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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 2026

Release Number: CB26-165

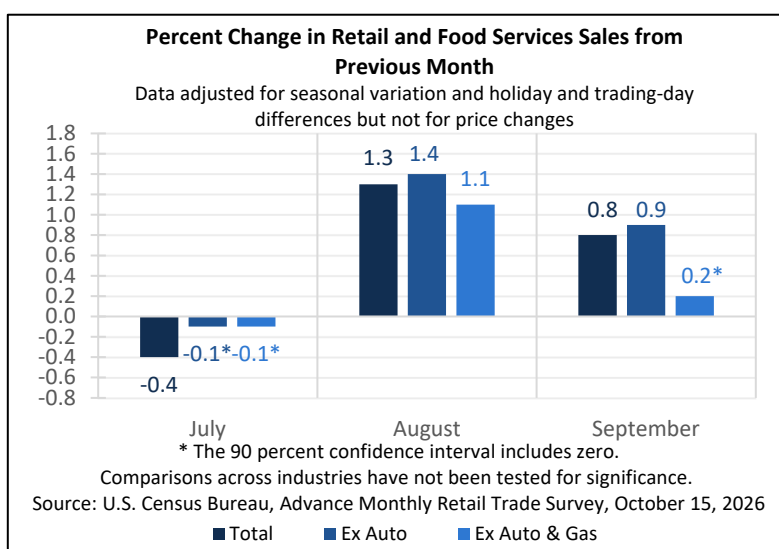
Notice of Revision

Monthly retail sales estimates were revised on September 28, 2026 based on historical corrections and the results of the 2023 and 2024 Annual Integrated Economic Survey. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised estimates can be found on our website at

<https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/historic_releases.html>.

October 15, 2026 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September 2026:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
September 2026	\$745.0 billion	0.8%
August 2026 (revised)	\$739.3 billion	1.3%
Next release: November 17, 2026		
* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero. Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 15, 2026		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September 2026, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$745.0 billion, up 0.8 percent (± 0.4 percent) from the previous month, and up 6.3 percent (± 0.5 percent) from September 2025. Total sales for the July 2026 through September 2026 period were up 5.5 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The July 2026 to August 2026 percent change was revised from up 1.1 percent (± 0.4 percent) to up 1.3 percent (± 0.1 percent).

Data Inquiries

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Media Inquiries

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Release Schedule

The October 2026 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on November 17, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. EST. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <<https://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <<https://www.census.gov/retail/index.html>>.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 4,800 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. For more information on how data is collected for the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MARTS), see our methodology page at <https://www.census.gov/retail/marts/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, letters are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 4,800 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. For each detailed industry, we compute a ratio of current-to-previous month weighted sales using data from units for which we have obtained usable responses for both the current and previous month. For each detailed industry, the advance total sales estimates for the current month is computed by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS) at the appropriate industry level. Total estimates for broader industries are computed as the sum of the detailed industry estimates. The link relative estimate is used because imputation is not performed for most nonrespondents in MARTS. For a limited number of nonresponding companies that have influential effects on the estimates, sales may be estimated based on historical performance of that company. The monthly estimates are benchmarked to the annual survey estimates from the Annual Retail Trade Survey once available. The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at <www.census.gov/retail>.

The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data (Project No. P-7504206, Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approval number: CBDRB-FY26-003).

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Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.6 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.4 percent to +2.8 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Statement Regarding Natural Disasters

For information on the impact of natural disasters on the compilation of this report, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website at www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html.

RESOURCES

API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before. www.census.gov/developers/

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FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/>> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		9 Month Total		2026			2025		2026			2025	
		2026	% Chg. 2025	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep.	Aug.	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep. (r)	Aug. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	6,445,114	4.7	727,033	750,707	749,221	680,630	715,547	745,021	739,322	729,915	700,948	700,407
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	5,193,985	5.4	589,191	605,485	604,062	546,894	573,165	605,188	599,797	591,337	564,592	564,016
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	5,886,655	3.7	657,379	682,217	682,238	626,396	658,638	677,000	675,372	668,406	647,829	647,567
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	4,635,526	4.2	519,537	536,995	537,079	492,660	516,256	537,167	535,847	529,828	511,473	511,176
	Retail	5,637,843	4.8	635,056	655,885	655,940	595,443	624,281	652,115	647,440	639,263	614,111	613,570
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	141,759	136,884	122,502	136,966	(*)	137,941	136,755	131,183	131,514
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,251,129	2.0	137,842	145,222	145,159	133,736	142,382	139,833	139,525	138,578	136,356	136,391
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1,145,727	1.7	125,616	132,785	132,834	122,420	130,702	127,788	127,555	126,750	125,174	125,193
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	109,722	108,384	101,640	108,781	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,437	12,325	11,316	11,680	(*)	11,970	11,828	11,182	11,198
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	93,192	-1.5	10,771	10,760	10,770	10,232	10,941	10,696	10,559	10,538	10,201	10,602
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,602	5,798	5,483	5,952	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	65,005	7.0	7,555	7,759	7,570	6,942	7,158	7,853	7,806	7,646	7,179	7,208
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	398,518	4.5	44,082	44,570	47,548	42,128	42,258	44,077	44,323	44,233	42,180	42,053
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,663	42,111	37,090	37,534	(*)	38,696	38,599	36,650	36,547
445	Food & beverage stores.....	751,682	0.9	83,080	85,442	87,070	81,532	86,054	85,056	84,727	84,556	84,301	84,503
4451	Grocery stores	683,438	1.0	75,532	77,628	78,734	74,160	77,982	77,152	76,783	76,589	76,454	76,528
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,637	6,096	5,273	5,822	(*)	5,711	5,740	5,616	5,686
446	Health & personal care stores	340,615	-1.9	40,088	38,620	38,544	40,289	39,130	39,535	39,248	38,777	40,009	39,565
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	32,699	32,948	34,759	33,439	(*)	33,130	32,849	34,381	33,914
447	Gasoline stations	558,459	17.0	69,654	68,490	66,983	54,234	56,909	68,021	63,950	61,509	53,119	52,840
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	218,265	5.3	23,572	27,302	26,161	22,369	26,435	26,478	26,486	26,327	25,222	25,400
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,322	2,404	2,301	2,551	(*)	2,360	2,426	2,529	2,556
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,179	13,685	11,012	13,023	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,784	3,195	2,407	3,855	(*)	2,931	2,942	2,763	2,954
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	72,755	9.2	8,134	9,495	8,623	7,456	8,738	8,681	8,727	8,640	7,923	7,973
452	General merchandise stores.....	703,717	3.6	76,981	83,627	81,243	73,234	81,276	81,776	81,844	81,233	78,476	78,235
4522	Department stores	30,769	0.9	3,468	3,650	3,602	3,241	3,628	4,028	3,963	3,985	3,786	3,876
4523	Gen. merchandise stores incl. warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	79,977	77,641	69,993	77,648	(*)	77,881	77,248	74,690	74,359
452311	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	71,159	68,895	61,822	69,144	(*)	68,753	68,213	65,979	65,664
452319	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,818	8,746	8,171	8,504	(*)	9,128	9,035	8,711	8,695
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	138,448	11.2	15,696	16,478	16,469	14,314	14,070	15,826	16,319	15,759	14,266	13,817
454	Nonstore retailers	1,046,058	8.0	117,601	118,120	119,800	108,977	108,930	124,283	123,926	121,467	114,879	114,983
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	112,217	113,591	102,970	103,290	(*)	116,650	114,047	108,048	108,157
722	Food services & drinking places	807,271	4.4	91,977	94,822	93,281	85,187	91,266	92,906	91,882	90,652	86,837	86,837

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(S) Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability (coefficient of variation is greater than 30%), poor response quality (total quantity response rate is less than 50%), or other concerns about the estimate's quality.

(1) Estimates include data only for businesses with paid employees. Prior to the benchmark report released in April 2025, the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey estimates included nonemployers.

For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <<https://www.census.gov/naics/>>.

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>.

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample.

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 15, 2026. (Project No. P-7504206 / Approval CBDRB-FY26-003), Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Sep. 2026 Advance from --		Aug. 2026 Preliminary from --		Jul. 2026 through Sep. 2026 from --	
		Aug. 2026 (p)	Sep. 2025 (r)	Jul. 2026 (r)	Aug. 2025 (r)	Apr. 2026 through Jun. 2026	Jul. 2025 through Sep. 2025
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.8	6.3	1.3	5.6	1.2	5.5
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	7.2	1.4	6.3	1.3	6.2
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.2	4.5	1.0	4.3	1.2	4.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.2	5.0	1.1	4.8	1.3	4.6
	Retail	0.7	6.2	1.3	5.5	1.0	5.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.2	2.5	0.7	2.3	0.7	2.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	0.2	2.1	0.6	1.9	0.5	1.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.3	4.9	0.2	-0.4	0.4	0.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.6	9.4	2.1	8.3	1.9	7.6
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.6	4.5	0.2	5.4	0.4	5.2
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.6
4451	Grocery stores	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.6
446	Health & personal care stores	0.7	-1.2	1.2	-0.8	2.2	-1.4
447	Gasoline stations	6.4	28.1	4.0	21.0	1.6	22.2
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.0	5.0	0.6	4.3	1.7	4.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-0.5	9.6	1.0	9.5	0.5	9.3
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.1	4.2	0.8	4.6	1.1	4.1
4522	Department stores	1.6	6.4	-0.6	2.2	1.1	3.9
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-3.0	10.9	3.6	18.1	3.8	13.0
454	Nonstore retailers	0.3	8.2	2.0	7.8	0.9	7.5
722	Food services & drinking places	1.1	7.0	1.4	5.8	2.6	6.0

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 15, 2026. (Project No. P-7504206 / Approval CBDRB-FY26-003),

Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Sep. 2026

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
441 4411, 4412 442 443 444 445 4451 446 447 448 451 452 4522 453 454 722	Retail & food services,						
	total	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	1.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Retail, total	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.8	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.1
	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	2.0	0.7	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.2
	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.8	1.7	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.5
	Electronics & appliance stores	2.3	1.1	0.7	1.3	0.2	0.3
	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	3.7	0.8	0.5	1.1	0.0	0.2
	Food & beverage stores.....	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3	-0.1	0.2
	Grocery stores	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Health & personal care stores	3.9	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1
	Gasoline stations	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.5
	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	3.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.5
	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	3.7	1.4	0.9	1.6	-0.1	0.5
	General merchandise stores.....	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.8	2.2	1.5	3.2	0.4	0.9
	Nonstore retailers	2.9	0.3	0.4	1.1	-0.2	0.3
	Food services & drinking places	3.2	0.9	0.6	1.0	0.2	0.1

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day variation. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 15, 2026. (Project No. P-7504206 / Approval CBDRB-FY26-003),
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