



WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Center for Economic Development  
and Business Research

## Misery Index: 2014 Q3

The Misery Index is an indicator measuring the impact of changing economic conditions on people. This index, as calculated by CEDBR, is a combination of the quarterly percent change in the Housing Price Index (HPI), the quarterly average change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and the quarterly average unemployment rate (UR). The combination of changes in these factors indicates the changing level of economic misery experienced by people in different geographic areas.

### Misery Index

		Index Value		% Change in Index		Quarterly % Change in Index Components		
		2014 Q3	2014 Q2	Quarterly	Annual	HPI	CPI	UR
	U.S.	6.17	6.09	▲ 1.25%	▼ -15.87%	▲ 1.41%	▲ 0.04%	▲ 0.01%
	Kansas	4.83	4.70	▲ 2.86%	▼ -13.80%	▲ 1.68%	▲ 0.07%	▲ 0.03%
Kansas	Wichita, KS	5.79	5.51	▲ 5.17%	▼ -10.60%	▲ 2.43%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.05%
	Kansas City, MO-KS	6.20	5.95	▲ 4.14%	▼ -5.63%	▲ 1.45%	▲ 0.02%	▲ 0.04%
	Lawrence, KS	4.58	4.30	▲ 6.60%	▼ -15.15%	▲ 0.08%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.06%
	Topeka, KS	5.07	4.90	▲ 3.56%	▼ -16.29%	▲ 1.20%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.03%
Region	Oklahoma City, OK	4.37	4.29	▲ 2.04%	▼ -15.50%	▲ 0.78%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.02%
	Omaha, NE	3.90	3.86	▲ 0.89%	▼ -6.69%	▲ 1.73%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.01%
	St. Louis, MO-IL	6.67	6.59	▲ 1.08%	▼ -8.48%	▲ 1.41%	▲ 0.02%	▲ 0.01%
	Tulsa, OK	4.73	4.67	▲ 1.47%	▼ -16.07%	▲ 1.44%	▲ 0.20%	▲ 0.01%
Peer	Akron, OH	5.06	5.07	▼ -0.11%	▼ -28.45%	▲ 1.91%	▲ 0.20%	▼ -0.01%
	Grand Rapids, MI	5.29	5.37	▼ -1.51%	▼ -25.03%	▲ 2.70%	▲ 0.20%	▼ -0.02%
	Greenville, SC	5.78	4.48	▲ 28.97%	▼ -11.40%	▲ 0.51%	▼ -0.03%	▲ 0.28%
	Lancaster, PA	4.71	4.41	▲ 6.79%	▼ -23.39%	▲ 0.24%	▲ 0.10%	▲ 0.07%

Values are impacted by rounding.

Between the second and third quarters of 2014 the general level of misery experienced by people in the United States increased slightly. This can be attributed to the increase in both the inflation rate and the unemployment rate. Despite experiencing a third quarter increase in misery, Kansans continue to experience a lower level of misery than the nation as a whole.

Within Kansas, the misery index for all metropolitan areas increased. Lawrence continues to have the lowest level of misery in the state, despite experiencing the largest increase in misery in the third quarter. The Kansas City metropolitan area continues to have the highest level of misery in the state, slightly above the national rate.

Within the region including Kansas, all areas experienced increases in the level of misery in the third quarter. However, the levels of misery are improved over the past year. The largest cities in the region, St. Louis, Omaha and Kansas City, have had the smallest improvements over the past year.

For comparison, the misery index for four metropolitan areas similar to Wichita in population, demographics, and industrial mix are also provided. Within these peer communities, Wichita currently has the highest level of misery. The average annual rate of misery in Akron remains somewhat above Wichita. Akron and Grand Rapids had small decreases in misery in the third quarter. The significant increase in misery in Greenville is attributed to deterioration in the unemployment rate. Greenville and Grand Rapids have returned to their pre-recession levels of misery.

As the economy continues to recover from the recession, the annual average misery rates in most areas continue to slowly decline. Although no metropolitan area in the region, including Kansas, has reached prerecession levels, all areas are better off today than they were a year ago.



