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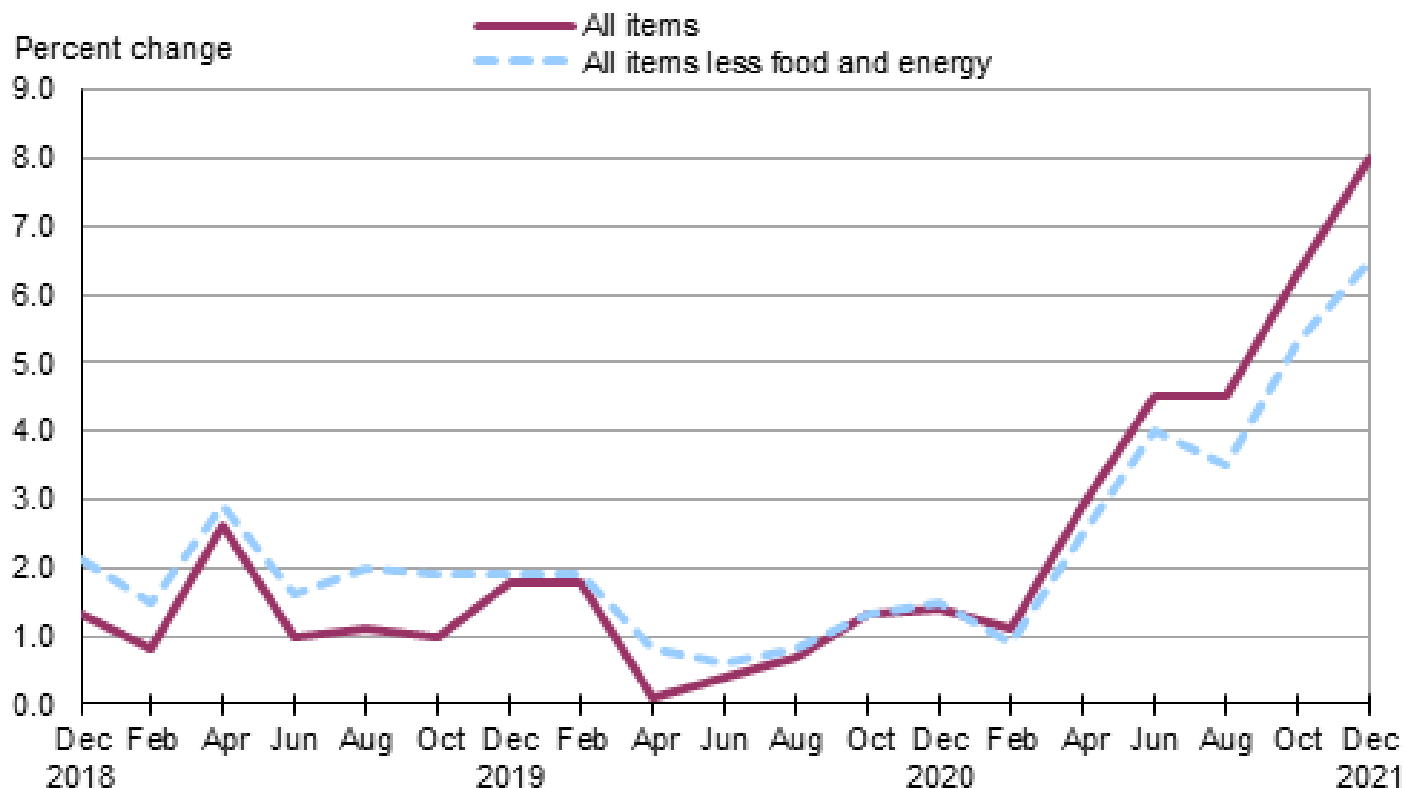
Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – December 2021

Area prices were up 1.8 percent over the past two months, up 8.0 percent from a year ago

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 1.8 percent for the 2 months ending in December 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Alexandra Hall Bovee noted that the December increase was mostly due to higher prices for all items less food and energy, up 1.5 percent; both the overall index and the all items less food and energy index increased less than they did in October when both were up 2.3 percent. The food index and the energy index also rose since October, up 4.2 and 1.2 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 8.0 percent, the largest over-the-year increase since November 1981. The over-the-year rise was mostly due to a 6.5-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index, the highest in the 28 year history of the series. The energy index and the food index also rose over the year, up 26.1 and 9.1 percent, respectively. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index rose 4.2 percent from October to December, reflecting the highest increase for food away from home since the series began in 1998 (6.3 percent). Food at home prices also rose (2.3 percent). Within the food at home component, higher prices for fruits and vegetables (6.7 percent) and the other food at home index (3.2 percent) led the general increase offset slightly by a 0.6 percent drop in nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials prices.

Over the year, the food index increased 9.1 percent, the largest 12-month rise in the series which began in 1999. Prices rose for both food away from home (9.6 percent) – again, a series high, and for food at home (8.6 percent) – the fastest 12-month increase since 2008. Within the food at home category, the meats, poultry, fish, and eggs index accounted for just under half of the increase and the 17.9 percent rise was the largest since that series began in 2018.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 1.2 percent since October, led by higher prices for gasoline (1.5 percent) although that index moderated since posting a 7.2 percent rise in October. Prices for electricity rose over the past two months by 1.4 percent, while utility (piped) gas service prices declined 2.1 percent

Over the year, the energy index increased 26.1 percent largely due to higher prices for gasoline (42.2 percent). Prices paid for utility (piped) gas service increased 11.7 percent – well below the 24.0 percent over-the-year increase in October, and prices for electricity advanced 9.9 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy rose 1.5 percent from October to December led by higher prices for new and used motor vehicles (8.2 percent) which also saw a slower rate of increase since October. New vehicles accounted for a third of the overall increase in the local CPI since October, up 9.6 percent well below the 19.3 percent increase in October, while prices for used cars and trucks increased 6.1 percent after two periods of decline. Higher prices for medical care (1.4 percent) and household furnishings and operations (3.0 percent), among other components, were partially offset by lower prices for apparel (-3.3 percent) and shelter (-0.1 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 6.5 percent. Components contributing to the increase included new and used motor vehicles, its 35.4 percent increase due to 12-month increases for new vehicles (35.0 percent) and used cars and trucks (38.1 percent). Shelter also increased, up 3.0 percent over-the-year. Partly offsetting the increases was a price decrease in medical care (-0.5 percent), the smallest of five consecutive 12-month declines.

The Consumer Price Index for February 2022 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, March 10, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on December 2021 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended almost entirely since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in December 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.

For each month from March 2020 to December 2021, BLS has published a summary of the impact of the pandemic on the Consumer Price Index news release and data. The impact summary for December is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/consumer-price-index-covid19-impacts-december-2021.htm. Beginning with publication of January 2022 data in February 2022, this month-specific impact summary will be discontinued. However, information related to the impact of the pandemic will continue to be 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 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 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 **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.














Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

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	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021	Dec. 2021	Dec. 2020	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
All items.....		277.415		282.455	8.0	1.8	
Food and beverages		283.694		295.121	8.6	4.0	
Food		283.289		295.268	9.1	4.2	
Food at home		253.826	258.700	259.556	8.6	2.3	0.3
Cereals and bakery products		308.227		311.596	7.1	1.1	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		274.425		275.278	17.9	0.3	
Dairy and related products		246.747		250.419	5.3	1.5	
Fruits and vegetables		291.787		311.205	7.2	6.7	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		178.533		177.378	0.0	-0.6	
Other food at home		222.609		229.796	6.8	3.2	
Food away from home.....		326.820		347.388	9.6	6.3	
Alcoholic beverages		286.410		289.370	1.3	1.0	
Housing(1).....		275.018		275.692	3.9	0.2	
Shelter		324.719	325.182	324.395	3.0	-0.1	-0.2
Rent of primary residence		372.229	372.659	372.159	1.7	0.0	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		343.116	343.800	343.442	2.8	0.1	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		343.116	343.800	343.442	2.8	0.1	-0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		245.667		247.170	10.1	0.6	
Household energy		214.046	215.983	215.690	11.1	0.8	-0.1
Energy services.....		228.467	229.186	230.171	10.2	0.7	0.4
Electricity		207.652	210.734	210.503	9.9	1.4	-0.1
Utility (piped) gas service		236.952	224.975	231.899	11.7	-2.1	3.1
Household furnishings and operations		126.651		130.417	6.9	3.0	
Apparel		128.220		124.046	2.4	-3.3	
Transportation		245.838		259.072	29.6	5.4	
Private transportation		252.124		266.229	31.3	5.6	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		126.322		136.715	35.4	8.2	
New vehicles(1).....		246.152		269.897	35.0	9.6	
Used cars and trucks(1)		340.711		361.331	38.1	6.1	
Motor fuel		284.236	292.598	288.458	42.0	1.5	-1.4
Gasoline (all types).....		278.354	286.548	282.442	42.2	1.5	-1.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		282.417	290.804	286.455	43.8	1.4	-1.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		294.749	303.988	300.808	29.6	2.1	-1.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		279.777	287.348	284.443	32.0	1.7	-1.0
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		752.593		783.828	4.8	4.2	
Medical care		470.792		477.430	-0.5	1.4	
Recreation		131.316		132.411	3.0	0.8	
Education and communication(3).....		159.560		160.542	3.7	0.6	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,320.520		1,320.520	4.1	0.0	
Other goods and services		461.303		476.243	6.4	3.2	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		207.615		216.312	16.3	4.2	
Commodities less food and beverages		171.237		178.566	21.2	4.3	

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	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021	Dec. 2021	Dec. 2020	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
Nondurables less food and beverages...		211.238		213.703	14.3	1.2	
Durables		124.413		132.931	27.1	6.8	
Services.....		345.329		346.740	3.4	0.4	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		260.162		267.552	10.8	2.8	
All items less medical care		267.826		272.792	8.8	1.9	
Commodities less food		174.965		182.258	20.4	4.2	
Nondurables		244.440		251.185	11.0	2.8	
Nondurables less food.....		215.434		217.927	13.2	1.2	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		381.886		385.831	4.0	1.0	
Services less medical care services.....		332.741		333.508	3.9	0.2	
Energy(1).....		253.098	258.199	256.032	26.1	1.2	-0.8
All items less energy		281.170		286.414	6.9	1.9	
All items less food and energy		280.714		284.908	6.5	1.5	

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.