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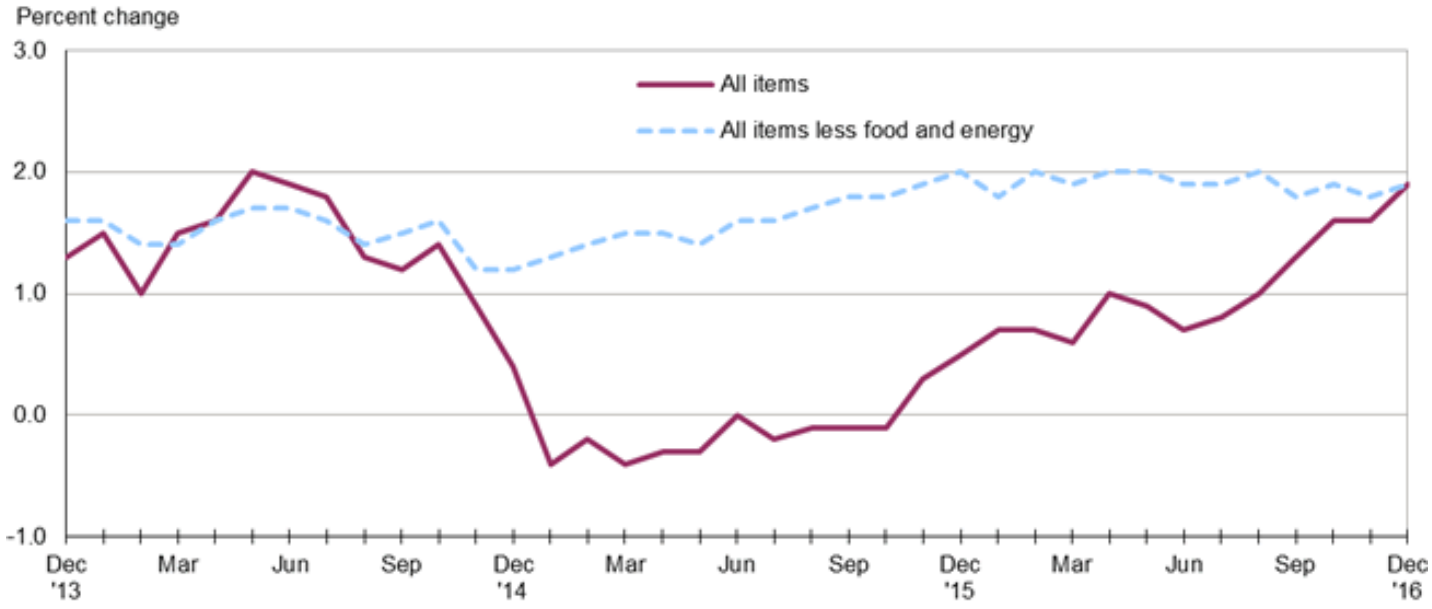
Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – December 2016

Regional prices unchanged over the month and up 1.9 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast was unchanged in December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that a 1.8-percent increase in the energy index was offset by a 0.2-percent decrease in the all items less food and energy index and a 0.1-percent decline in the food index over the month. (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 increased 1.9 percent, due almost entirely to a 1.9-percent advance in the all items less food and energy index. (See chart 1 and table A.) The energy index also increased, up 6.4 percent, while the food index edged down 0.2 percent. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Northeast region, December 2013–December 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index inched down 0.1 percent since November. Prices for food at home declined 0.2 percent, while prices for food away from home were unchanged over the month.

From December 2015 to December 2016, the food index declined 0.2 percent, as a 2.1-percent decrease in prices for food at home was nearly offset by a 2.5-percent increase in those for food away from home.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 1.8 percent since November, led by a 2.1-percent rise in gasoline prices. Prices for utility (piped) gas service and electricity also increased over the month, up 2.2 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively.

The energy index increased 6.4 percent since December 2015. The increase was led by a 10.1-percent increase in gasoline prices, the largest over-the-year increase in this index since October 2012. Prices also increased over the year for utility (piped) gas service (9.9 percent) and electricity (0.5 percent).

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged down 0.2 percent over the month, mostly due to a seasonal decrease in apparel prices (-4.0 percent). Prices for medical care also decreased, down 0.3 percent over the month. These and other decreases were moderated by a 0.4-percent increase in education and communication prices.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.9 percent since December 2015, led by higher prices for shelter (3.1 percent). Prices were also higher over the year for several other categories including medical care (3.4 percent).

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

Month	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January	0.4	2.9	0.3	1.8	0.6	1.5	-0.2	-0.4	0.0	0.7
February	0.4	2.8	0.6	2.0	0.1	1.0	0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.7
March	0.5	2.5	0.0	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.3	-0.4	0.2	0.6
April	0.3	2.3	-0.1	1.1	0.0	1.6	0.1	-0.3	0.6	1.0
May	-0.1	1.7	0.0	1.2	0.4	2.0	0.4	-0.3	0.3	0.9
June	-0.2	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.0	1.9	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.7
July	-0.1	1.1	0.2	1.8	0.1	1.8	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	0.8
August	0.5	1.3	0.2	1.5	-0.3	1.3	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	1.0
September	0.5	1.7	0.1	1.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	-0.1	0.2	1.3
October	0.1	1.9	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	1.4	-0.2	-0.1	0.2	1.6
November	-0.2	1.8	0.1	1.0	-0.4	0.9	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.6
December	-0.3	1.8	0.0	1.3	-0.5	0.4	-0.4	0.5	0.0	1.9

The Consumer Price Index for January 2017 is scheduled to be released Wednesday, February 15, 2017, 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/pdf/homch17.pdf.

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	Oct. 2016	Nov. 2016	Dec. 2016	Dec. 2015	Oct. 2016	Nov. 2016
All items		256.605	256.541	256.427	1.9	-0.1	0.0
All items (December 1977 = 100)		404.075	403.973	403.794			
Food and beverages		252.757	252.154	251.736	-0.1	-0.4	-0.2
Food		252.692	252.075	251.703	-0.2	-0.4	-0.1
Food at home		244.455	243.192	242.625	-2.1	-0.7	-0.2
Food away from home		268.284	268.657	268.580	2.5	0.1	0.0
Alcoholic beverages		252.416	251.988	250.978	0.9	-0.6	-0.4
Housing		271.486	271.939	272.396	2.7	0.3	0.2
Shelter		337.408	338.115	338.128	3.1	0.2	0.0
Rent of primary residence(1)		337.863	338.469	339.530	2.8	0.5	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(1)(2)		349.352	350.317	350.544	3.0	0.3	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(1)(2)		349.062	350.027	350.256	3.0	0.3	0.1
Fuels and utilities		207.521	208.707	211.471	3.8	1.9	1.3
Household energy		182.415	183.514	186.353	3.9	2.2	1.5
Energy services(1)		183.315	184.805	186.605	3.0	1.8	1.0
Electricity(1)		193.371	192.593	193.575	0.5	0.1	0.5
Utility (piped) gas service(1)		149.029	155.236	158.648	9.9	6.5	2.2
Household furnishings and operations		120.438	119.519	119.814	-2.5	-0.5	0.2
Apparel		137.452	131.786	126.535	-1.2	-7.9	-4.0
Transportation		195.764	196.399	196.679	1.8	0.5	0.1
Private transportation		187.453	188.061	188.848	2.1	0.7	0.4
New and used motor vehicles(3)		96.303	95.391	95.217	-2.0	-1.1	-0.2
New vehicles		146.020	145.323	144.960	0.0	-0.7	-0.2
New cars and trucks(3)(4)		101.159	100.677	100.422	-0.1	-0.7	-0.3
New cars(4)		137.127	136.450	135.511	-1.3	-1.2	-0.7
Used cars and trucks		146.400	144.118	143.634	-3.7	-1.9	-0.3
Motor fuel		190.178	194.889	199.091	10.0	4.7	2.2
Gasoline (all types)		189.394	194.119	198.287	10.1	4.7	2.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)		186.638	191.318	195.695	10.5	4.9	2.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)		203.945	208.414	211.936	8.8	3.9	1.7
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)		200.670	205.602	208.136	7.6	3.7	1.2
Medical care		488.866	488.452	486.991	3.4	-0.4	-0.3
Medical care commodities		391.216	388.107	383.992	4.0	-1.8	-1.1
Medical care services		516.222	516.733	516.196	3.3	0.0	-0.1
Professional services		372.793	373.255	373.178	2.0	0.1	0.0
Recreation(3)		121.178	121.568	121.630	1.3	0.4	0.1
Education and communication(3)		142.152	142.221	142.746	1.1	0.4	0.4
Other goods and services		468.052	468.986	468.699	2.8	0.1	-0.1
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		185.898	184.812	184.215	0.2	-0.9	-0.3
Commodities less food and beverages		149.451	148.224	147.583	0.5	-1.2	-0.4
Nondurables less food and beverages		189.667	188.250	187.393	3.0	-1.2	-0.5
Durables		103.829	102.868	102.457	-2.9	-1.3	-0.4

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, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2016	Nov. 2016	Dec. 2016	Dec. 2015	Oct. 2016	Nov. 2016
Services		324.914	325.751	326.063	2.7	0.4	0.1
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		228.826	228.477	228.316	1.3	-0.2	-0.1
All items less medical care		246.403	246.354	246.301	1.8	0.0	0.0
Commodities less food		153.167	151.956	151.302	0.5	-1.2	-0.4
Nondurables		221.134	220.088	219.430	1.3	-0.8	-0.3
Nondurables less food		193.330	191.973	191.107	2.9	-1.1	-0.5
Services less rent of shelter(2)		322.767	323.772	324.414	2.4	0.5	0.2
Services less medical care services		311.713	312.570	312.937	2.7	0.4	0.1
Energy		185.717	188.253	191.636	6.4	3.2	1.8
All items less energy		266.443	266.115	265.647	1.6	-0.3	-0.2
All items less food and energy		270.572	270.290	269.803	1.9	-0.3	-0.2

Footnotes (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.