



For Release: Thursday, June 10, 2021

21-1088-PHI

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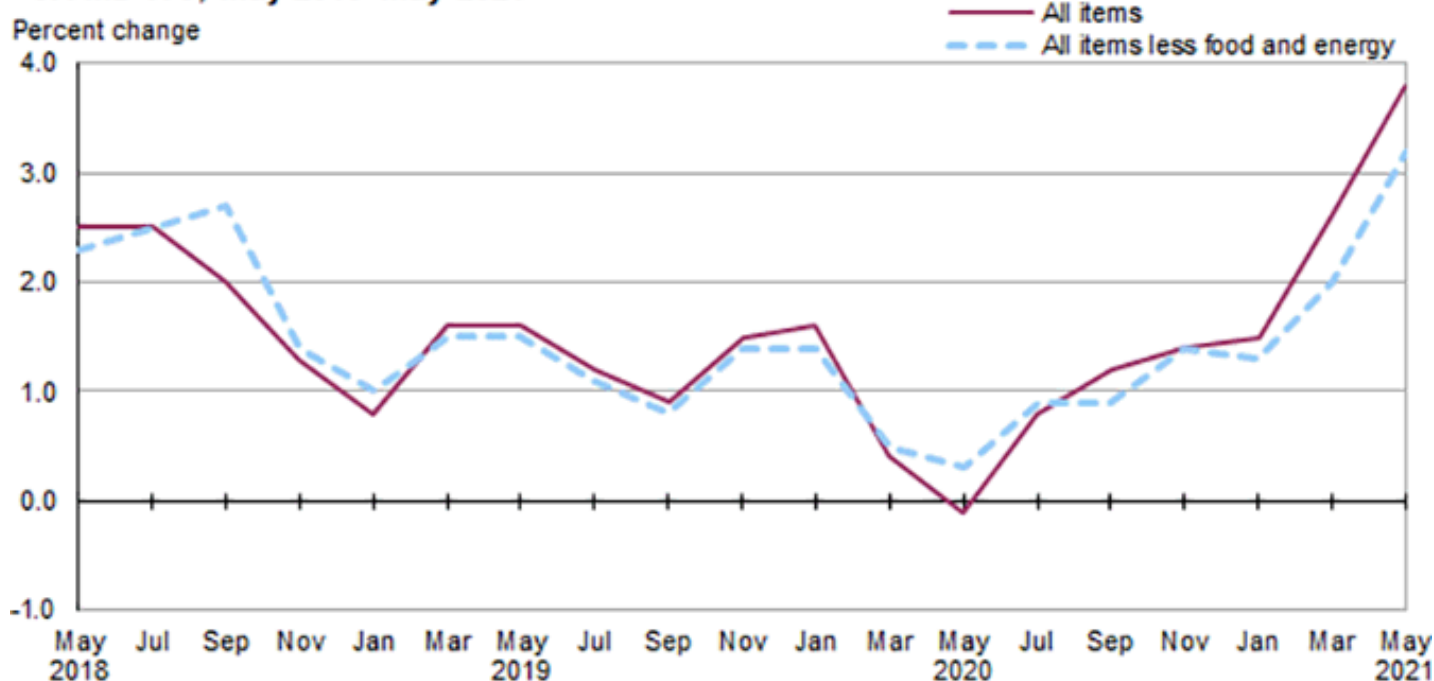
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – May 2021

Area prices up 1.3 percent since March, 3.8 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria increased 1.3 percent from March to May, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Alexandra Hall Bovee, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was the largest since March 2012. It was due largely to higher prices for new and used motor vehicles, reflected in an increase in the all items less food and energy index, up 1.2 percent. The energy index and the food index also increased since March, up 4.4 and 0.4 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 3.8 percent, the largest year-over-year increase since 2011. The rise was due mostly to a 3.2-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A.](#)) Since May 2020, the energy index and the food index also increased, up 24.1 and 1.4 percent, respectively. (See [table 1.](#))

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Following a 0.2-percent decrease from January to March, the food index increased 0.4 percent over the last 2 months. Prices for food away from home increased 1.8 percent, and those for food at home decreased 1.0 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were lower for spices, seasonings, condiments, sauces, among others, while prices were higher for breakfast cereal and citrus fruits.

Food prices increased 1.4 percent over the year. Prices were higher for food away from home (5.5 percent), while they decreased for food at home (-2.6 percent) since May 2020. The decline in food at home prices followed 15 months when the 12-month increase ranged from 1.9 to 4.3 percent; the rate of increase slowed in April to 0.7 percent.

Energy

Since March, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 4.4 percent, due mostly to higher prices for gasoline (6.5 percent). Prices were also higher for utility (piped) gas (7.9 percent), while those for electricity were lower (-0.6 percent) over the past 2 months.

Energy prices jumped 24.1 percent since May 2020, the largest 12-month increase since 2008. The rise was due almost entirely to sharply higher gasoline prices, up 51.7 percent, the highest such increase since 2010. Over the year, prices also increased for utility (piped) gas service, up 17.7 percent, while those for electricity decreased, down 2.7 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy rose 1.2 percent since March. The advance was led by strongly higher prices for new and used motor vehicles (9.9 percent), dominated by sharply higher prices for used cars and trucks (17.0 percent) which accounted for a third of the all items increase over the last 2 months. Prices were also higher for apparel (5.9 percent), while they were lower for shelter (-0.4 percent), led by owners' equivalent rent of residences (-0.7 percent).

Since May 2020, the index for all items less food and energy rose 3.2 percent. Prices were higher for new and used motor vehicles (15.8 percent), due mostly to prices for used cars and trucks (29.6 percent). Prices also increased for shelter (0.9 percent) since May 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	1.3	3.8
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 July 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on May 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 May 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	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	May 2021	May 2020	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021
All items.....		272.347		275.822	3.8	1.3	
Food and beverages		264.450		265.739	1.2	0.5	
Food		271.408		272.558	1.4	0.4	
Food at home		254.400	255.311	251.776	-2.6	-1.0	-1.4
Cereals and bakery products		326.575		321.989	-3.0	-1.4	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		281.438		281.234	-2.5	-0.1	
Dairy and related products		247.690		246.835	-0.6	-0.3	
Fruits and vegetables		263.387		263.719	-3.9	0.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		223.093		218.427	-5.4	-2.1	
Other food at home		212.571		207.585	-1.0	-2.3	
Food away from home.....		293.428		298.792	5.5	1.8	
Alcoholic beverages		198.978		201.312	-1.6	1.2	
Housing		286.593		286.413	1.6	-0.1	
Shelter		344.838	345.045	343.512	0.9	-0.4	-0.4
Rent of primary residence		378.241	377.523	376.500	0.1	-0.5	-0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		353.312	353.587	350.763	1.0	-0.7	-0.8
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		353.312	353.587	350.763	1.0	-0.7	-0.8
Fuels and utilities.....		239.775		244.459	3.6	2.0	
Household energy		184.206	188.753	188.426	3.4	2.3	-0.2
Energy services.....		188.925	193.171	192.824	3.3	2.1	-0.2
Electricity		202.504	202.658	201.235	-2.7	-0.6	-0.7
Utility (piped) gas service		151.312	161.833	163.258	17.7	7.9	0.9
Household furnishings and operations		114.416		115.467	5.8	0.9	
Apparel		148.062		156.839	7.6	5.9	
Transportation		216.225		230.898	15.7	6.8	
Private transportation		221.983		235.825	17.4	6.2	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		97.749		107.464	15.8	9.9	
New vehicles(1).....		193.573		203.406	5.0	5.1	
Used cars and trucks(1)		329.104		384.967	29.6	17.0	
Motor fuel		264.353	267.452	281.278	51.2	6.4	5.2
Gasoline (all types).....		261.379	264.591	278.360	51.7	6.5	5.2
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		255.369	258.338	271.977	53.3	6.5	5.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		267.615	271.413	284.637	44.8	6.4	4.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		278.163	282.852	296.172	41.4	6.5	4.7
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		808.251		822.360	14.8	1.7	
Medical care		498.579		497.740	0.7	-0.2	
Recreation(3).....		117.865		118.127	1.3	0.2	
Education and communication(3).....		156.718		157.126	2.5	0.3	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,441.837		1,447.953	2.8	0.4	
Other goods and services		441.963		442.296	4.9	0.1	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		185.673		191.232	6.9	3.0	

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	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	May 2021	May 2020	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021
Commodities less food and beverages		146.153		153.658	12.1	5.1	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		193.569		200.086	13.3	3.4	
Durables		102.270		109.578	10.8	7.1	
Services		350.993		351.853	2.0	0.2	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		243.173		248.215	5.2	2.1	
All items less medical care		261.660		265.336	4.1	1.4	
Commodities less food		148.570		155.798	11.1	4.9	
Nondurables		228.204		231.839	5.6	1.6	
Nondurables less food		193.721		199.732	11.3	3.1	
Services less rent of shelter(2)		369.630		373.014	3.2	0.9	
Services less medical care services		335.854		336.999	2.1	0.3	
Energy		223.130	227.141	232.988	24.1	4.4	2.6
All items less energy		279.685		282.789	2.9	1.1	
All items less food and energy		282.341		285.861	3.2	1.2	

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.