

PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

## ACCRA COST OF LIVING INDEX

Among the 297 urban areas participating in the first quarter 2006 *ACCRA Cost of Living Index*, the after-tax cost for a professional/managerial **standard of living ranged from more than twice the national average in New York (Manhattan) NY to nearly 20 percent below the national average in McAlester OK.** The *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* is compiled and published quarterly by ACCRA – The Council for Community and Economic Research.

### The Ten Most and Least Expensive Urban Areas in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)

First Quarter 2006

National Average for 297 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	New York (Manhattan) NY	201.2	1	McAlester OK	80.9
2	San Francisco CA	170.6	2	Harlingen TX	83.1
3	Honolulu HI	160.3	3	Nevada MO	84.2
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach CA	158.2	4	Douglas GA	84.4
5	San Jose CA	156.0	5	Pryor Creek OK	84.5
6	Orange County CA	154.1	6	Seguin TX	84.9
7	Stamford CT	148.5	7	Lubbock TX	84.9
8	Oakland CA	146.9	8	Texarkana TX-AR	85.1
9	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria DC-VA	142.1	9	Salina KS	85.2
10	Bergen-Passaic NJ	136.8	10	Paris TX	85.5

The *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* measures regional differences in the cost of consumer goods and services, excluding taxes and non-consumer expenditures, for professional and managerial households in the top income quintile. It is based on more than 50,000 prices covering almost 60 different items for which prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations or university applied economic centers in each participating urban area. Small differences should not be interpreted as showing a measurable difference.

The composite index is based on six components – housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, health care and miscellaneous goods and services.

## Where is the least expensive Ground Beef?

Each quarter, ACCRA collects more than 50,000 prices from communities across the US for the COLI. This quarter, ACCRA features the communities with the most and least expensive ground beef. ACCRA collected data on the cost of one pound of ground beef, lowest price, min 80% lean (or max 20% fat).

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Ground Beef  
in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)  
First Quarter 2006  
Average for 297 Urban Areas = \$2.53**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Price	Ranking	Urban Areas	Price
1	New York (Manhattan) NY	\$3.92	1	Charleston WV	\$1.43
2	Oakland CA	\$3.83	2	Knoxville TN	\$1.44
3	Boston MA	\$3.79	3	Dodge City KS	\$1.46
4	Providence RI	\$3.63	4	Cullman County AL	\$1.48
5	Flagstaff AZ	\$3.57	5	Gainesville FL	\$1.61

## A Closer Look at Five Cities in the Mid-West

Midwestern cities frequently rate among the least expensive in the index and prices are often below the national average. Here's a snapshot of prices for five items five Midwestern cities:

Quarter 1, 2006	T-Bone Steak (per pound)	Ground Beef (per pound)	Half gallon milk (whole milk)	Kleenex (200- count box)	Cascade (75 oz. box, powder)
Appleton, WI	\$8.11	\$2.41	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$4.10
Des Moines, IA	\$7.51	\$2.35	\$1.62	\$1.75	\$3.29
Dodge City, KS	\$7.12	\$1.46	\$1.89	\$1.50	\$3.74
Jefferson City, MO	\$7.22	\$2.42	\$1.79	\$1.55	\$3.65
Little Rock, AR	\$5.86	\$2.23	\$1.93	\$1.29	\$3.87
<b>National Mean</b>	<b>\$8.29</b>	<b>\$2.53</b>	<b>\$2.01</b>	<b>\$1.80</b>	<b>\$4.21</b>

The quarterly ACCRA Cost of Living Index is available by subscription for \$140 per year (print or PDF version) or \$250 per year (electronic version). Send check, payable to ACCRA, P.O. Box 100127, Arlington VA 22210-0407, or subscribe on the Internet at [www.coli.org](http://www.coli.org).

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