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MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic

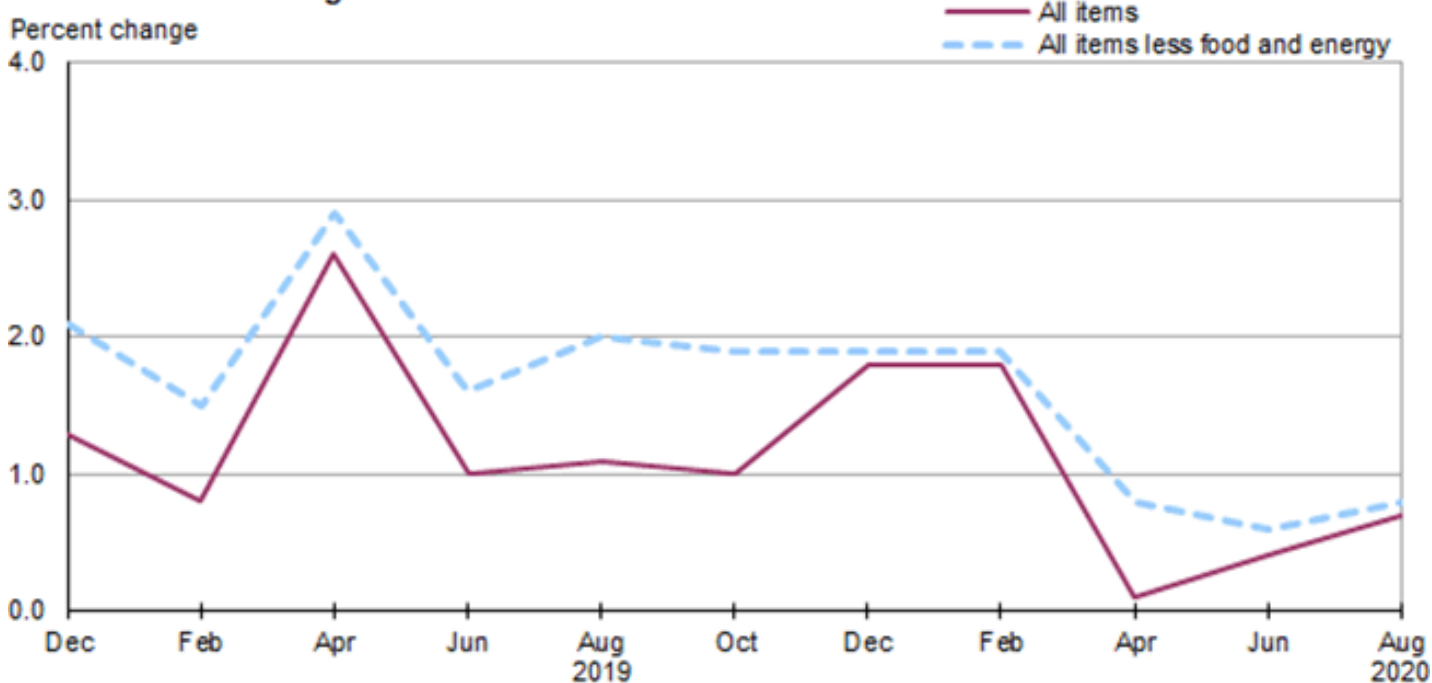
Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

## **Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – August 2020** **Area prices increased 0.5 percent since June; up 0.7 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 0.5 percent from June to August, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month increase was mostly due to a rise in the all items less food and energy index, up 0.7 percent. The energy index also rose since June, up 2.3 percent, while the food index decreased 1.5 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 0.7 percent. The over-the-year rise was due to increases in the all items less food and energy index (0.8 percent) and the food index (3.4 percent). (See [chart 1](#).) The energy index dropped over the year, down 5.6 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, December 2018–August 2020**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## **Food**

The food index declined over the last two months, down 1.5 percent. Prices decreased for both food at home (-2.5 percent) and for food away from home (-0.4 percent) since June. Within the food at home component, prices were lower for uncooked ground beef and eggs, while prices were higher for milk, among others.

Over the year, the food index increased 3.4 percent. Prices rose for both food at home (4.5 percent) and for food away from home (2.3 percent).

## **Energy**

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 2.3 percent since June, led by higher prices for gasoline (8.1 percent). Prices for utility (piped) gas service also increased over the last two months, up 0.8 percent, while those for electricity declined 3.4 percent.

Over the year, the energy index decreased 5.6 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline, dropping 12.1 percent. Prices increased for electricity and utility (piped) gas service, up 1.3 and 6.9 percent, respectively, since August 2019.

## **All items less food and energy**

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.7 percent from June to August. Higher prices for new and used motor vehicles (2.8 percent) and medical care (2.3 percent), among others, were moderated by lower prices for apparel (-2.5 percent).

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.8 percent since August 2019, led by higher prices for shelter (1.8 percent) and new and used motor vehicles (2.5 percent). Prices were lower for recreation (-2.5 percent) and apparel (-5.0 percent).

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**The Consumer Price Index for October 2020 is scheduled to be released Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 8:30 am (ET).**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on August 2020 Consumer Price Index Data**

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in August was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed.

While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at [www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm](http://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm).

## 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](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 **Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.














Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

**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	Jun. 2020	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020	Aug. 2019	Jun. 2020	Jul. 2020
All items.....		257.942		259.336	0.7	0.5	
Food and beverages .....		274.883		271.071	3.2	-1.4	
Food .....		275.015		270.960	3.4	-1.5	
Food at home .....		248.618	245.646	242.418	4.5	-2.5	-1.3
Cereals and bakery products .....		309.128		295.256	1.7	-4.5	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		246.797		234.464	2.8	-5.0	
Dairy and related products .....		241.544		238.777	1.7	-1.1	
Fruits and vegetables .....		288.545		291.494	5.7	1.0	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) .....		180.951		180.935	6.8	0.0	
Other food at home .....		230.580		222.977	7.2	-3.3	
Food away from home.....		314.300		313.084	2.3	-0.4	
Alcoholic beverages .....		269.598		269.501	0.3	0.0	
Housing(1).....		263.487		263.885	1.5	0.2	
Shelter .....		313.208	313.897	314.273	1.8	0.3	0.1
Rent of primary residence .....		368.177	369.797	370.328	1.9	0.6	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		329.526	330.489	331.199	2.4	0.5	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2) .....		329.526	330.489	331.199	2.4	0.5	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		224.101		219.787	2.3	-1.9	
Household energy .....		194.538	195.569	189.439	1.8	-2.6	-3.1
Energy services.....		209.898	211.136	204.213	2.4	-2.7	-3.3
Electricity .....		195.757	197.596	189.159	1.3	-3.4	-4.3
Utility (piped) gas service .....		191.590	189.130	193.186	6.9	0.8	2.1
Household furnishings and operations.....		119.234		119.499	-1.9	0.2	
Apparel.....		121.157		118.075	-5.0	-2.5	
Transportation .....		192.896		197.236	-2.5	2.2	
Private transportation .....		193.047		199.637	-0.2	3.4	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		95.991		98.673	2.5	2.8	
New vehicles(1).....		193.755		193.817	-0.2	0.0	
Used cars and trucks(1) .....		237.002		259.435	4.4	9.5	
Motor fuel .....		182.106	195.114	196.798	-12.1	8.1	0.9
Gasoline (all types).....		178.131	190.995	192.609	-12.1	8.1	0.8
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		178.701	191.979	193.607	-12.3	8.3	0.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		202.211	217.304	218.554	-7.8	8.1	0.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		194.094	204.587	206.379	-10.7	6.3	0.9
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		889.669		914.096	7.1	2.7	
Medical care .....		466.525		477.412	0.7	2.3	
Recreation .....		123.437		126.692	-2.5	2.6	
Education and communication(3).....		152.140		152.751	2.4	0.4	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) .....		1,247.122		1,257.234	2.0	0.8	
Other goods and services .....		433.662		435.247	2.3	0.4	
<b>Commodity and service group</b>							
Commodities .....		182.352		183.442	0.1	0.6	
Commodities less food and beverages .....		141.595		144.310	-1.8	1.9	

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

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jun. 2020	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020	Aug. 2019	Jun. 2020	Jul. 2020
Nondurables less food and beverages...		179.972		184.382	-4.7	2.5	
Durables .....		100.302		101.759	1.2	1.5	
Services.....		331.646		333.336	1.1	0.5	
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>							
All items less shelter.....		237.071		238.622	0.2	0.7	
All items less medical care .....		247.526		248.428	0.7	0.4	
Commodities less food .....		145.366		148.043	-1.7	1.8	
Nondurables .....		224.174		224.608	-0.4	0.2	
Nondurables less food.....		184.954		189.117	-4.3	2.3	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		364.746		367.388	0.2	0.7	
Services less medical care services.....		318.413		319.148	1.0	0.2	
Energy(1).....		193.035	199.903	197.423	-5.6	2.3	-1.2
All items less energy .....		264.859		266.020	1.1	0.4	
All items less food and energy .....		263.161		265.132	0.8	0.7	

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.