August 2026

STUDENT PRICE INDEX (SPI) UPDATE

The August 2026 Central Washington University Student Price Index (CWU SPI) shows a 1.4% increase in the cost of living compared to July 2026. The most notable price changes were observed in school supplies and Gasoline. School supply prices increased by 18.7%, jumping back up from last month's 24.5 decrease. This aligns with the *Wildcat Shop* prices reopening and bringing the prices back upwards. Gasoline prices increased by 6.3%, following last month's 4.9 increase, showing a recovery from June's sharp drop of –17.2%. Overall, the CWU SPI increased by 1.4% this month, while the Pacific Region CPI and the U.S. CPI increased by 0.4% and 0.4%, respectively.

INFLATION RATES

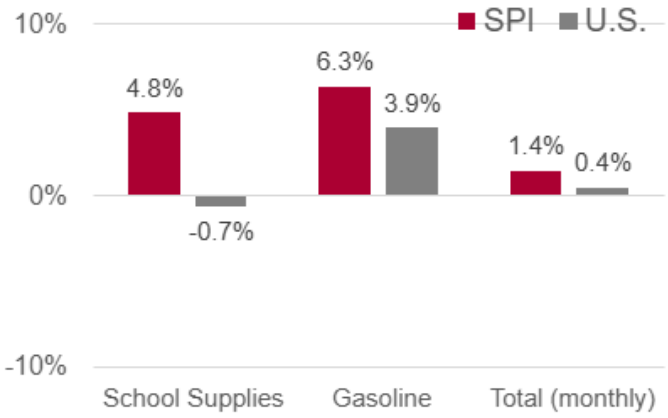
ANNUAL

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**-10.7 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**3.3 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**3.4 %**

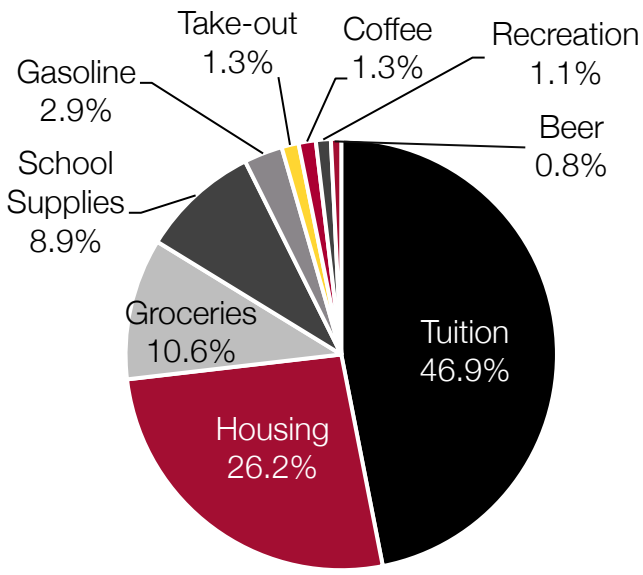
MONTHLY

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**1.4 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**0.4 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**0.4 %**

MAIN CONTRIBUTORS (MONTHLY)



CATEGORIES AND WEIGHTS



Last update: Fall 2022

1. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Pacific Division (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA).
2. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers

THE SPI PROJECT

This project, led jointly by the Economics Association and the Department of Economics at CWU, develops a price index of the cost of college living in Ellensburg, Washington. Based on the campus-wide survey, each month the members of the Economic Association collect prices of items typically consumed by CWU students from various stores in Ellensburg to calculate the SPI index and inflation rates. This index's strength lies in identifying the change in prices students in Ellensburg face.

Contributors

Hayden Hobbick (Report Writer), Doan Le, Diego Garza, Kaelan Kavanaugh, Luke Hogan, Miguel Ramos, Riley Klein, Sofia Ayala-Cordova, Sara Walters, Tyler Roach (Price Collectors) and Dr. Yurim Lee (Faculty Advisor)