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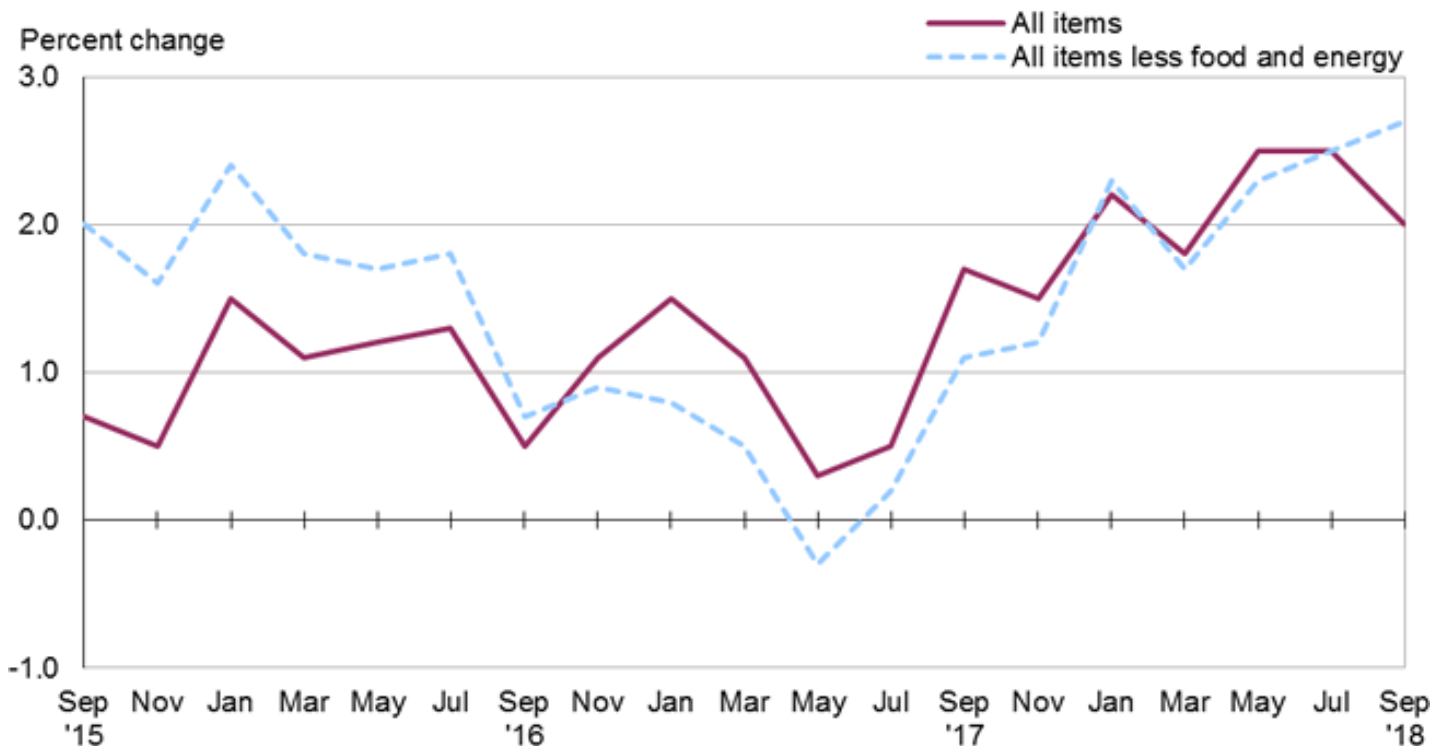
## Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – September 2018

### Area prices up 0.4 percent since July and 2.0 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria increased 0.4 percent from July to September, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the recent rise was due almost entirely to a 0.8-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. The food index also rose since July, up 0.2 percent, while the energy index declined 5.0 percent. (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 advanced 2.0 percent, primarily reflecting a 2.7-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since September 2017, the food index also advanced, up 0.5 percent, while the energy index declined 3.0 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, September 2015–September 2018**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Food

After a 0.6-percent decrease from May to July, the food index edged up 0.2 percent over the last two months. Prices for food at home were up 0.3 percent, and those for food away from home were 0.2 percent higher. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for items such as citrus fruits, apples, and lettuce over the last two months.

Food prices increased 0.5 percent over the year. Prices were higher for food away from home (1.3 percent), while those for food at home were down 0.2 percent since September 2017.

## Energy

Since July, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, decreased 5.0 percent, due to a 45.6-percent decrease in utility (piped) gas service prices. Prices also decreased for gasoline (-0.9 percent). Meanwhile, prices for electricity were 0.9 percent higher.

Energy prices decreased 3.0 percent since September 2017. Declines for both utility (piped) gas service prices (-51.4 percent) and electricity prices (-0.4 percent) were moderated by an increase in gasoline prices (5.8 percent).

## All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.8 percent since July. A seasonal increase in apparel prices (13.4 percent) and higher prices for shelter (1.1 percent) led the advance in the all items less food and energy index. Prices were lower for several categories including new and used motor vehicles (-2.5 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-2.2 percent).

Since September 2017, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.7 percent. The advance was led by higher prices for shelter (2.6 percent); apparel (7.5 percent) and recreation (5.2 percent) were among the other indexes that had increases over the year.

**Table A. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted**

Month	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	0.2	1.7	-1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2
March.....	0.8	1.7	1.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8
May.....	0.3	2.0	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5
July.....	0.0	1.7	-0.3	0.3	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5
September.....	0.1	1.1	0.6	0.7	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0
November.....	-0.3	1.1	-0.4	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5		

**The Consumer Price Index for November 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, December 12, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).**

## Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria 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 94 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 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 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](http://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](http://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-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MA-WV, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the county of 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-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2018	Aug. 2018	Sep. 2018	Sep. 2017	Jul. 2018	Aug. 2018
All items.....		262.016		263.056	2.0	0.4	
Food and beverages .....		247.626		248.062	0.6	0.2	
Food .....		252.150		252.779	0.5	0.2	
Food at home .....		239.976	240.293	240.627	-0.2	0.3	0.1
Cereals and bakery products .....		319.019		314.023		-1.6	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		258.224		259.563		0.5	
Dairy and related products .....		236.186		236.961		0.3	
Fruits and vegetables .....		256.990		261.176		1.6	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) .....		202.099		199.162		-1.5	
Other food at home .....		200.214		201.763		0.8	
Food away from home.....		268.502		269.106	1.3	0.2	
Alcoholic beverages .....		204.039		202.540	2.2	-0.7	
Housing .....		273.153		273.218	1.4	0.0	
Shelter .....		329.436	329.575	333.000	2.6	1.1	1.0
Rent of primary residence .....		359.621	360.318	360.382	2.5	0.2	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		336.761	337.216	337.187	2.0	0.1	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2) .....		336.761	337.216	337.187	2.0	0.1	0.0
Fuels and utilities.....		232.025		214.382	-9.6	-7.6	
Household energy .....		182.395	186.269	164.618	-12.6	-9.7	-11.6
Energy services.....		186.778	190.886	168.369	-13.2	-9.9	-11.8
Electricity .....		217.194	218.325	219.205	-0.4	0.9	0.4
Utility (piped) gas service .....		120.234	129.578	65.352	-51.4	-45.6	-49.6
Household furnishings and operations.....		105.929		103.605	1.6	-2.2	
Apparel .....		156.946		177.968	7.5	13.4	
Transportation .....		220.684		217.636	3.4	-1.4	
Private transportation .....		219.382		216.328	4.0	-1.4	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		95.113		92.749		-2.5	
New vehicles(1).....		197.667		197.043		-0.3	
Used cars and trucks(1) .....		301.137		288.395		-4.2	
Motor fuel .....		263.976	263.053	261.727	5.8	-0.9	-0.5
Gasoline (all types).....		261.170	260.238	258.900	5.8	-0.9	-0.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		255.274	254.449	253.169	5.9	-0.8	-0.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		258.437	257.037	255.897	5.4	-1.0	-0.4
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		275.104	273.412	271.674	5.0	-1.2	-0.6
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		857.600		852.769		-0.6	
Medical care .....		446.580		445.882	0.0	-0.2	
Recreation(3).....		117.464		117.486	5.2	0.0	
Education and communication(3).....		154.600		156.267	1.1	1.1	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,404.995		1,420.218		1.1	
Other goods and services .....		407.724		406.715	1.5	-0.2	
<b>Commodity and service group</b>							
Commodities .....		180.740		182.283	2.1	0.9	

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-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2018	Aug. 2018	Sep. 2018	Sep. 2017	Jul. 2018	Aug. 2018
Commodities less food and beverages .....		146.333		148.259	3.2	1.3	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		195.494		202.839	4.3	3.8	
Durables .....		101.382		99.424	0.8	-1.9	
Services .....		335.612		336.083	1.9	0.1	
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>							
All items less shelter .....		234.875		234.934	1.7	0.0	
All items less medical care .....		253.317		254.443	2.2	0.4	
Commodities less food .....		149.017		150.830	3.1	1.2	
Nondurables .....		220.780		224.769	2.3	1.8	
Nondurables less food .....		196.061		202.703	4.1	3.4	
Services less rent of shelter(2) .....		353.882		350.405	1.1	-1.0	
Services less medical care services .....		325.100		325.639	2.2	0.2	
Energy .....		222.450	224.208	211.437	-3.0	-5.0	-5.7
All items less energy .....		268.359		270.377	2.4	0.8	
All items less food and energy .....		272.538		274.817	2.7	0.8	

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a November 1977=100 base.
- (2) Indexes on a November 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.