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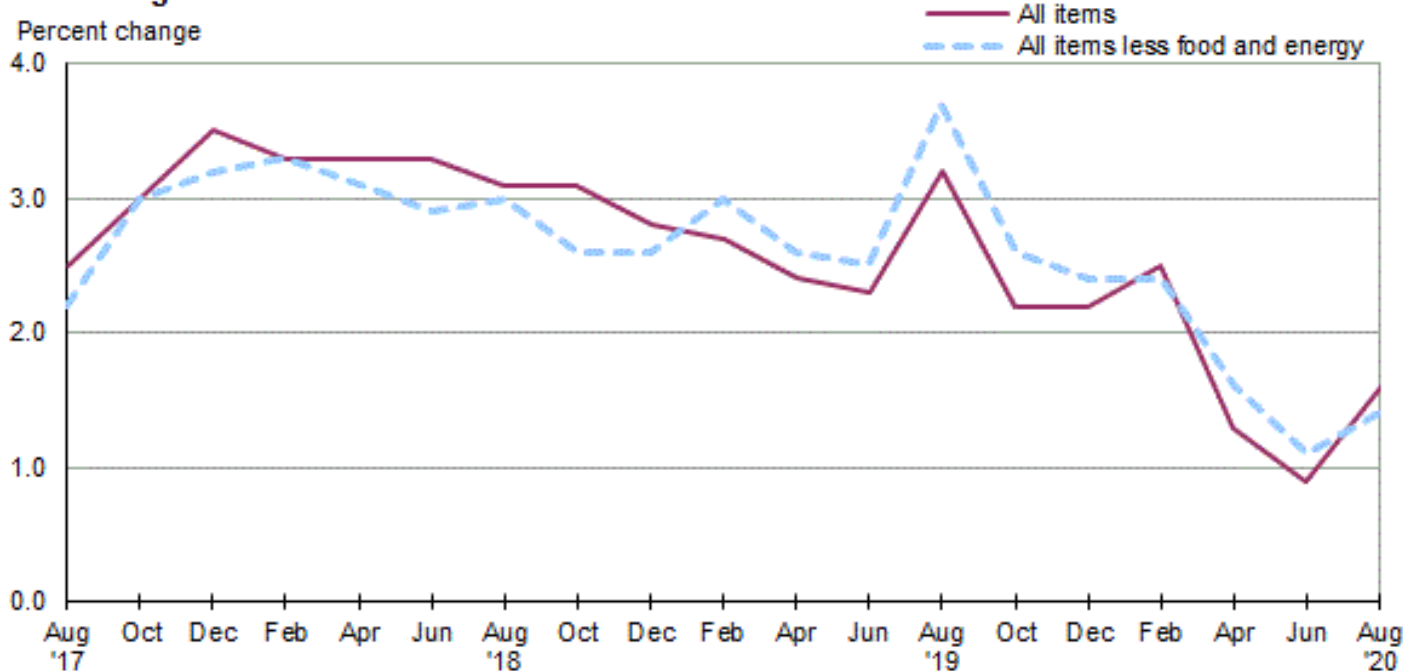
Consumer Price Index, Seattle area — August 2020

Area prices were up 1.4 percent over the past two months, up 1.6 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Seattle area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), increased 1.4 percent for the two months ending in August 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See [table A](#).) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the August increase was influenced by higher prices for shelter and household furnishings and operations. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.6 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.4 percent over the year. Food prices rose 5.6 percent. Energy prices decreased 6.6 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, August 2017–August 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices advanced 0.8 percent for the two months ending in August. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food away from home advanced 2.5 percent, but prices for food at home declined 0.5 percent for the same period, led by declines in other food at home (-2.7 percent), and meat poultry, fish and eggs (-2.5 percent).

Over the year, food prices rose 5.6 percent. Prices for food at home increased 6.1 percent since a year ago, largely due to increases in nonalcoholic beverages (21.9 percent) and dairy and related products (9.6 percent). Prices for food away from home moved up 5.1 percent.

Energy

The energy index advanced 4.6 percent for the two months ending in August. The increase was mainly due to higher prices for gasoline (8.3 percent). Prices for electricity rose 0.5 percent, while prices for natural gas service were unchanged for the same period.

Energy prices decreased 6.6 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-13.2 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service increased 9.0 percent, and prices for electricity rose 2.5 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.3 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for household furnishings and operations (6.6 percent), apparel (4.3 percent), education and communication (3.1 percent), and shelter (0.8 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for motor vehicle insurance (-15.0 percent) and new vehicles (-2.6 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.4 percent. Components contributing to the increase included medical care (2.9 percent), household furnishings and operations (2.5 percent), and shelter (2.3 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were price decreases in motor vehicle insurance (-15.0 percent) and apparel (-0.1 percent).

Table A. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

| Month | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | |
|----------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| | 2-month | 12-month | 2-month | 12-month | 2-month | 12-month | 2-month | 12-month | 2-month | 12-month |
| February | 0.2 | 2.2 | 1.0 | 3.4 | 0.8 | 3.3 | 0.7 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 2.5 |
| April | 1.1 | 2.5 | 0.8 | 3.1 | 0.8 | 3.3 | 0.5 | 2.4 | -0.6 | 1.3 |
| June | 0.9 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 3.0 | 0.8 | 3.3 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 0.2 | 0.9 |
| August | 0.3 | 2.1 | -0.2 | 2.5 | -0.3 | 3.1 | 0.6 | 3.2 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| October | 0.0 | 2.4 | 0.5 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 3.1 | -0.6 | 2.2 | | |
| December | 0.0 | 2.6 | 0.5 | 3.5 | 0.2 | 2.8 | 0.3 | 2.2 | | |

The October 2020 Consumer Price Index for the Seattle area is scheduled to be released on November 12, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on August 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 August 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 <https://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 94 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 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 (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 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA. metropolitan area covered in this release is comprised of King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties in the State of Washington.

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 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

| Item and Group | Indexes | | | Percent change from- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Jun. 2020 | Jul. 2020 | Aug. 2020 | Aug. 2019 | Jun. 2020 | Jul. 2020 |
| Expenditure category | | | | | | |
| All items | 281.055 | - | 284.905 | 1.6 | 1.4 | - |
| All items (1967=100) | 856.764 | - | 868.501 | - | - | - |
| Food and beverages | 288.774 | - | 292.042 | 5.6 | 1.1 | - |
| Food | 292.237 | - | 294.709 | 5.6 | 0.8 | - |
| Food at home | 270.013 | 263.639 | 268.667 | 6.1 | -0.5 | 1.9 |
| Cereals and bakery products | 303.237 | - | 307.461 | 0.1 | 1.4 | - |
| Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs | 240.243 | - | 234.233 | 7.2 | -2.5 | - |
| Dairy and related products | 239.761 | - | 238.216 | 9.6 | -0.6 | - |
| Fruits and vegetables | 412.102 | - | 424.333 | 6.6 | 3.0 | - |
| Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) | 337.909 | - | 340.918 | 21.9 | 0.9 | - |
| Other food at home | 222.317 | - | 216.328 | 1.1 | -2.7 | - |
| Food away from home | 326.729 | - | 334.748 | 5.1 | 2.5 | - |
| Alcoholic beverages | 250.088 | - | 260.154 | 5.3 | 4.0 | - |
| Housing | 339.670 | - | 344.681 | 2.8 | 1.5 | - |
| Shelter | 391.737 | 393.422 | 394.928 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Rent of primary residence(2) | 403.095 | 403.802 | 405.128 | 4.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)(3) | 414.385 | 415.096 | 416.381 | 3.1 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(1)(2) | 414.385 | 415.096 | 416.381 | 3.1 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Fuels and utilities | 279.628 | - | 280.715 | 3.6 | 0.4 | - |
| Household energy | 248.339 | 249.479 | 249.523 | 3.5 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Energy services(2) | 293.960 | 295.177 | 295.177 | 3.3 | 0.4 | 0.0 |
| Electricity(2) | 324.170 | 325.912 | 325.912 | 2.5 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Utility (piped) gas service(2) | 162.430 | 162.430 | 162.430 | 9.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Household furnishings and operations | 182.133 | - | 194.222 | 2.5 | 6.6 | - |
| Apparel | 123.056 | - | 128.329 | -0.1 | 4.3 | - |
| Transportation | 209.356 | - | 211.664 | -5.6 | 1.1 | - |
| Private transportation | 221.685 | - | 226.709 | -4.3 | 2.3 | - |
| New and used motor vehicles(4) | 97.548 | - | 101.211 | 2.4 | 3.8 | - |
| New vehicles(1) | 196.819 | - | 191.728 | -0.5 | -2.6 | - |
| Used cars and trucks(1) | 312.760 | - | 340.290 | 2.8 | 8.8 | - |
| Motor fuel | 287.264 | 305.655 | 310.729 | -13.3 | 8.2 | 1.7 |
| Gasoline (all types) | 292.956 | 311.991 | 317.406 | -13.2 | 8.3 | 1.7 |
| Gasoline, unleaded regular(4) | 315.504 | 335.525 | 342.199 | -13.6 | 8.5 | 2.0 |
| Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5) | 241.537 | 255.695 | 259.123 | -11.2 | 7.3 | 1.3 |
| Gasoline, unleaded premium(4) | 277.016 | 297.075 | 299.174 | -12.0 | 8.0 | 0.7 |
| Motor vehicle insurance(1) | 576.371 | - | 489.915 | -15.0 | -15.0 | - |
| Medical care | 416.143 | - | 418.634 | 2.9 | 0.6 | - |
| Recreation(6) | 97.752 | - | 97.927 | 0.6 | 0.2 | - |
| Education and communication(6) | 139.880 | - | 144.233 | 1.4 | 3.1 | - |
| Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) .. | 1,686.953 | - | 1,707.536 | 1.6 | 1.2 | - |
| Other goods and services | 418.547 | - | 416.271 | 0.4 | -0.5 | - |
| Commodity and service group | | | | | | |
| All items | 281.055 | - | 284.905 | 1.6 | 1.4 | - |
| Commodities | 195.331 | - | 200.506 | 2.0 | 2.6 | - |
| Commodities less food & beverages | 150.599 | - | 156.557 | -0.5 | 4.0 | - |
| Nondurables less food & beverages | 180.075 | - | 185.465 | -3.6 | 3.0 | - |
| Durables | 120.119 | - | 126.209 | 2.9 | 5.1 | - |
| Services | 361.176 | - | 363.536 | 1.4 | 0.7 | - |

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 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

| Item and Group | Indexes | | | Percent change from- | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Jun. 2020 | Jul. 2020 | Aug. 2020 | Aug. 2019 | Jun. 2020 | Jul. 2020 |
| Special aggregate indexes | | | | | | |
| All items less medical care | 274.986 | - | 278.909 | 1.6 | 1.4 | - |
| All items less shelter..... | 238.818 | - | 242.844 | 1.3 | 1.7 | - |
| Commodities less food | 154.580 | - | 160.703 | -0.2 | 4.0 | - |
| Nondurables | 232.530 | - | 236.822 | 1.8 | 1.8 | - |
| Nondurables less food..... | 185.961 | - | 191.769 | -2.6 | 3.1 | - |
| Services less rent of shelter(3)..... | 332.998 | - | 334.463 | 0.3 | 0.4 | - |
| Services less medical care services..... | 353.244 | - | 355.545 | 1.1 | 0.7 | - |
| Energy | 274.040 | 284.056 | 286.682 | -6.6 | 4.6 | 0.9 |
| All items less energy | 284.092 | - | 287.576 | 2.1 | 1.2 | - |
| All items less food and energy | 282.867 | - | 286.538 | 1.4 | 1.3 | - |

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a November 1977=100 base.

(2) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(3) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

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

(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(6) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available

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