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Consumer Price Index, Seattle area — February 2019

Area prices were up 0.7 percent over the past two months, up 2.7 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Seattle area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), advanced 0.7 percent for the two months ending in February 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See [table A.](#)) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the February increase was influenced by higher prices for household furnishings and operations and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 2.7 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A.](#)) Energy prices declined 3.2 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 3.0 percent over the year. (See [table 1.](#))

News Release Information

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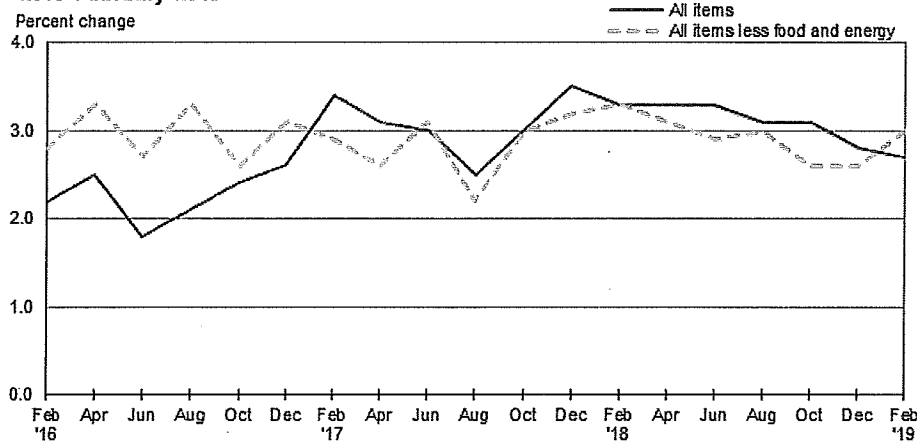
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Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, February 2016–February 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices increased 0.8 percent for the two months ending in February. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home rose 1.2 percent, and prices for food away from home increased 0.4 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices advanced 3.3 percent. Prices for food at home rose 3.4 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home advanced 3.2 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 5.0 percent for the two months ending in February. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-8.9 percent). Prices for electricity rose 1.9 percent, and prices for natural gas service moved up 0.4 percent for the same period.

Energy prices declined 3.2 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-3.9 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service decreased 8.5 percent, and prices paid for electricity declined 0.6 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 1.1 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for household furnishings and operations (8.0 percent) and apparel (7.8 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for education and communication (-0.6 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 3.0 percent. Components contributing to the increase included household furnishings and operations (9.3 percent), education and communication (4.2 percent), and shelter (4.1 percent). Partly offsetting the increases was a price decline in apparel (-0.8 percent).

Table A. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
February	0.2	1.1	0.2	2.2	1.0	3.4	0.8	3.3	0.7	2.7
April	0.9	0.4	1.1	2.5	0.8	3.1	0.8	3.3		
June	1.6	1.6	0.9	1.8	0.8	3.0	0.8	3.3		
August	0.0	1.8	0.3	2.1	-0.2	2.5	-0.3	3.1		
October	-0.3	1.2	0.0	2.4	0.5	3.0	0.4	3.1		
December	-0.2	2.2	0.0	2.6	0.5	3.5	0.2	2.8		

The February 2019 Consumer Price Index for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area is scheduled to be released on March 12, 2019

Consumer Price Index Geographic Revision for 2018

In January 2018, BLS introduced a new geographic area sample for the Consumer Price Index (CPI). As part of the new sample, the index for this area was renamed. Additional information on the geographic revision is available at: www.bls.gov/cpi/additional-resources/geographic-revision-2018.htm.

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 94 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 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/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 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, metropolitan area covered in this release is comprised of King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties in the State of Washington.

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

Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Dec. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Feb. 2018	Dec. 2018	Jan. 2019