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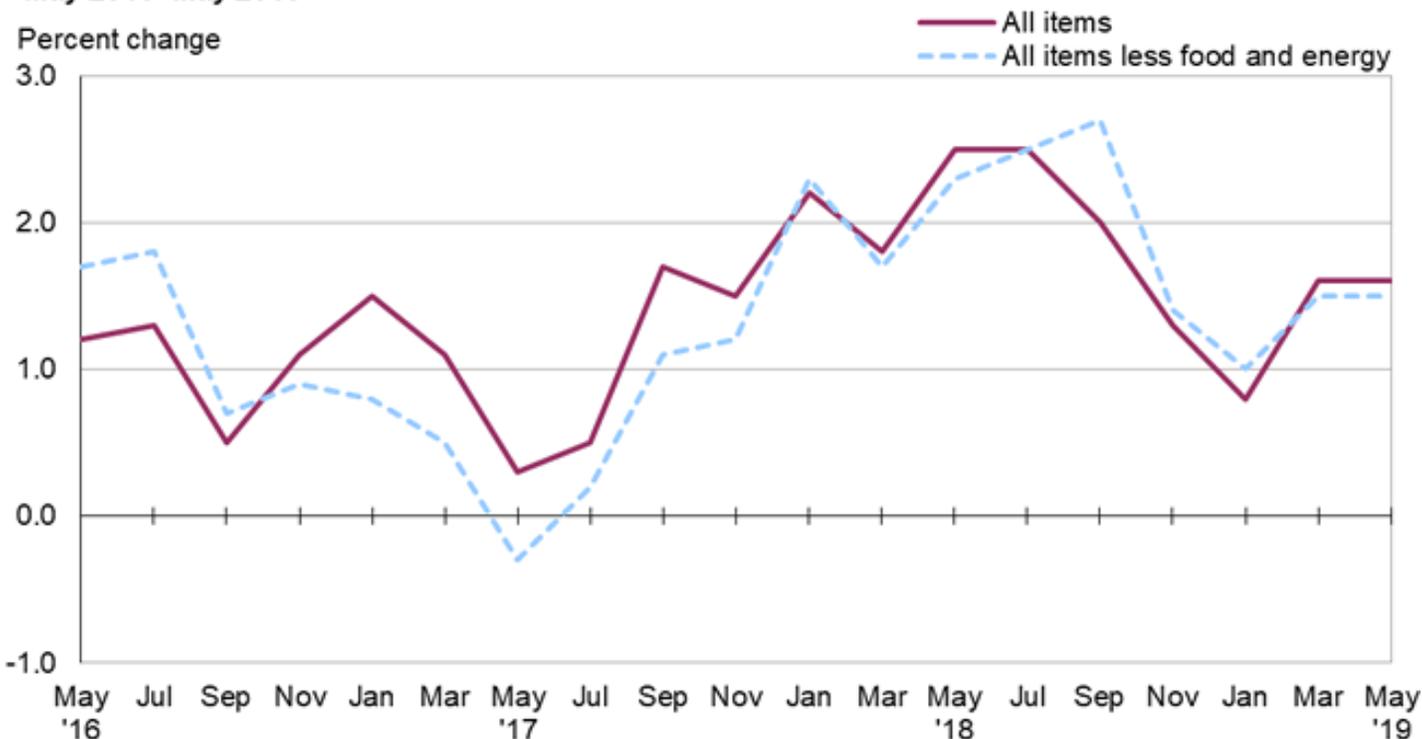
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – May 2019

Area prices up 0.6 percent since March, 1.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria increased 0.6 percent from March to May, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due mainly to a 5.8-percent rise in the energy index. The all items less food and energy index and the food index also increased since March, up 0.3 and 0.7 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 advanced 1.6 percent, primarily reflecting a 1.5-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since May 2018, the food index and the energy index also advanced, up 2.5 and 0.8 percent, respectively. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, May 2016–May 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After a 0.5-percent increase from January to March, the food index rose 0.7 percent over the last two months. Prices for food at home advanced 1.1 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for canned fruits and vegetables, uncooked beef steaks, and lettuce; prices were lower for chicken and eggs. Food away from home prices also increased over the last two months, edging up 0.2 percent.

Food prices increased 2.5 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both food at home (2.8 percent) and food away from home (2.2 percent) since May 2018.

Energy

Since March, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, advanced 5.8 percent, due almost entirely to a 12.0-percent increase in gasoline prices. Prices were also higher for utility (piped) gas service (1.3 percent), but were lower for electricity (-1.0 percent) over the past two months.

Energy prices rose 0.8 percent since May 2018. Increases in both utility (piped) gas service prices (6.3 percent) and electricity prices (0.8 percent) were moderated by slightly lower prices for gasoline (-0.3 percent).

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.3 percent since March. Increases in prices for education and communication (1.5 percent) and apparel (2.1 percent) led the advance. A decrease in prices for recreation (-0.9 percent) moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index from March to May.

Since May 2018, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.5 percent. The advance was led by higher prices for shelter (1.5 percent); household furnishings and operations (4.6 percent), apparel (4.2 percent) and recreation (3.3 percent) were among the indexes that had increases over the year. Education and communication prices were down 1.7 percent since May 2018.

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	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	2-month	12-month								
January.....	-1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.8
March.....	1.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8	0.7	1.6
May.....	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5	0.6	1.6
July.....	-0.3	0.3	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5		
September.....	0.6	0.7	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0		
November.....	-0.4	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5	-0.7	1.3		

The Consumer Price Index for July 2019 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, August 13, 2019, 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 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-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	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	May 2019	May 2018	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019
All items.....		264.257		265.967	1.6	0.6	
Food and beverages		253.071		254.663	2.3	0.6	
Food		258.260		260.090	2.5	0.7	
Food at home		247.462	245.982	250.262	2.8	1.1	1.7
Cereals and bakery products		323.483		323.442	1.0	0.0	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		260.408		271.907	4.6	4.4	
Dairy and related products		231.555		232.835	-1.7	0.6	
Fruits and vegetables		277.873		282.810	3.7	1.8	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		216.871		215.845	5.4	-0.5	
Other food at home		204.959		203.695	2.0	-0.6	
Food away from home.....		272.855		273.439	2.2	0.2	
Alcoholic beverages		202.878		202.096	0.3	-0.4	
Housing		277.236		277.060	1.9	-0.1	
Shelter		332.881	332.956	332.978	1.5	0.0	0.0
Rent of primary residence		363.442	364.022	364.882	2.0	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		338.728	339.657	339.457	1.5	0.2	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		338.728	339.657	339.457	1.5	0.2	-0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		236.620		236.197	2.8	-0.2	
Household energy		185.705	186.075	184.988	2.2	-0.4	-0.6
Energy services.....		190.336	190.594	189.508	2.2	-0.4	-0.6
Electricity		212.259	210.840	210.044	0.8	-1.0	-0.4
Utility (piped) gas service		139.197	142.522	140.964	6.3	1.3	-1.1
Household furnishings and operations.....		110.871		110.116	4.6	-0.7	
Apparel		167.026		170.495	4.2	2.1	
Transportation		214.389		220.493	0.3	2.8	
Private transportation		213.577		219.071	0.3	2.6	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		94.892		94.838	1.6	-0.1	
New vehicles(1).....		199.836		198.691	0.3	-0.6	
Used cars and trucks(1)		300.166		297.790	0.6	-0.8	
Motor fuel		234.003	254.930	261.803	-0.3	11.9	2.7
Gasoline (all types).....		231.203	252.163	259.057	-0.3	12.0	2.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		225.222	246.061	253.050	-0.4	12.4	2.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		236.622	254.173	258.297	1.1	9.2	1.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		248.990	268.402	273.918	0.5	10.0	2.1
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		845.825		841.671	-1.9	-0.5	
Medical care		456.233		457.446	1.1	0.3	
Recreation(3).....		119.388		118.326	3.3	-0.9	
Education and communication(3).....		148.590		150.851	-1.7	1.5	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,362.448		1,379.467	-0.3	1.2	
Other goods and services		416.659		417.688	2.7	0.2	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		181.747		184.526	1.6	1.5	

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	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	May 2019	May 2018	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019
Commodities less food and beverages		145.509		148.652	1.0	2.2	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		193.240		200.917	1.3	4.0	
Durables		101.607		101.384	0.7	-0.2	
Services.....		339.041		339.568	1.6	0.2	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		236.641		238.967	1.7	1.0	
All items less medical care		255.196		256.932	1.6	0.7	
Commodities less food.....		148.178		151.195	1.0	2.0	
Nondurables		222.264		226.985	1.9	2.1	
Nondurables less food.....		193.895		200.899	1.2	3.6	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		357.410		358.500	1.8	0.3	
Services less medical care services.....		327.669		328.040	1.6	0.1	
Energy		210.692	220.408	222.920	0.8	5.8	1.1
All items less energy		271.749		272.636	1.7	0.3	
All items less food and energy		275.451		276.171	1.5	0.3	

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.