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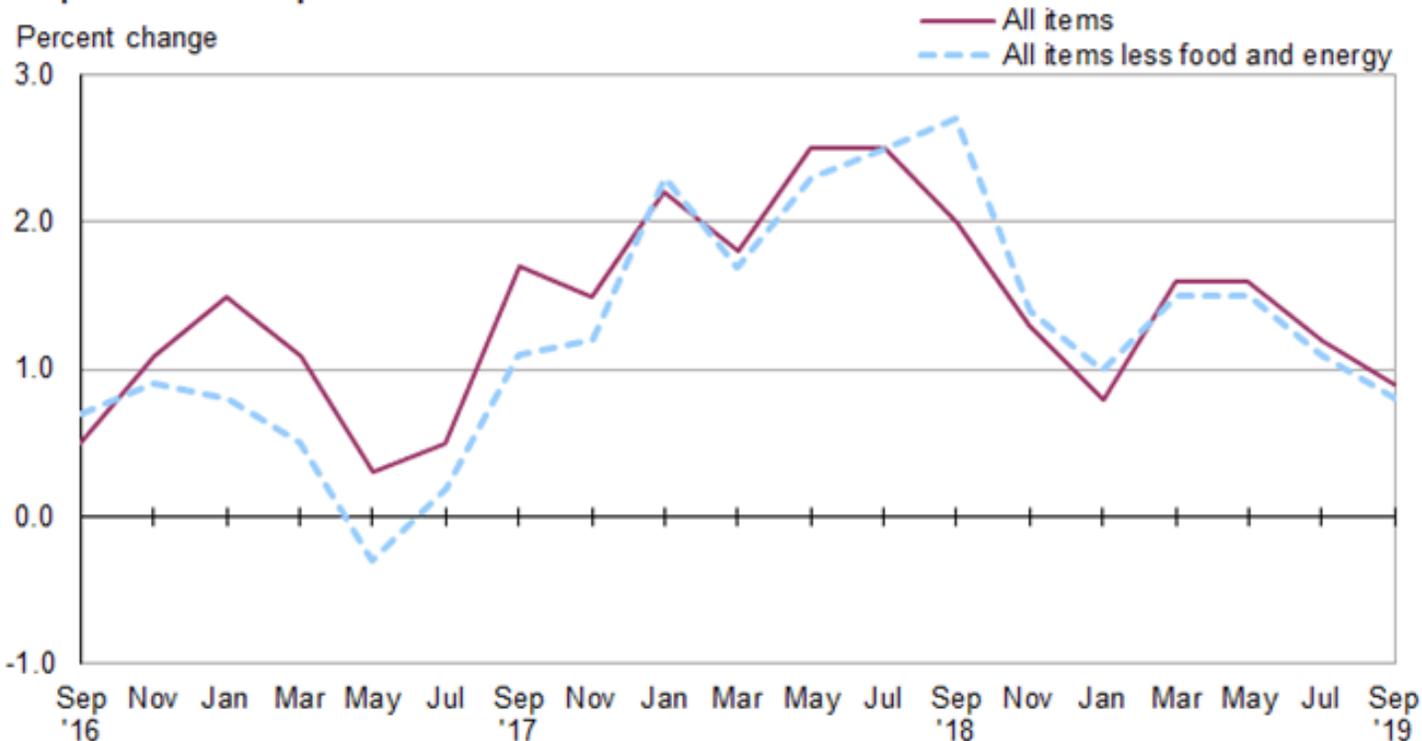
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – September 2019

Area prices up 0.1 percent since July, up 0.9 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria inched up 0.1 percent from July to September, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due entirely to a 0.5-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and the food index decreased since July, down 4.1 and 0.3 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 advanced 0.9 percent, reflecting a 0.8-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since September 2018, the food index and energy index also advanced, up 2.0 and 0.2 percent, respectively. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, September 2016–September 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Following a 0.6-percent decline from May to July, the food index edged down 0.3 percent over the last two months. Prices for food at home decreased 0.5 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were lower for frozen and freeze dried prepared foods; while prices were higher for eggs and citrus fruits. Food away from home prices decreased over the last two months, down 0.1 percent.

Food prices increased 2.0 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both food at home (2.2 percent) and food away from home (1.8 percent) since September 2018.

Energy

Since July, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, declined 4.1 percent, due to lower prices for gasoline (-7.2 percent) and for utility (piped) gas service (-10.4 percent). Prices were higher for electricity (2.3 percent) over the past two months.

Energy prices edged up 0.2 percent since September 2018, due to higher prices for utility (piped) gas service (90.2 percent). Prices for electricity also increased over the year, up 1.4 percent, while gasoline prices declined 10.3 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.5 percent since July. The advance was led by higher prices for shelter (1.2 percent); apparel (6.1 percent) and education and communication (1.3 percent) were among the indexes that had increases over the last two months. Decreased prices for household furnishings and operations (-3.1 percent), among others, moderated the rise in the all items less food and energy index from July to September.

Since September 2018, the index for all items less food and energy rose 0.8 percent. Prices were higher for shelter (1.0 percent), medical care (3.2 percent), and household furnishings and operations (5.4 percent), among others. Apparel and education and communication prices decreased 6.3 and 2.4 percent, respectively, since September 2018.

Table A. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	2-month	12-month								
January.....	-1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.8
March.....	1.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8	0.7	1.6
May.....	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5	0.6	1.6
July.....	-0.3	0.3	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5	-0.3	1.2
September.....	0.6	0.7	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0	0.1	0.9
November.....	-0.4	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5	-0.7	1.3		

The Consumer Price Index for November 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria 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 94 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 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/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 **Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MA-WV, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the county of Jefferson in West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019	Sep. 2018	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019
All items.....		265.170		265.500	0.9	0.1	
Food and beverages		253.097		252.494	1.8	-0.2	
Food		258.656		257.869	2.0	-0.3	
Food at home		247.149	246.699	245.972	2.2	-0.5	-0.3
Cereals and bakery products		324.293		322.678	2.8	-0.5	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		265.394		268.230	3.3	1.1	
Dairy and related products		237.810		242.622	2.4	2.0	
Fruits and vegetables		274.063		272.254	4.2	-0.7	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		223.883		214.494	7.7	-4.2	
Other food at home		197.158		195.551	-3.1	-0.8	
Food away from home.....		274.167		273.881	1.8	-0.1	
Alcoholic beverages		199.203		200.435	-1.0	0.6	
Housing		277.925		279.485	2.3	0.6	
Shelter		332.426	333.438	336.338	1.0	1.2	0.9
Rent of primary residence		365.851	368.464	368.766	2.3	0.8	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		340.111	341.055	341.865	1.4	0.5	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		340.111	341.055	341.865	1.4	0.5	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		241.915		240.200	12.0	-0.7	
Household energy		188.797	191.933	187.063	13.6	-0.9	-2.5
Energy services.....		193.522	196.714	191.631	13.8	-1.0	-2.6
Electricity		217.307	217.318	222.309	1.4	2.3	2.3
Utility (piped) gas service		138.780	147.633	124.332	90.2	-10.4	-15.8
Household furnishings and operations.....		112.681		109.225	5.4	-3.1	
Apparel		157.230		166.761	-6.3	6.1	
Transportation		219.883		215.337	-1.1	-2.1	
Private transportation		218.131		212.642	-1.7	-2.5	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		95.288		92.906	0.2	-2.5	
New vehicles(1).....		194.686		191.948	-2.6	-1.4	
Used cars and trucks(1)		304.944		296.799	2.9	-2.7	
Motor fuel		252.909	245.321	234.972	-10.2	-7.1	-4.2
Gasoline (all types).....		250.204	242.658	232.292	-10.3	-7.2	-4.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		244.193	236.586	226.066	-10.7	-7.4	-4.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		251.417	244.283	236.649	-7.5	-5.9	-3.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		266.098	260.374	252.671	-7.0	-5.0	-3.0
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		845.972		859.819	0.8	1.6	
Medical care		461.061		459.966	3.2	-0.2	
Recreation(3).....		117.384		116.345	-1.0	-0.9	
Education and communication(3).....		150.598		152.548	-2.4	1.3	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,386.766		1,408.443	-0.8	1.6	
Other goods and services		419.337		416.673	2.4	-0.6	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		181.460		180.187	-1.1	-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, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019	Sep. 2019	Sep. 2018	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019
Commodities less food and beverages		145.108		143.615	-3.1	-1.0	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		193.191		191.276	-5.7	-1.0	
Durables		100.992		99.904	0.5	-1.1	
Services.....		341.164		343.147	2.1	0.6	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		238.079		237.022	0.9	-0.4	
All items less medical care		255.918		256.317	0.7	0.2	
Commodities less food.....		147.658		146.257	-3.0	-0.9	
Nondurables		222.252		220.974	-1.7	-0.6	
Nondurables less food.....		193.559		191.894	-5.3	-0.9	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		362.891		362.421	3.4	-0.1	
Services less medical care services.....		329.411		331.383	1.8	0.6	
Energy		221.020	219.335	211.896	0.2	-4.1	-3.4
All items less energy		271.918		273.009	1.0	0.4	
All items less food and energy		275.580		277.016	0.8	0.5	

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a November 1977=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.