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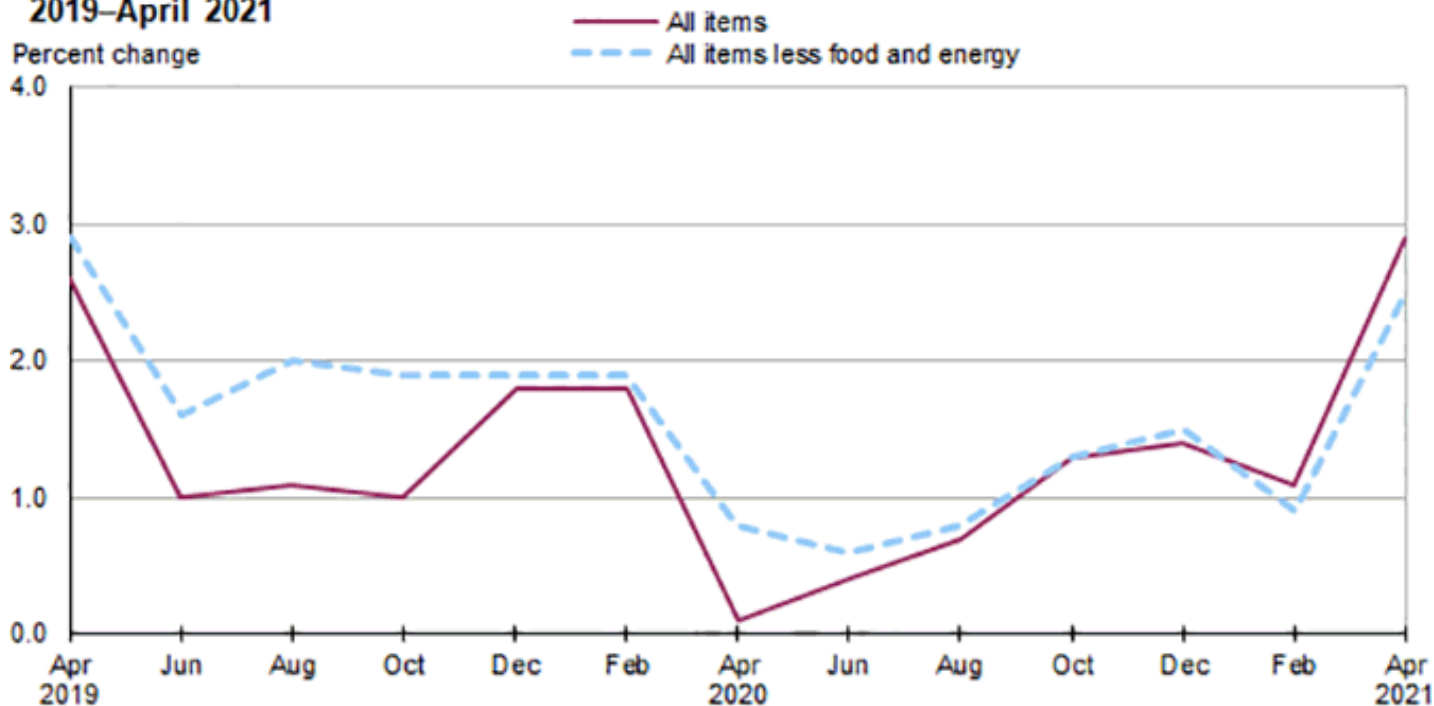
## **Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – April 2021**

### **Area prices increased 1.8 percent since February; up 2.9 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 1.8 percent from February to April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Alexandra Hall Bovee noted that the recent bi-monthly increase was mostly due to a rise in the all items less food and energy index, up 1.6 percent. The energy index and the food index also rose since February, up 6.1 and 0.8 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 2.9 percent. The over-the-year rise was due to increases in the all items less food and energy index (2.5 percent) and the energy index (16.8 percent). (See [chart 1.](#)) The food index inched down 0.2 percent over the year. (See [table 1.](#))

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, April 2019–April 2021**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## **Food**

The food index rose from February to April, up 0.8 percent. Prices increased for food away from home, up 1.4 percent since February, and for food at home, up 0.1 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for eggs and breakfast cereal, as well as other dairy and related products.

Over the year, the food index decreased 0.2 percent. Prices declined for food at home (-1.6 percent), while they were higher for food away from home (1.2 percent).

## **Energy**

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 6.1 percent since February, due to higher prices for gasoline (10.2 percent). Prices for electricity and utility (piped) gas service also rose over the past two months, up 1.7 and 2.8 percent, respectively.

Over the year, the energy index increased 16.8 percent, led by higher prices for gasoline (44.8 percent). Prices were also higher for utility (piped) gas service (5.9 percent), while they were lower for electricity (-6.7 percent) since April 2020.

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

The index for all items less food and energy rose 1.6 percent from February to April. Prices were higher for new and used motor vehicles (9.0 percent) and shelter (0.9 percent), particularly those for lodging away from home (28.6 percent), while they were lower for medical care (-1.3 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 2.5 percent since April 2020, led by higher prices for shelter (2.3 percent). Prices were lower for medical care (-2.0 percent) over the year.

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**The Consumer Price Index for June 2021 is scheduled to be released Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 8:30 am (ET).**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on April 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 April 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 U.S. population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total U.S. 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; for most of the CPI-U the reference base is 1982-84 equals 100. An increase of 7 percent from the reference base, for example, is shown as 107.000. Alternatively, that relationship can also be expressed as the price of a base period market basket of goods and services rising from \$100 to \$107. For further details see the CPI home page on the internet at [www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi) and the CPI section of the BLS Handbook of Methods available on the internet at [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cpi/](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cpi/). 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, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's counties, as well as Baltimore City, 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   | Feb. 2021 | Mar. 2021 | Apr. 2021 | Apr. 2020           | Feb. 2021 | Mar. 2021 |
| All items.....   |    | 261.917   |           | 266.534   | 2.9                 | 1.8       |           |
| Food and beverages .....                               |    | 273.430   |           | 275.406   | 0.1                 | 0.7       |           |
| Food .....   |    | 272.363   |           | 274.460   | -0.2                | 0.8       |           |
| Food at home .....                                     |    | 242.895   | 239.805   | 243.176   | -1.6                | 0.1       | 1.4       |
| Cereals and bakery products .....                      |    | 291.251   |           | 295.617   | -1.2                | 1.5       |           |
| Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....                    |    | 241.859   |           | 240.238   | -5.1                | -0.7      |           |
| Dairy and related products .....                       |    | 241.471   |           | 241.826   | 2.8                 | 0.1       |           |
| Fruits and vegetables .....                            |    | 297.256   |           | 299.471   | -2.1                | 0.7       |           |
| Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) ..... |    | 177.625   |           | 170.542   | -1.7                | -4.0      |           |
| Other food at home .....                               |    | 216.808   |           | 220.171   | 0.8                 | 1.6       |           |
| Food away from home.....                               |    | 315.755   |           | 320.328   | 1.2                 | 1.4       |           |
| Alcoholic beverages .....                              |    | 286.261   |           | 286.392   | 5.5                 | 0.0       |           |
| Housing(1).....  |    | 265.897   |           | 268.757   | 2.0                 | 1.1       |           |
| Shelter .....  |    | 316.234   | 317.226   | 319.163   | 2.3                 | 0.9       | 0.6       |
| Rent of primary residence .....                        |    | 365.863   | 367.261   | 368.527   | -0.1                | 0.7       | 0.3       |
| Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....          |    | 335.687   | 336.342   | 336.926   | 2.6                 | 0.4       | 0.2       |
| Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2) .....  |    | 335.687   | 336.342   | 336.926   | 2.6                 | 0.4       | 0.2       |
| Fuels and utilities.....                               |    | 220.586   |           | 224.256   | -3.1                | 1.7       |           |
| Household energy .....                                 |    | 190.276   | 195.294   | 193.889   | -4.0                | 1.9       | -0.7      |
| Energy services.....                                   |    | 203.396   | 208.199   | 207.157   | -4.8                | 1.8       | -0.5      |
| Electricity .....                                      |   | 187.882   | 192.458   | 191.015   | -6.7                | 1.7       | -0.7      |
| Utility (piped) gas service .....                      |  | 195.143   | 199.019   | 200.540   | 5.9                 | 2.8       | 0.8       |
| Household furnishings and operations .....             |  | 122.315   |           | 124.667   | 3.8                 | 1.9       |           |
| Apparel .....  |  | 124.580   |           | 125.921   | 3.8                 | 1.1       |           |
| Transportation .....                                   |  | 199.528   |           | 213.986   | 11.4                | 7.2       |           |
| Private transportation .....                           |  | 203.366   |           | 215.606   | 12.9                | 6.0       |           |
| New and used motor vehicles(3).....                    |  | 97.727    |           | 106.495   | 9.2                 | 9.0       |           |
| New vehicles(1).....                                   |  | 190.674   |           | 204.543   | 3.0                 | 7.3       |           |
| Used cars and trucks(1) .....                          |  | 259.844   |           | 291.590   | 20.7                | 12.2      |           |
| Motor fuel .....                                       |  | 220.834   | 244.844   | 243.230   | 44.4                | 10.1      | -0.7      |
| Gasoline (all types).....                              |  | 216.027   | 239.784   | 238.162   | 44.8                | 10.2      | -0.7      |
| Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....                     |  | 217.550   | 242.439   | 240.210   | 46.7                | 10.4      | -0.9      |
| Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....                 |  | 242.653   | 259.851   | 260.853   | 30.1                | 7.5       | 0.4       |
| Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....                     |  | 228.292   | 246.728   | 249.700   | 32.3                | 9.4       | 1.2       |
| Motor vehicle insurance(1).....                        |  | 749.862   |           | 736.892   | -8.8                | -1.7      |           |
| Medical care .....                                     |  | 480.759   |           | 474.622   | -2.0                | -1.3      |           |
| Recreation .....                                       |  | 126.244   |           | 126.180   | 0.0                 | -0.1      |           |
| Education and communication(3).....                    |  | 154.626   |           | 158.015   | 3.3                 | 2.2       |           |
| Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) .....    |  | 1,268.218 |           | 1,270.658 | 1.9                 | 0.2       |           |
| Other goods and services .....                         |  | 451.857   |           | 454.865   |                     | 0.7       |           |
| <b>Commodity and service group</b>                     |   |           |           |           |                     |           |           |
| Commodities .....                                      |  | 187.151   |           | 194.569   | 6.5                 | 4.0       |           |
| Commodities less food and beverages .....              |  | 148.297   |           | 157.209   | 10.8                | 6.0       |           |

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   | Feb. 2021 | Mar. 2021 | Apr. 2021 | Apr. 2020           | Feb. 2021 | Mar. 2021 |
| Nondurables less food and beverages...   |  | 193.128   |           | 202.024   | 14.2                | 4.6       |           |
| Durables .....                           |  | 102.798   |           | 110.292   | 7.9                 | 7.3       |           |
| Services.....                            |  | 334.793   |           | 336.628   | 1.0                 | 0.5       |           |
| <b>Special aggregate indexes</b>         |   |           |           |           |                     |           |           |
| All items less shelter.....              |  | 241.496   |           | 246.885   | 3.3                 | 2.2       |           |
| All items less medical care .....        |  | 250.974   |           | 256.159   | 3.4                 | 2.1       |           |
| Commodities less food .....              |  | 152.328   |           | 161.124   | 10.6                | 5.8       |           |
| Nondurables .....                        |  | 230.226   |           | 235.738   | 5.9                 | 2.4       |           |
| Nondurables less food.....               |  | 198.306   |           | 206.723   | 13.5                | 4.2       |           |
| Services less rent of shelter(2).....    |  | 368.172   |           | 368.439   | -0.7                | 0.1       |           |
| Services less medical care services..... |  | 320.463   |           | 323.362   | 1.5                 | 0.9       |           |
| Energy(1).....                           |  | 209.539   | 223.892   | 222.353   | 16.8                | 6.1       | -0.7      |
| All items less energy .....              |  | 267.845   |           | 271.828   | 2.1                 | 1.5       |           |
| All items less food and energy .....     |  | 267.022   |           | 271.297   | 2.5                 | 1.6       |           |

**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.