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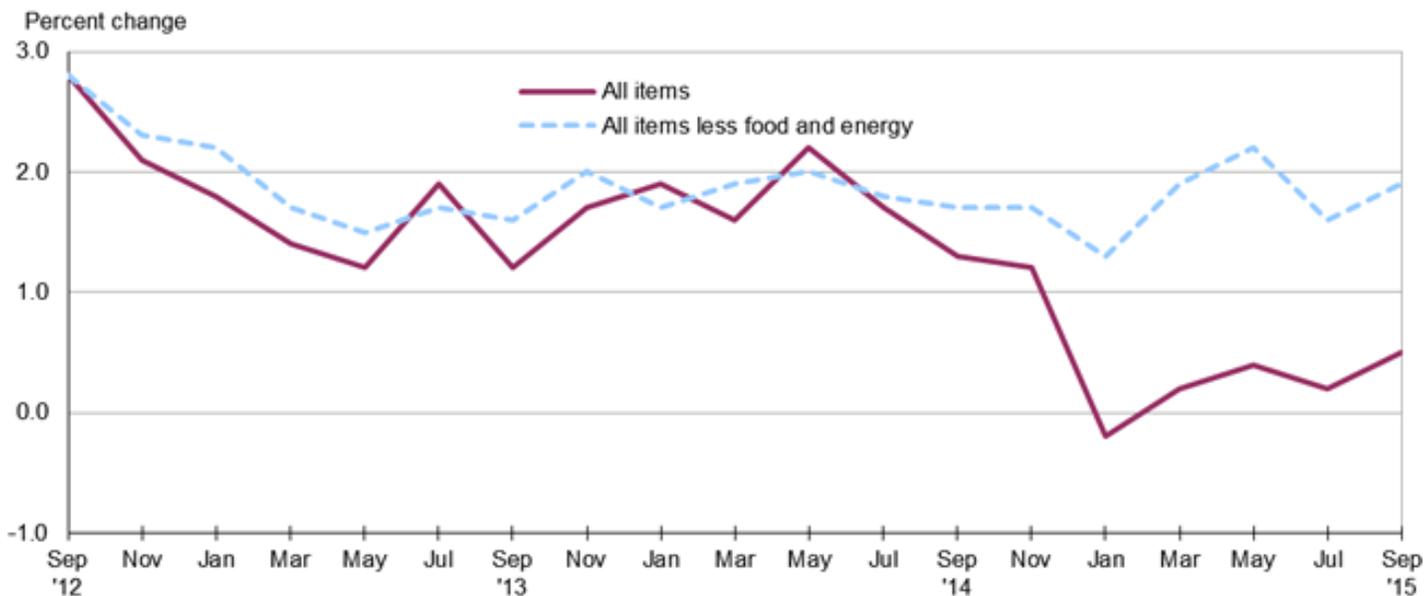
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Baltimore – September 2015

Area prices up 0.5 percent since July and 0.5 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Baltimore increased 0.5 percent over the last two months, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted the rise was led by a 0.9-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. The food index increased, up 1.4 percent, while the energy index declined 6.3 percent since July. (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 CPI-U increased 0.5 percent, due largely to a 1.9-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since September 2014, the food index rose 2.0 percent, while the energy index dropped 16.6 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington, D.C., September 2012–September 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After decreasing 0.5 percent from May to July, the food index increased 1.4 percent over the last two months. Higher prices for other fresh fruits and citrus fruits, among other items, contributed to the 2.2-percent increase in the food at home index. The food away from home index also rose since July, up 0.5 percent.

Food prices rose 2.0 percent over the year, as prices for both components also increased. Prices for food away from home advanced 2.6 percent and those for food at home increased 1.5 percent since last September.

Energy

Since July, a 6.3-percent decline in the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, was led by a 15.1-percent decrease in gasoline prices. Electricity and utility (piped) gas service prices were higher over the last two months, up 2.3 and 3.8 percent, respectively.

Energy prices fell 16.6 percent over the year, led by a 30.0-percent drop in gasoline prices. Utility (piped) gas service prices also declined since September 2014, down 4.8 percent, while electricity prices rose 1.2 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.9 percent since July, due in large part to a 13.4-percent seasonal increase in apparel prices—the component’s largest two-month increase in 10 years. Higher prices for education and communication (2.8 percent) and medical care (1.0 percent) also contributed to the recent advance.

Since September 2014, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.9 percent. The increase was due largely to an over-the-year rise in prices for shelter (2.6 percent), as well as those for medical care (5.9 percent). Lower prices for apparel (-4.3 percent) moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index since last September.

Table A. Washington, D.C. CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	2-month	12-month								
January.....	1.0	2.3	0.4	2.7	0.1	1.8	0.4	1.9	-1.0	-0.2
March	1.2	3.0	1.3	2.8	0.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.0	0.2
May.....	1.0	3.9	0.1	1.8	-0.2	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.6	0.4
July.....	0.1	4.1	-0.2	1.4	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.7	-0.2	0.2
September.....	-0.1	3.4	1.3	2.8	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.3	0.5	0.5
November.....	-0.1	3.3	-0.7	2.1	-0.2	1.7	-0.4	1.2		

The Consumer Price Index for November 2015 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, December 15, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Baltimore is published bi-monthly. 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 **Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Sep. 2014	Jul. 2015	Aug. 2015
All items (1).....		155.546		156.278	0.5	0.5	
Food and beverages (1).....		154.613		156.616	2.1	1.3	
Food (1).....		155.876		158.094	2.0	1.4	
Food at home.....		146.488	147.656	149.751	1.5	2.2	1.4
Food away from home (2).....		165.118		165.969	2.6	0.5	
Alcoholic beverages (2).....		136.502		136.222	2.8	-0.2	
Housing (1).....		168.092		168.462	2.0	0.2	
Shelter.....		179.521	179.468	179.578	2.6	0.0	0.1
Rent of primary residence (1) (3).....		199.663	199.999	199.795	3.0	0.1	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences (3) (4).....		179.723	179.567	179.778	2.5	0.0	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (3) (4).....		179.730	179.564	179.770	2.5	0.0	0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		185.806		189.141	0.4	1.8	
Household energy.....		175.414	177.175	179.365	-1.1	2.3	1.2
Gas (piped) and electricity (3).....		168.187	170.151	172.510	0.0	2.6	1.4
Electricity (3).....		182.748	184.109	186.930	1.2	2.3	1.5
Utility (piped) gas service (3).....		109.428	112.667	113.547	-4.8	3.8	0.8
Household furnishings and operations.....		88.848		89.073	-0.9	0.3	
Apparel (1).....		86.778		98.415	-4.3	13.4	
Transportation (1).....		145.268		139.696	-9.0	-3.8	
Private transportation.....		143.527		137.180	-10.0	-4.4	
Motor fuel.....		234.385	220.006	199.105	-30.0	-15.1	-9.5
Gasoline (all types).....		234.136	219.764	198.812	-30.0	-15.1	-9.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular (5).....		235.028	219.327	197.280	-31.2	-16.1	-10.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (5).....		238.505	228.074	210.807	-26.0	-11.6	-7.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium (5).....		244.594	234.140	215.348	-25.5	-12.0	-8.0
Medical care (1).....		179.413		181.231	5.9	1.0	
Recreation.....		118.484		118.840	1.6	0.3	
Education and communication.....		149.394		153.637	3.5	2.8	
Other goods and services (1).....		178.687		179.394	-0.1	0.4	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities.....		126.252		126.701	-3.8	0.4	
Commodities less food and beverages.....		110.679		110.309	-7.8	-0.3	
Nondurables less food and beverages.....		138.923		137.967	-10.6	-0.7	
Durables.....		80.379		80.554	-3.1	0.2	
Services.....		175.229		176.156	2.8	0.5	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		143.646		144.693	-0.7	0.7	
All items less medical care (1).....		154.037		154.697	0.1	0.4	
Commodities less food.....		111.881		111.514	-7.2	-0.3	
Nondurables.....		146.385		146.964	-4.0	0.4	
Nondurables less food.....		138.782		137.885	-9.6	-0.6	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Sep. 2014	Jul. 2015	Aug. 2015
Services less rent of shelter		171.155		173.118	3.1	1.1	
Services less medical care services.....		174.810		175.650	2.4	0.5	
Energy ⁽¹⁾		200.072	194.988	187.384	-16.6	-6.3	-3.9
All items less energy		151.568		153.040	1.9	1.0	
All items less food and energy ⁽¹⁾		151.838		153.199	1.9	0.9	

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a November 1996=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1997=100 base.

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

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

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

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