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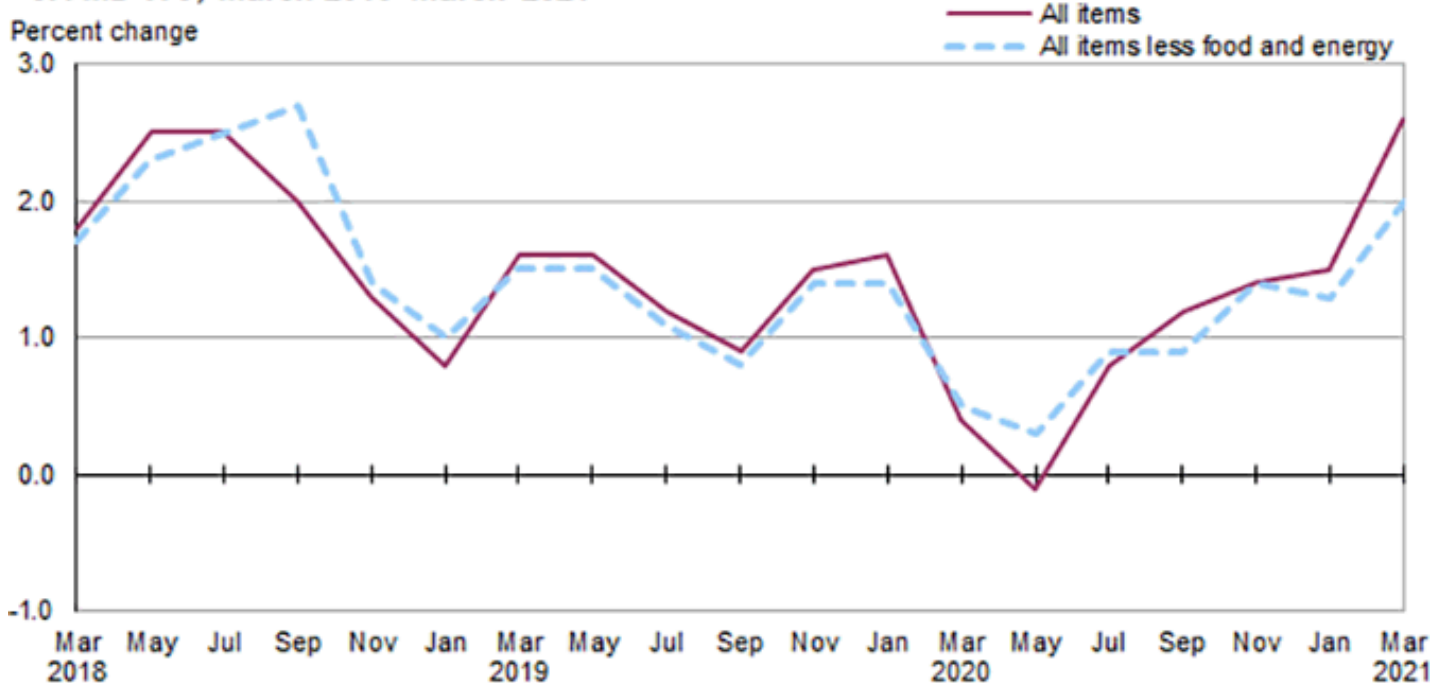
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – March 2021

Area prices up 0.7 percent since January, 2.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria increased 0.7 percent from January to March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Alexandra Hall Bovee, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due largely to an increase in the energy index, up 10.3 percent. The all items less food and energy index also increased since January, up 0.3 percent, while the food index edged down 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 2.6 percent, due mostly to a 2.0-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since March 2020, the food index and the energy index also increased, up 3.7 and 10.2 percent, respectively. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, March 2018–March 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Following a 1.0-percent rise from November to January, the food index decreased 0.2 percent over the last 2 months. Prices for food away from home declined 0.9 percent, and those for food at home increased 0.5 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for carbonated drinks and citrus fruits, as well as uncooked beef steaks, while prices were lower for milk, among others.

Food prices increased 3.7 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both food away from home (4.6 percent) and for food at home (2.7 percent) since March 2020.

Energy

Since January, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 10.3 percent, due largely to higher prices for gasoline (17.5 percent). Prices were also higher for utility (piped) gas (14.7 percent), while those for electricity were lower (-0.5 percent) over the past 2 months.

Energy prices advanced 10.2 percent since March 2020, due largely to a rise in gasoline prices, up 20.7 percent. Over the year, prices also increased for utility (piped) gas service, up 18.5 percent, while those for electricity decreased, down 5.2 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.3 percent since January. The advance was led by higher prices for recreation (2.6 percent) and shelter (0.2 percent), particularly owners' equivalent rent of residences (0.4 percent) over the last 2 months. Prices were also higher for new and used motor vehicles (1.0 percent) and other goods and services (0.7 percent).

Since March 2020, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.0 percent. Prices were higher for shelter (2.4 percent) and medical care (6.9 percent), among others. Prices decreased for apparel (-6.5 percent) since March 2020.

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	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	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	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.8	0.5	1.6	0.7	1.5
March	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8	0.7	1.6	-0.4	0.4	0.7	2.6
May.....	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	-0.1		
July	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5	-0.3	1.2	0.6	0.8		
September.....	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0	0.1	0.9	0.6	1.2		
November.....	0.0	1.5	-0.7	1.3	-0.2	1.5	0.0	1.4		

The Consumer Price Index for May 2021 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, June 10, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on March 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 March 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 (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 6,000 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 and the CPI section of the BLS Handbook of Methods available on the internet at 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 **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	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Mar. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021
All items.....		270.535		272.347	2.6	0.7	
Food and beverages		264.780		264.450	3.3	-0.1	
Food		271.960		271.408	3.7	-0.2	
Food at home		253.094	257.674	254.400	2.7	0.5	-1.3
Cereals and bakery products		325.930		326.575	9.3	0.2	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		277.715		281.438	0.6	1.3	
Dairy and related products		241.934		247.690	0.7	2.4	
Fruits and vegetables		263.970		263.387	0.4	-0.2	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		221.859		223.093	3.5	0.6	
Other food at home		213.377		212.571	4.1	-0.4	
Food away from home.....		296.055		293.428	4.6	-0.9	
Alcoholic beverages		197.556		198.978	-0.4	0.7	
Housing		285.565		286.593	2.5	0.4	
Shelter		344.056	344.499	344.838	2.4	0.2	0.1
Rent of primary residence		378.504	378.324	378.241	1.2	-0.1	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		351.958	353.178	353.312	2.2	0.4	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		351.958	353.178	353.312	2.2	0.4	0.0
Fuels and utilities.....		233.361		239.775	1.7	2.7	
Household energy		177.923	177.896	184.206	0.8	3.5	3.5
Energy services.....		181.943	181.770	188.925	1.2	3.8	3.9
Electricity		203.559	202.048	202.504	-5.2	-0.5	0.2
Utility (piped) gas service		131.896	133.904	151.312	18.5	14.7	13.0
Household furnishings and operations		114.780		114.416	4.5	-0.3	
Apparel		147.564		148.062	-6.5	0.3	
Transportation		211.250		216.225	2.3	2.4	
Private transportation		213.801		221.983	4.0	3.8	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		96.789		97.749	4.0	1.0	
New vehicles(1).....		195.243		193.573	-0.8	-0.9	
Used cars and trucks(1)		320.978		329.104	8.9	2.5	
Motor fuel		225.091	235.814	264.353	20.6	17.4	12.1
Gasoline (all types).....		222.390	233.033	261.379	20.7	17.5	12.2
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		216.086	227.131	255.369	21.4	18.2	12.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		236.658	243.221	267.615	21.7	13.1	10.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		244.759	251.548	278.163	15.9	13.6	10.6
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		818.891		808.251	-9.9	-1.3	
Medical care		498.887		498.579	6.9	-0.1	
Recreation(3).....		114.838		117.865	1.4	2.6	
Education and communication(3).....		156.292		156.718	2.5	0.3	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,437.884		1,441.837	2.4	0.3	
Other goods and services		438.703		441.963	3.4	0.7	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		183.861		185.673	3.0	1.0	

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, 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	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Mar. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021
Commodities less food and beverages		143.352		146.153	2.7	2.0	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		187.368		193.569	3.0	3.3	
Durables		101.807		102.270	2.4	0.5	
Services		349.311		350.993	2.4	0.5	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		241.041		243.173	2.8	0.9	
All items less medical care		259.748		261.660	2.3	0.7	
Commodities less food		145.844		148.570	2.5	1.9	
Nondurables		225.573		228.204	3.2	1.2	
Nondurables less food		188.097		193.721	2.6	3.0	
Services less rent of shelter(2)		366.794		369.630	2.6	0.8	
Services less medical care services		333.942		335.854	1.7	0.6	
Energy		202.311	206.977	223.130	10.2	10.3	7.8
All items less energy		279.104		279.685	2.3	0.2	
All items less food and energy		281.522		282.341	2.0	0.3	

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.