



For Release: Friday, April 14, 2017

17-435-BOS

NEW ENGLAND INFORMATION OFFICE: Boston, Mass.

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

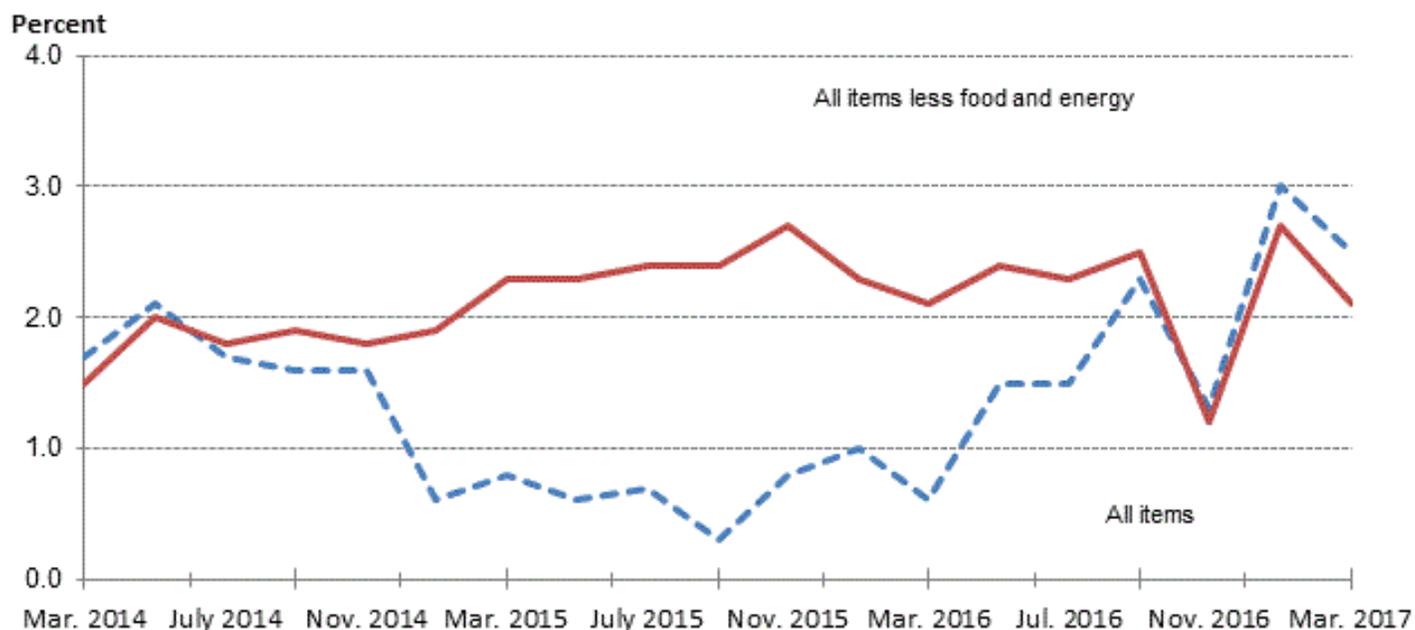
Media contact: (617) 565-2326 BLSMediaBoston@bls.gov

Consumer Price Index, Boston-Brockton-Nashua — March 2017
Area prices edged up 0.1 percent over two months; up 2.5 percent from a year ago

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Brockton-Nashua area edged up 0.1 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 paid by area consumers for all items less food and energy, up 0.2 percent. Lower food and energy prices down 0.6 percent and 0.4 percent respectively, almost entirely offset this 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 2.5 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher prices within all items less food and energy, up 2.1 percent and to a lesser extent, higher energy prices paid by area consumers, up 13.6 percent (See [chart 1](#)). Food prices were down 0.4 percent over the year, partially offsetting the increase.

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, March 2014 - March 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices edged down 0.6 percent since January mainly due to lower grocery store or food at home prices, down 0.8 percent. Restaurant prices, or food away from home, edged down 0.2 percent, contributing to the decrease.

Food prices decreased 0.4 percent over the year mainly due to lower grocery store prices, down 1.9 percent. To a lesser extent, restaurant prices edged up 2.1 percent partially offsetting the overall decrease since last March.

Energy

The energy index decreased 0.4 percent over the two months, mainly due to lower gasoline prices down 2.9 percent. Increases in prices paid by local households for electricity (2.0 percent) offset the overall decrease. To a lesser extent, higher prices for utility piped gas up 0.6 percent also partially offset the decrease.

Energy prices were up 13.6 percent from a year ago, largely attributable to higher gasoline prices, up 18.3 percent. Higher prices for electricity, up 9.4 percent, and to a lesser extent, utility (piped) gas up 7.5 percent, also contributed to the overall increase.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up from January (0.2 percent). The increase was mainly attributable to recreation also up 2.2 percent but almost entirely offset by decreases in education and communication (1.6 percent). Apparel, up 4.6 percent attributed to this overall increase. Within the local shelter index, lower prices for lodging away from home partially offset the overall increase.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.1 percent, with higher shelter costs being the main driver of the increase up 2.5 percent. Higher recreation and other goods and services prices up 6.3 percent and 6.1 percent respectively also contributed to the overall increase. Apparel up 4.4 percent also contributed to the overall increase. Within shelter, higher costs for owners' equivalent rent of residences, up 2.5 percent led the increase.

CPI-W

In March, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 263.888. The CPI-W was up 0.1 percent over two months and increased 2.6 percent over the year.

The May 2017 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Brockton-Nashua is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 14, 2017, 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 <https://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 Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Mass.-N.H.-Maine-Conn. consolidated area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, Bristol, Hampden, and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts; Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire; York County in Maine; and 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. 2017	Feb. 2017	Mar. 2017	Mar. 2016	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017
All items.....		264.865		265.070	2.5	0.1	
All items (1967 = 100).....		769.837		770.433			
Food and beverages.....		259.177		258.411	-0.3	-0.3	
Food.....		260.190		258.746	-0.4	-0.6	
Food at home.....		245.733	244.194	243.793	-1.9	-0.8	-0.2
Food away from home.....		285.291		284.807	2.1	-0.2	
Alcoholic beverages.....		252.051		259.430	0.9	2.9	
Housing.....		268.742		268.885	3.0	0.1	
Shelter.....		316.742	317.307	316.390	2.5	-0.1	-0.3
Rent of primary residence(1).....		328.042	329.161	328.992	3.3	0.3	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(1)(2)(3).....		338.105	339.002	338.114	2.5	0.0	-0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(1)(2)(3).....		338.105	339.002	338.114	2.5	0.0	-0.3
Fuels and utilities.....		270.189		272.981	10.2	1.0	
Household energy.....		226.756	228.116	229.481	10.8	1.2	0.6
Energy services(1).....		240.729	242.657	244.524	8.9	1.6	0.8
Electricity(1).....		271.662	271.662	276.971	9.4	2.0	2.0
Utility (piped) gas service(1).....		178.513	183.632	179.588	7.5	0.6	-2.2
Household furnishings and operations.....		128.024		128.342	-1.2	0.2	
Apparel.....		141.290		147.823	4.4	4.6	
Transportation.....		185.505		184.533	2.7	-0.5	
Private transportation.....		185.183		183.721	3.2	-0.8	
Motor fuel.....		200.438	196.581	194.747	18.2	-2.8	-0.9
Gasoline (all types).....		198.220	194.347	192.520	18.3	-2.9	-0.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		191.838	187.962	185.985	18.5	-3.1	-1.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		211.648	208.590	208.015	16.9	-1.7	-0.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		211.617	208.425	208.082	16.3	-1.7	-0.2
Medical care.....		635.944		637.160	0.8	0.2	
Recreation(6).....		122.228		124.970	6.3	2.2	
Education and communication(6).....		161.094		158.582	1.4	-1.6	
Other goods and services.....		471.909		475.618	6.1	0.8	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities.....		188.622		189.019	1.6	0.2	
Commodities less food and beverages.....		151.672		152.515	2.9	0.6	
Nondurables less food and beverages.....		195.043		195.942	6.3	0.5	
Durables.....		109.546		110.295	-1.4	0.7	
Services.....		333.811		333.838	3.0	0.0	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		247.190		247.615	2.5	0.2	
All items less medical care.....		250.627		250.795	2.7	0.1	
Commodities less food.....		155.677		156.721	2.8	0.7	
Nondurables.....		226.138		226.251	2.6	0.0	
Nondurables less food.....		198.186		199.497	5.8	0.7	

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. 2017	Feb. 2017	Mar. 2017	Mar. 2016	Jan. 2017	Feb. 2017
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		371.192		371.673	3.6	0.1	
Services less medical care services.....		313.110		313.143	3.4	0.0	
Energy		213.684	212.766	212.731	13.6	-0.4	0.0
All items less energy		273.515		273.837	1.7	0.1	
All items less food and energy		276.636		277.261	2.1	0.2	

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.