

COLA LIVING PATTERN SURVEY

A new The Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) Living Pattern Survey (LPS) has been released and will run from Dec.1, 2023 through Dec. 31, 2023. **The information received in this survey directly impacts your COLA rate, and could eventually reverse Anchorage's projected COLA reduction.**

Since the LPS for a given COLA location is only conducted every three years, this will be the basis for a data point to compute COLA rates through 2025 with the next survey taking place in 2026. **All military members, active Guard Reserve (AGR) and Drill Status Guardsmen (DSG) are encouraged to take the survey.** The responses to this survey will have a direct effect on future COLA rates for all service members and their dependents in your area, so your participation is highly encouraged. Please feel free to forward the survey link to other service members who may not receive it. The link may also be found on the Defense Travel Management Office website at <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Overseas-Cost-of-Living-Allowance/Overseas-COLA-Data-Collection-Surveys/>.

If you have recently transferred to another location, it would be appropriate for you to complete the survey based on your experience in Alaska so that others may benefit. Since the survey is not limited to those with access to the DoD network, the survey may be taken from any personal computer or device and by any family member who may experience most of the information being collected. Information from civilian employees is not requested as this survey only intends to capture the living pattern information of uniformed service members and their families. Please only submit one survey per household.

The survey will ask general information in the first segment about the service member and location such as number of dependents, branch of service, rank, unit and availability of commissaries and exchanges at your duty location. In the second segment, it will ask which goods and services you normally purchase and allow you to select an outlet where you would most often purchase those goods and services locally. Finally, in that segment, it will ask you to state a percentage of how much you purchase those goods and services locally, on-base, online or if you merely brought the items with you. It will continue with the next two segments asking you general information concerning how you travel locally (personal vehicle, taxi, bus, etc.) and where you generally eat your daily meals (home, work or locally). Lastly, it will ask you about items you had to purchase due to the cold-weather climate in Alaska. Alaska is the only location where cold-weather purchases add to your COLA index. Once you get started, you will see a pattern develop and the survey goes fairly quick.

There are several data points that come together to create a COLA rate and the LPS is the only data point that comes straight from the service member, so take this opportunity to be a part of the process. Although participation is not mandatory, maximum participation is requested. Statistics will be reported weekly to your allowances coordinator until the survey concludes.

Please go to the following webpage to take the survey at your earliest convenience:

<https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Overseas-Cost-of-Living-Allowance/Overseas-COLA-Data-Collection-Surveys/>

or, just begin the survey at:

<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Community/se/2511374556FF6A0F>