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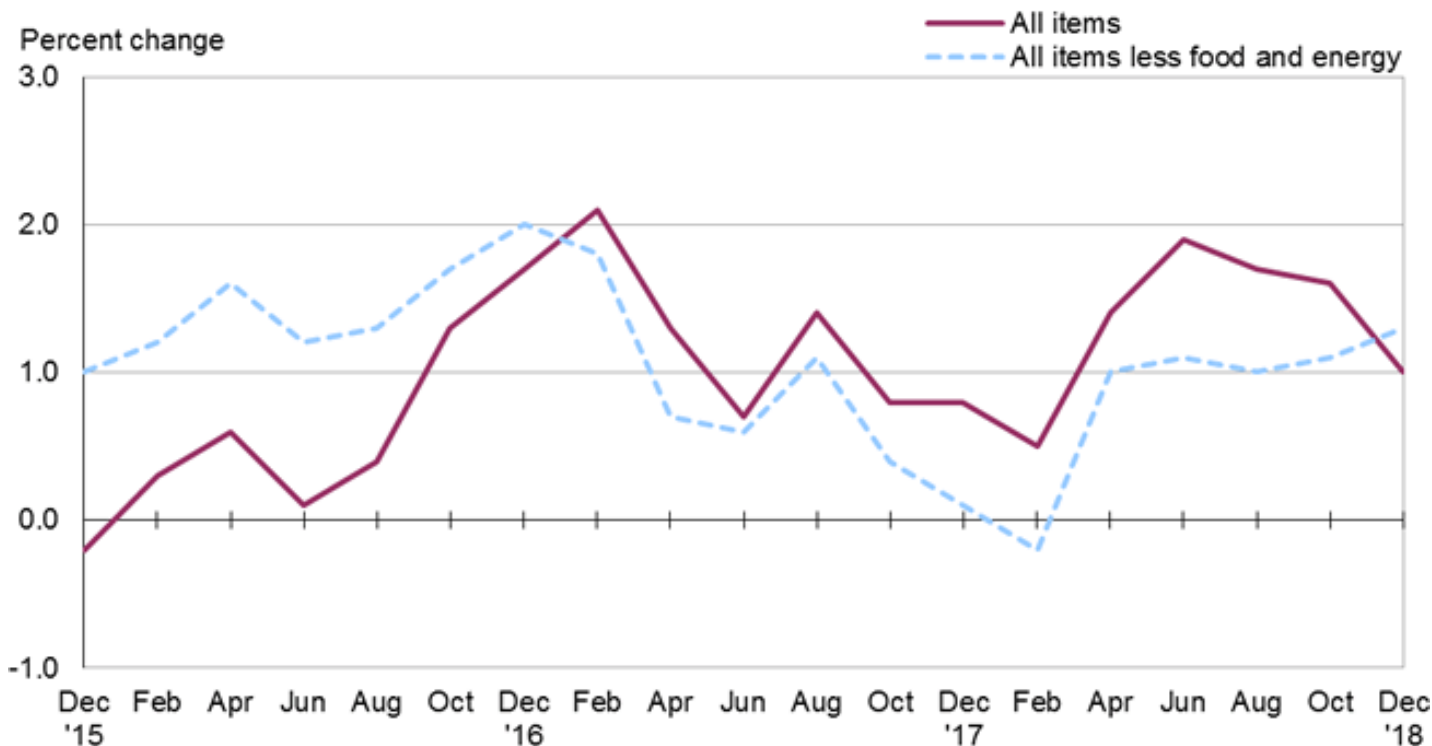
Consumer Price Index, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington – December 2018

Area prices were down 0.7 percent since October; up 1.0 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington decreased 0.7 percent from October to December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month decline reflected a 6.7-percent decrease in the energy index. The all items less food and energy index also decreased since October, down 0.2 percent, while the food index edged up 0.3 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 increased 1.0 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) The over-the-year rise was led by an increase in the all items less food and energy index (1.3 percent); the food index also advanced (0.7 percent). Prices for energy decreased since December 2017, down 1.8 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, December 2015–December 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index increased 0.3 percent over the last two months. Prices rose for both food at home and food away from home, up 0.4 and 0.1 percent, respectively. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for various items including fresh fish and seafood and tomatoes, while prices were lower for items including uncooked ground beef and milk.

Over the year, the food index increased 0.7 percent. Prices for food away from home rose 1.9 percent, while those for food at home inched down 0.1 percent.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, decreased 6.7 percent due to a 14.2-percent drop in gasoline prices since October. Prices were higher over the last two months for utility (piped) gas service (2.4 percent) and electricity (0.7 percent).

Over the year, the energy index declined 1.8 percent, due to price decreases for electricity (-4.7 percent) and gasoline (-3.3 percent). Prices were higher for utility (piped) gas service (5.0 percent) since December 2017.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged down 0.2 percent from October to December. Lower prices for apparel (-6.1 percent) and shelter (-0.5 percent), were moderated by higher prices for recreation (2.7 percent) and medical care (0.9 percent), among others.

Since December 2017, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.3 percent. Prices were higher for a number of items including shelter (1.9 percent), medical care (3.4 percent), and new and used motor vehicles (3.2 percent).

Table A. Philadelphia 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
February	0.5	1.0	-0.2	-0.1	0.3	0.3	0.7	2.1	0.4	0.5
April	0.5	1.4	0.5	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.0	1.3	0.9	1.4
June	0.6	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	-0.3	0.7	0.2	1.9
August	0.0	1.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	0.4	0.5	1.4	0.3	1.7
October	-0.1	1.6	-0.3	-0.5	0.6	1.3	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.6
December	-0.8	0.6	-0.6	-0.2	-0.1	1.7	-0.1	0.8	-0.7	1.0

The Consumer Price Index for February 2019 is scheduled to be released Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 8:30 am (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington 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 **Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.
















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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018	Dec. 2018	Dec. 2017	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018
All items.....		253.040		251.148	1.0	-0.7	
All items (1967 = 100).....		731.020		725.552			
Food and beverages		234.970		235.294	0.6	0.1	
Food		235.027		235.718	0.7	0.3	
Food at home		237.833	237.630	238.792	-0.1	0.4	0.5
Cereals and bakery products		300.917		304.754	1.1	1.3	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		264.789		263.464	0.9	-0.5	
Dairy and related products		198.127		197.729	-1.7	-0.2	
Fruits and vegetables		271.611		277.402	-1.8	2.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		156.917		157.801	3.6	0.6	
Other food at home		216.165		215.157	-1.5	-0.5	
Food away from home.....		225.639		225.953	1.9	0.1	
Alcoholic beverages		231.652		226.670	-0.9	-2.2	
Housing		262.087		261.330	1.9	-0.3	
Shelter		327.249	324.087	325.729	1.9	-0.5	0.5
Rent of primary residence		304.156	304.293	306.115	2.7	0.6	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		333.824	333.962	335.753	2.4	0.6	0.5
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		333.824	333.962	335.753	2.4	0.6	0.5
Fuels and utilities.....		206.714		207.420	0.3	0.3	
Household energy		170.467	171.916	170.747	-0.7	0.2	-0.7
Energy services.....		176.826	178.673	179.151	-1.1	1.3	0.3
Electricity		174.678	176.805	175.825	-4.7	0.7	-0.6
Utility (piped) gas service		168.980	170.283	172.959	5.0	2.4	1.6
Household furnishings and operations.....		113.362		113.897	4.2	0.5	
Apparel		107.717		101.165	-0.1	-6.1	
Transportation		215.768		206.030	-1.1	-4.5	
Private transportation		214.992		206.321	-0.7	-4.0	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		97.405		98.082	3.2	0.7	
New vehicles(1).....		178.463		177.965	0.9	-0.3	
Used cars and trucks(1).....		250.706		253.475	1.2	1.1	
Motor fuel		266.561	242.629	229.111	-3.1	-14.0	-5.6
Gasoline (all types).....		262.743	238.846	225.441	-3.3	-14.2	-5.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		259.647	235.308	221.855	-3.5	-14.6	-5.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		265.511	245.867	232.831	-2.9	-12.3	-5.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		263.923	244.807	232.905	-1.7	-11.8	-4.9
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		724.451		724.451	-10.9	0.0	
Medical care		526.709		531.533	3.4	0.9	
Recreation(3).....		117.734		120.886	-1.2	2.7	
Education and communication(3).....		130.650		130.622	0.5	0.0	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,028.013		1,035.649	0.9	0.7	
Other goods and services		536.893		540.463	0.4	0.7	
Commodity and service group							

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, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018	Dec. 2018	Dec. 2017	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018
Commodities		180.960		176.534	0.1	-2.4	
Commodities less food and beverages		150.253		144.501	-0.2	-3.8	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		196.100		184.464	-0.7	-5.9	
Durables		101.239		100.821	0.6	-0.4	
Services.....		326.377		326.566	1.5	0.1	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		228.652		226.586	0.6	-0.9	
All items less medical care		241.510		239.310	0.8	-0.9	
Commodities less food		153.239		147.458	-0.2	-3.8	
Nondurables		217.575		210.792	-0.1	-3.1	
Nondurables less food.....		198.294		186.921	-0.7	-5.7	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		332.748		334.813	1.1	0.6	
Services less medical care services.....		311.561		311.432	1.3	0.0	
Energy		205.507	197.434	191.642	-1.8	-6.7	-2.9
All items less energy		260.147		259.665	1.3	-0.2	
All items less food and energy		267.021		266.360	1.3	-0.2	

Footnotes

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