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WESTERN INFORMATION OFFICE: San Francisco, Calif.
Technical information: (415) 625-2270 BLSinfoSF@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/west
Media contact: (415) 625-2270

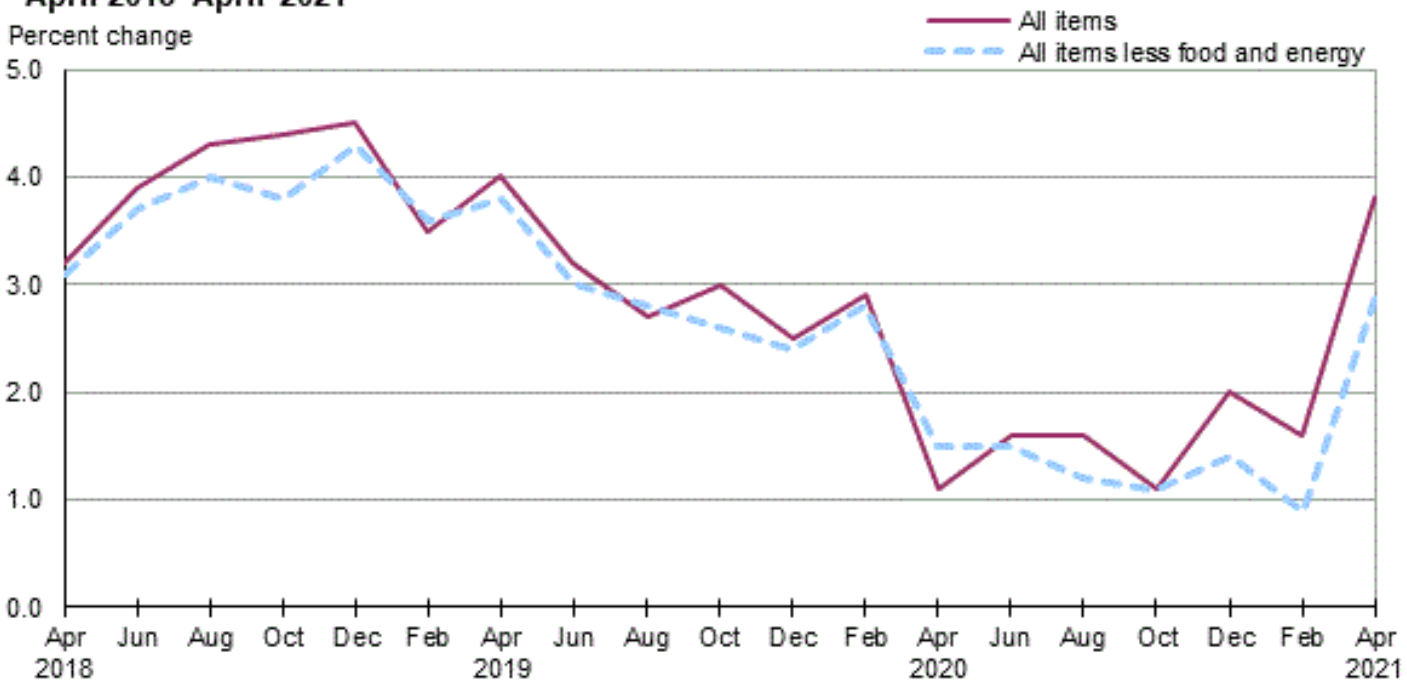
Consumer Price Index, San Francisco Area — April 2021

Area prices were up 1.7 percent over the past two months, up 3.8 percent from a year ago

Prices in the San Francisco area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), advanced 1.7 percent for the two months ending in April 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See table A.) Regional Commissioner Chris Rosenlund noted that the April increase was influenced by higher prices for shelter and gasoline. (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 increased 3.8 percent. (See chart 1 and table A.) Food prices increased 3.4 percent. Energy prices jumped 23.4 percent, largely the result of an increase in the price of gasoline. The index for all items less food and energy rose 2.9 percent over the year. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA, April 2018–April 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices inched up 0.1 percent for the two months ending in April. (See table 1.) Prices for food away from home edged up 0.1 percent, while prices for food at home were unchanged for the same period.

Over the year, food prices increased 3.4 percent. Prices for food away from home increased 5.8 percent. Prices for food at home rose 1.2 percent since a year ago, largely due to a price rise in fruits and vegetables (5.3 percent) and meat, poultry, fish, and eggs (4.8 percent).

Energy

The energy index rose 9.9 percent for the two months ending in April. The increase was mainly due to higher prices for gasoline (14.0 percent). Prices for electricity advanced 6.0 percent, and prices for natural gas service rose 5.6 percent for the same period.

Energy prices jumped 23.4 percent over the year, largely due to higher prices for gasoline (38.0 percent). Prices paid for electricity jumped 12.8 percent, and prices for natural gas service rose 4.5 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.4 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for used cars and trucks (11.8 percent), shelter (1.7 percent), and household furnishings and operations (1.4 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for recreation (-1.4 percent) and motor vehicle insurance (-1.3 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.9 percent. Components contributing to the increase included used cars and trucks (20.2 percent), household furnishings and operations (6.6 percent), and shelter (2.5 percent). Partly offsetting the increases was a price decrease in tuition, other school fees, and childcare (-1.2 percent).

Table A. San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA, 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
February	0.8	3.4	1.4	3.6	0.5	3.5	0.9	2.9	0.5	1.6
April	1.1	3.8	0.8	3.2	1.2	4.0	-0.5	1.1	1.7	3.8
June	0.3	3.5	0.9	3.9	0.2	3.2	0.7	1.6		
August	0.2	3.0	0.6	4.3	0.1	2.7	0.0	1.6		
October	0.6	2.7	0.7	4.4	1.0	3.0	0.5	1.1		
December	-0.1	2.9	0.1	4.5	-0.5	2.5	0.4	2.0		

The June 2021 Consumer Price Index for the San Francisco area is scheduled to be released on July 13, 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on April 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 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 https://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measures 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 San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA. metropolitan area covered in this release is comprised of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo Counties in the State of California.

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 San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	Apr. 2020	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021
Expenditure category						
All items	304.387	-	309.419	3.8	1.7	-
All items (1967=100)	935.771	-	951.239	-	-	-
Food and beverages	308.572	-	308.790	3.1	0.1	-
Food	308.589	-	308.788	3.4	0.1	-
Food at home	272.623	271.136	272.702	1.2	0.0	0.6
Cereals and bakery products	271.126	-	268.268	-1.2	-1.1	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	301.538	-	300.295	4.8	-0.4	-
Dairy and related products	278.438	-	286.643	0.0	2.9	-
Fruits and vegetables	371.388	-	368.829	5.3	-0.7	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	203.766	-	202.257	-6.0	-0.7	-
Other food at home	220.791	-	222.654	-0.7	0.8	-
Food away from home	349.922	-	350.276	5.8	0.1	-
Alcoholic beverages	311.778	-	312.228	-0.7	0.1	-
Housing	361.955	-	368.394	3.3	1.8	-
Shelter	409.850	411.202	416.798	2.5	1.7	1.4
Rent of primary residence(2)	468.807	468.231	467.758	0.3	-0.2	-0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)(3)	439.058	438.879	438.336	1.2	-0.2	-0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(1)(2)	439.058	438.879	438.336	1.2	-0.2	-0.1
Fuels and utilities	455.265	-	469.885	8.4	3.2	-
Household energy	395.975	409.316	419.376	11.3	5.9	2.5
Energy services(2)	397.337	410.870	420.836	11.1	5.9	2.4
Electricity(2)	428.380	444.009	454.073	12.8	6.0	2.3
Utility (piped) gas service(2)	319.675	327.293	337.454	4.5	5.6	3.1
Household furnishings and operations	154.126	-	156.336	6.6	1.4	-
Apparel	105.422	-	107.007	3.7	1.5	-
Transportation	204.673	-	216.498	11.4	5.8	-
Private transportation	203.631	-	213.824	13.7	5.0	-
New and used motor vehicles(4)	97.889	-	-	-	-	-
New vehicles(1)	161.204	-	-	-	-	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	269.617	-	301.321	20.2	11.8	-
Motor fuel	253.600	277.844	289.079	37.7	14.0	4.0
Gasoline (all types)	252.663	276.891	288.146	38.0	14.0	4.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	251.951	276.602	287.968	38.8	14.3	4.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	237.199	257.507	268.466	32.2	13.2	4.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	242.198	263.736	273.887	35.3	13.1	3.8
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	528.598	-	521.662	5.0	-1.3	-
Medical care	555.065	-	555.675	1.4	0.1	-
Recreation(6)	126.052	-	124.335	3.7	-1.4	-
Education and communication(6)	150.882	-	152.099	0.3	0.8	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)	1,815.339	-	1,819.305	-1.2	0.2	-
Other goods and services	524.717	-	535.942	4.8	2.1	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	304.387	-	309.419	3.8	1.7	-
Commodities	199.185	-	202.736	5.5	1.8	-
Commodities less food & beverages	141.375	-	146.358	7.9	3.5	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	184.904	-	194.869	11.9	5.4	-
Durables	98.949	-	-	-	-	-
Services	392.055	-	398.340	3.2	1.6	-

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 San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	Apr. 2020	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	294.117	-	299.283	4.0	1.8	-
All items less shelter	260.943	-	265.166	4.9	1.6	-
Commodities less food	148.669	-	153.548	7.3	3.3	-
Nondurables	248.289	-	253.206	6.2	2.0	-
Nondurables less food	194.803	-	204.083	10.3	4.8	-
Services less rent of shelter(3)	387.224	-	392.789	4.2	1.4	-
Services less medical care services	380.732	-	387.364	3.2	1.7	-
Energy	311.817	331.861	342.694	23.4	9.9	3.3
All items less energy	307.721	-	311.595	3.0	1.3	-
All items less food and energy	308.432	-	312.894	2.9	1.4	-

Footnotes
(1) Indexes on a December 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.