



For Release: Friday, April 17, 2015

15-676-BOS

NEW ENGLAND INFORMATION OFFICE: Boston, Mass.

Technical information: (617) 565-2327 BLSInfoBoston@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/new-england

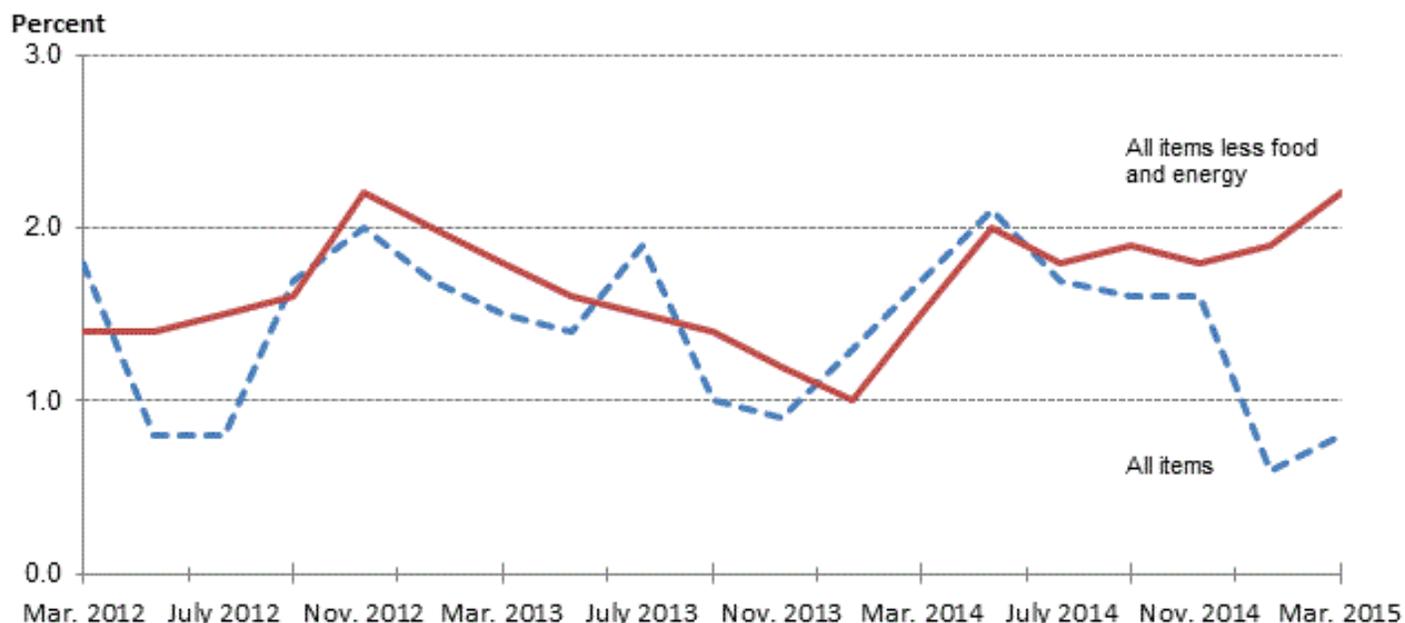
Media contact: (617) 565-2326 BLSMediaBoston@bls.gov

Consumer Price Index, Boston-Brockton-Nashua - March 2015
Area prices up 1.0 percent over two months; edged up 0.8 percent from a year ago

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Brockton-Nashua area was up 1.0 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that the two-month increase was mainly due to higher prices for shelter, up 1.3 percent over two months as well as higher prices paid by area consumers for apparel, up 6.8 percent, which also contributed to the overall increase. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bimonthly changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months the Boston CPI-U rose 0.8 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher shelter prices, up 3.1 percent. (See [chart 1.](#)) Lower energy prices paid by area consumers, down 14.2 percent, partially offset the modest increase.

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, March 2012 - March 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices were unchanged since January. Grocery store prices, also known as food at home, edged up 0.1 percent. A drop in the prices for food away from home (-0.2 percent), or restaurant prices, offset this rise.

From March 2014 to March 2015 the index for food rose 1.9 percent mainly due to higher grocery store prices (+2.6 percent) and, to a lesser extent, higher restaurant prices (+0.9 percent).

Energy

The energy index was up 1.8 percent over the two months, mainly due to gas price increases. Area motorists paid \$2.437 per gallon of gasoline in March. This increase was partially offset by lower prices for utility (piped) gas, down 12.1 percent from January.

Energy prices were down 14.2 percent from a year ago, attributable to lower gasoline prices, down 31.7 percent. Partially offsetting this decline was a 30.5-percent advance in local electricity prices. The March increase in local electricity prices was the largest since a 36.7-percent increase was recorded in February of 2006.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was up 1.1 percent from January. Increases in the indexes for shelter (+1.3 percent) and apparel (+6.8 percent) led the advance.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.3 percent, with higher shelter costs, rising 3.1 percent from March 2014, being the main cause of this increase. This marked the 45th consecutive annual increase in the local shelter index. Contributing to the over-the-year rise in the all items less food and energy index were increases in the prices paid for apparel (+8.5 percent) as well as medical care and recreation (+1.8 percent, each).

CPI-W

In March, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 256.929. The CPI-W rose 1.0 percent over two months and edged up 0.4 percent over the year.

The May 2015 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Brockton-Nashua is scheduled to be released on Thursday, June 18, 2015, 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 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 6,000 housing units and approximately 24,000 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 change 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/homch17_a.htm.

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 Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Mass.-N.H.-Maine-Conn. consolidated area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth and Suffolk Counties and parts of Bristol, Hampden, and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts; parts of Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire; part of York County in Maine; and part of Windham County in Connecticut.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service (800) 877-8339.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015	Mar. 2015	Mar. 2014	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015
All items		254.556		257.013	0.8	1.0	
All items (1967 = 100)		739.873		747.015			
Food and beverages		254.439		254.369	1.9	0.0	
Food		254.776		254.813	1.9	0.0	
Food at home		246.456	249.168	246.775	2.6	0.1	-1.0
Food away from home		268.272		267.776	0.9	-0.2	
Alcoholic beverages		254.365		253.194	1.0	-0.5	
Housing		256.155		258.940	3.0	1.1	
Shelter		295.784	297.601	299.626	3.1	1.3	0.7
Rent of primary residence (1)		307.346	308.584	309.395	3.0	0.7	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of residences (1) (2) (3)		317.139	318.735	319.459	3.6	0.7	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2) (3)		317.139	318.735	319.459	3.6	0.7	0.2
Fuels and utilities		285.501		282.995	3.2	-0.9	
Household energy		245.166	241.857	242.720	3.4	-1.0	0.4
Energy services (1)		255.333	250.975	246.727	11.5	-3.4	-1.7
Electricity (1)		277.768	277.768	278.362	30.5	0.2	0.2
Utility (piped) gas service (1)		207.157	194.970	182.007	-20.6	-12.1	-6.6
Household furnishings and operations		128.224		130.748	1.9	2.0	
Apparel		144.833		154.746	8.5	6.8	
Transportation		182.833		187.388	-10.0	2.5	
Private transportation		180.855		185.906	-10.5	2.8	
Motor fuel		194.587	191.189	206.730	-31.7	6.2	8.1
Gasoline (all types)		192.176	188.823	204.182	-31.7	6.2	8.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular (4)		187.036	183.729	200.132	-32.6	7.0	8.9
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (4) (5)		204.163	201.526	213.384	-29.8	4.5	5.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium (4)		200.324	196.122	208.104	-28.4	3.9	6.1
Medical care		598.852		596.534	1.8	-0.4	
Recreation (6)		115.464		116.047	1.8	0.5	
Education and communication (6)		150.755		150.604	1.5	-0.1	
Other goods and services		445.613		443.709	1.5	-0.4	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		187.958		191.245	-2.6	1.7	
Commodities less food and beverages		152.980		157.898	-5.9	3.2	
Nondurables less food and beverages		195.604		203.587	-9.0	4.1	
Durables		111.149		113.164	-0.1	1.8	
Services		314.476		316.081	2.9	0.5	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		240.982		242.916	-0.3	0.8	
All items less medical care		241.174		243.756	0.7	1.1	
Commodities less food		157.023		161.679	-5.4	3.0	
Nondurables		223.969		227.849	-3.2	1.7	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015	Mar. 2015	Mar. 2014	Jan. 2015	Feb. 2015
Nondurables less food.....		198.830		205.991	-8.1	3.6	
Services less rent of shelter (2).....		353.013		351.835	2.6	-0.3	
Services less medical care services.....		295.042		296.827	3.0	0.6	
Energy		221.409	218.085	225.327	-14.2	1.8	3.3
All items less energy		261.386		263.740	2.3	0.9	
All items less food and energy		263.196		266.022	2.3	1.1	

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) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(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.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.