

News

United
States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: www.bls.gov/ro1/

USDL-08-256

For information: (617) 565-2327

For release: Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Media contact: Walter Marshall (617) 565-2324

Consumer Price Index for Food and Energy Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT August 2008

Energy costs in the Boston metropolitan area fell 5.9 percent over the month in August 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The August decline was the first over-the-month drop since energy prices fell 0.6 percent in February 2008 and was caused mainly by a decline in gasoline prices and, to a lesser extent, lower prices for fuel oil. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that consumers in the Boston area still faced energy prices in August 2008 that were 35.1 percent higher than those the year before. The cost of grocery food, as measured by the food at home index, rose 1.9 percent over the month, following a 1.5 percent advance in July. Higher prices for meats led the overall increase. Grocery prices in Boston were up 6.2 percent since last August, the highest over-the-year rise since December 1998.

After declining by less than a cent in July, the price of a gallon of gasoline in Boston fell an additional 33 cents to \$3.734 in August. Although still high by historical standards, the average price in Boston was slightly below the national average, which stood at \$3.838. Over the year, Boston area drivers have seen prices at the pump rise by a steep 34.3 percent.

In the other energy categories, while the price of utility (piped) gas service fell by 1.9 percent over the month, over the year, prices have increased by a sharp 61.8 percent. This was the second highest annual increase recorded since the series began. Electricity prices were flat over the month, but over the twelve months, electricity posted a 10.4 percent increase. In August, the Boston energy index on the 1982-84 base was 282.014, meaning that Boston area consumers would have to spend \$28.20 for selected energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

NOTE: Local area CPI indexes are the by-products of the national CPI program. Since each local area 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 that for the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal factors. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility compared with the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Additional information is available from the BLS Internet Web site at www.bls.gov/cpi or by calling the Boston Economic Analysis and Information office at 617-565-2327.

Free email subscription service! To receive the most recent monthly Consumer Price Indexes for the U.S. and Northeast, and bimonthly indexes for the Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT metropolitan area, please subscribe at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/list.htm> and select the notification titled New England CPI Summary (Boston). Boston Consumer Price Index for September will be released on Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods

Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	June 2008	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Aug. 2007	June 2008	July 2008
Expenditure category						
All items	-	241.258	-	-	-	-
All items (1967=100)	-	701.224	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages	-	224.591	-	-	-	-
Food	-	224.933	-	-	-	-
Food at home	215.394	218.626	222.748	6.2	3.4	1.9
Food away from home	-	236.645	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages	-	222.547	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	246.619	-	-	-	-
Shelter	273.355	280.020	276.610	.8	1.2	-1.2
Rent of primary residence ¹	271.722	272.176	272.083	1.1	.1	.0
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	282.211	282.216	281.392	-1.8	-3	-3
Fuels and utilities	-	297.291	-	-	-	-
Household energy	248.662	264.913	254.627	34.8	2.4	-3.9
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	228.197	249.282	247.362	25.9	8.4	-8
Electricity ¹	209.444	217.064	217.064	10.4	3.6	.0
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	254.500	301.286	295.651	61.8	16.2	-1.9
Household furnishings and operations	-	126.639	-	-	-	-
Apparel	-	117.327	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	198.520	-	-	-	-
Private transportation	-	198.087	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel	347.709	347.173	319.597	35.1	-8.1	-7.9
Gasoline (all types)	341.783	341.250	313.524	34.3	-8.3	-8.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular ³	341.857	341.108	312.614	35.0	-8.6	-8.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{3 4}	339.595	339.375	313.838	32.9	-7.6	-7.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium ³	326.516	327.021	303.196	31.5	-7.1	-7.3
Medical care	-	499.036	-	-	-	-
Recreation ⁵	-	118.310	-	-	-	-
Education and communication ⁵	-	131.531	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	-	376.395	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	-	241.258	-	-	-	-
Commodities	-	187.206	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages	-	166.257	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	-	224.780	-	-	-	-
Durables	-	110.974	-	-	-	-
Services	-	289.366	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	-	230.432	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter	-	228.348	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food	-	168.676	-	-	-	-
Nondurables	-	223.142	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food	-	223.175	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter ²	-	314.408	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services	-	273.081	-	-	-	-
Energy	290.939	299.805	282.014	35.1	-3.1	-5.9
All items less energy	-	238.542	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy	-	241.814	-	-	-	-

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 November 1982=100 base.

³ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁴ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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