

News

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CONSUMER PRICES IN THE NORTHEAST: SEPTEMBER 2004

Retail prices in the Northeast region, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), inched up 0.1 percent in September, after registering no change for two consecutive months. Sheila Watkins, Regional Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, said that in September, higher prices for apparel and education and communication, food, and medical care were largely offset by declines for shelter and energy. For the year ended September 2004, the CPI-U for the Northeast region rose 3.2 percent, and core inflation, as measured by the all items less food and energy index, was up 2.7 percent.

The apparel index rose 4.2 percent in September. Apparel prices typically rise at this time of year with the introduction of fall and winter lines. The September increase followed a 1.6-percent increase in August. Despite the increases of the past two months, apparel prices are down 2.2 percent over the year.

The education and communication index rose 1.2 percent in September. The September increase followed a 0.7-percent rise in August.

The food and beverages index rose 0.3 percent in September, primarily reflecting a 0.5-percent rise in the food at home component. The food away from home index and the alcoholic beverages index each edged up 0.2 percent.

The housing index declined 0.3 percent in September, largely based on a drop in out-of-town lodging charges. Decreases of 1.5 percent for electricity and 1.0 percent for utility (piped) gas service and lower prices for household furnishings and operations also contributed to the decline. These decreases were in part offset by increases of 0.3 percent for both owners' equivalent rent and residential rent.

The transportation index edged down 0.2 percent in September primarily due to a 1.5-percent decline in gasoline prices. The September decline in the price of gasoline followed decreases of 2.1 percent in August and 4.8 percent in July. Despite the declines of the past three months, the gasoline index is now 8.0 percent higher than a year ago. An increase of 0.8 percent in the index for new and used motor vehicles in part offset the September decline in gasoline prices.

Table A. Percent changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), by region

Expenditure category	(not seasonally adjusted)									
	September 2003- September 2004					August 2004 – September 2004				
	US	North-east	Mid-west	South	West	US	North-east	Mid-west	South	West
All items	2.5	3.2	2.3	2.5	2.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.4
Food and beverages	3.3	3.7	3.0	3.5	3.0	-0.1	0.3	- 0.2	-0.2	0.0
Housing	2.8	4.4	2.2	2.3	2.4	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	0.4
Apparel	-0.7	-2.2	-0.8	-0.9	1.2	4.0	4.2	5.5	4.3	2.2
Transportation	2.2	1.9	2.1	3.0	1.5	0.0	-0.2	-0.4	0.0	0.5
Medical care	4.4	4.7	5.4	4.1	3.6	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0
Recreation	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.5	0.1	- 0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Education and communication	1.8	1.3	2.0	1.2	2.8	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.5	1.3
Other goods and services	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3

Among the remaining expenditure categories, the medical care index rose 0.3 percent in September, with increases of 0.3 percent for medical care services and 0.2 percent for medical care commodities. The other goods and services index, (which includes tobacco and smoking products, along with personal care products, and personal expenses, such as funeral, and laundry, and dry cleaning services), increased 0.5 percent, while the recreation index was little changed over the month.

The Northeast increase of 3.2 percent for the year ended September 2004 exceeded the national rise of 2.5 percent. Among other regions, over-the-year increases were 2.5 percent in the South, 2.3 percent in the Midwest, and 2.2 percent in the West.

The Northeast Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 197.7 in September. The CPI-W rose 0.3 percent over the month, and increased 3.0 percent over the year.

Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month to month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences. Regions are defined as the four Census regions, comprised as follows: Northeast - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Midwest - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. South -Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. West - Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods
Northeast (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sep. 2004	Sep. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004
Expenditure category						
All items.....	201.0	201.0	201.2	3.2	0.1	0.1
All items (December 1977=100)	316.6	316.5	316.9	-	-	-
Food and beverages.....	189.8	189.4	190.0	3.7	.1	.3
Food.....	189.1	188.6	189.3	3.7	.1	.4
Food at home.....	190.1	189.0	189.9	4.4	-1.1	.5
Food away from home.....	190.3	190.8	191.2	2.9	.5	.2
Alcoholic beverages.....	198.1	197.8	198.1	3.2	.0	.2
Housing.....	211.2	211.4	210.7	4.4	-.2	-.3
Shelter.....	254.1	254.3	253.4	4.6	-.3	-.4
Rent of primary residence <u>1/</u>	234.8	235.5	236.3	4.1	.6	.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence <u>1/ 2/</u>	261.8	262.8	263.6	3.8	.7	.3
Fuels and utilities.....	158.6	159.3	158.8	6.4	.1	-.3
Fuels.....	147.3	147.9	147.3	6.6	.0	-.4
Gas (piped) and electricity <u>1/</u>	160.9	160.2	158.1	2.7	-1.7	-1.3
Electricity <u>1/</u>	149.3	148.2	146.0	.6	-2.2	-1.5
Utility (piped) gas service <u>1/</u>	183.7	184.1	182.2	6.2	-.8	-1.0
Household furnishings and operations.....	127.3	127.1	127.0	.4	-.2	-.1
Apparel.....	115.8	117.6	122.5	-2.2	5.8	4.2
Transportation.....	165.4	163.8	163.4	1.9	-1.2	-.2
Private transportation.....	159.9	158.4	158.6	2.5	-.8	.1
New and used motor vehicles <u>3/</u>	92.7	92.3	93.0	-1.2	.3	.8
New vehicles.....	134.7	133.8	134.1	-.7	-.4	.2
New cars and trucks <u>3/ 4/</u>	93.7	93.1	93.3	-.5	-.4	.2
New cars <u>4/</u>	131.6	130.9	130.9	-.8	-.5	.0
Used cars and trucks.....	134.7	136.4	139.2	-1.8	3.3	2.1
Motor fuel.....	163.9	160.5	158.1	8.0	-3.5	-1.5
Gasoline (all types).....	163.1	159.7	157.3	8.0	-3.6	-1.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular <u>4/</u>	163.7	160.3	157.9	7.9	-3.5	-1.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade <u>4/ 5/</u>	166.5	163.1	160.5	8.0	-3.6	-1.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium <u>4/</u>	159.3	155.9	153.7	8.2	-3.5	-1.4
Medical care.....	331.4	331.5	332.5	4.7	.3	.3
Medical care commodities.....	286.1	286.3	286.8	2.2	.2	.2
Medical care services.....	342.4	342.5	343.6	5.4	.4	.3
Professional services.....	283.6	283.7	284.0	4.2	0.1	0.1
Recreation <u>3/</u>	110.8	110.8	110.7	1.0	-.1	-.1
Education and communication <u>3/</u>	111.5	112.3	113.6	1.3	1.9	1.2
Other goods and services.....	329.3	330.0	331.5	2.3	.7	.5
Commodity and service group						
All items.....	201.0	201.0	201.2	3.2	.1	.1
Commodities.....	157.1	157.0	157.9	2.3	.5	.6
Commodities less food and beverages.....	136.8	136.8	137.9	1.2	.8	.8
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	156.3	156.7	158.4	2.9	1.3	1.1
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel.....	189.0	188.3	187.9	5.3	-.6	-.2
Durables.....	112.3	111.9	112.2	-1.1	-.1	.3
Services.....	244.0	244.0	243.7	3.8	-.1	-.1
Rent of shelter <u>2/</u>	265.6	265.8	264.9	4.6	-.3	-.3
Transportation services.....	215.1	212.8	212.2	1.5	-1.3	-.3
Other services.....	276.1	277.3	279.5	2.0	1.2	.8
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care.....	195.0	194.9	195.2	3.1	.1	.2
All items less food.....	203.4	203.4	203.6	3.1	.1	.1
All items less shelter.....	183.0	182.8	183.5	2.4	.3	.4
Commodities less food.....	139.2	139.2	140.2	1.2	.7	.7
Nondurables.....	173.5	173.5	174.7	3.4	.7	.7
Nondurables less food.....	158.8	159.1	160.8	3.0	1.3	1.1
Nondurables less food and apparel.....	188.7	188.1	187.7	5.1	-.5	-.2
Services less rent of shelter <u>2/</u>	241.0	240.8	241.2	2.7	.1	.2
Services less medical care services.....	236.5	236.5	236.1	3.6	-.2	-.2
Energy.....	154.7	153.6	152.2	7.2	-1.6	-.9
All items less energy.....	208.0	208.0	208.5	2.9	.2	.2
All items less food and energy.....	212.9	213.0	213.4	2.7	.2	.2
Commodities less food and energy commodities.....	140.7	141.0	142.4	-.6	1.2	1.0
Energy commodities.....	161.2	159.6	158.8	11.2	-1.5	-.5
Services less energy services.....	252.1	252.2	252.0	3.8	0.0	-0.1

1/ This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

2/ Index is 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.

- Data not available.