



For Release: Tuesday, May 12, 2020

20-930-KAN

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Consumer Price Index, St. Louis area – April 2020

Area prices were down 1.6 percent over the past two months, down 0.6 percent from a year ago

Prices in the St. Louis area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), declined 1.6 percent for the two months ending in April 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Acting Regional Commissioner Susan Mendez noted that the April decrease was most strongly influenced by lower prices for all items less food and energy, as well as lower costs for energy. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U declined 0.6 percent. (See [chart 1](#).) Energy prices fell 17.1 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. Food prices rose 3.4 percent. The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.4 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, St. Louis, MO-IL, December 2018–April 2020

Percent change



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices declined 1.0 percent for the two months ending in April. (See [table 1](#).) Prices for food away from home declined 5.0 percent, and prices for food at home rose 2.1 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices increased 3.4 percent. The advance was entirely the result of an 8.8-percent increase in prices for food at home.

Energy

The energy index decreased 8.7 percent for the two months ending in April. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-17.0 percent). Also contributing, prices for electricity decreased 1.0 percent, and prices for natural gas service decreased 1.2 percent for the same period.

Energy prices fell 17.1 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-31.4 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service declined 2.4 percent, while prices for electricity increased 1.6 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy decreased 1.1 percent in the latest two-month period. Lower prices for apparel (-15.0 percent) and motor vehicle insurance (-17.3 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for medical care (0.6 percent) and used cars and trucks (1.6 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.4 percent. Components contributing to the increase included owners' equivalent rent of primary residences (2.2 percent), education and communication (4.7 percent) and medical care (2.5 percent). Partly offsetting these increases were price decreases in apparel (-14.2 percent) and motor vehicle insurance (-14.6 percent).

The June 2020 Consumer Price Index for the St. Louis area is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, July 14, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact on April 2020 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/bls/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-bls-price-indexes.htm#CPI.

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 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 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 (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 St. Louis, MO-IL, area covered in this release includes Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois; and Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis, and Warren counties and St. Louis City in Missouri.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals 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, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
All items.....	233.374	-	229.592	-0.6	-1.6	-
All items (1967 = 100).....	693.160	-	681.925			
Food and beverages.....	265.988	-	264.441	4.2	-0.6	-
Food.....	265.101	-	262.473	3.4	-1.0	-
Food at home.....	242.327	236.424	247.438	8.8	2.1	4.7
Cereals and bakery products.....	214.984	-	222.120	9.2	3.3	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	246.491	-	261.249	7.4	6.0	-
Dairy and related products.....	166.582	-	176.989	14.6	6.2	-
Fruits and vegetables.....	417.382	-	391.707	9.9	-6.2	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1).....	176.962	-	174.294	1.8	-1.5	-
Other food at home.....	231.729	-	241.424	9.3	4.2	-
Food away from home.....	302.987	-	287.825	-	-5.0	-
Alcoholic beverages.....	246.624	-	256.318	13.3	3.9	-
Housing.....	226.719	-	225.619	0.4	-0.5	-
Shelter.....	269.899	269.282	268.293	0.0	-0.6	-0.4
Rent of primary residence.....	250.824	250.200	250.669	2.7	-0.1	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)....	283.438	283.905	284.974	2.2	0.5	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2).....	283.438	283.905	284.974	2.2	0.5	0.4
Fuels and utilities.....	210.124	-	208.530	1.4	-0.8	-
Household energy.....	177.987	178.165	176.061	0.2	-1.1	-1.2
Energy services.....	179.656	179.875	177.774	0.3	-1.0	-1.2
Electricity.....	178.600	179.048	176.863	1.6	-1.0	-1.2
Utility (piped) gas service.....	149.206	148.978	147.405	-2.4	-1.2	-1.1
Household furnishings and operations.....	120.798	-	121.305	1.5	0.4	-
Apparel.....	145.097	-	123.294	-14.2	-15.0	-
Transportation.....	187.695	-	176.382	-9.6	-6.0	-
Private transportation.....	188.592	-	179.177	-8.7	-5.0	-
New and used motor vehicles(3).....	90.738	-	91.069	-2.2	0.4	-
New vehicles(1).....	205.358	-	205.777	1.1	0.2	-
Used cars and trucks(1).....	294.795	-	299.633	-0.8	1.6	-
Motor fuel.....	207.964	202.373	172.780	-31.1	-16.9	-14.6
Gasoline (all types).....	204.174	198.836	169.365	-31.4	-17.0	-14.8
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....	195.654	190.299	161.538	-31.9	-17.4	-15.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)....	247.706	241.967	212.506	-27.5	-14.2	-12.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....	218.096	215.386	187.281	-26.9	-14.1	-13.0
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....	597.363	-	493.801	-14.6	-17.3	-
Medical care.....	468.442	-	471.090	2.5	0.6	-
Recreation(3).....	120.146	-	120.785	3.9	0.5	-
Education and communication(3).....	142.980	-	141.713	4.7	-0.9	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,259.675	-	1,259.675	-	0.0	-
Other goods and services.....	333.447	-	335.859	-	0.7	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities.....	187.961	-	182.983	-2.6	-2.6	-
Commodities less food and beverages.....	150.190	-	144.309	-6.6	-3.9	-
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	204.869	-	189.765	-12.0	-7.4	-
Durables.....	100.972	-	100.573	0.0	-0.4	-
Services.....	280.129	-	277.324	0.7	-1.0	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter.....	222.703	-	218.064	-0.8	-2.1	-
All items less medical care.....	221.588	-	217.520	-0.9	-1.8	-
Commodities less food.....	154.192	-	148.742	-5.8	-3.5	-

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, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
Nondurables	235.624	-	227.032	-3.6	-3.6	-
Nondurables less food.....	208.925	-	195.692	-10.1	-6.3	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	298.293	-	294.159	1.4	-1.4	-
Services less medical care services.....	262.571	-	259.374	0.3	-1.2	-
Energy	192.487	190.107	175.794	-17.1	-8.7	-7.5
All items less energy	240.349	-	237.658	0.8	-1.1	-
All items less food and energy	236.303	-	233.609	0.4	-1.1	-

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on an 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) Index on a December 1993=100.
- Data not available.