MAY 2026

STUDENT PRICE INDEX (SPI) UPDATE

The May 2026 Central Washington University Student Price Index (CWU SPI) shows a 1.9% increase in the cost of living compared to April 2026. The most notable price changes were observed in gasoline, groceries, and take-out meals. Gasoline prices increased by 8.7%, making it the largest contributor to the increase in student living costs this month. This rise was also higher than the 7.4% increase reported in the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI), suggesting that local fuel prices increased more rapidly than the national average. Grocery prices also rose by 5.3%, adding to students' everyday expenses. In contrast, take-out meal prices decreased by 2.4%, providing some relief from higher food costs. Overall, the CWU SPI increased this month, while the Pacific Region CPI and the U.S. CPI increased by 0.3% and 0.5%, respectively.

INFLATION RATES

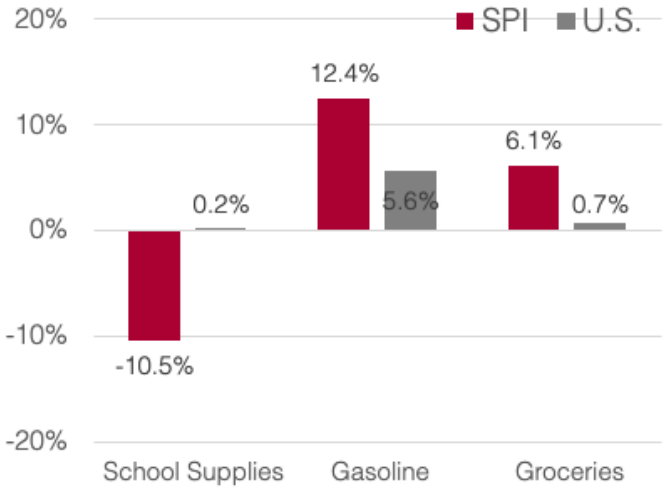
ANNUAL

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**4.1 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**3.5 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**4.2 %**

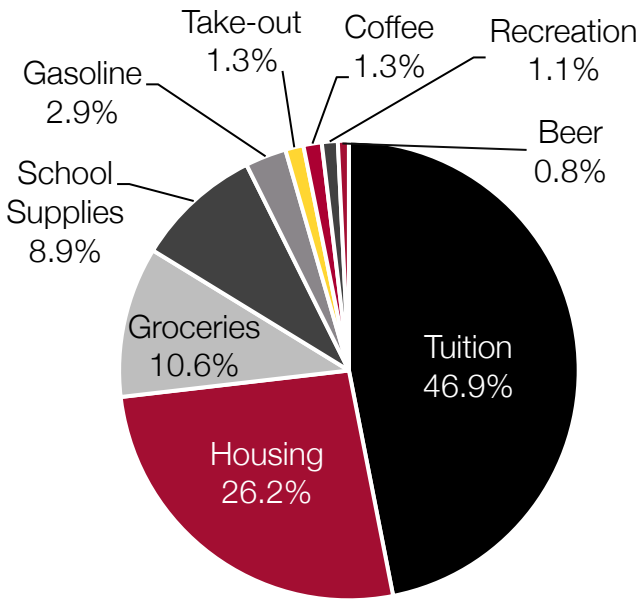
MONTHLY

Central Washington University Student Price Index (SPI)	**1.9 %**
Pacific Region (CPI)[1]	**0.3 %**
United States (CPI)[2]	**0.5 %**

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

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