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MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.
Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic
Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

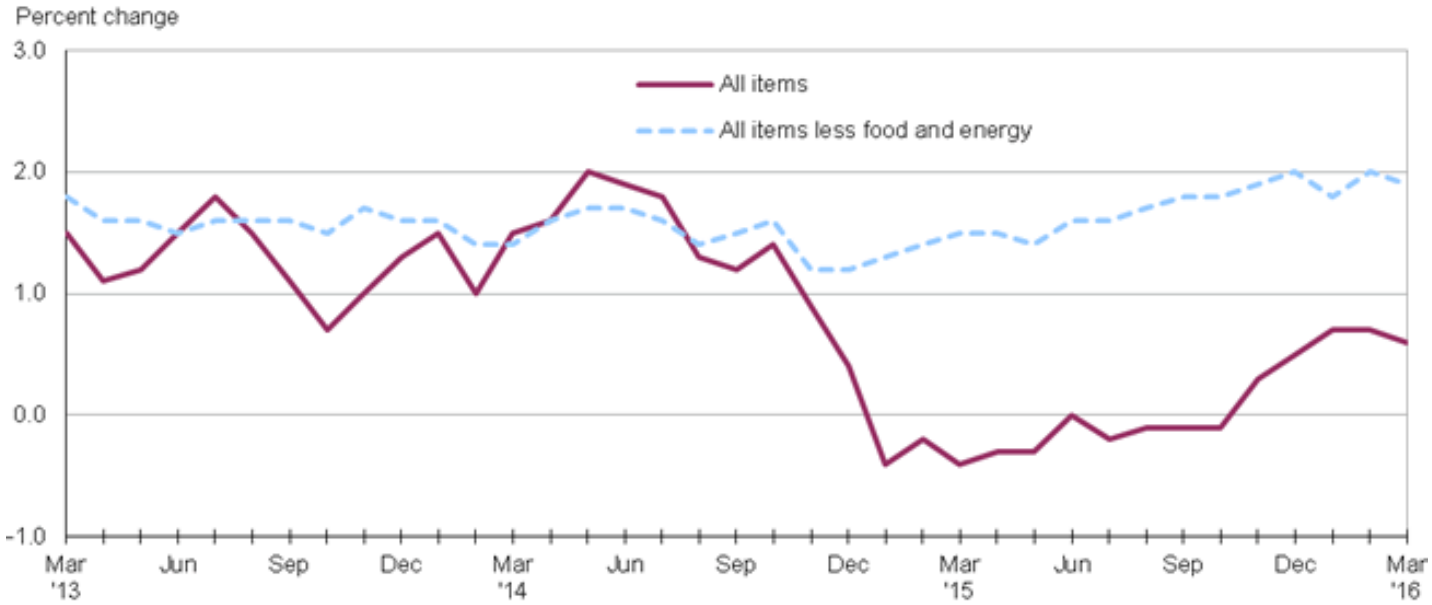
# Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – March 2016

## Regional prices up 0.2 percent over the month and 0.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast edged up 0.2 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due to a 0.2-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index and a 1.9-percent advance in the energy index. Partially offsetting the overall increase was a one-month decrease in the food index, down 0.4 percent. (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 Northeast all items CPI-U increased 0.6 percent, due mostly to a 1.9-percent advance in the all items less food and energy index. Food prices also rose, up 0.6 percent over the year. (See chart 1 and table A.) The increase was moderated by a 13.8-percent decline in the energy index since March 2015. (See table 1.)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Northeast region, March 2013–March 2016**




Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### Food

The food index fell 0.4 percent since February. Prices for one of its two components, food at home, decreased 0.9 percent, while prices for the other, food away from home, edged up 0.3 percent over the month.

From March 2015 to March 2016, the food index increased 0.6 percent. Prices for food away from home rose 2.7 percent over the year, while those for food at home declined 0.8 percent.

**Energy**

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 1.9 percent since February, led by a 2.9-percent rise in gasoline prices. Prices for utility (piped) gas service and electricity also increased over the month, up 4.3 and 0.6 percent, respectively.

The energy index fell 13.8 percent since March 2015, led by a 21.8-percent drop in gasoline prices. Prices for electricity and utility (piped) gas service also decreased over the year, down 3.1 and 6.2 percent, respectively.

**All items less food and energy**

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.2 percent in March. The index's increase was led by higher prices for shelter, particularly owners' equivalent rent of residences (0.2 percent each). Price increases for recreation (0.5 percent) and used cars and trucks (1.6 percent) also contributed to the one-month rise in the all items less food and energy index.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.9 percent, led by higher prices for shelter (2.5 percent), particularly owners' equivalent rent of residences (2.7 percent). Prices were also higher over the year for medical care (2.9 percent) and education and communication (2.5 percent).

**Table A. Northeast region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted**

| Month | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-month | 12-month | 1-month | 12-month | 1-month | 12-month | 1-month | 12-month | 1-month | 12-month |
| January | 0.4 | 2.9 | 0.3 | 1.8 | 0.6 | 1.5 | -0.2 | -0.4 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| February | 0.4 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 0.1 | 1.0 | 0.2 | -0.2 | 0.2 | 0.7 |
| March | 0.5 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.3 | -0.4 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| April | 0.3 | 2.3 | -0.1 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 0.1 | -0.3 | | |
| May | -0.1 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 2.0 | 0.4 | -0.3 | | |
| June | -0.2 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 1.9 | 0.3 | 0.0 | | |
| July | -0.1 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 1.8 | -0.1 | -0.2 | | |
| August | 0.5 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 1.5 | -0.3 | 1.3 | -0.2 | -0.1 | | |
| September | 0.5 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.0 | -0.1 | | |
| October | 0.1 | 1.9 | -0.4 | 0.7 | -0.2 | 1.4 | -0.2 | -0.1 | | |
| November | -0.2 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 1.0 | -0.4 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.3 | | |
| December | -0.3 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 1.3 | -0.5 | 0.4 | -0.4 | 0.5 | | |

**The Consumer Price Index for April 2016 is scheduled to be released Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).**

## 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 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 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 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 Northeast region is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

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**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

| Expenditure category | Indexes | | | | Percent change from | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Historical data | Jan. 2016 | Feb. 2016 | Mar. 2016 | Mar. 2015 | Jan. 2016 | Feb. 2016 |
| All items | | 251.739 | 252.250 | 252.854 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| All items (December 1977 = 100) | | 396.412 | 397.217 | 398.168 | | | |
| Food and beverages | | 253.328 | 253.212 | 252.308 | 0.7 | -0.4 | -0.4 |
| Food | | 253.531 | 253.261 | 252.236 | 0.6 | -0.5 | -0.4 |
| Food at home | | 249.096 | 248.472 | 246.278 | -0.8 | -1.1 | -0.9 |
| Food away from home | | 263.274 | 263.547 | 264.313 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Alcoholic beverages | | 249.519 | 251.396 | 252.050 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.3 |
| Housing | | 265.610 | 266.340 | 267.159 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Shelter | | 328.130 | 329.542 | 330.202 | 2.5 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Rent of primary residence [1] | | 330.856 | 331.634 | 332.072 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Owners' equivalent rent of residences [1] [2] | | 340.963 | 341.632 | 342.247 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence [1] [2] | | 340.696 | 341.362 | 341.976 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Fuels and utilities | | 205.630 | 204.437 | 206.830 | -6.4 | 0.6 | 1.2 |
| Household energy | | 181.149 | 179.675 | 182.209 | -8.2 | 0.6 | 1.4 |
| Energy services [1] | | 184.665 | 183.484 | 186.299 | -3.9 | 0.9 | 1.5 |
| Electricity [1] | | 197.527 | 196.205 | 197.366 | -3.1 | -0.1 | 0.6 |
| Utility (piped) gas service [1] | | 144.319 | 143.522 | 149.653 | -6.2 | 3.7 | 4.3 |
| Household furnishings and operations | | 122.619 | 122.529 | 122.791 | -1.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Apparel | | 127.645 | 132.054 | 132.779 | -0.8 | 4.0 | 0.5 |
| Transportation | | 191.225 | 189.627 | 190.762 | -4.0 | -0.2 | 0.6 |
| Private transportation | | 182.965 | 180.554 | 181.751 | -4.6 | -0.7 | 0.7 |
| New and used motor vehicles [3] | | 97.288 | 97.467 | 97.686 | -0.5 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| New vehicles | | 145.381 | 145.899 | 145.652 | 0.2 | 0.2 | -0.2 |
| New cars and trucks [3] [4] | | 100.725 | 101.085 | 100.909 | 0.2 | 0.2 | -0.2 |
| New cars [4] | | 137.396 | 138.047 | 137.514 | -0.6 | 0.1 | -0.4 |
| Used cars and trucks | | 149.383 | 150.792 | 153.201 | -0.6 | 2.6 | 1.6 |
| Motor fuel | | 170.044 | 157.071 | 161.526 | -21.9 | -5.0 | 2.8 |
| Gasoline (all types) | | 169.283 | 156.349 | 160.807 | -21.8 | -5.0 | 2.9 |
| Gasoline, unleaded regular [4] | | 166.101 | 152.914 | 157.741 | -22.8 | -5.0 | 3.2 |
| Gasoline, unleaded midgrade [4] [5] | | 184.655 | 173.232 | 175.802 | -18.3 | -4.8 | 1.5 |
| Gasoline, unleaded premium [4] | | 184.381 | 173.424 | 175.394 | -16.0 | -4.9 | 1.1 |
| Medical care | | 473.711 | 478.863 | 479.701 | 2.9 | 1.3 | 0.2 |
| Medical care commodities | | 371.929 | 377.418 | 381.577 | 0.7 | 2.6 | 1.1 |
| Medical care services | | 502.663 | 507.637 | 507.331 | 3.5 | 0.9 | -0.1 |
| Professional services | | 367.213 | 369.841 | 368.111 | 1.7 | 0.2 | -0.5 |
| Recreation [3] | | 120.471 | 120.729 | 121.334 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.5 |
| Education and communication [3] | | 141.275 | 141.130 | 141.145 | 2.5 | -0.1 | 0.0 |
| Other goods and services | | 455.999 | 458.077 | 459.605 | 3.3 | 0.8 | 0.3 |
| **Commodity and service group** | | | | | | | |
| Commodities | | 183.250 | 182.954 | 183.369 | -2.5 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Commodities less food and beverages | | 145.631 | 145.277 | 146.206 | -4.8 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Nondurables less food and beverages | | 178.955 | 177.997 | 179.738 | -7.2 | 0.4 | 1.0 |
| Durables | | 105.735 | 105.885 | 106.093 | -1.1 | 0.3 | 0.2 |

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, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

| Expenditure category | Indexes | | | | Percent change from | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Historical data | Jan. 2016 | Feb. 2016 | Mar. 2016 | Mar. 2015 | Jan. 2016 | Feb. 2016 |
| Services | | 317.977 | 319.212 | 319.998 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| **Special aggregate indexes** | | | | | | | |
| All items less shelter | | 225.549 | 225.732 | 226.320 | -0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| All items less medical care | | 241.994 | 242.297 | 242.892 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Commodities less food | | 149.353 | 149.062 | 149.987 | -4.5 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Nondurables | | 215.643 | 215.073 | 215.583 | -3.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Nondurables less food | | 183.087 | 182.297 | 183.973 | -6.5 | 0.5 | 0.9 |
| Services less rent of shelter [2] | | 318.143 | 319.221 | 320.143 | 1.9 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Services less medical care services | | 305.224 | 306.212 | 307.068 | 2.1 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Energy | | 176.949 | 170.903 | 174.204 | -13.8 | -1.6 | 1.9 |
| All items less energy | | 261.920 | 263.099 | 263.437 | 1.7 | 0.6 | 0.1 |
| All items less food and energy | | 265.116 | 266.546 | 267.116 | 1.9 | 0.8 | 0.2 |

Footnotes
(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.
(2) Indexes on a December 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.
Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.