NEWS RELEASE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For Release: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 **16-146-PHI**

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.
Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic
Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

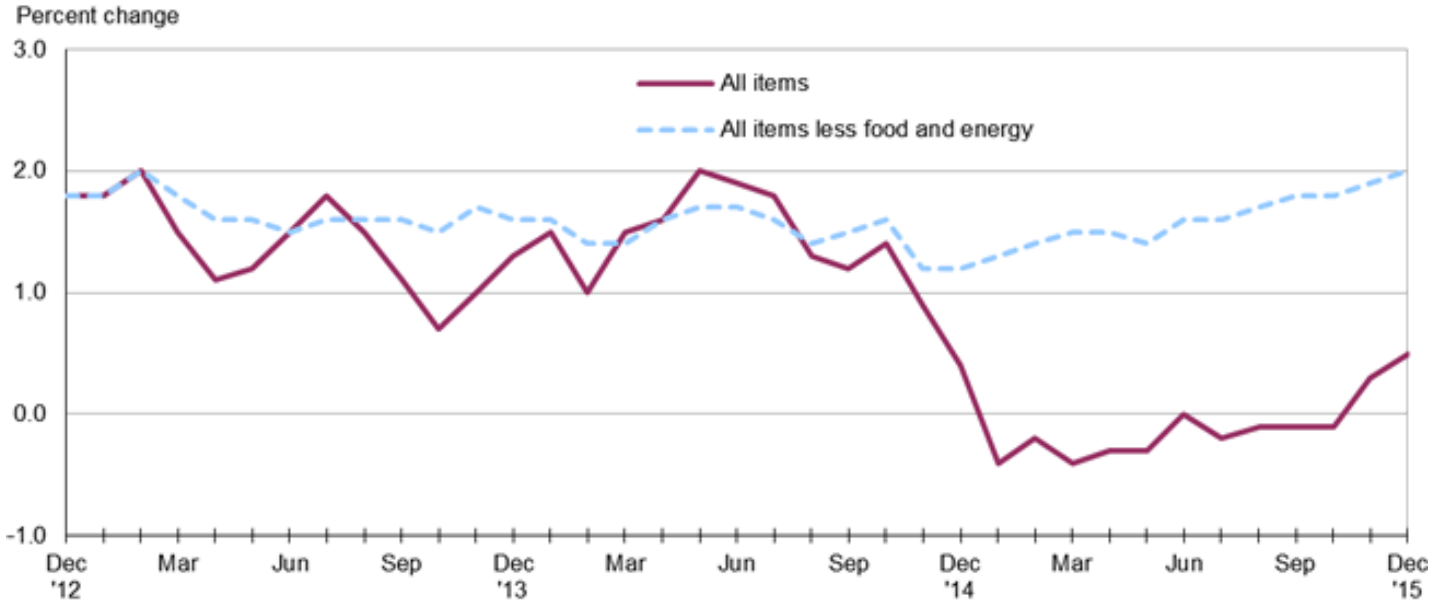
Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region – December 2015

Regional prices down 0.4 percent over the month and up 0.5 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Northeast decreased 0.4 percent in December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that both the energy index and the all items less food and energy index declined since November, down 2.6 and 0.2 percent, respectively. The food index was unchanged over the month. (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 Northeast all items CPI-U increased 0.5 percent. (See chart 1 and table A.) The all items less food and energy index advanced 2.0 percent over the year, and food prices rose 0.7 percent. The increase was moderated by a 15.3-percent decline in the energy index since December 2014. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Northeast region, December 2012–December 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index was unchanged since November. Prices for food at home inched down 0.1 percent, while prices for food away from home inched up 0.1 percent over the month.

From December 2014 to December 2015, the food index increased 0.7 percent. Prices for food away from home rose 2.2 percent over the year, while those for food at home edged down 0.3 percent.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, decreased 2.6 percent since November, led by a 3.2-percent decline in gasoline prices. Prices for utility (piped) gas and electricity also fell over the month, down 4.0 and 0.9 percent, respectively.

The energy index fell 15.3 percent since December 2014, led by a 22.6-percent drop in gasoline prices. Prices for utility (piped) gas and electricity also decreased over the year, down 15.3 and 1.9 percent, respectively.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged down 0.2 percent in December. The index's decline was led by lower prices for apparel (-2.0 percent), medical care (-0.3 percent), and education and communication (-0.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 2.0 percent, led by higher prices for shelter, particularly owners' equivalent rent of residences (2.7 percent each). Prices were also higher over the year for education and communication (2.4 percent) and medical care (2.2 percent), among others.

Table A. Northeast region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January	0.4	1.6	0.4	2.9	0.3	1.8	0.6	1.5	-0.2	-0.4
February	0.5	2.0	0.4	2.8	0.6	2.0	0.1	1.0	0.2	-0.2
March	0.8	2.5	0.5	2.5	0.0	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.3	-0.4
April	0.5	2.8	0.3	2.3	-0.1	1.1	0.0	1.6	0.1	-0.3
May	0.5	3.2	-0.1	1.7	0.0	1.2	0.4	2.0	0.4	-0.3
June	0.1	3.4	-0.2	1.5	0.1	1.5	0.0	1.9	0.3	0.0
July	0.2	3.6	-0.1	1.1	0.2	1.8	0.1	1.8	-0.1	-0.2
August	0.3	3.8	0.5	1.3	0.2	1.5	-0.3	1.3	-0.2	-0.1
September	0.1	4.0	0.5	1.7	0.1	1.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	-0.1
October	-0.1	3.6	0.1	1.9	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	1.4	-0.2	-0.1
November	-0.1	3.2	-0.2	1.8	0.1	1.0	-0.4	0.9	0.0	0.3
December	-0.3	2.9	-0.3	1.8	0.0	1.3	-0.5	0.4	-0.4	0.5

The Consumer Price Index for January 2016 is scheduled to be released Friday, February 19, 2016, 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 approximately 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 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 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/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 Northeast region is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

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, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2014	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015
All items		252.504	252.573	251.670	0.5	-0.3	-0.4
All items (December 1977 = 100)		397.616	397.726	396.303			
Food and beverages		252.759	252.167	252.100	0.7	-0.3	0.0
Food		252.919	252.328	252.268	0.7	-0.3	0.0
Food at home		249.465	248.120	247.883	-0.3	-0.6	-0.1
Food away from home		261.198	261.719	261.919	2.2	0.3	0.1
Alcoholic beverages		249.500	248.902	248.763	0.2	-0.3	-0.1
Housing		265.348	265.874	265.320	1.3	0.0	-0.2
Shelter		327.847	327.989	328.018	2.7	0.1	0.0
Rent of primary residence [1]		328.864	329.456	330.296	3.0	0.4	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of residences [1] [2]		339.116	339.816	340.368	2.7	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence [1] [2]		338.861	339.561	340.105	2.7	0.4	0.2
Fuels and utilities		204.297	207.541	203.697	-7.3	-0.3	-1.9
Household energy		179.901	183.405	179.319	-9.0	-0.3	-2.2
Energy services [1]		179.883	184.232	181.210	-5.5	0.7	-1.6
Electricity [1]		192.385	194.217	192.558	-1.9	0.1	-0.9
Utility (piped) gas service [1]		140.377	150.364	144.327	-15.3	2.8	-4.0
Household furnishings and operations		123.219	123.105	122.920	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2
Apparel		133.577	130.735	128.090	1.5	-4.1	-2.0
Transportation		194.865	195.171	193.211	-5.0	-0.8	-1.0
Private transportation		186.260	186.101	184.880	-5.4	-0.7	-0.7
New and used motor vehicles [3]		97.504	97.255	97.113	0.2	-0.4	-0.1
New vehicles		145.103	145.486	145.024	0.6	-0.1	-0.3
New cars and trucks [3] [4]		100.560	100.812	100.482	0.6	-0.1	-0.3
New cars [4]		137.195	137.282	137.230	-0.1	0.0	0.0
Used cars and trucks		152.746	150.002	149.144	0.0	-2.4	-0.6
Motor fuel		187.946	186.892	180.925	-22.6	-3.7	-3.2
Gasoline (all types)		187.075	186.046	180.106	-22.6	-3.7	-3.2
Gasoline, unleaded regular [4]		184.097	183.124	177.112	-23.3	-3.8	-3.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade [4] [5]		202.372	200.784	194.852	-20.5	-3.7	-3.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium [4]		200.149	198.643	193.420	-18.1	-3.4	-2.6
Medical care		471.457	472.096	470.813	2.2	-0.1	-0.3
Medical care commodities		375.766	371.518	369.270	-1.2	-1.7	-0.6
Medical care services		498.330	500.650	499.719	3.1	0.3	-0.2
Professional services		362.999	367.449	365.933	2.1	0.8	-0.4
Recreation [3]		120.907	120.427	120.123	0.9	-0.6	-0.3
Education and communication [3]		141.127	141.499	141.178	2.4	0.0	-0.2
Other goods and services		454.368	456.362	455.714	2.3	0.3	-0.1
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		186.071	185.183	183.806	-2.5	-1.2	-0.7
Commodities less food and beverages		149.744	148.766	146.883	-4.7	-1.9	-1.3
Nondurables less food and beverages		186.619	185.059	181.895	-7.4	-2.5	-1.7
Durables		106.580	106.182	105.554	-0.5	-1.0	-0.6

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, Northeast Region, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2014	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015
Services		316.906	317.843	317.353	2.1	0.1	-0.2
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		226.717	226.760	225.495	-0.7	-0.5	-0.6
All items less medical care		242.892	242.938	242.052	0.3	-0.3	-0.4
Commodities less food		153.363	152.393	150.554	-4.5	-1.8	-1.2
Nondurables		219.481	218.367	216.645	-3.1	-1.3	-0.8
Nondurables less food		190.287	188.786	185.805	-6.8	-2.4	-1.6
Services less rent of shelter [2]		316.171	318.026	316.938	1.4	0.2	-0.3
Services less medical care services		304.366	305.215	304.753	2.0	0.1	-0.2
Energy		183.436	185.044	180.170	-15.3	-1.8	-2.6
All items less energy		262.108	262.019	261.518	1.8	-0.2	-0.2
All items less food and energy		265.439	265.439	264.856	2.0	-0.2	-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) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.
Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.