

News

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Philadelphia Area Retail Food, Shelter, and Energy Price Indexes: September 2008

Philadelphia area food at home prices rose, while shelter and energy prices declined in September, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that despite the one-month decreases in shelter and energy prices, all three indexes were higher than year-ago levels; energy prices were up 19.0 percent since September 2007, while food at home and shelter prices were 6.6 and 0.9 percent higher, respectively. (See table 1.)

Following a 0.6-percent decline in August, the food at home index rose 2.3 percent in September. The recent advance was led by higher prices for eggs, ice cream and related products, and uncooked ground beef, among others. Partially offsetting these advances were lower prices for a variety of items including milk and citrus fruits.

The Philadelphia area food at home index was 222.175 on the 1982-84 base, which means that grocery shoppers in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$22.22 last month for a market basket of food items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Shelter prices fell 0.7 percent in September—the largest one-month decrease in two years—due in large part to lower prices for other lodging away from home (including hotels and motels). Lower prices for owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (-0.1 percent) also contributed to the recent decline in the shelter index, while rent of primary residence prices inched up 0.1 percent in September. These two published components of the shelter index had over-the-year increases of 0.9 and 2.7 percent, respectively.

The Philadelphia area shelter index stood at 275.013 on the 1982-84 base, which means that local residents would have had to spend \$27.50 last month for various types of shelter that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Following a 3.8-percent decrease in August, energy prices fell 4.5 percent in September. The recent decline was due largely to lower gasoline prices, which also fell in both August (-7.3 percent) and September (-5.9 percent). Over the year, gasoline prices were up 31.7 percent. Lower prices for fuel oil, along with electricity (-1.3 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (-2.8 percent) also contributed to the recent one-month decline in the overall energy index. Both the electricity and utility gas service indexes were higher over the year, up 2.7 and 11.5 percent, respectively.

The Philadelphia area energy index stood at 249.093 on the 1982-84 base, which means that energy users in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$24.91 last month for a group of energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

The Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sep. 2008	Sep. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008
All items	-	228.337	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages	-	203.201	-	-	-	-
Food	-	203.080	-	-	-	-
Food at home	218.483	217.116	222.175	6.6	1.7	2.3
Food away from home	-	180.370	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages	-	202.158	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	236.167	-	-	-	-
Shelter	277.355	276.859	275.013	0.9	-0.8	-0.7
Rent of primary residence (1)	255.566	256.267	256.532	2.7	0.4	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2)	280.644	280.050	279.648	0.9	-0.4	-0.1
Fuels and utilities	-	234.266	-	-	-	-
Household energy	218.712	217.511	210.638	9.0	-3.7	-3.2
Gas (piped) and electricity (1)	223.649	224.802	220.700	5.4	-1.3	-1.8
Electricity (1)	209.379	210.970	208.136	2.7	-0.6	-1.3
Utility (piped) gas service (1)	254.720	254.720	247.463	11.5	-2.8	-2.8
Household furnishings and operations	-	125.706	-	-	-	-
Apparel	-	98.789	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	209.522	-	-	-	-
Private transportation	-	205.959	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel	364.608	338.371	318.344	32.2	-12.7	-5.9
Gasoline (all types)	357.988	331.966	312.236	31.7	-12.8	-5.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3)	362.087	334.106	313.376	31.5	-13.5	-6.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4)	346.605	324.533	306.365	32.7	-11.6	-5.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3)	328.584	308.249	292.472	31.9	-11.0	-5.1
Medical care	-	418.465	-	-	-	-
Recreation (5)	-	122.572	-	-	-	-
Education and communication (5)	-	125.390	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	-	389.079	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	-	176.140	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages	-	158.227	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	-	199.962	-	-	-	-
Durables	-	112.332	-	-	-	-
Services	-	282.554	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	-	220.084	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter	-	213.908	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food	-	160.068	-	-	-	-
Nondurables	-	204.027	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food	-	200.173	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter (2)	-	295.672	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services	-	271.224	-	-	-	-
Energy	271.192	260.773	249.093	19.0	-8.1	-4.5
All items less energy	-	225.880	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy	-	232.104	-	-	-	-

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 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.