



Delayed Consumer-Price Index Report Comes Out Oct. 24

BY ANNE TERGESEN AND SAM GOLDFARB

The Trump administration is recalling some furloughed workers to publish a key inflation report, showing just how critical the data are for a variety of government services.

The consumer-price index offers a monthly snapshot of what Americans are paying for everything including bread, gas and airline tickets.

Figures for September, which were due out this week, were looking like they would be delayed indefinitely by the government shutdown. But on Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said it would publish the data on Oct. 24. It said no other releases would be rescheduled during the shutdown.

The data help the Federal Reserve decide how to adjust its benchmark interest rates.

They are also used for other government programs and rates on certain government bonds.

Social Security

Under normal circumstances, retirees would learn this week how much bigger their Social Security checks for 2026 would be. The annual raise is tied to the average inflation data for July, August and September, and announced soon after the release of the September report.

The Social Security cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, is required to be published by Nov. 1. The BLS said on Friday that the later October release of the CPI report allows the Social Security Administration to meet deadlines necessary to ensure the accurate and timely payment of benefits.

The nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates, based on data through August, a 2.8% Social Security COLA for next year, larger than this year's 2.5% raise.

I bonds, TIPS

The Treasury issues two types of bonds that are indexed for inflation: Treasury inflation-protected securities, or TIPS, and the savings bonds known as I bonds.

Investors in both might have ended up slightly worse without the September CPI report, though most wouldn't notice a big change in what the bonds pay out. That is because interest on the bonds would be based on an estimate for September inflation, rather than the actual number.

TIPS have a principal that adjusts based on the change in consumer prices, and a fixed interest rate that is applied to that principal. Those adjustments are typically announced for the coming month around the time the CPI report for the

previous month is released.

If September inflation data hadn't been released by the end of October, regulations say --the Treasury Department must come up with a substitute number based on the assumption that prices rose at the same pace as over the previous 12 months.

Inflation derivatives recently showed traders think consumer prices rose 0.33% (not seasonally adjusted) in September, exceeding the 0.24% monthly pace of the previous 12 months. If traders are right, Treasury's inflation adjustments would be a little smaller than the actual increase.

I bonds have interest that depends on a combination of a fixed and an adjustable rate. The latter updates every May 1 and Nov. 1, based on inflation over the past six months.

As with TIPS, Treasury would estimate September's CPI level based on the 12month trend if a report isn't released by month's end.

401(k), IRA limits

The IRS typically announces 401(k) and IRA contribution limits for the following year in the fall, based in part on the September inflation data. Those caps were also set to be delayed without the report.

In 2025, individuals under 50 can contribute up to \$23,500 to their 401(k)s and similar plans. Those 50 and older can kick in an extra \$7,500 in catch-up contributions, an allowance that rises to \$11,250 for people 60 to 63.

For IRAs, the current limit is \$7,000, rising to \$8,000 for people 50 and older.

The September inflation data also help determine the income thresholds below which taxpayers can contribute to a Roth IRA and fully or partly deduct IRA contributions on their income-tax returns.

Copyright (c)2025 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. 10/13/2025
Powered by TECNAVIA

The following is a digital replica of content from the print newspaper and is intended for the personal use of our members. For commercial reproduction or distribution of Dow Jones printed content, contact: Dow Jones Reprints & Licensing at (800) 843-0008 or visit djreprints.com.
