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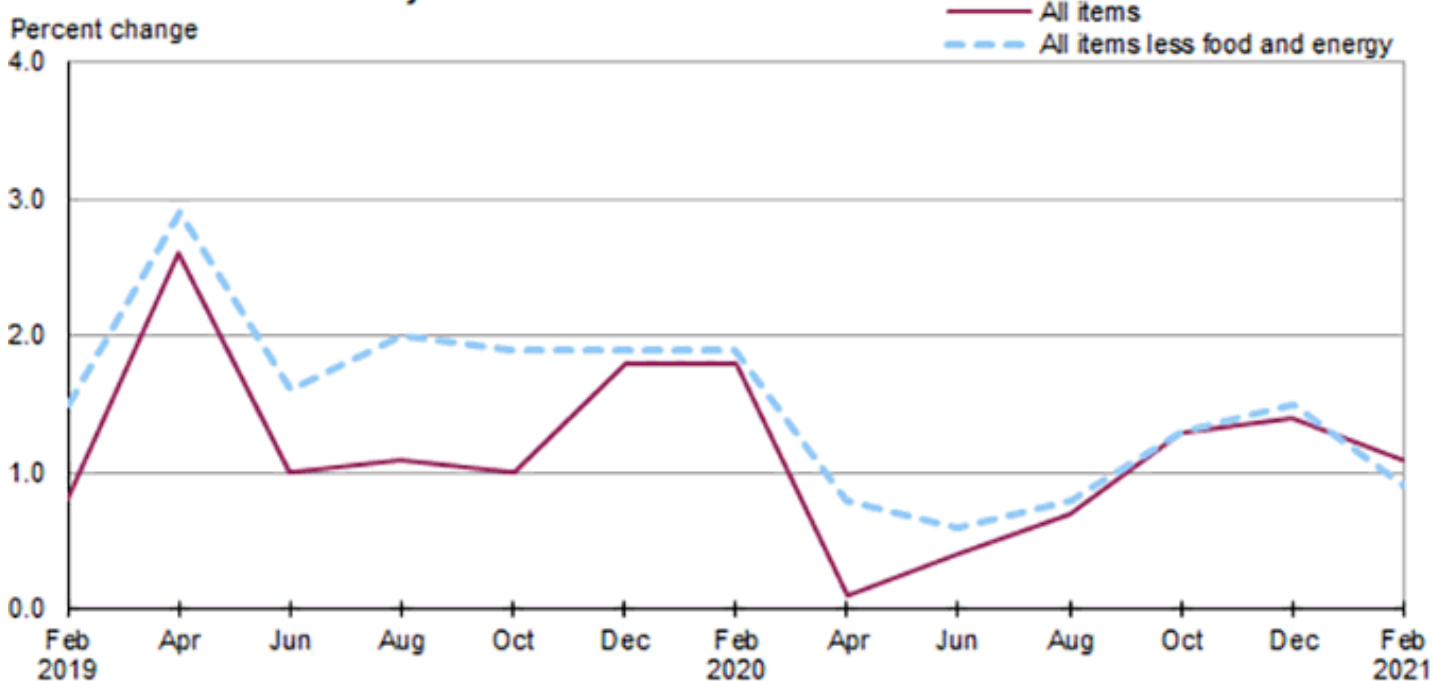
Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – February 2021

Area prices increased 0.1 percent since December; up 1.1 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson inched up 0.1 percent from December to February, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Acting Regional Commissioner Frank Waligorski noted that the recent bi-monthly increase was mostly due to a rise in the energy index, up 3.2 percent. The food index also rose since December, up 0.7 percent, while the all items less food and energy index declined 0.2 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 1.1 percent. The over-the-year rise was due to increases in the all items less food and energy index (0.9 percent) and the food index (2.6 percent). (See [chart 1](#).) The energy index was unchanged over the year. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, December 2018–February 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index rose from December to February, up 0.7 percent. Prices increased for food at home, up 1.7 percent since December, while prices declined for food away from home, down 0.4 percent.

Over the year, the food index increased 2.6 percent. Prices rose for both food at home (3.7 percent) and for food away from home (1.5 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 3.2 percent since December, due to higher prices for gasoline (8.8 percent). Prices for electricity and utility (piped) gas service declined over the past two months, down 1.9 and 6.0 percent, respectively.

Over the year, the energy index was unchanged. Lower prices for electricity (-7.6 percent) were offset by higher prices for gasoline (6.9 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (0.2 percent) since February 2020.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged down 0.2 percent from December to February. Lower prices for new and used motor vehicles (-3.2 percent) and recreation (-1.8 percent) were offset by higher prices for shelter (0.4 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.9 percent since February 2020, led by higher prices for shelter (1.8 percent), particularly those for owners' equivalent rent of residences (2.7 percent). Prices were lower for apparel (-7.5 percent) and new vehicles (-2.9 percent) over the year.

The Consumer Price Index for April 2021 is scheduled to be released Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 8:30 am (ET).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on February 2021 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 February 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.














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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	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Feb. 2020	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021
All items.....		261.535		261.917	1.1	0.1	
Food and beverages		271.703		273.430	2.9	0.6	
Food		270.572		272.363	2.6	0.7	
Food at home		238.904	240.281	242.895	3.7	1.7	1.1
Cereals and bakery products		290.919		291.251	1.0	0.1	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		233.468		241.859	4.2	3.6	
Dairy and related products		237.810		241.471	2.9	1.5	
Fruits and vegetables		290.371		297.256	7.0	2.4	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		177.425		177.625	3.2	0.1	
Other food at home		215.183		216.808	2.7	0.8	
Food away from home.....		316.905		315.755	1.5	-0.4	
Alcoholic beverages		285.521		286.261	6.5	0.3	
Housing(1).....		265.303		265.897	1.1	0.2	
Shelter		314.960	315.411	316.234	1.8	0.4	0.3
Rent of primary residence		366.082	366.220	365.863	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		333.963	334.603	335.687	2.7	0.5	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		333.963	334.603	335.687	2.7	0.5	0.3
Fuels and utilities.....		224.587		220.586	-5.1	-1.8	
Household energy		194.215	191.270	190.276	-6.3	-2.0	-0.5
Energy services.....		208.849	205.203	203.396	-6.4	-2.6	-0.9
Electricity		191.540	189.455	187.882	-7.6	-1.9	-0.8
Utility (piped) gas service		207.603	197.381	195.143	0.2	-6.0	-1.1
Household furnishings and operations		121.945		122.315	0.8	0.3	
Apparel		121.090		124.580	-7.5	2.9	
Transportation		199.956		199.528	-1.4	-0.2	
Private transportation		202.693		203.366	2.3	0.3	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		100.980		97.727	0.8	-3.2	
New vehicles(1).....		199.934		190.674	-2.9	-4.6	
Used cars and trucks(1)		261.673		259.844	8.8	-0.7	
Motor fuel		203.092	211.627	220.834	6.8	8.7	4.4
Gasoline (all types).....		198.577	206.971	216.027	6.9	8.8	4.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		199.167	208.053	217.550	6.9	9.2	4.6
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		232.048	236.907	242.653	9.0	4.6	2.4
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		215.492	221.269	228.292	6.2	5.9	3.2
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		747.828		749.862	-17.5	0.3	
Medical care		479.745		480.759	5.1	0.2	
Recreation		128.590		126.244	-2.2	-1.8	
Education and communication(3).....		154.875		154.626	1.7	-0.2	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,268.203		1,268.218	1.7	0.0	
Other goods and services		447.627		451.857	4.9	0.9	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		185.994		187.151	1.7	0.6	
Commodities less food and beverages		147.392		148.297	0.9	0.6	

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

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Feb. 2020	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021
Nondurables less food and beverages...		187.019		193.128	0.4	3.3	
Durables		104.565		102.798	1.4	-1.7	
Services.....		335.178		334.793	0.8	-0.1	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		241.492		241.496	0.7	0.0	
All items less medical care		250.624		250.974	0.7	0.1	
Commodities less food		151.421		152.328	1.1	0.6	
Nondurables		226.264		230.226	1.8	1.8	
Nondurables less food.....		192.490		198.306	0.9	3.0	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		370.904		368.172	-0.5	-0.7	
Services less medical care services.....		321.029		320.463	0.1	-0.2	
Energy(1).....		203.047	205.606	209.539	0.0	3.2	1.9
All items less energy		267.956		267.845	1.1	0.0	
All items less food and energy		267.429		267.022	0.9	-0.2	

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.