

ACCRA COST OF LIVING INDEX

Among the 298 urban areas participating in the third quarter 2005 *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 more than 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)

Third Quarter 2005

National Average for 298 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	76.5
2	San Francisco CA	174.8	2	Cookeville TN	80.9
3	San Jose CA	166.2	3	Pryor Creek OK	83.6
4	Honolulu HI	158.7	4	Jonesboro AR	83.6
5	Los Angeles-Long Beach CA	157.4	5	Laredo TX	83.7
6	Orange County CA	157.1	6	Jackson MS	84.3
7	Nassau County NY	152.5	7	Salina KS	84.7
8	San Diego CA	150.6	8	McAllen TX	84.8
9	New York (Queens) NY	149.8	9	Joplin MO	84.8
10	Oakland CA	148.8	10	Longview TX	84.9

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 Dry Cleaning?

Each quarter, ACCRA collects more than 50,000 prices from communities across the US and Canada for the COLI. This quarter, ACCRA features the communities with the most and least expensive dry cleaning. ACCRA collected data on dry cleaning costs for a two-piece Men's suit.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Dry Cleaning
in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)
Third Quarter 2005
Average for 298 Urban Areas = \$8.86**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Price	Ranking	Urban Areas	Price
1	San Jose CA	\$13.81	1	Corpus Christi TX	\$5.40
2	Glenwood Springs CO	\$13.33	2	Auburn-Opelika AL	\$5.41
3	Stamford CT	\$12.77	3	Hot Springs AR	\$5.43
4	Rochester MN	\$12.75	4	McAlester OK	\$5.50
5	Hartford CT	\$12.55	5	Pueblo CO	\$5.62

A Closer Look at Grocery Store Items in Texas

Texas cities frequently rate among the least expensive in the index and prices are often below the national average - especially for items found in the grocery store. Here's a snapshot of prices for five items in Texas:

Quarter 3, 2005	T-Bone Steak (per pound)	Dozen Eggs (large eggs)	Potatoes (10 lb. sack)	Cascade (75 oz. box of powder)	Frozen Meal (8-10 oz. Healthy Choice or Lean Cuisine chicken entree)
Abilene	\$7.95	\$0.80	\$2.63	\$3.34	\$2.25
Corpus Christi	\$7.86	\$0.95	\$2.99	\$3.70	\$1.59
Fort Worth	\$7.35	\$0.91	\$2.92	\$3.59	\$2.13
Houston	\$6.99	\$0.82	\$2.48	\$3.60	\$1.99
Lubbock	\$7.91	\$0.78	\$2.43	\$3.31	\$2.35
San Antonio	\$8.01	\$0.96	\$2.82	\$3.61	\$2.00
National Mean	\$8.65	\$1.03	\$3.31	\$4.00	\$2.59

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.

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