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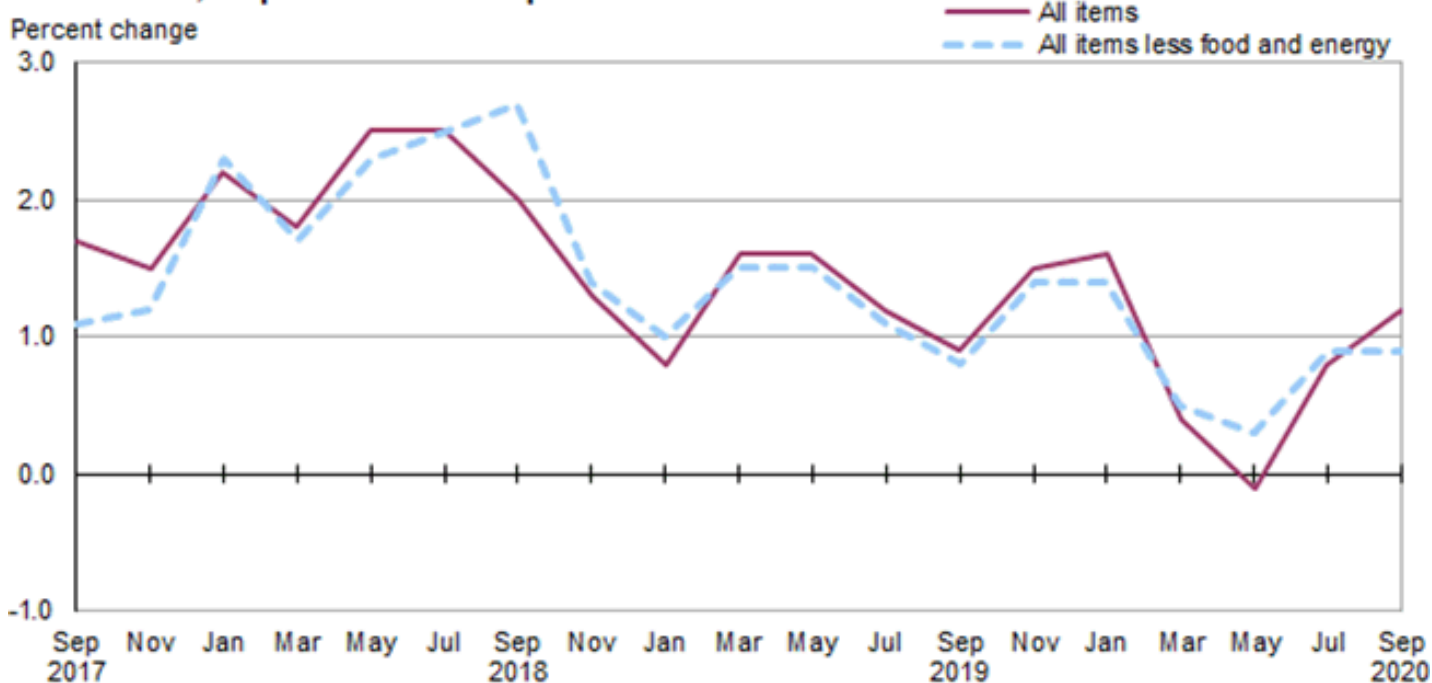
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Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – September 2020 **Area prices up 0.6 percent since July, 1.2 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria advanced 0.6 percent from July to September, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due to advances in the all items less food and energy index, up 0.5 percent, and the food index, up 1.3 percent; the energy index decreased 1.4 percent over the month. (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 1.2 percent, due largely to a 5.3-percent rise in the food index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since September 2019, the all items less food and energy index also increased, up 0.9 percent, while the energy index decreased 6.1 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, September 2017–September 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Following a 0.3-percent decrease from May to July, the food index increased 1.3 percent over the last two months. Prices for food away from home increased 2.4 percent, and those for food at home rose 0.3 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for breakfast cereal and apples, while prices were lower for bread, eggs, and potatoes, among others.

Food prices increased 5.3 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both food away from home (6.5 percent) and for food at home (4.3 percent) since September 2019.

Energy

Since July, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, declined 1.4 percent, due mainly to lower prices for utility (piped) gas service (-11.4 percent). Prices were also lower for electricity (-1.7 percent), while those for gasoline were higher (2.3 percent) over the past two months.

Energy prices decreased 6.1 percent since September 2019, due mostly to a drop in gasoline prices, down 9.5 percent. Over the year, prices also declined for electricity, down 5.2 percent, while prices were higher for utility (piped) gas service, up 4.9 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent since July. The advance was led by higher prices for apparel (7.0 percent) and shelter (0.5 percent) over the last two months. Lower prices for several categories, including motor vehicle insurance (-9.7 percent), moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index from July to September.

Since September 2019, the index for all items less food and energy rose 0.9 percent. Prices were higher for medical care (7.6 percent) and shelter (1.7 percent), among others. Prices decreased for apparel (-7.7 percent) and recreation (-4.2 percent) since September 2019.

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	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.8	0.5	1.6
March.....	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8	0.7	1.6	-0.4	0.4
May.....	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	-0.1
July.....	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5	-0.3	1.2	0.6	0.8
September.....	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0	0.1	0.9	0.6	1.2
November.....	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5	-0.7	1.3	-0.2	1.5		

The Consumer Price Index for November 2020 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, December 10, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on September 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 September 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 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	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2019	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020
All items.....		267.287		268.788	1.2	0.6	
Food and beverages		260.635		264.518	4.8	1.5	
Food		268.037		271.655	5.3	1.3	
Food at home		255.629	254.210	256.472	4.3	0.3	0.9
Cereals and bakery products		335.828		330.632	2.5	-1.5	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		286.655		276.737	3.2	-3.5	
Dairy and related products		250.465		250.878	3.4	0.2	
Fruits and vegetables		264.208		267.089	-1.9	1.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		220.787		222.330	3.7	0.7	
Other food at home		209.735		219.001	12.0	4.4	
Food away from home.....		284.894		291.645	6.5	2.4	
Alcoholic beverages		191.843		197.647	-1.4	3.0	
Housing		283.053		283.829	1.6	0.3	
Shelter		340.344	342.122	341.944	1.7	0.5	-0.1
Rent of primary residence		378.325	379.735	380.032	3.1	0.5	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		349.222	350.269	350.731	2.6	0.4	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		349.222	350.269	350.731	2.6	0.4	0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		243.811		236.399	-1.6	-3.0	
Household energy		189.831	180.380	181.675	-2.9	-4.3	0.7
Energy services.....		194.872	184.780	185.935	-3.0	-4.6	0.6
Electricity		214.326	212.347	210.697	-5.2	-1.7	-0.8
Utility (piped) gas service		147.257	124.863	130.466	4.9	-11.4	4.5
Household furnishings and operations.....		111.171		112.592	3.1	1.3	
Apparel		143.903		153.947	-7.7	7.0	
Transportation		210.230		208.563	-3.1	-0.8	
Private transportation		213.036		212.133	-0.2	-0.4	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		94.968		96.380	3.7	1.5	
New vehicles(1).....		195.712		192.465	0.3	-1.7	
Used cars and trucks(1)		303.564		328.334	10.6	8.2	
Motor fuel		207.955	209.330	212.512	-9.6	2.2	1.5
Gasoline (all types).....		205.578	206.942	210.211	-9.5	2.3	1.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		199.234	200.581	203.785	-9.9	2.3	1.6
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		218.545	221.244	223.073	-5.7	2.1	0.8
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		230.634	231.726	235.387	-6.8	2.1	1.6
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		897.449		810.380	-5.7	-9.7	
Medical care		494.021		494.879	7.6	0.2	
Recreation(3).....		110.476		111.468	-4.2	0.9	
Education and communication(3).....		154.625		155.960	2.2	0.9	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,414.752		1,436.779	2.0	1.6	
Other goods and services		431.885		428.164	2.8	-0.9	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		180.172		182.996	1.6	1.6	

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	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2019	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020
Commodities less food and beverages		139.926		142.214	-1.0	1.6	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		181.533		185.125	-3.2	2.0	
Durables		100.188		101.452	1.5	1.3	
Services		346.798		346.690	1.0	0.0	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		238.006		239.448	1.0	0.6	
All items less medical care		256.577		258.108	0.7	0.6	
Commodities less food		142.307		144.770	-1.0	1.7	
Nondurables		220.728		224.418	1.6	1.7	
Nondurables less food		182.291		186.133	-3.0	2.1	
Services less rent of shelter(2)		365.237		363.170	0.2	-0.6	
Services less medical care services		331.857		331.661	0.1	-0.1	
Energy		201.787	196.863	199.010	-6.1	-1.4	1.1
All items less energy		275.627		277.434	1.6	0.7	
All items less food and energy		278.127		279.564	0.9	0.5	

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.