



**WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**W. FRANK BARTON
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

*Center for Economic Development
and Business Research*

Wichita’s Cost of Living is Below the National Average

According to the first quarter 2012 Cost of Living Index, which is published quarterly by C2ER (The Council for Community and Economic Research), New York (Manhattan), N.Y., had the highest cost of living, with an index value of 228.3. Harlingen, Texas, had the lowest index value, 82.8. Wichita’s Cost of Living Index was 8.6 percent below the national average.

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

First Quarter 2012

National Average for 306 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	New York (Manhattan), NY	228.3	1	Harlingen, TX	82.8
2	New York (Brooklyn), NY	183.1	2	Memphis, TN	83.7
3	San Francisco, CA	166.5	3	McAllen, TX	83.8
4	Honolulu, HI	165.8	4	Fayetteville, AR	84.6
5	San Jose, CA	154.3	5	Ardmore, OK	85.2
6	Stamford, CT	147.4	6	Temple, TX	85.7
7	New York (Queens), NY	145.9	7	Ashland, OH	86.0
8	Orange County, CA	144.7	8	Conway, AR	86.2
9	Washington, DC	144.6	9	Pueblo, CO	86.2
10	Juneau, AK	140.5	10	Pryor Creek, OK	86.3

Wichita, KS = 91.4

In a recent news release, C2ER featured first quarter grocery prices, one of six component categories within the index. Twenty-six different grocery items are priced in each metro area. The table below shows the most and least expensive places to buy groceries first quarter. The cost of Wichita’s grocery items was more than 9 percent below the national average.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places for Grocery Items by Index Number
in the Cost of Living Index (COLI)
First Quarter 2012
Average for 306 Urban Areas = 100**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	Index
1	Honolulu, HI	156.8	1	San Antonio, TX	81.0
2	Kodiak, AK	149.7	2	Waco, TX	81.7
3	New York (Manhattan), NY	147.7	3	Corpus Christi, TX	81.8
4	Juneau, AK	133.8	4	Temple, TX	81.9
5	Anchorage, AK	130.7	5	Harlingen, TX	83.4

Wichita, KS = 90.7

According to C2ER, the price per pound of a t-bone steak varied widely across the nation first quarter. The table below shows the five most and least expensive places to buy a t-bone steak. Wichita's price was approximately two dollars per pound below the national average.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places to Buy T-Bone Steak
First Quarter 2012
National Average for 306 Urban Areas = \$9.44**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price per lb.	Ranking	Urban Areas	Avg. Price per lb.
1	Minneapolis, MN	15.49	1	Honolulu, HI	6.24
2	New York (Manhattan), NY	14.99	2	Dalton, GA	6.49
3	St. Paul, MN	13.02	3	Harlingen, TX	7.26
4	Stamford, CT	12.32	4	Dodge City, KS	7.28
5	New York (Brooklyn), NY	12.19	5	Salina, KS	7.28

Wichita, KS = \$7.43

The quarterly Cost of Living Index is available by subscription for \$165 per year for the print version and \$150 per year for the PDF. The electronic version is available for \$250 per year. To learn more about the Cost of Living Index and C2ER, visit their website at www.coli.org.