## PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

**COST OF LIVING INDEX**

Among the 271 urban areas that participated in the first quarter of the 2023 *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 Harlingen, TX.** The *Cost of Living Index* is published quarterly by C2ER – The Council for Community and Economic Research.

|  |
| --- |
| **The Ten Most and Least Expensive Urban Areas****in the Cost of Living Index (COLI)****Review of Quarter One in 2023****National Average for 271 Urban Areas = 100** |
| **Most Expensive** |  | **Least Expensive** |  |
|  |  | **COL** |  |  |  **COL** |
| **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** | **Index** | **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** | **Index** |
| 1 | New York (Manhattan) NY | 222.0 | 1 | Harlingen TX | 75.9 |
| 2 | Honolulu HI | 179.0 | 2 | Decatur IL | 77.6 |
| 3 | San Francisco CA | 169.9 | 3 | Muskogee OK | 80.0 |
| 4 | New York (Brooklyn) NY | 159.1 | 4 | McAllen TX | 80.9 |
| 5 | Orange County CA | 150.3 | 5 | Tupelo MS | 81.7 |
| 6 | Los Angeles-Long Beach CA | 149.1 | 6 | Lawton OK | 82.5 |
| 7 | Washington DC | 148.7 | 7 | Kalamazoo MI | 82.9 |
| 8 | Boston MA | 148.4 | 8 | Ponca City OK | 82.9 |
| 9 | Seattle WA | 144.5 | 9 | Pittsburg KS | 83.1 |
| 10 | San Diego CA | 142.5 | 10 | Conway AR | 83.2 |

The *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. Covering 61 different items, prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and 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 component categories – housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services.

|  |
| --- |
| **What Do Groceries Cost?**The C2ER grocery index is drawing data from over 320 million grocery prices derived from 1.5 trillion historical data points collected across the country to generate the most accurate data possible. Datasembly’s weekly collection covers 200 national and regional retailers and quick service restaurants representing over 150,000 brick and mortar locations across 30,000 zip codes. With food prices still being a big part of the national conversation, C2ER decided to feature those communities once again with the most and least expensive food costs as measured by the grocery item index number. The twenty-six items priced come from a variety of surrogate categories to represent the grocery item component of the index. With food prices still being a big part of the national conversation, C2ER decided to feature those communities once again with the most and least expensive food costs as measured by the grocery item index number. The twenty-six items priced come from a variety of surrogate categories to represent the grocery item component of the index. **The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Grocery Items by Index Number****in the Cost of Living Index (COLI)****Review of Quarter One in 2023****Average for 271 Urban Areas = 100** |
| **Most Expensive** |  | **Least Expensive** |  |
|  |  |  |  |   |  |
| **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** |  **Index** | **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** | **Index** |
| 1 | Kodiak AK | 132.9 | 1 | McAllen TX | 85.9 |
| 2 | San Francisco CA | 127.8 | 2 | Harlingen TX | 85.9 |
| 3 | Honolulu HI | 125.6 | 3 | Temple TX | 86.4 |
| 4 | Juneau AK | 125.6 | 4 | Waco TX | 87.7 |
| 5 | Anchorage AK | 125.6 | 5 | Cedar Park TX | 87.9 |

**The Most Expensive and Least Expensive Cities to Buy Almond Milk**

This quarter’s release of the *Cost of Living Index* saw the replacement of whole milk half-gallon prices with almond milk half-gallon prices. The last quarter collected, Q3 2022, saw the average price of a half-gallon of whole milk at $2.57. However, this quarter we have found the average price of almond milk to be $4.65, almost twice the average of whole milk during Q3 2022. According to a [2021 article by the Food Institute](https://foodinstitute.com/focus/the-meteoric-rise-of-dairy-alternatives-will-cow-milk-substitutes-remain-unstoppable/), as more infants are being born with a food allergy to cow’s milk, there has been a growing interest in adopting plant based dairy alternatives. Additionally, the availability of these alternatives, primarily almond milk, has been increasing to the point where in 2021, you could find these alternatives at virtually any supermarket or café. With the popularity of these alternative options rising quickly and seemingly showing no signs of stopping, the *Cost of Living Index* continues to strive to represent the COLI consumer.

|  |
| --- |
| **The Five Most and Least Expensive Places to Buy Almond Milk****Year-End Review of Three Quarters in 2022****Average for 271 Urban Areas = $4.65** |
| **Most Expensive** |  | **Least Expensive** |  |
| **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** | **Avg. Rate** | **Ranking** | **Urban Areas** | **Avg. Rate** |
| 1 | Honolulu HI |  $5.42  | 1 | Burlington NC |  $4.25  |
| 2 | San Francisco CA |  $5.35 | 2 | Ocala FL |  $4.36 |
| 3 | Juneau AK |  $5.29  | 3 | Tampa FL |  $4.41  |
| 4 | Fairbanks AK |  $5.22  | 4 | Vero Beach-India River FL |  $4.41  |
| 5 | New York (Queens) NY |  $5.22  | 5 | Fort Lauderdale FL |  $4.43  |

The quarterly Cost of Living Index is available by subscription for $190 per year for the print version and $180 per year for the PDF. The electronic version is available for $300 per year. Be sure and ask about our new Expanded Excel version which covers more household and income types. Send check, payable to C2ER, P.O. Box 12546, Arlington VA 22209, or subscribe on the Internet at [www.coli.org](http://www.coli.org).

If you need additional information on the Cost of Living Index or other COLI-related products such as the COLI Web Calculator and the COLI Historical Index, please contact Tyler Baines at tbaines@crec.net or by phone at 703-522-4980.