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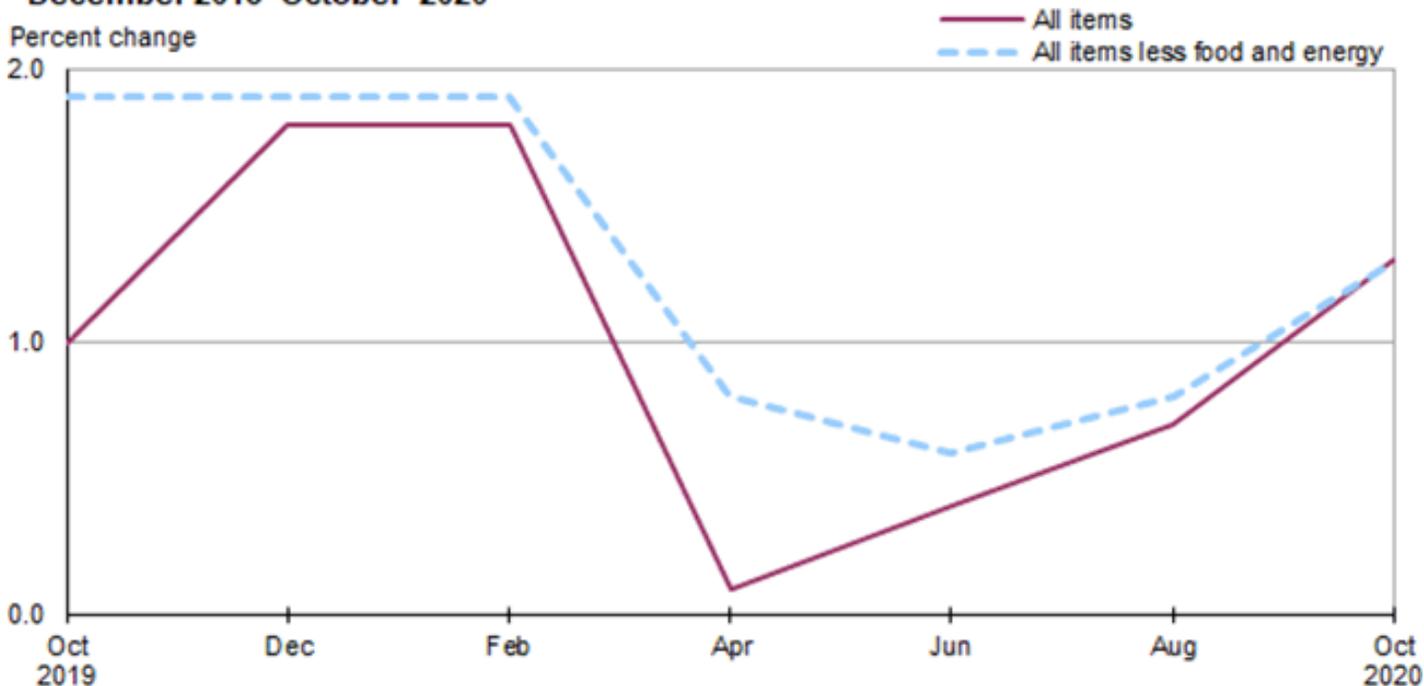
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Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – October 2020 **Area prices increased 0.6 percent since August; up 1.3 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 0.6 percent from August to October, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Acting Regional Commissioner Maureen McDevitt Greene noted that the recent bi-monthly increase was mostly due to a rise in the all items less food and energy index, up 0.5 percent. The food index and the energy index also rose since August, up 1.2 and 0.6 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 1.3 percent. The over-the-year rise was due to increases in the all items less food and energy index (1.3 percent) and the food index (4.4 percent). (See [chart 1](#).) The energy index dropped over the year, down 5.2 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index increased from August to October, up 1.2 percent. Prices increased for both food at home (1.7 percent) and for food away from home (0.6 percent) since August. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for bread and carbonated drinks, while prices were lower for milk, among other food categories.

Over the year, the food index increased 4.4 percent. Prices rose for both food at home (6.0 percent) and for food away from home (2.8 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 0.6 percent since August, led by higher prices for electricity (1.1 percent). Prices for gasoline also increased over the last two months, up 0.5 percent, while those for utility (piped) gas service declined 1.1 percent.

Over the year, the energy index decreased 5.2 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline, dropping 8.5 percent. Prices also decreased for electricity (-2.5 percent), while they increased for utility (piped) gas service (6.0 percent) since October 2019.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent from August to October. Higher prices for shelter (0.7 percent) and education and communication (1.0 percent), among others, were moderated by lower prices for apparel (-5.5 percent).

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.3 percent since October 2019, led by higher prices for shelter (2.4 percent) and new and used motor vehicles (4.3 percent). Prices were lower for apparel (-9.0 percent) and medical care (-1.7 percent).

The Consumer Price Index for December 2020 is scheduled to be released Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 8:30 am (ET).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on October 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 October 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.

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.

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	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2019	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020
All items.....		259.336		260.892	1.3	0.6	
Food and beverages		271.071		275.192	4.6	1.5	
Food		270.960		274.166	4.4	1.2	
Food at home		242.418	242.742	246.575	6.0	1.7	1.6
Cereals and bakery products		295.256		299.277	4.9	1.4	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		234.464		241.380	5.0	2.9	
Dairy and related products		238.777		243.292	2.0	1.9	
Fruits and vegetables		291.494		293.128	4.1	0.6	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		180.935		184.636	11.1	2.0	
Other food at home		222.977		226.076	8.5	1.4	
Food away from home.....		313.084		315.051	2.8	0.6	
Alcoholic beverages		269.501		287.384	7.4	6.6	
Housing(1).....		263.885		265.397	1.8	0.6	
Shelter		314.273	313.418	316.324	2.4	0.7	0.9
Rent of primary residence		370.328	370.668	372.278	2.4	0.5	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		331.199	331.136	334.954	3.5	1.1	1.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		331.199	331.136	334.954	3.5	1.1	1.2
Fuels and utilities.....		219.787		221.130	-0.9	0.6	
Household energy		189.439	187.654	190.942	-1.8	0.8	1.8
Energy services.....		204.213	202.010	205.795	-1.3	0.8	1.9
Electricity		189.159	186.296	191.320	-2.5	1.1	2.7
Utility (piped) gas service		193.186	195.414	191.042	6.0	-1.1	-2.2
Household furnishings and operations.....		119.499		119.282	-1.2	-0.2	
Apparel.....		118.075		111.620	-9.0	-5.5	
Transportation		197.236		198.059	-0.3	0.4	
Private transportation		199.637		199.406	1.3	-0.1	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		98.673		98.967	4.3	0.3	
New vehicles(1).....		193.817		191.475	0.3	-1.2	
Used cars and trucks(1)		259.435		267.852	12.0	3.2	
Motor fuel		196.798	197.799	197.717	-8.7	0.5	0.0
Gasoline (all types).....		192.609	193.627	193.653	-8.5	0.5	0.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		193.607	194.417	194.374	-8.8	0.4	0.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		218.554	221.794	222.530	-3.4	1.8	0.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		206.379	209.006	209.538	-7.0	1.5	0.3
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		914.096		844.112	-1.1	-7.7	
Medical care		477.412		479.216	-1.7	0.4	
Recreation		126.692		128.501	-0.9	1.4	
Education and communication(3).....		152.751		154.284	3.2	1.0	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,257.234		1,268.771	2.3	0.9	
Other goods and services		435.247		435.643	3.5	0.1	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		183.442		184.435	1.7	0.5	
Commodities less food and beverages		144.310		144.182	-0.1	-0.1	

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. 2020	Sep. 2020	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2019	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020
Nondurables less food and beverages...		184.382		183.173	-3.6	-0.7	
Durables		101.759		102.177	3.3	0.4	
Services.....		333.336		335.442	1.1	0.6	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		238.622		239.983	0.7	0.6	
All items less medical care		248.428		249.974	1.6	0.6	
Commodities less food		148.043		148.292	0.2	0.2	
Nondurables		224.608		225.964	1.0	0.6	
Nondurables less food.....		189.117		188.957	-2.8	-0.1	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		367.388		369.578	-0.5	0.6	
Services less medical care services.....		319.148		321.228	1.5	0.7	
Energy(1).....		197.423	196.948	198.677	-5.2	0.6	0.9
All items less energy		266.020		267.611	1.7	0.6	
All items less food and energy		265.132		266.471	1.3	0.5	

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.