

**The official figure for the 2019 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will not be announced until mid-October 2018.**

The Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers ([CPI-W](#)) increased 3.2 percent over the last 12 months to an index level of 246.155 (1982-84=100). For the month of July, the index was unchanged prior to seasonal adjustment.

The third quarter of 2017 (July, August, September) will be used as the base quarter to determine the 2019 federal retiree (CSRS and FERS) and Social Security COLAs. The July 2018 CPI-W figure was 2.71 percent higher than the average CPI-W for the third quarter of 2017 (which was 239.668).

## Trend Toward 2019 COLA Increase (FERS / CSRS / Social Security)

CPI-W Index Monthly		Percentage (%) Change Monthly	Percentage (*%) Trend Toward 2019 COLA
<b>July 2017</b>	238.617	-0.08	-
<b>Aug. 2017</b>	239.448	0.35	-
<b>Sept. 2017</b>	240.939	0.62	-
<b>Oct. 2017</b>	240.573	-0.15	0.38
<b>Nov. 2017</b>	240.666	0.04	0.42
<b>Dec. 2017</b>	240.526	-0.06	0.36
<b>Jan. 2018</b>	241.919	0.58	0.94
<b>Feb. 2018</b>	242.988	0.44	1.39
<b>Mar. 2018</b>	243.463	0.20	1.58
<b>Apr. 2018</b>	244.607	0.50	2.06
<b>May 2018</b>	245.770	0.50	2.55
<b>June 2018</b>	246.196	0.20	2.72
<b>July 2018</b>	246.155	0.00	<b>2.71</b>

[2019 COLA Watch - CSRS / FERS / Social Security](#)

## How is a COLA calculated?

The Social Security Act specifies a formula for determining each COLA. According to the formula, COLAs are based on increases in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). CPI-Ws are calculated on a monthly basis by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

A COLA effective for December of the current year is equal to the percentage increase (if any) in the average CPI-W for the third quarter of the current year over the average for the third quarter of the *last year in which a COLA became effective*. If there is an increase, it must be rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent. If there is no increase, or if the rounded increase is zero, there is no COLA.