prices of used cars are obtained from car dealers through a trade association.

Price changes for all items in each city are combined in accordance with their importance in the "market basket" for that city to obtain an average price change for that city. Price changes for the 46 cities are combined for the U.S. with the use of 1950 population data. Each city is given an importance or weight proportionate to the wage-earner and clerical-worker population it represents in the index. The 12 largest cities, each weighted by its own population, when combined have about two-fifths of the total weight in the national index. Each of the 3 other city-size groups has about one-fifth of the total weight; i.e., the 9 other large cities, the 9 medium-sized cities, and the 16 small cities. City indexes are compiled for the 20 largest of the 46 cities priced for the national average. The remaining 26 cities in which prices are collected are:

Anna, Illinois	Huntington, W. Virginia	Pulaski, Virginia
Camden, Arkansas	Laconia, New Hampshire	Ravenna, Ohio
Canton, Ohio	Lodi, California	Rawlins, Wyoming
Charleston, W. Virginia	Lynchburg, Virginia	San Jose, California
Evansville, Indiana	Madill, Oklahoma	Sandpoint, Idaho
Garrett, Indiana	Madison, Wisconsin	Shawnee, Oklahoma
Glerdale, Arizona	Middlesboro, Kentucky	Shenandoah, Iowa
Grand Forks, N. Dakota	Middletown, Connecticut	Youngstown, Ohio
Grand Island, Nebraska	Newark, Ohio	

The present index, as described above, has been linked (spliced) to the "interim adjusted" Consumer Price Index for 34 cities, issued through December 1952, to form a continuous series back to 1913. <sup>1/</sup>

For detailed descriptions of the Consumer Price Index, its uses and limitations, see the following:

"The Consumer Price Index," A Short Description of the Index as Revised, 1953.

"The Revised Consumers' Price Index--A Summary of Changes in the Index and Suggestions for Transition from the 'Interim Adjusted' and 'Old Series' Indexes to the Revised Index."

Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin No. 1039: "Interim Adjustment of the Consumers' Price Index."

January 1951 Report: "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices."

December 1952 Report: "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices."

Monthly Labor Review articles:

The Revised Consumer Price Index (February 1953).

Adjusted Consumers' Price Index: Relative Importance of Items (June 1951).

Interim Adjustment of Consumers' Price Index (April 1951).

Selection of Cities for Consumer Expenditure Survey-1950 (April 1951).

Revision of the Consumers' Price Index (July 1950).

<sup>1/</sup> See December 1952 report, "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices." Tables of rebased "interim adjusted" indexes for the U. S. and for 20 cities are available upon request.

