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

Area prices increased 0.1 percent since August; up 1.0 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson inched up 0.1 percent from August to October, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month increase was due to increases in both the food index (0.2 percent) and energy index (0.3 percent). The all items less food and energy index was unchanged since August. (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 1.0 percent. The over-the-year rise was due almost entirely to an increase in the all items less food and energy index (1.9 percent). The food index also rose over the year, up 1.0 percent, while prices for energy decreased, down 8.3 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

The food index edged up 0.2 percent over the last two months. Prices increased for food at home, up 0.3 percent, and food away from home, up 0.1 percent.

Over the year, the food index increased 1.0 percent. Prices rose for food away from home (3.1 percent) while those for food at home declined (-0.8 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 0.3 percent since August. Prices were higher for electricity over the last two months, up 5.1 percent, while those for gasoline were lower, down 3.3 percent. Utility (piped) gas service prices also decreased, down 0.3 percent.

Over the year, the energy index declined 8.3 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline (-12.0 percent) and electricity (-4.6 percent) since October 2018, while those for utility (piped) gas service increased 9.2 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was unchanged from August to October. Higher prices for medical care (2.8 percent) and shelter (0.1 percent) were moderated by lower prices for new and used motor vehicles (-1.5 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-0.8 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.9 percent since October 2018, led by higher prices for medical care (14.3 percent) and recreation (5.7 percent). Prices were lower for apparel (-15.0 percent), among others.

The Consumer Price Index for December 2019 is scheduled to be released Tuesday, January 14, 2020 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	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019	Oct. 2019	Oct. 2018	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019
All items.....		257.455		257.616	1.0	0.1	
Food and beverages		262.635		263.097	1.0	0.2	
Food		261.992		262.568	1.0	0.2	
Food at home		232.020	233.446	232.677	-0.8	0.3	-0.3
Cereals and bakery products		290.367		285.320	-2.7	-1.7	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		228.113		229.877	0.4	0.8	
Dairy and related products		234.772		238.557	2.8	1.6	
Fruits and vegetables		275.860		281.552	2.9	2.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		169.434		166.172	-6.8	-1.9	
Other food at home		208.059		208.403	-1.8	0.2	
Food away from home.....		305.904		306.359	3.1	0.1	
Alcoholic beverages		268.622		267.661	1.2	-0.4	
Housing(1).....		260.005		260.818	0.0	0.3	
Shelter		308.804	308.176	309.014	0.0	0.1	0.3
Rent of primary residence		363.560	363.494	363.532	0.9	0.0	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		323.488	324.267	323.649	1.3	0.0	-0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		323.488	324.267	323.649	1.3	0.0	-0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		214.808		223.087	-3.0	3.9	
Household energy		186.136	184.212	194.389	-3.8	4.4	5.5
Energy services.....		199.366	197.406	208.408	-3.4	4.5	5.6
Electricity		186.652	186.459	196.137	-4.6	5.1	5.2
Utility (piped) gas service		180.720	164.867	180.178	9.2	-0.3	9.3
Household furnishings and operations		121.797		120.778	2.8	-0.8	
Apparel		124.256		122.678	-15.0	-1.3	
Transportation		202.211		198.690	-2.7	-1.7	
Private transportation		199.938		196.909	-3.2	-1.5	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		96.300		94.856	-2.5	-1.5	
New vehicles(1).....		194.261		190.927	-3.8	-1.7	
Used cars and trucks(1)		248.517		239.217	1.9	-3.7	
Motor fuel		223.823	216.013	216.612	-11.9	-3.2	0.3
Gasoline (all types).....		219.032	211.141	211.722	-12.0	-3.3	0.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		220.814	212.684	213.215	-12.5	-3.4	0.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		237.014	229.424	230.396	-10.0	-2.8	0.4
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		231.123	224.175	225.221	-8.8	-2.6	0.5
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		853.690		853.690	5.4	0.0	
Medical care		474.169		487.569	14.3	2.8	
Recreation		129.907		129.671	5.7	-0.2	
Education and communication(3).....		149.157		149.558	3.9	0.3	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,232.067		1,240.153	5.3	0.7	
Other goods and services		425.533		421.060	0.8	-1.1	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		183.272		181.315	-2.5	-1.1	
Commodities less food and beverages		146.882		144.349	-4.4	-1.7	

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	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019	Oct. 2019	Oct. 2018	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019
Nondurables less food and beverages...		193.484		189.983	-6.5	-1.8	
Durables		100.559		98.916	-1.9	-1.6	
Services.....		329.810		331.871	2.8	0.6	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		238.258		238.399	1.5	0.1	
All items less medical care		246.614		246.083	-0.2	-0.2	
Commodities less food		150.562		148.044	-4.1	-1.7	
Nondurables		225.555		223.743	-2.8	-0.8	
Nondurables less food.....		197.682		194.312	-6.0	-1.7	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		366.632		371.359	6.2	1.3	
Services less medical care services.....		315.911		316.596	1.3	0.2	
Energy(1).....		209.044	204.100	209.635	-8.3	0.3	2.7
All items less energy		263.008		263.127	1.8	0.0	
All items less food and energy		263.008		263.068	1.9	0.0	

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.