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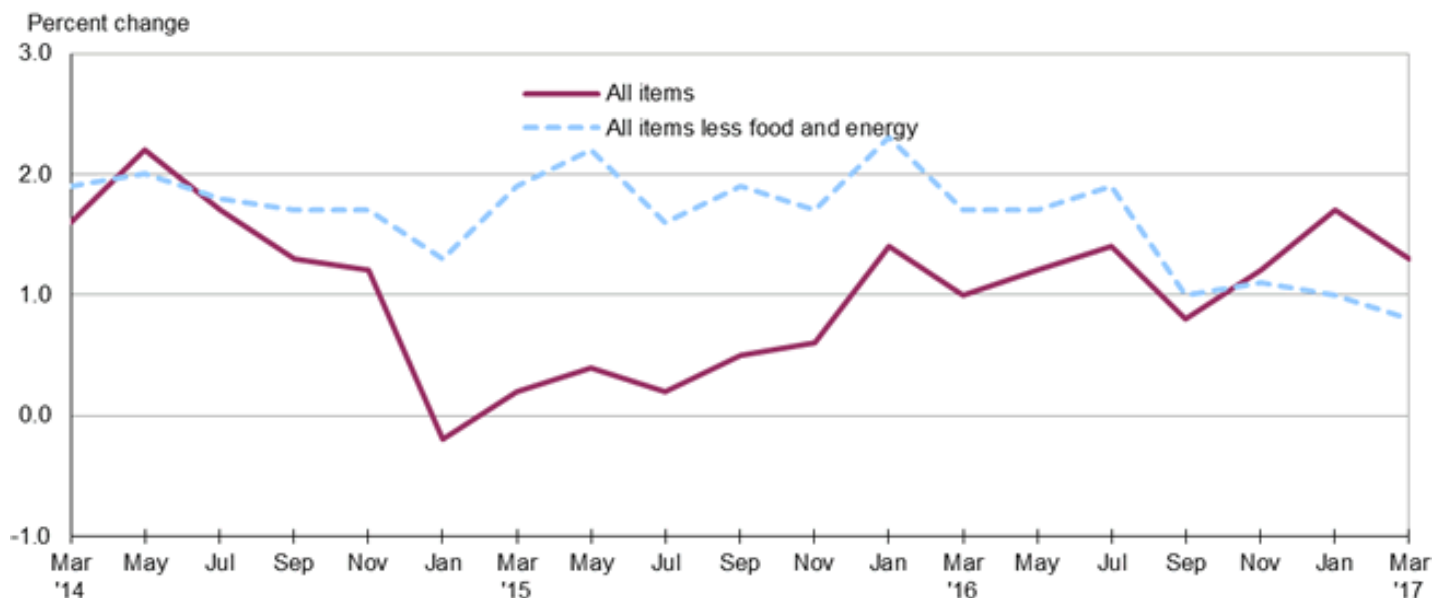
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Baltimore – March 2017

Area prices up 0.3 percent since January and 1.3 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Baltimore edged up 0.3 percent over the last two months, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted the increase was due to a 0.5-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The food index and the energy index both declined over the last two months, down 0.6 and 0.2 percent, respectively. (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 1.3 percent, due to monthly increases in the all items less food and energy index and the energy index, up 0.8 and 10.9 percent, respectively. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since March 2016, the food index inched up 0.1 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington, D.C., March 2014–March 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After increasing 0.1 percent from November to January, the food index decreased 0.6 percent over the last two months. Prices for food away from home declined 0.7 percent, and those for food at home decreased 0.5 percent.

Food prices inched up 0.1 percent over the year. Higher prices for food away from home, up 1.7 percent, were nearly offset by lower prices for food at home, down 1.2 percent, since last March.

Energy

Since January, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, edged down 0.2 percent, due to lower prices for gasoline (2.6 percent). Prices for utility (piped) gas service rose over the last two months, up 7.4 percent. Electricity prices also increased since January, up 0.4 percent.

Energy prices rose 10.9 percent over the year. The increase was led by a 22.0-percent jump in gasoline prices. Prices also increased over the year for utility (piped) gas service (13.3 percent) and electricity (0.7 percent).

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent since January. Higher prices for a number of items, including shelter (0.7 percent), were moderated by declines in prices for recreation (-1.9 percent) and education and communication (-0.9 percent).

Since March 2016, the index for all items less food and energy rose 0.8 percent. The increase was due largely to an over-the-year rise in shelter prices (1.1 percent). Higher prices for medical care (2.2 percent), among others, also contributed to the rise. Prices declined over the year for recreation (-5.9 percent) and used cars and trucks.

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

Month	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	0.1	1.8	0.4	1.9	-1.0	-0.2	-0.2	1.4	0.2	1.7
March	0.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.3	1.3
May.....	-0.2	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.6	0.4	0.8	1.2		
July	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.7	-0.2	0.2	-0.1	1.4		
September.....	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.3	0.5	0.5	-0.1	0.8		
November.....	-0.2	1.7	-0.4	1.2	-0.3	0.6	0.1	1.2		

The Consumer Price Index for May 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 14, 2017, 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/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 **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	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017	Mar. 2017	Mar. 2016	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017
All items(1)		158.086		158.558	1.3	0.3	
Food and beverages(1)		157.668		156.842	0.2	-0.5	
Food(1)		159.046		158.154	0.1	-0.6	
Food at home		147.034	145.600	146.365	-1.2	-0.5	0.5
Food away from home(2)		171.768		170.597	1.7	-0.7	
Alcoholic beverages(2)		138.342		138.426	1.8	0.1	
Housing(1)		170.882		172.136	1.3	0.7	
Shelter		182.886	184.529	184.226	1.1	0.7	-0.2
Rent of primary residence(1)(3)		204.086	205.006	205.233	2.1	0.6	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(3)(4)		183.427	184.217	184.114	1.4	0.4	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(3)(4)		183.412	184.206	184.106	1.4	0.4	-0.1
Fuels and utilities		191.883		194.404	3.7	1.3	
Household energy		179.885	183.065	182.851	3.5	1.6	-0.1
Gas (piped) and electricity(3)		172.482	175.664	175.481	3.0	1.7	-0.1
Electricity(3)		184.502	186.613	185.243	0.7	0.4	-0.7
Utility (piped) gas service(3)		120.405	126.200	129.319	13.3	7.4	2.5
Household furnishings and operations		86.954		87.015	-0.2	0.1	
Apparel(1)		101.113		101.528	1.5	0.4	
Transportation(1)		141.729		143.199	5.4	1.0	
Private transportation		140.399		141.474	5.9	0.8	
Motor fuel		205.968	199.913	200.725	22.0	-2.5	0.4
Gasoline (all types)		205.786	199.695	200.511	22.0	-2.6	0.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular(5)		203.950	197.599	198.433	22.9	-2.7	0.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(5)		217.392	212.710	213.296	19.0	-1.9	0.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(5)		224.467	220.448	221.215	19.4	-1.4	0.3
Medical care(1)		187.735		187.934	2.2	0.1	
Recreation		115.517		113.371	-5.9	-1.9	
Education and communication		152.832		151.435	-1.1	-0.9	
Other goods and services(1)		177.455		178.363	0.4	0.5	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		126.497		126.227	1.2	-0.2	
Commodities less food and beverages		109.358		109.342	1.8	0.0	
Nondurables less food and beverages		139.495		138.415	4.8	-0.8	
Durables		78.842		79.461	-1.1	0.8	
Services		179.371		180.365	1.4	0.6	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		145.776		145.862	1.4	0.1	
All items less medical care(1)		156.180		156.672	1.2	0.3	
Commodities less food		110.719		110.706	1.8	0.0	
Nondurables		148.210		147.269	2.2	-0.6	
Nondurables less food		139.576		138.576	4.6	-0.7	
Services less rent of shelter		176.134		176.752	1.6	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, 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	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017	Mar. 2017	Mar. 2016	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017
Services less medical care services.....		178.452		179.538	1.3	0.6	
Energy(1).....		190.418	189.748	189.961	10.9	-0.2	0.1
All items less energy		154.787		155.304	0.7	0.3	
All items less food and energy(1).....		155.080		155.806	0.8	0.5	

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.