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Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – June 2020 **Area prices decreased 0.4 percent since April; up 0.4 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson declined 0.4 percent from April to June, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month decrease was due to a decline in the all items less food and energy index, down 0.6 percent. The energy index rose since April, up 1.4 percent, while the food index was unchanged over the period. (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 CPI-U increased 0.4 percent. The over-the-year rise was due to increases in both the food index (4.7 percent) and the all items less food and energy index (0.6 percent). The energy index dropped over the year, down 9.5 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

The food index was unchanged over the last two months. Prices increased for food at home, up 0.6 percent, while prices for food away from home decreased, down 0.7 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for cheese and related products and uncooked beef steaks, while prices were lower for eggs, among others.

Over the year, the food index increased 4.7 percent. Prices rose for both food at home (6.7 percent) and for food away from home (2.7 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 1.4 percent since April, led by higher prices for gasoline (8.3 percent). Prices for utility (piped) gas service also increased over the last two months, up 1.2 percent, while those for electricity were down 4.4 percent.

Over the year, the energy index dropped 9.5 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline, down 20.5 percent. Prices increased for electricity and utility (piped) gas service, up 3.5 and 2.9 percent, respectively, since June 2019.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy declined 0.6 percent from April to June. Lower prices for medical care (-3.7 percent) and new and used motor vehicles (-1.6 percent) were moderated by higher prices for shelter (0.4 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.6 percent since June 2019, led by higher prices for medical care (5.8 percent) and education and communication (3.9 percent). Prices were lower for recreation (-2.3 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-2.0 percent).

The Consumer Price Index for August 2020 is scheduled to be released Friday, September 11, 2020 at 8:30 am (ET).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on June 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in June was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed.

While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson is published bi-monthly. 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 **Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.

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.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Apr. 2020	May 2020	Jun. 2020	Jun. 2019	Apr. 2020	May 2020
All items.....		258.978		257.942	0.4	-0.4	
Food and beverages		275.058		274.883	4.5	-0.1	
Food		275.084		275.015	4.7	0.0	
Food at home		247.020	248.988	248.618	6.7	0.6	-0.1
Cereals and bakery products		299.226		309.128	5.8	3.3	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		253.261		246.797	11.2	-2.6	
Dairy and related products		235.226		241.544	3.0	2.7	
Fruits and vegetables		305.874		288.545	2.1	-5.7	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		173.424		180.951	4.5	4.3	
Other food at home		218.429		230.580	9.7	5.6	
Food away from home.....		316.618		314.300	2.7	-0.7	
Alcoholic beverages		271.382		269.598	0.8	-0.7	
Housing(1).....		263.447		263.487	-0.2	0.0	
Shelter		311.927	313.186	313.208	-0.4	0.4	0.0
Rent of primary residence		368.940	366.671	368.177	1.8	-0.2	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		328.507	329.010	329.526	2.4	0.3	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		328.507	329.010	329.526	2.4	0.3	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		231.520		224.101	3.3	-3.2	
Household energy		201.874	200.600	194.538	2.8	-3.6	-3.0
Energy services.....		217.614	216.782	209.898	3.7	-3.5	-3.2
Electricity		204.730	203.189	195.757	3.5	-4.4	-3.7
Utility (piped) gas service		189.320	192.564	191.590	2.9	1.2	-0.5
Household furnishings and operations.....		120.061		119.234	-2.0	-0.7	
Apparel.....		121.279		121.157	2.3	-0.1	
Transportation		192.006		192.896	-5.1	0.5	
Private transportation		190.970		193.047	-3.5	1.1	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		97.507		95.991	0.2	-1.6	
New vehicles(1).....		198.504		193.755	0.5	-2.4	
Used cars and trucks(1)		241.500		237.002	-2.4	-1.9	
Motor fuel		168.480	164.093	182.106	-20.5	8.1	11.0
Gasoline (all types).....		164.439	160.266	178.131	-20.5	8.3	11.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		163.687	159.960	178.701	-21.0	9.2	11.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		200.449	190.581	202.211	-16.1	0.9	6.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		188.695	180.680	194.094	-17.3	2.9	7.4
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		808.318		889.669	4.2	10.1	
Medical care		484.502		466.525	5.8	-3.7	
Recreation		126.135		123.437	-2.3	-2.1	
Education and communication(3).....		153.021		152.140	3.9	-0.6	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,247.199		1,247.122	3.6	0.0	
Other goods and services				433.662	3.0		
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		182.639		182.352	-0.1	-0.2	
Commodities less food and beverages		141.906		141.595	-2.9	-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, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Apr. 2020	May 2020	Jun. 2020	Jun. 2019	Apr. 2020	May 2020
Nondurables less food and beverages...		176.888		179.972	-5.9	1.7	
Durables		102.212		100.302	0.0	-1.9	
Services.....		333.419		331.646	0.7	-0.5	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		239.111		237.071	1.0	-0.9	
All items less medical care		247.682		247.526	-0.1	-0.1	
Commodities less food		145.711		145.366	-2.8	-0.2	
Nondurables		222.676		224.174	-0.1	0.7	
Nondurables less food.....		182.136		184.954	-5.4	1.5	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		370.937		364.746	2.1	-1.7	
Services less medical care services.....		318.615		318.413	0.0	-0.1	
Energy(1).....		190.368	187.553	193.035	-9.5	1.4	2.9
All items less energy		266.202		264.859	1.1	-0.5	
All items less food and energy		264.702		263.161	0.6	-0.6	

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a March 1978=100 base.
- (2) Indexes on a November 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.