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# Primerica Household Budget Index™ Data: Purchasing Power for Middle-Income Americans Remained Flat in February

DULUTH, Ga.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The latest Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™) data, a monthly economic metric that examines how inflation and wage trends impact the ability of middle-income families to afford life's everyday necessities, is estimated at 101.4% in February, unchanged from January and up 1.8% from a year ago.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

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“Rising energy costs will be important to watch for middle-income households in the months ahead,” said Amy Crews

Cutts, Ph.D., CBE®, economic consultant to Primerica. “Small modifications in daily activities along with careful budget planning and strategic use of savings will help families better navigate these changes.”

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures inflation for a comprehensive basket of goods for all U.S. households, increased 2.4% in February compared to a year ago. Adjusting the CPI to narrow the impact of inflation to focus specifically on middle-income families and their purchase patterns, inflation rose to 2.9% in February 2026 compared to February 2025. The cost of necessity items as used in the HBI™ metric (food, utilities, gas, auto insurance, and health care) for middle-income Americans is up 1.8% from a year ago.

## About the Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™) Data

The Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™) data is constructed monthly on behalf of Primerica by its chief economic consultant Amy Crews Cutts, PhD, CBE®. The index measures the purchasing power of middle-income families with household incomes from \$30,000 to \$130,000 and is developed using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Bureau of Census, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The index looks at the cost of necessities including food, gas, auto insurance, utilities, and health care and earned income to track differences in inflation and wage growth.

Primerica's HBI™ metric was created to fill an information void around the economy's impact on middle-income families. Metrics like the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure overall inflation but don't offer a clear picture of how it impacts middle-income Americans. Middle-income households play a key role in driving consumer spending and the overall

economy as they account for over 55% of the U.S. population. The purchasing power of middle-income families are a key barometer of real-time economic trends. Understanding middle-income households' purchasing power is important because it shows whether they are gaining financial ground or falling behind.

The HBI™ data uses January 2019 as its baseline, with the value set to 100% at that point in time.

Periodically, prior HBI™ values may be modified due to revisions in the CPI series and Consumer Expenditure Survey releases by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Beginning with the December 2024 release of the index, the expenditure weights have been updated to the most recent (Q1 2024) data and auto insurance has been added to the group of necessity items. For more information, visit [householdbudgetindex.com](https://householdbudgetindex.com).

### **About Primerica, Inc.**

Primerica, Inc., headquartered in Duluth, GA, is a leading provider of financial products and services to middle-income households in North America. Independent licensed representatives educate Primerica clients about how to better prepare for a more secure financial future by assessing their needs and providing appropriate solutions through term life insurance, which we underwrite, and mutual funds, annuities, managed investments and other financial products, which we distribute primarily on behalf of third parties. We insured over 5.5 million lives and had approximately 3.1 million client investment accounts as of December 31, 2025. Primerica, through its insurance company subsidiaries, was the #3 issuer of Term Life insurance coverage in the United States and Canada in 2025. Primerica stock is included in the S&P MidCap 400 and the Russell 1000 stock indices and is traded on The New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "PRI".

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