NEWS RELEASE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For Release: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 **16-1019-PHI**

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

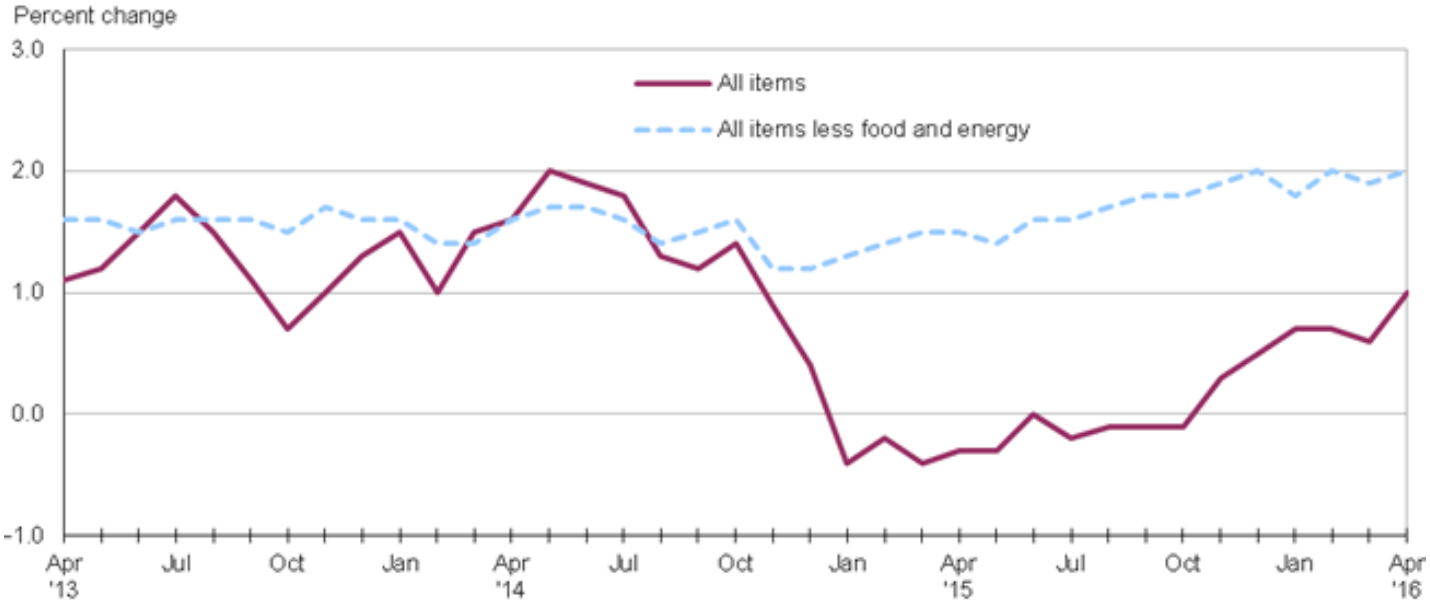
Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – April 2016

Regional prices up 0.6 percent over the month and 1.0 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast advanced 0.6 percent in April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due mainly to a 4.6-percent rise in the energy index and a 0.3-percent advance in the all items less food and energy index. The food index also rose, up 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 1.0 percent, due mostly to a 2.0-percent advance in the all items less food and energy index. Food prices also rose, up 0.9 percent over the year. (See chart 1 and table A.) The increase was moderated by a 9.3-percent decline in the energy index since April 2015. (See table 1.)

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index rose 0.4 percent since March, as prices for its two components advanced over the month. Food at home prices increased 0.4 percent and prices for food away from home edged up 0.3 percent.

From April 2015 to April 2016, the food index increased 0.9 percent. Prices for food away from home rose 2.9 percent over the year, while those for food at home declined 0.6 percent.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 4.6 percent since March, due almost entirely to a 12.7-percent rise in gasoline prices. Prices for electricity and utility (piped) gas service decreased over the month, down 0.3 and 0.2 percent, respectively.

The energy index fell 9.3 percent since April 2015, led by a 12.2-percent drop in gasoline prices. Prices for electricity and utility (piped) gas service also decreased over the year, down 4.1 and 3.0 percent, respectively.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.3 percent in April, led by higher prices for shelter (0.3 percent). Prices for medical care also increased over the month (0.6 percent), while those for education and communication and household furnishings and operations decreased 0.2 percent each.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 2.0 percent, led by higher prices for shelter (2.6 percent). Prices were also higher over the year for medical care (3.0 percent) and education and communication (2.2 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	0.6	1.0
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 May 2016 is scheduled to be released Thursday, June 16, 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	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	Apr. 2015	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016
All items		252.250	252.854	254.270	1.0	0.8	0.6
All items (December 1977 = 100)		397.217	398.168	400.397			
Food and beverages		253.212	252.308	253.098	0.9	0.0	0.3
Food		253.261	252.236	253.153	0.9	0.0	0.4
Food at home		248.472	246.278	247.349	-0.6	-0.5	0.4
Food away from home		263.547	264.313	265.001	2.9	0.6	0.3
Alcoholic beverages		251.396	252.050	251.194	1.4	-0.1	-0.3
Housing		266.340	267.159	267.721	1.3	0.5	0.2
Shelter		329.542	330.202	331.180	2.6	0.5	0.3
Rent of primary residence [1]		331.634	332.072	332.609	3.1	0.3	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences [1] [2]		341.632	342.247	342.984	2.6	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence [1] [2]		341.362	341.976	342.709	2.6	0.4	0.2
Fuels and utilities		204.437	206.830	206.666	-5.3	1.1	-0.1
Household energy		179.675	182.209	181.920	-6.9	1.2	-0.2
Energy services [1]		183.484	186.299	185.770	-3.8	1.2	-0.3
Electricity [1]		196.205	197.366	196.766	-4.1	0.3	-0.3
Utility (piped) gas service [1]		143.522	149.653	149.311	-3.0	4.0	-0.2
Household furnishings and operations		122.529	122.791	122.538	-1.7	0.0	-0.2
Apparel		132.054	132.779	132.911	0.7	0.6	0.1
Transportation		189.627	190.762	195.913	-1.8	3.3	2.7
Private transportation		180.554	181.751	186.608	-2.4	3.4	2.7
New and used motor vehicles [3]		97.467	97.686	97.946	-0.7	0.5	0.3
New vehicles		145.899	145.652	145.410	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2
New cars and trucks [3] [4]		101.085	100.909	100.740	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2
New cars [4]		138.047	137.514	137.174	-0.7	-0.6	-0.2
Used cars and trucks		150.792	153.201	154.668	-1.4	2.6	1.0
Motor fuel		157.071	161.526	181.944	-12.4	15.8	12.6
Gasoline (all types)		156.349	160.807	181.275	-12.2	15.9	12.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular [4]		152.914	157.741	178.765	-12.8	16.9	13.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade [4] [5]		173.232	175.802	194.214	-10.3	12.1	10.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium [4]		173.424	175.394	191.315	-9.0	10.3	9.1
Medical care		478.863	479.701	482.472	3.0	0.8	0.6
Medical care commodities		377.418	381.577	383.681	1.4	1.7	0.6
Medical care services		507.637	507.331	510.297	3.4	0.5	0.6
Professional services		369.841	368.111	369.611	2.3	-0.1	0.4
Recreation [3]		120.729	121.334	121.453	0.4	0.6	0.1
Education and communication [3]		141.130	141.145	140.887	2.2	-0.2	-0.2
Other goods and services		458.077	459.605	459.280	3.2	0.3	-0.1
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		182.954	183.369	185.241	-1.5	1.3	1.0
Commodities less food and beverages		145.277	146.206	148.423	-3.2	2.2	1.5
Nondurables less food and beverages		177.997	179.738	184.211	-4.2	3.5	2.5
Durables		105.885	106.093	106.343	-1.6	0.4	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	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	Apr. 2015	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016
Services		319.212	319.998	321.041	2.3	0.6	0.3
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		225.732	226.320	227.908	0.1	1.0	0.7
All items less medical care		242.297	242.892	244.247	0.8	0.8	0.6
Commodities less food		149.062	149.987	152.128	-2.9	2.1	1.4
Nondurables		215.073	215.583	218.360	-1.4	1.5	1.3
Nondurables less food		182.297	183.973	188.127	-3.7	3.2	2.3
Services less rent of shelter [2]		319.221	320.143	321.303	2.0	0.7	0.4
Services less medical care services		306.212	307.068	307.983	2.2	0.6	0.3
Energy		170.903	174.204	182.145	-9.3	6.6	4.6
All items less energy		263.099	263.437	264.208	1.8	0.4	0.3
All items less food and energy		266.546	267.116	267.868	2.0	0.5	0.3

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.