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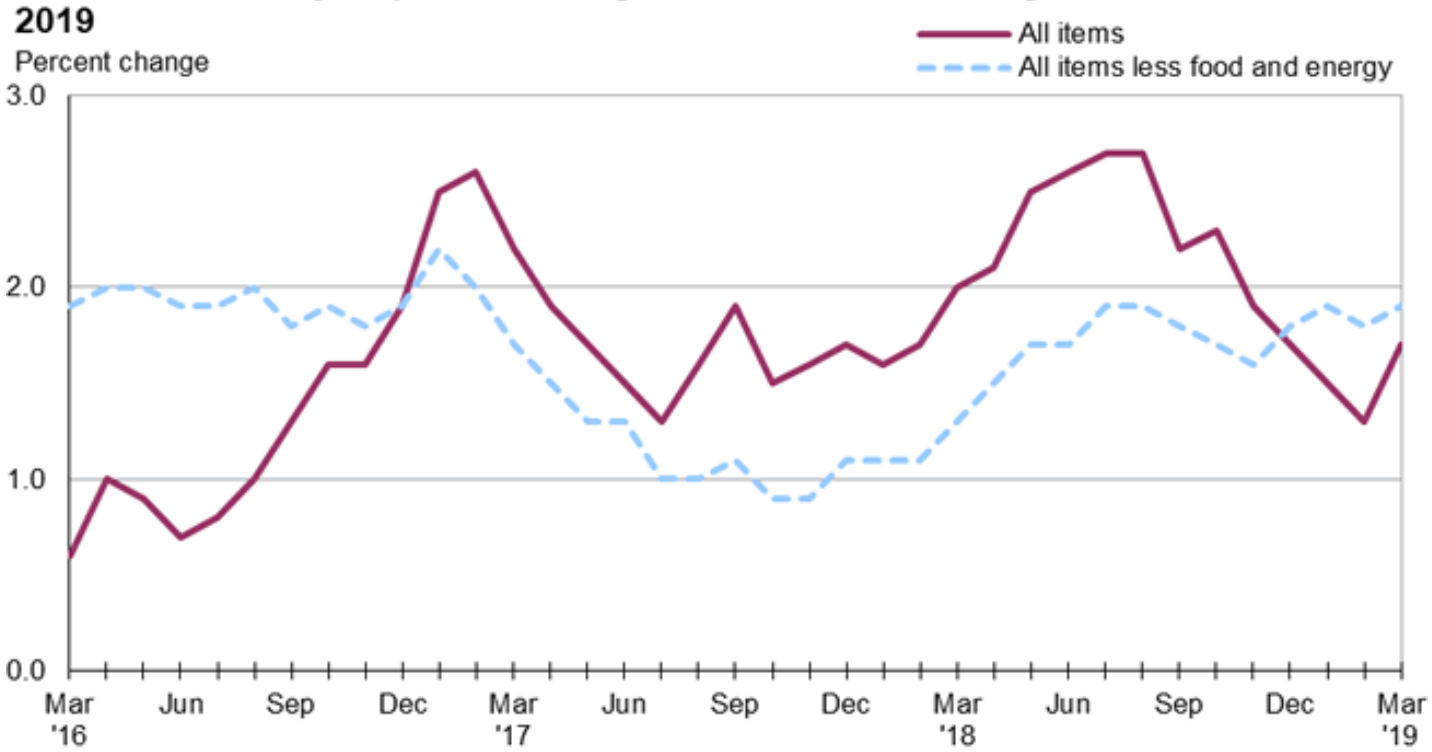
Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – March 2019

Regional prices increased 0.5 percent over the month; up 1.7 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast rose 0.5 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that this was due largely to a 0.3-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and food index also increased over the month, up 2.6 and 0.4 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 Northeast all items CPI-U increased 1.7 percent. (See chart 1 and table A.) The all items less food and energy index led the advance, rising 1.9 percent. The food index also rose, up 2.1 percent since March 2018, while the energy index declined 0.9 percent. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Northeast region, March 2016–March 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index increased 0.4 percent since February as prices were higher for both food at home (0.5 percent) and food away from home (0.3 percent).

From March 2018 to March 2019, the food index increased 2.1 percent. Prices for both food away from home and food at home increased over the year, up 3.0 and 1.4 percent, respectively.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 2.6 percent in March. Gasoline prices rose 6.4 percent since February. Prices were also higher for utility (piped) gas service (0.1 percent), while prices declined for electricity service (-0.3 percent).

The energy index decreased 0.9 percent since March 2018. The decline reflected lower prices for gasoline, down 2.1 percent. Utility (piped) gas service prices also decreased (-0.3 percent) over the year, while electricity prices inched up 0.1 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.3 percent over the month. Prices were higher for shelter (0.4 percent) and medical care (0.9 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.9 percent since March 2018, led by higher prices for shelter, up 2.5 percent. Prices also rose over the year for medical care (2.8 percent) and education and communication (2.2 percent), among others.

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

Month	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January	-0.2	-0.4	0.0	0.7	0.6	2.5	0.5	1.6	0.3	1.5
February	0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.7	0.3	2.6	0.4	1.7	0.2	1.3
March	0.3	-0.4	0.2	0.6	-0.1	2.2	0.1	2.0	0.5	1.7
April	0.1	-0.3	0.6	1.0	0.3	1.9	0.4	2.1		
May	0.4	-0.3	0.3	0.9	0.1	1.7	0.4	2.5		
June	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.0	1.5	0.0	2.6		
July	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	0.8	-0.2	1.3	0.0	2.7		
August	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	1.0	0.3	1.6	0.2	2.7		
September	0.0	-0.1	0.2	1.3	0.5	1.9	0.1	2.2		
October	-0.2	-0.1	0.2	1.6	-0.1	1.5	-0.1	2.3		
November	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.6	-0.4	1.9		
December	-0.4	0.5	0.0	1.9	0.1	1.7	-0.1	1.7		

Geographic divisions

Additional price indexes are now available for the two divisions of the Northeast. Over the month, the all items CPI-U rose 0.9 percent in the New England division and 0.4 percent in the Middle Atlantic division.

Over the year, the all items index advanced 2.1 percent in the New England division. (See table B.) Prices also rose in the Middle Atlantic division, up 1.5 percent.

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

Area	1-month change	12-month change
Northeast	0.5	1.7
New England Division	0.9	2.1
Middle Atlantic Division	0.4	1.5

The Consumer Price Index for April 2019 is scheduled to be released Friday, May 10, 2019, 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 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 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 **Northeast region** is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The **New England division** is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The **Middle Atlantic division** is comprised of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

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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. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
All items		266.109	266.706	268.025	1.7	0.7	0.5
All items (December 1977 = 100)		419.040	419.981	422.058			
Food and beverages		262.254	262.304	263.215	2.0	0.4	0.3
Food		262.757	262.792	263.847	2.1	0.4	0.4
Food at home		250.946	250.641	251.944	1.4	0.4	0.5
Cereals and bakery products		296.536	296.997	299.328	1.8	0.9	0.8
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs		252.542	250.074	251.915	-0.2	-0.2	0.7
Dairy and related products		229.934	226.344	225.171	-0.2	-2.1	-0.5
Fruits and vegetables		317.510	317.052	322.627	4.0	1.6	1.8
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials		176.152	176.845	174.643	0.7	-0.9	-1.2
Other food at home		222.401	224.535	225.782	1.8	1.5	0.6
Food away from home		283.866	284.393	285.104	3.0	0.4	0.3
Alcoholic beverages		254.697	254.936	254.083	0.3	-0.2	-0.3
Housing		286.006	286.342	287.121	2.2	0.4	0.3
Shelter		354.236	354.639	355.912	2.5	0.5	0.4
Rent of primary residence		356.335	357.009	357.883	2.5	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(1)		366.621	367.145	367.684	2.5	0.3	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(1)		366.325	366.857	367.393	2.5	0.3	0.1
Fuels and utilities		231.293	232.067	232.085	0.4	0.3	0.0
Household energy		205.230	205.890	205.762	-0.1	0.3	-0.1
Energy services		203.244	203.254	202.903	0.0	-0.2	-0.2
Electricity		202.479	206.023	205.339	0.1	1.4	-0.3
Utility (piped) gas service		188.706	182.939	183.159	-0.3	-2.9	0.1
Household furnishings and operations		121.577	121.406	121.147	1.4	-0.4	-0.2
Apparel		126.648	129.882	130.492	-0.3	3.0	0.5
Transportation		200.914	201.759	204.648	-0.2	1.9	1.4
Private transportation		193.595	194.061	197.213	-0.1	1.9	1.6
New and used motor vehicles(2)		96.598	96.730	96.759	-0.1	0.2	0.0
New vehicles		144.093	145.594	144.836	-0.4	0.5	-0.5
New cars and trucks(2)(3)		99.883	100.901	100.376	-0.4	0.5	-0.5
New cars(3)		132.910	134.393	133.757	-0.4	0.6	-0.5
Used cars and trucks		144.452	145.124	146.118	0.3	1.2	0.7
Motor fuel		206.413	207.184	220.378	-2.0	6.8	6.4
Gasoline (all types)		205.140	205.908	219.146	-2.1	6.8	6.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular(3)		202.043	202.865	216.378	-2.2	7.1	6.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(3)(4)		222.149	222.237	233.775	-1.4	5.2	5.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium(3)		218.398	218.805	229.423	-1.1	5.0	4.9
Motor vehicle insurance(5)		622.423	623.964	623.412	0.5	0.2	-0.1
Medical care		512.667	513.713	518.479	2.8	1.1	0.9
Medical care commodities		392.591	392.718	404.465	3.6	3.0	3.0
Medical care services		547.184	548.506	551.106	2.7	0.7	0.5
Professional services		385.347	385.907	386.581	1.7	0.3	0.2
Recreation(2)		124.676	124.988	125.130	1.0	0.4	0.1
Education and communication(2)		142.389	142.359	142.681	2.2	0.2	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. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(5)		1,249.035	1,252.490	1,252.800	3.5	0.3	0.0
Other goods and services		492.072	493.249	494.119	1.5	0.4	0.2
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		188.382	189.028	190.905	0.7	1.3	1.0
Commodities less food and beverages		149.030	149.871	152.017	-0.2	2.0	1.4
Nondurables less food and beverages		190.795	192.427	197.082	0.1	3.3	2.4
Durables		102.241	102.388	102.383	-0.6	0.1	0.0
Services		340.839	341.407	342.262	2.2	0.4	0.3
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		235.698	236.372	237.720	1.2	0.9	0.6
All items less medical care		255.270	255.848	257.011	1.6	0.7	0.5
Commodities less food		152.822	153.650	155.720	-0.2	1.9	1.3
Nondurables		226.147	227.067	230.047	1.1	1.7	1.3
Nondurables less food		194.529	196.077	200.399	0.1	3.0	2.2
Services less rent of shelter(1)		338.113	338.878	339.303	1.8	0.4	0.1
Services less medical care services		326.617	327.132	327.868	2.2	0.4	0.2
Energy		205.512	206.219	211.657	-0.9	3.0	2.6
All items less energy		275.035	275.627	276.524	1.9	0.5	0.3
All items less food and energy		278.975	279.662	280.539	1.9	0.6	0.3

Footnotes
(1) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.
(2) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
(3) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
(4) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.
(5) Indexes on a December 1977=100 base.