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Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – April 2019

Area prices up 1.7 percent since February; up 2.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 1.7 percent from February to April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month increase was due largely to a 1.1-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and food index also increased since February, up 10.6 and 0.4 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 2.6 percent. The over-the-year rise was due almost entirely to an increase in the all items less food and energy index (2.9 percent). The food index also rose over the year, up 2.3 percent, while prices for energy decreased, down 0.2 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

The food index increased 0.4 percent over the last two months. Prices rose for food away from home, up 2.3 percent, while prices were lower for food at home, down 1.2 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were lower for various items including tomatoes, while prices were higher for items including snacks and milk, among others.

Over the year, the food index increased 2.3 percent. Prices rose for food away from home (5.3 percent), while they edged down for food at home (-0.2 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 10.6 percent, due almost entirely to a 21.2-percent rise in gasoline prices since February, the largest two month increase in this index in eight years. Prices were also higher over the last two months for electricity, up 1.6 percent, while those for utility (piped) gas service decreased 4.1 percent.

Over the year, the energy index declined 0.2 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline (-0.3 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (-5.0 percent) since April 2018, while those for electricity increased 0.6 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.1 percent from February to April. Higher prices for medical care (7.5 percent) and recreation (2.8 percent) were moderated by lower prices for apparel (-6.8 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 2.9 percent since April 2018, led by higher prices for medical care, up 12.9 percent, the largest over-the-year increase for this index. Prices also rose over the year for shelter (2.6 percent), but were lower for apparel (-8.7 percent).

The Consumer Price Index for June 2019 is scheduled to be released Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 8:30 am (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson 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 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 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 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 **Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.














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

| Expenditure category | Indexes | | | | Percent change from | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Historical data | Feb. 2019 | Mar. 2019 | Apr. 2019 | Apr. 2018 | Feb. 2019 | Mar. 2019 |
| All items |  | 254.433 | | 258.816 | 2.6 | 1.7 | |
| Food and beverages |  | 262.572 | | 263.698 | 2.5 | 0.4 | |
| Food |  | 262.149 | | 263.166 | 2.3 | 0.4 | |
| Food at home |  | 236.383 | 235.362 | 233.468 | -0.2 | -1.2 | -0.8 |
| Cereals and bakery products |  | 293.843 | | 289.296 | -1.0 | -1.5 | |
| Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs |  | 226.106 | | 224.266 | -2.3 | -0.8 | |
| Dairy and related products |  | 233.095 | | 229.537 | -0.1 | -1.5 | |
| Fruits and vegetables |  | 288.740 | | 288.342 | 3.3 | -0.1 | |
| Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) |  | 181.643 | | 176.082 | -0.4 | -3.1 | |
| Other food at home |  | 210.725 | | 208.123 | -0.5 | -1.2 | |
| Food away from home |  | 299.884 | | 306.673 | 5.3 | 2.3 | |
| Alcoholic beverages |  | 265.813 | | 268.291 | 4.9 | 0.9 | |
| Housing(1) |  | 260.455 | | 261.553 | 2.4 | 0.4 | |
| Shelter |  | 307.214 | 308.700 | 308.113 | 2.6 | 0.3 | -0.2 |
| Rent of primary residence |  | 361.731 | 361.637 | 361.364 | 4.0 | -0.1 | -0.1 |
| Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2) |  | 320.084 | 321.021 | 321.188 | 2.6 | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2) |  | 320.084 | 321.021 | 321.188 | 2.6 | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Fuels and utilities |  | 232.675 | | 234.621 | 0.4 | 0.8 | |
| Household energy |  | 204.914 | 204.445 | 206.744 | -0.2 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Energy services |  | 219.240 | 218.579 | 221.682 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| Electricity |  | 207.139 | 207.050 | 210.553 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 1.7 |
| Utility (piped) gas service |  | 182.613 | 177.475 | 175.172 | -5.0 | -4.1 | -1.3 |
| Household furnishings and operations |  | 120.272 | | 121.764 | 2.1 | 1.2 | |
| Apparel |  | 131.439 | | 122.489 | -8.7 | -6.8 | |
| Transportation |  | 196.540 | | 206.958 | 0.0 | 5.3 | |
| Private transportation |  | 195.459 | | 205.192 | 0.1 | 5.0 | |
| New and used motor vehicles(3) |  | 98.412 | | 98.698 | -1.3 | 0.3 | |
| New vehicles(1) |  | 200.318 | | 200.337 | -1.1 | 0.0 | |
| Used cars and trucks(1) |  | 240.164 | | 242.882 | 1.0 | 1.1 | |
| Motor fuel |  | 197.888 | 220.114 | 239.138 | -0.2 | 20.8 | 8.6 |
| Gasoline (all types) |  | 193.075 | 215.160 | 234.063 | -0.3 | 21.2 | 8.8 |
| Gasoline, unleaded regular(4) |  | 194.253 | 217.591 | 236.660 | -0.4 | 21.8 | 8.8 |
| Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5) |  | 211.960 | 230.341 | 250.564 | 1.3 | 18.2 | 8.8 |
| Gasoline, unleaded premium(4) |  | 206.664 | 221.529 | 241.397 | 0.2 | 16.8 | 9.0 |
| Motor vehicle insurance(1) |  | 832.794 | | 856.879 | 4.0 | 2.9 | |
| Medical care |  | 441.386 | | 474.391 | 12.9 | 7.5 | |
| Recreation |  | 126.507 | | 130.066 | 6.1 | 2.8 | |
| Education and communication(3) |  | 147.269 | | 145.760 | 1.2 | -1.0 | |
| Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) |  | 1,195.793 | | 1,195.793 | 3.6 | 0.0 | |
| Other goods and services |  | 419.797 | | 425.536 | 2.5 | 1.4 | |
| Commodity and service group | | | | | | | |
| Commodities |  | 182.263 | | 186.046 | 0.6 | 2.1 | |
| Commodities less food and beverages |  | 145.664 | | 149.965 | -0.3 | 3.0 | |

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, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

| Expenditure category | Indexes | | | | Percent change from | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Historical data | Feb. 2019 | Mar. 2019 | Apr. 2019 | Apr. 2018 | Feb. 2019 | Mar. 2019 |
| Nondurables less food and beverages... |  | 186.575 | | 197.019 | -0.9 | 5.6 | |
| Durables |  | 102.643 | | 102.960 | 0.3 | 0.3 | |
| Services..... |  | 324.915 | | 329.936 | 3.7 | 1.5 | |
| Special aggregate indexes | | | | | | | |
| All items less shelter..... |  | 234.552 | | 240.554 | 2.6 | 2.6 | |
| All items less medical care |  | 245.141 | | 248.037 | 1.7 | 1.2 | |
| Commodities less food |  | 149.301 | | 153.593 | -0.1 | 2.9 | |
| Nondurables |  | 221.554 | | 228.051 | 0.8 | 2.9 | |
| Nondurables less food..... |  | 190.983 | | 201.016 | -0.5 | 5.3 | |
| Services less rent of shelter(2)..... |  | 357.008 | | 367.970 | 4.9 | 3.1 | |
| Services less medical care services..... |  | 313.792 | | 316.031 | 2.5 | 0.7 | |
| Energy(1)..... |  | 205.564 | 216.579 | 227.395 | -0.2 | 10.6 | 5.0 |
| All items less energy |  | 260.019 | | 262.734 | 2.9 | 1.0 | |
| All items less food and energy |  | 259.613 | | 262.547 | 2.9 | 1.1 | |

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a March 1978=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.