

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/home.htm>

PLS – 4053

INFORMATION: Gerald Perrins
(215) 597-3282

TRANSMISSION OF MATERIAL IN
THIS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED

MEDIA CONTACT: Sheila Watkins
(215) 861-5600

UNTIL 8:30 A.M. (EDT)
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2004

PITTSBURGH CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: LOCAL PRICES UP 2.5 PERCENT OVER THE YEAR

Retail prices in the Pittsburgh area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), rose 2.5 percent since the first half of 2003, the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that higher prices for housing and food and beverages were mainly responsible for the increase. Seven of the eight major components of the Pittsburgh CPI-U had over-the-year increases in the first half of 2004. (See table 1.)

The housing index rose 2.3 percent, as each of the three main components of the category had higher prices over the year. The shelter component, which includes rent of primary residence, owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, lodging away from home, and tenants' and household insurance, increased 2.0 percent from year-ago levels. The fuels and utilities index rose 4.3 percent, as utility (piped) gas service rates jumped 8.2 percent. Electricity rates, on the other hand, were essentially unchanged since the first of 2003. Household furnishings and operations, the third component of housing, rose 1.8 percent over the year.

Food and beverages prices increased 4.4 percent from year-ago levels, as prices for both food at home and food away from home were higher. These two components had over-the-year increases of 6.6 and 2.9 percent, respectively. Also contributing to the rise was a 1.9-percent increase in alcoholic beverage prices.

Transportation prices rose 2.1 percent from the first half of 2003. This increase was due entirely to higher gasoline prices, which increased 17.8 percent. The other goods and service index, which includes tobacco and smoking products, personal care products and services, and personal services such as legal, funeral, and laundry and dry cleaning services, rose 4.9 percent from last year.

Medical care costs were up 5.9 over the year—the largest twelve-month increase of any of the major categories that make up the CPI-U. Recreation prices were up 1.6 percent over the year and the education and communication index rose 1.0 percent since last year.

The only major category to record lower prices over the last 12 months was apparel, which fell 4.9 percent from its year-ago level.

The energy index, which reflects pricing for gasoline and household fuels, jumped 10.1 percent since the first half of 2003. This increase was due to higher gasoline and utility gas prices as electricity prices were essentially unchanged.

The CPI reflects two types of expenditures, services and commodities. Both services and commodities prices rose over the last 12 months, up 2.7 and 2.3 percent respectively. Services accounted for nearly three-fifths of the twelve-month increase in the CPI-U.

The CPI-U for the Pittsburgh area stood at 181.4 on the 1982-84=100 reference base, which means that a market basket of goods and services which averaged \$100.00 in the 1982-84 period would have cost \$181.40 in the first half of 2004. The Pittsburgh area includes Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties.

NOTE: Local area indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. As a result, area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Short-term changes in local indexes may reflect strictly seasonal influences.

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

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	1st half 2003	2nd half 2003	1st half 2004	1st half 2003	2004 from- 2nd half 2003
All items.....	176.9	178.1	181.4	2.5	1.9
All items (1967=100).....	539.9	543.4	553.4	-	-
Food and beverages.....	171.7	174.6	179.2	4.4	2.6
Food.....	170.2	173.3	177.9	4.5	2.7
Food at home.....	168.3	172.5	179.4	6.6	4.0
Food away from home.....	173.2	175.4	178.2	2.9	1.6
Alcoholic beverages.....	190.8	190.8	194.5	1.9	1.9
Housing.....	177.8	177.9	181.9	2.3	2.2
Shelter.....	197.0	196.0	200.9	2.0	2.5
Rent of primary residence.....	174.1	174.3	177.1	1.7	1.6
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1).....	196.6	195.5	199.4	1.4	2.0
Fuels and utilities.....	172.8	175.8	180.3	4.3	2.6
Fuels.....	165.8	169.2	173.3	4.5	2.4
Gas (piped) and electricity.....	166.9	171.2	174.7	4.7	2.0
Electricity.....	127.8	127.8	127.9	.1	.1
Utility (piped) gas service.....	214.9	224.7	232.6	8.2	3.5
Household furnishings and operations.....	135.2	134.0	137.6	1.8	2.7
Apparel.....	144.9	145.1	137.8	-4.9	-5.0
Transportation.....	140.1	140.3	143.1	2.1	2.0
Private transportation.....	139.1	139.4	142.5	2.4	2.2
Motor fuel.....	127.7	129.6	150.3	17.7	16.0
Gasoline (all types).....	127.9	129.9	150.7	17.8	16.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2).....	126.3	128.3	148.9	17.9	16.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3).....	137.2	139.4	161.4	17.6	15.8
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2).....	125.6	127.3	147.2	17.2	15.6
Medical care.....	276.0	284.7	292.2	5.9	2.6
Recreation (4).....	105.5	106.3	107.2	1.6	.8
Education and communication (4).....	115.1	116.0	116.3	1.0	.3
Other goods and services.....	289.6	290.6	303.9	4.9	4.6
Commodity and service group					
Commodities.....	155.2	155.6	158.7	2.3	2.0
Commodities less food and beverages.....	144.9	144.1	146.4	1.0	1.6
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	160.4	161.0	167.3	4.3	3.9
Durables.....	126.5	124.2	122.8	-2.9	-1.1
Services.....	200.9	202.8	206.3	2.7	1.7
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care.....	171.5	172.4	175.4	2.3	1.7
All items less shelter.....	171.7	173.3	176.3	2.7	1.7
Commodities less food.....	146.7	145.9	148.3	1.1	1.6
Nondurables.....	166.5	168.2	173.6	4.3	3.2
Nondurables less food.....	162.3	163.0	169.1	4.2	3.7
Services less rent of shelter (1).....	210.7	214.6	217.6	3.3	1.4
Services less medical care services.....	194.9	196.3	199.5	2.4	1.6
Energy.....	150.4	153.2	165.6	10.1	8.1
All items less energy.....	181.0	182.1	184.6	2.0	1.4
All items less food and energy.....	184.2	184.7	186.8	1.4	1.1

1 Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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

Table 2. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W):Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods, Pittsburgh, PA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	1st half 2003	2nd half 2003	1st half 2004	1st half 2003	2004 from- 2nd half 2003
All items.....	169.5	170.4	174.2	2.8	2.2
All items (1967=100).....	504.1	506.7	518.0	-	-
Food and beverages.....	172.0	175.0	179.8	4.5	2.7
Food.....	169.8	173.1	178.0	4.8	2.8
Food at home.....	167.9	172.8	179.3	6.8	3.8
Food away from home.....	173.6	175.5	178.9	3.1	1.9
Alcoholic beverages.....	195.7	195.7	200.0	2.2	2.2
Housing.....	163.7	163.8	167.2	2.1	2.1
Shelter.....	173.3	172.6	176.3	1.7	2.1
Rent of primary residence.....	174.1	174.3	177.1	1.7	1.6
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1).....	182.7	181.7	185.3	1.4	2.0
Fuels and utilities.....	172.9	175.6	180.2	4.2	2.6
Fuels.....	165.1	167.9	172.3	4.4	2.6
Gas (piped) and electricity.....	167.7	172.1	175.4	4.6	1.9
Electricity.....	127.8	127.8	127.9	.1	.1
Utility (piped) gas service.....	214.9	224.7	232.6	8.2	3.5
Household furnishings and operations.....	129.6	128.7	131.7	1.6	2.3
Apparel.....	145.7	144.1	135.8	-6.8	-5.8
Transportation.....	140.1	140.4	145.4	3.8	3.6
Private transportation.....	140.3	140.7	145.9	4.0	3.7
Motor fuel.....	127.7	129.6	150.3	17.7	16.0
Gasoline (all types).....	127.9	129.9	150.7	17.8	16.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2).....	126.3	128.3	148.9	17.9	16.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3).....	137.2	139.4	161.4	17.6	15.8
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2).....	125.6	127.3	147.2	17.2	15.6
Medical care.....	264.2	272.1	279.7	5.9	2.8
Recreation (4).....	103.4	104.0	105.1	1.6	1.1
Education and communication (4).....	113.6	114.8	114.7	1.0	-.1
Other goods and services.....	313.3	312.2	332.8	6.2	6.6
Commodity and service group					
Commodities.....	153.3	153.5	157.6	2.8	2.7
Commodities less food and beverages.....	141.3	140.0	143.5	1.6	2.5
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	160.4	159.9	168.2	4.9	5.2
Durables.....	119.6	117.5	116.2	-2.8	-1.1
Services.....	189.1	190.9	194.3	2.7	1.8
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care.....	165.9	166.6	170.3	2.7	2.2
All items less shelter.....	168.9	170.1	174.0	3.0	2.3
Commodities less food.....	143.7	142.4	146.0	1.6	2.5
Nondurables.....	166.4	167.8	174.5	4.9	4.0
Nondurables less food.....	162.8	162.4	170.6	4.8	5.0
Services less rent of shelter (1).....	181.6	185.2	188.1	3.6	1.6
Services less medical care services.....	184.9	186.4	189.6	2.5	1.7
Energy.....	144.6	146.9	160.6	11.1	9.3
All items less energy.....	173.5	174.2	176.9	2.0	1.5
All items less food and energy.....	174.5	174.6	176.7	1.3	1.2

1 Index is on a December 1984=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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