



CFM Updates

We have updated the Consumer Finance Monthly data. Updates include cases collected during the field period of April–June 2009 and additional created variables. You should now have access to **Consumer Finance Monthly > CFM Through 6/2009** dataset. This has been a very busy summer for us, and the second quarter release came out later than we had hoped.

Please log on to the [Investigator](#) to select and extract your variables.

We have recently made some significant changes. Please note the following new sample weights which include post-stratification home ownership:

CV_WEIGHT_1JUL05_30JUN06
CV_WEIGHT_1JUL06_30JUN07
CV_WEIGHT_1JUL07_30JUN08
CV_WEIGHT_1JUL08_30JUN09

Note: These weights are based on post-stratification on income, race, age, and home ownership. These weights are constructed to support estimation of the effects of price declines in the housing market. The approximate peak for the housing market was July 1, 2007 so these weights facilitate estimates of 12 month periods before and after the housing peak. Telephone methods tend to oversample homeowners, and our revised post-stratification weights help control for that.

Tertiary variables can be accessed by setting the Variable Preference Level to “Show all” in the Investigator. Please note that CV_SAMPLE_WEIGHT_JAN-MAR_2009 is now a tertiary variable. It was replaced by CV_SAMPLE_WEIGHT_JAN-JUN_2009.

Retired questions: This quarter we have stopped asking questions regarding Gasoline, Social Security and the current Credit Knowledge section. We hope to start asking a more comprehensive set of financial knowledge questions some time this quarter.

3 months of Foreclosure data! Please select “Foreclosure” as an Area of Interest in the Investigator!

An Interesting Read

[Housing Price Declines and Household Balance Sheets](#)

By: Randall Olsen & Lucia Dunn

This research note tracks the evolution of household balance sheets from 2005 through mid-2008. It also quantifies the likely value impairment on mortgages against owner occupied homes. We are working on a revision that will bring these estimates forward to mid-2009.

Documentation Corner

We greatly appreciate users who forward data anomalies or instances of unclear documentation to us (email mlowden@chrr.osu.edu). This is not a big-budget project and our users often notice things we don't. We will do our utmost to reply to you and fix any problems.

Entry points to Financial Questions in CFM. What are they and how do we use them?

By: Dr. Jay Zagorsky

Non-response to Financial Questions in the CFM Financial questions often elicits from respondents either a “refusal” or a “don't know” response. The Consumer Finance Monthly handles these cases of item non-response two different ways. First, respondents are asked for a range of values. Second,

respondents who cannot provide a range are asked some simple above or below questions which bracket the value.

The range of values questions give respondents a method of providing a lower and upper bound answer. Examining the data suggest that some respondents give quite precise bounds. When a respondent gives a range, researchers should note that the upper and lower bound variables are not always in the correct order. The survey always asks for the upper bound first and the lower bound second. However, if a respondent gives the smaller number first, that number will be typed into the upper bound variable and the range values will be reversed.

If respondents are not able to give an upper or a lower bound then a second method of handling item non-response is tried. Respondents are asked if amount is above or below a particular value. These initial values are called the variable's entry point. The list of all entry points used by the Consumer Finance Monthly as of wave 11 is found in table 1 and 2 at the end of this section.

For example, the entry point for the person's primary residence is \$200,000. If the answer to the entry point question is neither a refusal nor a don't know then the respondent is asked one more "is the value above or below question." This results in a series of four brackets that provide researchers with a rough idea the range the item's value falls into. One caution for researchers is that while three of the brackets have a defined range, the top range is open-ended.

An example of how item non-response to financial questions is handled is seen in the questions that ask all homeowners the market value of their residence.

Question SAS-NFA_1A_SR000001 asks homeowners "About how much do you think this residence would sell for on today's market?"

If the respondent is unable to provide a specific amount the interviewer probes by asking if they could provide "an approximate range for that amount?" If they can provide a range both the upper and lower number is captured.

If the respondent cannot provide a range they are then asked "Would it amount to \$[entry_resi] or more?" Looking at table 2 shows that "Entry_resi" has the value of \$200,000. This results in the interviewer asking if the home is worth more or less than \$200,000. If the respondent states less than \$200,000 they are asked one last question "would it amount to \$100,000 or more." If the respondent states their home is worth more than \$200,000 they are asked if it is worth \$350,000 or more.

These questions result in the researcher being able to classify respondents who do not know the value of their home into four groups; \$0 to \$100,000, \$100,000 to \$200,000, \$200,000 to \$350,000 and over \$350,000. The specific entry points and symbol names for all income and asset questions used in the bracketing questions is found in table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Entry Points for Consumer Finance Monthly's Income Section

Type	Variable Name	Amount
Financial Assistance	entry_asst	\$600
Income from Farm or Self Employment	entry_bus	\$1,250
Child Support	entry_chsupt	\$400
Educational Assistance	entry_ed	\$1,000
Inheritance	entry_inher	\$550
Military Pay	entry_mil	\$2,000
Other Household Items	entry_othhh	\$1,200
Debt	entry_debt	\$500
Other	entry_othr	\$500
Wage Rate	entry_wage	\$1,000
Income	entry_income	\$50,000

Table 2: Entry Points for Consumer Finance Monthly's Asset Section

Type	Variable Name	Amount
Checking/Money Market/Savings	entry_chkgmmsav	\$10,000
Cash/Certificates of Deposits	entry_cashcd	\$10,000
US Savings Bonds	entry_usbonds	\$3,000
Mutual Funds	entry_mf	\$30,000
Life Insurance Policies	entry_lip	\$20,000
Retirement Plans	entry_rp	\$40,000
Primary Residence	entry_resi	\$200,000
Tax Advantaged Accounts (Ira/401k)	entry_taxadv	\$20,000
Stock	entry_stock	\$30,000
Bonds	entry_bondsecur	\$30,000
Money Owed to Respondent	entry_loan	\$3,000

User Note: Some of the CFM entry points are not constant but have been changed. In October 2006, a number of entry points were revised to ensure a more even distribution of respondents within the four brackets. For example ENTRY_CHSUPT (child support) prior to October 2006 was \$300 and was then changed to \$400.

Investigator Remote training

Please sign up new staff members for a remote 30-minute courtesy demonstration of the Investigator. If you have any questions regarding the Investigator or the data, please send these to mldowden@chrr.osu.edu.

We Appreciate Your Input

Are you satisfied with the Consumer Finance Monthly data from the Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University? Please let us know if you have any questions or comments. We welcome your suggestions and value your opinion. If you have suggestions for improving survey content, please let us know. We want to be responsive to research needs in the profession.



Randall Olsen
Professor of Economics and
Director, [Center for Human Resource Research](#)
The Ohio State University
614-442-7348 olsen.6@osu.edu