MARCH 2026

STUDENT PRICE INDEX (SPI) UPDATE

The March 2026 Central Washington University Student Price Index (CWU SPI) shows a 0.1% decrease in the cost of living compared to February 2026. The most notable price changes were observed in beer, gasoline, and groceries. Gasoline prices increased by 11.6%, continuing an upward trend seen over the past few months. However, this increase was lower than the 22.1% rise observed in the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI), suggesting that while rising fuel costs remain a concern, the local impact has been more moderate. At the same time, beer prices declined significantly and grocery prices decreased slightly, helping to offset the increase in gasoline prices and contributing to the overall small decline in the index. Overall, while the CWU SPI decreased slightly this month, both the Pacific Region CPI and the National CPI increased by 0.8% and 0.9%, respectively.

INFLATION RATES

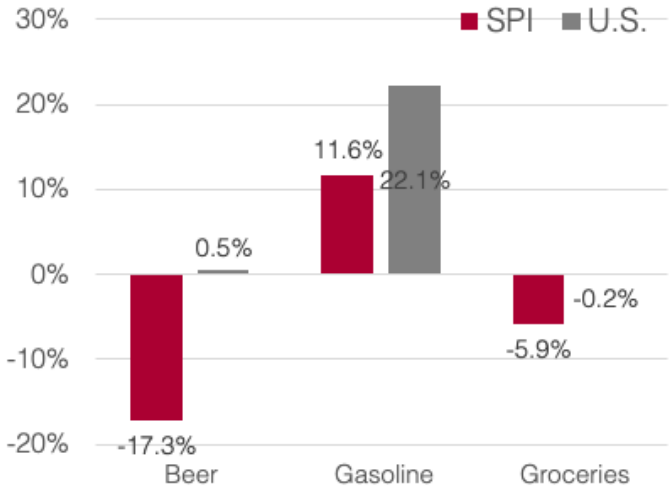
ANNUAL

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**0.9 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**3.1 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**3.3 %**

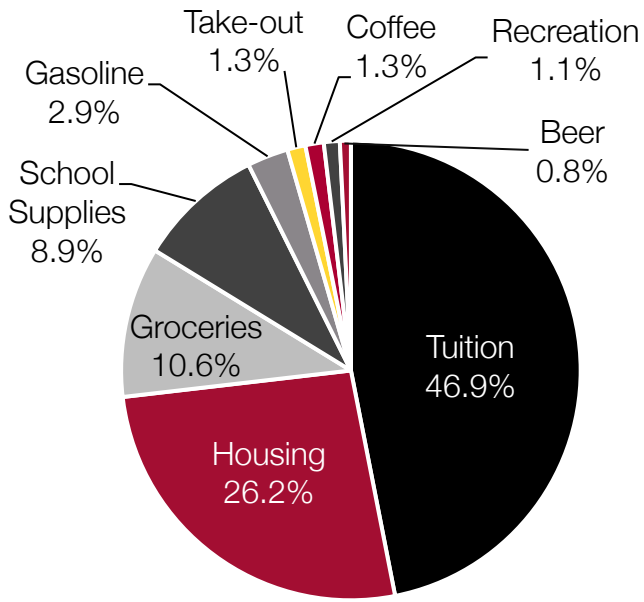
MONTHLY

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**-0.1 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**0.8 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**0.9 %**

MAIN CONTRIBUTORS (MONTHLY)



CATEGORIES AND WEIGHTS



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

Last update: Fall 2022

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

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