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Consumer Price Index, Phoenix area – April 2020

Area prices were down 1.4 percent over the past two months, up 1.5 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Phoenix area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), declined 1.4 percent for the two months ending in April 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the April decrease was influenced by lower prices for gasoline and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.5 percent. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.4 percent over the year. Food prices rose 4.0 percent. Energy prices fell 13.5 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices advanced 2.1 percent for the two months ending in April. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home rose 4.2 percent, while prices for food away from home were unchanged for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 4.0 percent. Prices for food at home advanced 5.8 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home increased 2.4 percent.

Energy

The energy index fell 11.3 percent for the two months ending in April. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-21.0 percent). Prices for electricity were unchanged, while prices for natural gas service increased 6.3 percent for the same period.

Energy prices fell 13.5 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-23.4 percent). Prices for electricity decreased 2.6 percent, but prices paid for natural gas service advanced 2.9 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 (-11.2 percent), household furnishings and operations (-1.8 percent), and recreation (-1.7 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for other goods and services (0.9 percent) and shelter (0.7 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.4 percent. Components contributing to the increase included shelter (5.2 percent), other goods and services (4.2 percent), and education and communication (1.0 percent). Partly offsetting the increases was a price decrease in apparel (-11.3 percent) and used cars and trucks (-0.9 percent).

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic 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 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 28 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 87 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 24,000 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/homch17_a.htm.

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 Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale metropolitan area covered in this release consists of Maricopa and Pinal Counties in the State of Arizona.

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 Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale (December 2001=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
Expenditure category						
All items	145.746	-	143.734	1.5	-1.4	-
Food and beverages	150.831	-	154.298	4.1	2.3	-
Food	152.172	-	155.382	4.0	2.1	-
Food at home	146.696	148.278	152.830	5.8	4.2	3.1
Cereals and bakery products	189.991	-	194.110	4.6	2.2	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	180.569	-	191.344	3.5	6.0	-
Dairy and related products	115.684	-	122.517	17.7	5.9	-
Fruits and vegetables	128.623	-	133.007	3.2	3.4	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials.....	109.040	-	116.769	8.2	7.1	-
Other food at home	143.844	-	147.569	5.6	2.6	-
Food away from home.....	161.092	-	161.139	2.4	0.0	-
Alcoholic beverages	138.534	-	145.653	6.0	5.1	-
Housing	151.030	-	151.552	4.1	0.3	-
Shelter	158.989	159.315	160.080	5.2	0.7	0.5
Rent of primary residence	168.952	170.596	171.397	7.7	1.4	0.5
Owners' equiv. rent of residences	157.374	157.663	158.604	5.3	0.8	0.6
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence	157.374	157.663	158.604	5.3	0.8	0.6
Fuels and utilities.....	153.161	-	153.727	-1.3	0.4	-
Household energy	150.162	150.129	150.961	-2.0	0.5	0.6
Energy services.....	149.829	149.826	150.714	-2.0	0.6	0.6
Electricity	159.930	159.930	159.960	-2.6	0.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	97.514	97.495	103.611	2.9	6.3	6.3
Household furnishings and operations.....	100.854	-	99.034	0.4	-1.8	-
Apparel	137.738	-	122.352	-11.3	-11.2	-
Transportation	130.932	-	119.276	-8.5	-8.9	-
Private transportation	133.305	-	121.806	-7.7	-8.6	-
New and used motor vehicles	94.088	-	-	-	-	-
New vehicles	97.070	-	-	-	-	-
Used cars and trucks.....	84.526	-	85.418	-0.9	1.1	-
Motor fuel	244.273	229.806	193.452	-23.2	-20.8	-15.8
Gasoline (all types).....	244.723	230.122	193.309	-23.4	-21.0	-16.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular(1).....	245.490	230.244	192.376	-24.1	-21.6	-16.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(1).....	254.526	245.267	210.479	-20.6	-17.3	-14.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium(1).....	244.744	232.466	200.530	-20.1	-18.1	-13.7
Motor vehicle insurance	-	-	124.569	-26.3	-	-
Medical care	196.321	-	-	-	-	-
Recreation	118.828	-	116.832	0.1	-1.7	-
Education and communication	116.890	-	116.867	1.0	0.0	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care.....	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	150.170	-	151.567	4.2	0.9	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	145.746	-	143.734	1.5	-1.4	-
Commodities	125.908	-	122.985	-0.5	-2.3	-
Commodities less food & beverages.....	113.008	-	107.528	-3.1	-4.8	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	152.702	-	141.058	-5.8	-7.6	-
Durables	79.835	-	78.536	0.1	-1.6	-
Services.....	159.391	-	158.083	2.6	-0.8	-
Special aggregate indexes						

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 Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale (December 2001=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
All items less medical care	142.672	-	140.543	0.8	-1.5	-
All items less shelter.....	138.743	-	135.351	-0.5	-2.4	-
Commodities less food	114.018	-	108.865	-2.7	-4.5	-
Nondurables	152.037	-	148.057	-0.8	-2.6	-
Nondurables less food.....	151.566	-	141.162	-5.0	-6.9	-
Services less rent of shelter	159.205	-	155.096	-0.6	-2.6	-
Services less medical care services.....	155.868	-	154.527	2.3	-0.9	-
Energy	194.789	188.368	172.760	-13.5	-11.3	-8.3
All items less energy	142.913	-	141.929	2.6	-0.7	-
All items less food and energy	141.409	-	139.832	2.4	-1.1	-

Footnotes

(1) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

- Data not available

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.