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Anchorage vs. U.S. City Averages, Part 1

Select CPI components, 1983 to 2010 annual averages

Year	ALL ITEMS				ALL ITEMS LESS SHELTER*			
	Anchorage average	% chg. from prev. yr.	U.S. average	% chg. from prev. yr.	Anchorage average	% chg. from prev. yr.	U.S. average	% chg. from prev. yr.
1983	99.2	1.8%	99.6	3.2%	99.9	3.7%	99.8	3.7%
1984	103.3	4.1%	104.4	4.3%	103.8	3.9%	103.9	4.1%
1985	105.8	2.4%	107.6	3.6%	107.5	3.6%	107.0	3.0%
1986	107.8	1.9%	109.6	1.9%	111.2	3.4%	108.0	0.9%
1987	108.2	0.4%	113.6	3.6%	115.1	3.5%	111.6	3.3%
1988	108.6	0.4%	118.3	4.1%	117.8	2.3%	115.9	3.9%
1989	111.7	2.9%	124.0	4.8%	122.3	3.8%	121.6	4.9%
1990	118.6	6.2%	130.7	5.4%	128.0	4.7%	128.2	5.4%
1991	124.0	4.6%	136.2	4.2%	131.9	3.0%	133.5	4.1%
1992	128.2	3.4%	140.3	3.0%	134.6	2.0%	137.3	2.8%
1993	132.2	3.1%	144.5	3.0%	137.9	2.5%	141.4	3.0%
1994	135.0	2.1%	148.2	2.6%	140.3	1.7%	144.8	2.4%
1995	138.9	2.9%	152.4	2.8%	144.6	3.1%	148.6	2.6%
1996	142.7	2.7%	156.9	3.0%	148.4	2.6%	152.8	2.8%
1997	144.8	1.5%	160.5	2.3%	150.6	1.5%	155.9	2.0%
1998	146.9	1.5%	163.0	1.6%	152.6	1.3%	157.2	0.8%
1999	148.4	1.0%	166.6	2.2%	153.5	0.6%	160.2	1.9%
2000	150.9	1.7%	172.2	3.4%	156.1	1.7%	165.7	3.4%
2001	155.2	2.8%	177.1	2.8%	160.6	2.9%	169.7	2.4%
2002	158.2	1.9%	179.9	1.6%	162.2	1.0%	170.8	0.6%
2003	162.5	2.7%	184.0	2.3%	166.5	2.7%	174.6	2.2%
2004	166.7	2.6%	188.9	2.7%	171.7	3.1%	179.3	2.7%
2005	171.8	3.1%	195.3	3.4%	177.5	3.4%	186.1	3.8%
2006	177.3	3.2%	201.6	3.2%	182.9	3.0%	191.9	3.1%
2007	181.2	2.2%	207.3	2.8%	187.7	2.6%	196.6	2.5%
2008	189.5	4.6%	215.3	3.8%	198.0	5.5%	205.5	4.5%
2009	191.7	1.2%	214.5	-0.4%	199.2	0.6%	203.3	-1.0%
2010	195.1	1.8%	218.1	1.6%	202.2	1.5%	208.6	2.6%
Year	HOUSING				TRANSPORTATION			
	Anchorage average	% chg. from prev. yr.	U.S. average	% chg. from prev. yr.	Anchorage average	% chg. from prev. yr.	U.S. average	% chg. from prev. yr.
1983	99.0	0.8%	99.5	2.7%	98.5	1.8%	99.3	2.4%
1984	102.7	3.7%	103.6	4.1%	104.6	6.2%	103.7	4.4%
1985	103.0	0.3%	107.7	4.0%	108.2	3.4%	106.4	2.6%
1986	102.6	-0.4%	110.9	3.0%	107.8	-0.4%	102.3	-3.9%
1987	97.5	-5.0%	114.2	3.0%	111.3	3.2%	105.4	3.0%
1988	95.4	-2.2%	118.5	3.8%	113.0	1.5%	108.7	3.1%
1989	96.3	0.9%	123.0	3.8%	116.7	3.3%	114.1	5.0%
1990	103.9	7.9%	128.5	4.5%	120.7	3.4%	120.5	5.6%
1991	111.2	7.0%	133.6	4.0%	121.7	0.8%	123.8	2.7%
1992	116.6	4.9%	137.5	2.9%	123.3	1.3%	126.5	2.2%
1993	121.1	3.9%	141.2	2.7%	128.8	4.5%	130.4	3.1%
1994	122.9	1.5%	144.8	2.5%	136.9	6.3%	134.3	3.0%
1995	124.9	1.6%	148.5	2.6%	143.8	5.0%	139.1	3.6%
1996	127.9	2.4%	152.8	2.9%	147.2	2.4%	143.0	2.8%
1997	129.4	1.2%	156.8	2.6%	147.0	-0.1%	144.3	0.9%
1998	131.0	1.2%	160.4	2.3%	144.9	-1.4%	141.6	-1.9%
1999	132.7	1.3%	163.9	2.2%	143.7	-0.8%	144.4	2.0%
2000	134.2	1.1%	169.6	3.5%	150.5	4.7%	153.3	6.2%
2001	139.0	3.6%	176.4	4.0%	153.0	1.7%	154.3	0.7%
2002	143.5	3.2%	180.3	2.2%	151.5	-1.0%	152.9	-1.0%
2003	146.8	2.3%	184.8	2.5%	158.3	4.5%	157.6	3.1%
2004	149.1	1.6%	189.5	2.5%	162.7	2.8%	163.1	3.5%
2005	153.1	2.7%	195.7	3.3%	171.7	5.5%	173.9	6.6%
2006	159.2	4.0%	203.2	3.8%	178.6	4.0%	180.9	4.0%
2007	163.5	2.7%	209.6	3.1%	180.7	1.2%	184.7	2.1%
2008	167.6	2.5%	216.3	2.2%	199.7	10.5%	195.5	5.9%
2009	173.7	3.7%	217.1	0.4%	190.2	-4.8%	179.3	-8.3%
2010	175.2	0.9%	216.3	-0.4%	198.6	4.4%	193.4	7.9%

*"All Items Less Shelter" includes everything except housing.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Anchorage CPI used for Alaska

The Anchorage CPI is probably the most important cost-of-living index in Alaska. Anchorage is the only community in the state where the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics produces such an index, and it is often treated as the de facto statewide inflation measure.

Anchorage is one of 27 urban areas in the country where the BLS tracks changes in consumer prices, and among cities with their own CPIs, Anchorage is the smallest. For the nation and some of the largest metro areas, the index is produced monthly. Others come out every other month, and for the rest — like Anchorage — it's twice yearly.

In most cases, price changes in Anchorage do not differ radically from Alaska's other urban areas, so the Anchorage CPI is probably a decent proxy. However, in the smaller and more remote communities — particularly those off the road system — spending habits may differ greatly from Anchorage. Despite this shortcoming, no good substitute exists.

CPI shows what we buy

The U.S. Department of Labor goes to great lengths and expense to produce the consumer price index. Intermittently, BLS conducts elaborate surveys of consumers' spending habits to examine the market basket of goods and their location-specific weights. The