

MONTHLY ADVANCE ECONOMIC INDICATORS REPORT, AUGUST 2026

Release Number: CB26-159

September 30, 2026 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following international trade, wholesale inventories, and retail inventories advance statistics for August 2026:

	 ADVANCE INTERNATIONAL TRADE: GOODS DEFICIT	 ADVANCE WHOLESALE INVENTORIES	 ADVANCE RETAIL INVENTORIES
AUGUST 2026	\$132.6 Billion +11.5%°	\$965.7 Billion +0.7%	\$881.6 Billion +0.3%
JULY 2026	\$118.9 Billion	\$959.4 Billion (R)	\$879.0 Billion (R)
Next release: October 28, 2026. * The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero. ° Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable. Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Advance Economic Indicators Report, September 30, 2026.			

Advance International Trade in Goods

The international trade deficit was \$132.6 billion in August, up \$13.7 billion from \$118.9 billion in July. Exports of goods for August were \$203.4 billion, \$3.7 billion more than July exports. Imports of goods for August were \$336.1 billion, \$17.4 billion more than July imports.

Advance Wholesale Inventories

Wholesale inventories for August, adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$965.7 billion, up 0.7 percent (± 0.2 percent) from July 2026, and were up 6.6 percent (± 1.1 percent) from August 2025. The June 2026 to July 2026 percentage change was unrevised from the preliminary estimate of up 1.3 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Advance Retail Inventories

Retail inventories for August, adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$881.6 billion, up 0.3 percent (± 0.2 percent) from July 2026, and were up 4.8 percent (± 0.7 percent) from August 2025. The June 2026 to July 2026 percentage change was unrevised from up 0.8 percent (± 0.2 percent).

The September 2026 Advance report is scheduled for release on October 28, 2026. 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/econ/indicators/index.html> >.

Data Inquiries

International Trade Indicator Branch: 301-763-2311 eid.international.trade.data@census.gov

Retail Indicator Branch: 301-763-2713 eid.retail.indicator.branch@census.gov

Wholesale Indicator Branch: 301-763-6856 eid.wholesale.indicator.branch@census.gov

Media Inquiries

Public Information Office

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Notice of Revision - Revisions to the Retail estimates were released on September 28, 2026 and are reflected in this release. Revisions to the Wholesale estimates will be released October 26, 2026 and will be reflected in the September 2026 Advance Economic Indicators Release scheduled for October 28, 2026. Estimates are revised based on historical corrections and the results of the 2023 and 2024 Annual Integrated Economic Survey.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

International Trade in Goods

Goods (Census Basis)

Data for goods on a Census basis are compiled from the documents collected by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and reflect the movement of goods between foreign countries and the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and U.S. Foreign Trade Zones. They include government and non-government shipments of goods and exclude shipments between the United States and its territories and possessions; transactions with U.S. military, diplomatic, and consular installations abroad; U.S. goods returned to the United States by its Armed Forces; personal and household effects of travelers; and in-transit shipments. Data for U.S. exports to Canada are derived from import data compiled by Canada. For more information on the data exchange and substitution please refer to the FT-900. The General Imports value reflects the total arrival of merchandise from foreign countries that immediately enters consumption channels, warehouses, or Foreign Trade Zones.

For imports, the value reported is the U.S. Customs and Border Protection appraised value of merchandise—generally, the price paid for merchandise for export to the United States. Import duties, freight, insurance, and other charges incurred in bringing merchandise to the United States are excluded.

Exports are valued at the free alongside ship value of merchandise at the U.S. port of export, based on the transaction price including inland freight, insurance, and other charges incurred in placing the merchandise alongside the carrier at the U.S. port of exportation.

Additional information on coverage and valuation are available in the Guide to Foreign Trade Statistics, <www.census.gov/foreign-trade/guide/sec2.html#coverage> and <www.census.gov/foreign-trade/guide/sec2.html#valuation>, respectively.

Data Inquiries

International Trade Indicator Branch: 301-763-2311 eid.international.trade.data@census.gov

Retail Indicator Branch: 301-763-2713 eid.retail.indicator.branch@census.gov

Wholesale Indicator Branch: 301-763-6856 eid.wholesale.indicator.branch@census.gov

Media Inquiries

Public Information Office

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Nonsampling Errors

Goods data are a complete enumeration of documents collected by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and are not subject to sampling errors. This report presents current month statistics which reflect nearly complete coverage. Current month statistics reflecting complete coverage will be published in the upcoming U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services report (FT-900). Statistics for other months shown reflect complete coverage and appear in the most recently published FT-900. Quality assurance procedures are performed at every stage of collection, processing, and tabulation. However, the data are still subject to several types of nonsampling errors. Information on nonsampling errors and other quality issues are available in the Guide to Foreign Trade Statistics, <<https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/guide/sec2.html#error>>.

The U.S. Census Bureau recommends that data users incorporate this information into their analyses, as nonsampling errors could impact the conclusion drawn from the results. For a detailed discussion of errors affecting the goods data, see U.S. Merchandise Trade Statistics: A Quality Profile (October 2014), available at <www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aip/quality_profile10032014.pdf> or from the Economic Indicators Division, U.S. Census Bureau.

Adjustments for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variations

Goods data are presented on a seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted basis. Seasonally adjusted (and/or trading day adjusted data) are produced using X-13ARIMA-SEATS software to develop monthly adjustment factors. Goods data are initially classified under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System), which is an internationally accepted standard for the commodity classification of traded goods. Combining trade into approximately 140 export and 140 import end-use categories makes it possible to examine goods according to their principal uses. These categories are used as the basis for computing the seasonal and trading-day adjusted data. These adjusted data are then summed to the six end-use aggregates for publication. For more information, visit the seasonal adjustment section of the Guide to Foreign Trade here: <www.census.gov/foreign-trade/guide/sec2.html#seasonal>.

Retail and Wholesale Inventories

National estimates of end-of-month inventories are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey. Additional information for each survey can be found at <www.census.gov/retail> and <www.census.gov/wholesale>. The advance estimates contained in this report are not incorporated into the full MRTS and MWTS time series.

The MRTS and MWTS samples selected to measure inventories consist of a stratified simple random sampling method of approximately 11,000 retail firms and 4,200 wholesale firms located in the United States. The retail and wholesale samples include firms of all sizes and are updated on a quarterly basis to account for new retail and wholesale firms, deaths, and other changes to the universe.

Data for nonresponding firms are imputed based on data for similar-sized firms classified in the same kind of business. For surveyed Retail companies, approximately 36.6 percent provided data for this reporting period

Data Inquiries

International Trade Indicator Branch: 301-763-2311 eid.international.trade.data@census.gov

Retail Indicator Branch: 301-763-2713 eid.retail.indicator.branch@census.gov

Wholesale Indicator Branch: 301-763-6856 eid.wholesale.indicator.branch@census.gov

Media Inquiries

Public Information Office

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

resulting in a total quantity response rate of 48.9 percent. For surveyed Wholesale companies, approximately 50.0 percent provided data for this reporting period resulting in a total quantity response rate of 55.0 percent.

MRTS estimates cover companies with one or more establishments that sell merchandise and related services to final consumers. 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).

MWTS estimates cover wholesale merchants who sell goods on their own account and include such businesses as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, exporters, and importers. Sales offices and branches maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining firms for the purpose of marketing their products are not covered in this report. Also excluded is NAICS Industry Group 4251: Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers. The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data (Project No. 7503922, Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approval number: CBDRB-FY26-005).

Reliability of Estimates

Because the retail and wholesale estimates 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 are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percentage 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 are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total).

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 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.

Data Inquiries

International Trade Indicator Branch: 301-763-2311 eid.international.trade.data@census.gov

Retail Indicator Branch: 301-763-2713 eid.retail.indicator.branch@census.gov

Wholesale Indicator Branch: 301-763-6856 eid.wholesale.indicator.branch@census.gov

Media Inquiries

Public Information Office

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

The U.S. Census Bureau recommends that individuals using retail and wholesale estimates incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error and nonsampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Adjustments for Seasonal Variations

Concurrent seasonal adjustment is used to adjust the retail and wholesale inventories estimates for seasonal variations. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are applied to the retail and wholesale estimates of current and previous month inventories and for inventories estimates a year ago as well.

Statement Regarding Natural Disasters: For information on the impact of natural disasters, including hurricanes, on the compilation of this report, please see <[Wholesale Natural Disaster FAQs](#)> and <[Retail Natural Disaster FAQs](#)>.

Data Availability

The Advance Economic Indicators Report is available at <www.census.gov/econ/indicators/index.html>. For archived versions of the Advance Economic Indicators Report please visit the Historical Data tab at the following: <www.census.gov/econ/indicators/historical_data.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>

FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <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.

###

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

° Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable for this survey.

(R) Revised from the last published Monthly Retail Trade Report and Monthly Wholesale Trade: Sales and Inventories Report

Data Inquiries

International Trade Indicator Branch: 301-763-2311 eid.international.trade.data@census.gov

Retail Indicator Branch: 301-763-2713 eid.retail.indicator.branch@census.gov

Wholesale Indicator Branch: 301-763-6856 eid.wholesale.indicator.branch@census.gov

Media Inquiries

Public Information Office

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Table 1. U.S. International Trade in Goods by Principal End-Use Category (1)

In millions of dollars. Details may not equal totals due to seasonal adjustment and rounding. (X) – Not applicable

	Goods - Census Basis (2)						
	Monthly				Percent change		
	August 2026 (a)	July 2026	June 2026	August 2025	August 2026/ July 2026	July 2026/ June 2026	August 2026/ August 2025
<u>Seasonally Adjusted</u>							
Balance	-132,636	-118,940	-101,055	-85,157	(X)	(X)	(X)
Exports	203,415	199,689	205,614	177,650	1.9	-2.9	14.5
Foods, Feeds, & Beverages	14,137	14,971	15,124	13,530	-5.6	-1.0	4.5
Industrial Supplies (3)	77,542	71,592	80,259	59,565	8.3	-10.8	30.2
Capital Goods	69,486	68,143	66,259	62,338	2.0	2.8	11.5
Automotive Vehicles, etc.	12,602	13,529	13,621	12,852	-6.9	-0.7	-1.9
Consumer Goods	20,616	23,035	21,315	21,498	-10.5	8.1	-4.1
Other Goods	9,031	8,419	9,036	7,866	7.3	-6.8	14.8
Imports	336,051	318,630	306,668	262,806	5.5	3.9	27.9
Foods, Feeds, & Beverages	18,594	17,631	17,758	16,913	5.5	-0.7	9.9
Industrial Supplies (3)	62,429	53,528	55,317	49,141	16.6	-3.2	27.0
Capital Goods	145,842	140,264	125,869	92,760	4.0	11.4	57.2
Automotive Vehicles, etc.	35,701	35,388	35,897	34,594	0.9	-1.4	3.2
Consumer Goods	57,035	57,964	57,685	55,657	-1.6	0.5	2.5
Other Goods	16,452	13,854	14,142	13,742	18.8	-2.0	19.7
<u>Not Seasonally Adjusted</u>							
Balance	-131,824	-135,466	-108,882	-83,142	(X)	(X)	(X)
Exports	204,249	197,454	208,374	179,448	3.4	-5.2	13.8
Foods, Feeds, & Beverages	13,217	13,560	13,427	12,894	-2.5	1.0	2.5
Industrial Supplies (3)	78,905	72,325	80,816	60,464	9.1	-10.5	30.5
Capital Goods	69,560	68,610	68,364	63,049	1.4	0.4	10.3
Automotive Vehicles, etc.	13,163	13,027	14,277	13,448	1.0	-8.8	-2.1
Consumer Goods	20,185	21,496	22,387	21,474	-6.1	-4.0	-6.0
Other Goods	9,219	8,435	9,102	8,119	9.3	-7.3	13.5
Imports	336,073	332,920	317,255	262,590	0.9	4.9	28.0
Foods, Feeds, & Beverages	17,959	17,608	18,316	16,165	2.0	-3.9	11.1
Industrial Supplies (3)	62,866	56,934	57,949	49,858	10.4	-1.8	26.1
Capital Goods	146,068	148,539	133,314	92,510	-1.7	11.4	57.9
Automotive Vehicles, etc.	36,182	35,458	36,066	35,117	2.0	-1.7	3.0
Consumer Goods	57,778	60,210	57,282	56,298	-4.0	5.1	2.6
Other Goods	15,220	14,172	14,329	12,643	7.4	-1.1	20.4

(a) Advance statistics

(1) For a listing of the detail included in each end-use category, see <www.census.gov/foreign-trade/reference/codes/enduse/exeumstr.txt>.

(2) Data are presented on a Census basis. The information needed to convert to a balance of payment basis is not available.

(3) Includes petroleum and petroleum products.

NOTES:

* Current month statistics reflect nearly complete coverage; current month statistics reflecting complete coverage will be published in the upcoming U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services report (FT-900). Statistics for other months shown reflect complete coverage and appear in the most recently published FT-900.

* For information on data sources, nonsampling errors, and definitions, see the explanatory notes in this release or at <www.census.gov/econ/indicators/advance_report.pdf>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Advance Economic Indicators Report, September 30, 2026.

Table 2. Levels and Percent Changes for Inventories

Inventories estimates are shown in millions of dollars. Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey and the Monthly Retail Trade Survey.

	Inventories					
	Monthly			Percent change		
	August 2026 (a)	July 2026 (r)	August 2025 (r)	August 2026/ July 2026	July 2026/ June 2026	August 2026/ August 2025
Adjusted¹						
Merchant wholesale ² trade, total	965,693	959,445	905,914	0.7	1.3	6.6
Durable goods	601,816	597,430	566,534	0.7	1.1	6.2
Nondurable goods	363,877	362,015	339,380	0.5	1.7	7.2
Retail ³ trade, total	881,623	879,001	841,549	0.3	0.8	4.8
Total (excl. motor veh. & parts)	605,344	605,019	581,410	0.1	0.8	4.1
Motor vehicle & parts dealers	276,279	273,982	260,139	0.8	0.8	6.2
Not Adjusted						
Merchant wholesale ² trade, total	950,896	949,746	894,954	0.1	1.4	6.3
Durable goods	605,079	602,848	569,110	0.4	1.3	6.3
Nondurable goods	345,817	346,898	325,844	-0.3	1.5	6.1
Retail ³ trade, total	871,298	867,932	830,931	0.4	0.3	4.9
Total (excl. motor veh. & parts)	601,382	596,906	577,240	0.7	0.8	4.2
Motor vehicle & parts dealers	269,916	271,026	253,691	-0.4	-0.8	6.4

(a) Advance estimate

(r) Revised estimate

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability

Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey and the Monthly Retail Trade Survey.

	Inventories					
	Monthly			Standard Error of		
	Coefficient of Variation			Percent Change		
	August 2026 (a)	July 2026 (r)	August 2025 (r)	August 2026/ July 2026	July 2026/ June 2026	August 2026/ August 2025
Merchant wholesale ² trade, total	2.0	2.0	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.6
Durable goods	2.8	2.8	2.8	0.1	0.2	1.0
Nondurable goods	1.9	1.9	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.6
Retail trade, total	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.4
Total (excl. motor veh. & parts)	1.5	1.5	1.6	Z	0.1	0.2
Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.7	1.8	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.9

(a) Advance estimate

(r) Revised estimate

Z Estimate rounds to zero

(1) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available not adjusted 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.

(2) The 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) defines merchant wholesalers as including manufacturers' sales branches and offices. However, the estimates included in this release exclude manufacturers' sales branches and offices. Note that this is not a change in coverage from prior releases and is consistent with the description used in the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey data products.

(3) Retail Trade estimates include data only for businesses with paid employees. Prior to the benchmark report released in April 2025, the monthly retail estimates that were released in the Advance Economic Indicators Report estimates included nonemployees.

NOTES:

Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html for wholesale and at www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/how_surveys_are_collected.html for retail.