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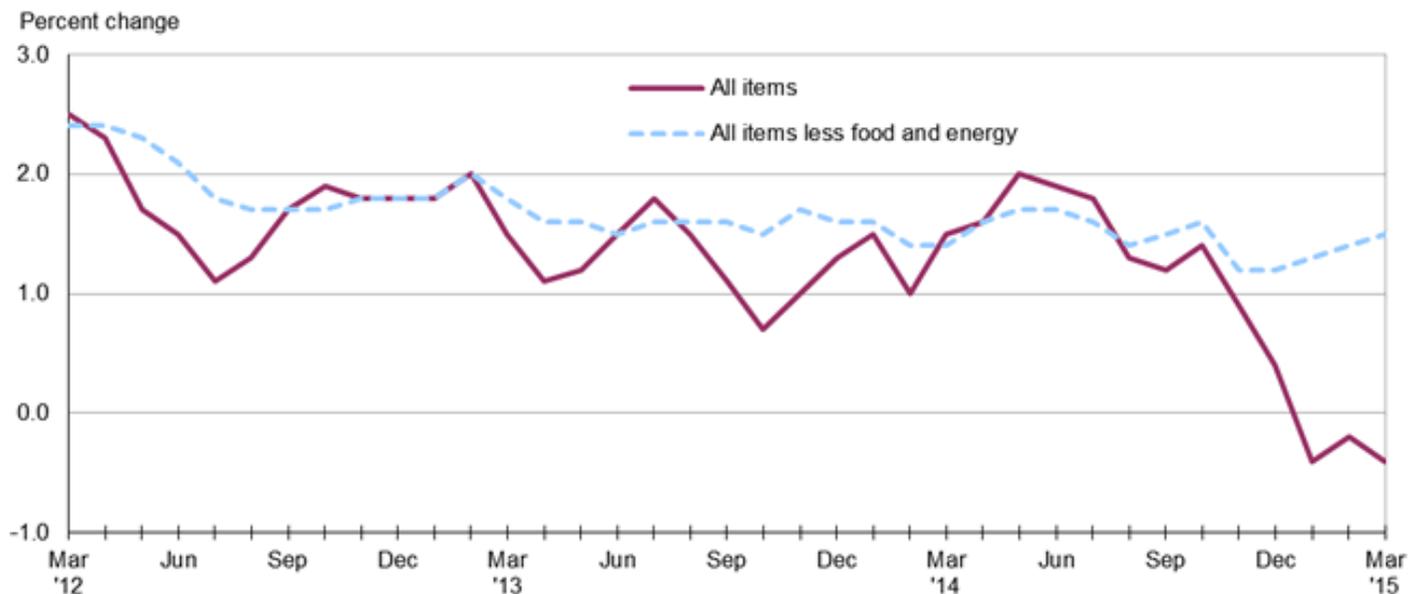
Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – March 2015

Area prices up 0.3 percent over the month; down 0.4 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast edged up 0.3 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that this was mostly due to a 0.3-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index also increased over the month, up 1.1 percent. These one-month increases were partially offset by a 0.1-percent decline in the food index. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the Northeast all items CPI-U decreased 0.4 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) The energy index fell 19.7 percent over the year, while the all items less food and energy index was 1.5 percent higher. Food prices also increased from March 2014, up 2.2 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Northeast region, March 2012–March 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices inched down 0.1 percent in March after being unchanged in February. Food at home prices edged down 0.2 percent, while food away from home prices increased 0.1 percent over the month.

From March 2014 to March 2015, the food index increased 2.2 percent. Food at home prices rose 2.1 percent over the year and prices for food away from home increased 2.3 percent.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 1.1 percent since February, following nine consecutive one-month decreases. This was due to a 7.4-percent increase in the gasoline index, moderated by decreases in both electricity and utility (piped) gas service prices, down 5.1 and 3.4 percent, respectively.

The energy index fell 19.7 percent since March 2014—the largest 12-month decrease since September 2009. The decrease was mostly due to a 31.3-percent drop in gasoline prices. Prices for utility (piped) gas service also dropped over the year, down 16.5 percent—the largest 12-month decrease for this index since December 2009. The electricity index also decreased, down 0.4 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.3 percent in March. Shelter prices rose 0.3 percent, led by higher prices for lodging away from home. The apparel index posted a seasonal increase, up 2.0 percent. Prices were also higher for new and used motor vehicles (0.8 percent) and household furnishings and operations (1.0 percent), while those for education and communication declined 0.1 percent.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.5 percent, led by higher prices for shelter (2.2 percent). Prices were also higher for medical care (3.3 percent). Moderating the 12-month advance in the all items less food and energy index were lower prices for household furnishings and operations and recreation, down 0.7 and 0.1 percent, respectively.

Table A. Northeast region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	1-month	12-month								
January.....	0.4	1.6	0.4	2.9	0.3	1.8	0.6	1.5	-0.2	-0.4
February.....	0.5	2.0	0.4	2.8	0.6	2.0	0.1	1.0	0.2	-0.2
March.....	0.8	2.5	0.5	2.5	0.0	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.3	-0.4
April.....	0.5	2.8	0.3	2.3	-0.1	1.1	0.0	1.6		
May.....	0.5	3.2	-0.1	1.7	0.0	1.2	0.4	2.0		
June.....	0.1	3.4	-0.2	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.0	1.9		
July.....	0.2	3.6	-0.1	1.1	0.2	1.8	0.1	1.8		
August.....	0.3	3.8	0.5	1.3	0.2	1.5	-0.3	1.3		
September.....	0.1	4.0	0.5	1.7	0.1	1.1	0.0	1.2		
October.....	-0.1	3.6	0.1	1.9	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	1.4		
November.....	-0.1	3.2	-0.2	1.8	0.1	1.0	-0.4	0.9		
December.....	-0.3	2.9	-0.3	1.8	0.0	1.3	-0.5	0.4		

The Consumer Price Index for April 2015 is scheduled to be released Friday, May 22, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Northeast region is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015	Mar. 2015	Mar. 2014	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015
All items.....		250.016	250.619	251.451	-0.4	0.6	0.3
All items (December 1977 = 100).....		393.699	394.648	395.958			
Food and beverages.....		250.774	250.897	250.658	2.1	0.0	-0.1
Food.....		250.847	250.917	250.711	2.2	-0.1	-0.1
Food at home.....		248.942	248.881	248.385	2.1	-0.2	-0.2
Food away from home.....		256.799	257.064	257.287	2.3	0.2	0.1
Alcoholic beverages.....		248.652	249.447	248.785	1.1	0.1	-0.3
Housing.....		263.363	264.049	264.040	0.8	0.3	0.0
Shelter.....		320.295	321.074	321.995	2.2	0.5	0.3
Rent of primary residence ⁽¹⁾		321.124	321.961	322.538	2.7	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ^{(1) (2)}		332.339	332.996	333.117	1.9	0.2	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{(1) (2)}		332.166	332.815	332.929	1.9	0.2	0.0
Fuels and utilities.....		225.280	226.898	220.864	-6.8	-2.0	-2.7
Household energy.....		203.231	204.961	198.476	-8.3	-2.3	-3.2
Energy services ⁽¹⁾		201.727	203.334	193.794	-5.0	-3.9	-4.7
Electricity ⁽¹⁾		210.584	214.691	203.688	-0.4	-3.3	-5.1
Utility (piped) gas service ⁽¹⁾		169.493	165.164	159.589	-16.5	-5.8	-3.4
Household furnishings and operations.....		123.219	122.954	124.224	-0.7	0.8	1.0
Apparel		127.778	131.201	133.810	2.2	4.7	2.0
Transportation.....		195.235	195.156	198.706	-8.9	1.8	1.8
Private transportation.....		187.107	186.628	190.545	-9.7	1.8	2.1
New and used motor vehicles ⁽³⁾		97.019	97.384	98.195	-0.2	1.2	0.8
New vehicles.....		144.923	145.396	145.298	0.6	0.3	-0.1
New cars and trucks ^{(3) (4)}		100.409	100.757	100.671	0.6	0.3	-0.1
New cars ⁽⁴⁾		138.324	138.743	138.321	0.3	0.0	-0.3

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015	Mar. 2015	Mar. 2014	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015
Used cars and trucks.....		148.559	150.518	154.140	-1.2	3.8	2.4
Motor fuel.....		196.553	192.644	206.834	-31.3	5.2	7.4
Gasoline (all types).....		195.288	191.458	205.554	-31.3	5.3	7.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁽⁴⁾		193.172	189.577	204.223	-32.0	5.7	7.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{(4) (5)}		208.492	203.032	215.109	-29.5	3.2	5.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁽⁴⁾		202.677	197.472	208.923	-28.1	3.1	5.8
Medical care.....		462.132	465.554	466.218	3.3	0.9	0.1
Medical care commodities.....		374.814	379.834	378.847	3.8	1.1	-0.3
Medical care services.....		486.233	489.058	490.284	3.1	0.8	0.3
Professional services.....		358.844	360.957	361.833	3.1	0.8	0.2
Recreation ⁽³⁾		119.495	120.103	120.624	-0.1	0.9	0.4
Education and communication ⁽³⁾		138.118	137.904	137.729	0.1	-0.3	-0.1
Other goods and services		448.803	444.710	445.092	1.5	-0.8	0.1
Commodity and service group.....							
Commodities.....		185.655	186.174	188.161	-3.7	1.3	1.1
Commodities less food and beverages.....		150.020	150.688	153.552	-7.4	2.4	1.9
Nondurables less food and beverages.....		187.409	188.497	193.647	-10.6	3.3	2.7
Durables.....		106.389	106.641	107.300	-1.8	0.9	0.6
Services.....		312.501	313.190	312.989	1.5	0.2	-0.1
Special aggregate indexes.....							
All items less shelter.....		226.115	226.657	227.463	-1.7	0.6	0.4
All items less medical care.....		240.691	241.177	242.013	-0.7	0.5	0.3
Commodities less food.....		153.606	154.280	157.049	-7.0	2.2	1.8
Nondurables.....		218.962	219.602	222.240	-4.2	1.5	1.2
Nondurables less food.....		190.977	192.046	196.843	-9.8	3.1	2.5

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015	Mar. 2015	Mar. 2014	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015
Services less rent of shelter ⁽²⁾		315.145	315.746	314.278	0.8	-0.3	-0.5
Services less medical care services.....		300.447	301.003	300.717	1.4	0.1	-0.1
Energy.....		200.653	200.035	202.160	-19.7	0.8	1.1
All items less energy.....		257.555	258.290	258.996	1.6	0.6	0.3
All items less food and energy.....		260.414	261.272	262.145	1.5	0.7	0.3

(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.