

Questions for the Panel

1. Are there any practical alternatives not considered here that could improve accuracy without materially compromising integrity or delaying production timelines?
2. How should BLS prioritize accuracy, methodological integrity, and timeliness in this context?
 - Are there thresholds (implicit or explicit) that should guide tradeoffs among these criteria?
3. If improved methods require additional time, would it be preferable to:
 - (a) maintain current publication timelines with less precise inputs, or
 - (b) delay final estimates to allow for more accurate methods?
4. How important is it to maintain internal consistency across CPI products (i.e., the CPI-U and the C-CPI-U) or external consistency (across the CE and CPI-U data products)?
5. Is it methodologically acceptable to apply different treatments across item categories or data sources (e.g., seasonal vs. non-seasonal items, Interview vs. Diary Survey data)?
 - Under what conditions would such an approach be justified?
 - What are the risks to transparency and public trust if more than one method was chosen?
6. What is the most appropriate way to handle missing October–November expenditure data in the construction of the C-CPI-U?
 - Are departures from standard methodology acceptable in this case?
 - Would it be reasonable to not published final Chained CPI-U versions for Q3 and Q4 of 2025?
7. What investments (e.g., data sources, modeling capacity, infrastructure) should BLS prioritize to better handle future disruptions to data collection?
8. How should BLS communicate the chosen approach and its limitations to ensure users can properly interpret the resulting estimates?