ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, JANUARY 2021

Release Number: CB21-21

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2019 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the Service Annual Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 26, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

Statement Regarding COVID-19 Impact: The Census Bureau continues to monitor response and data quality and has determined that estimates in this release meet publication standards. For more information, see COVID-19 FAQs.

February 17, 2021 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for January 2021:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
January 2021	**$568.2 billion**	**5.3%**
December 2020 (revised)	**$539.7 billion**	**-1.0%**
Next release: March 16, 2021		

* 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, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 17, 2021.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales from Previous Month
Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 17, 2021
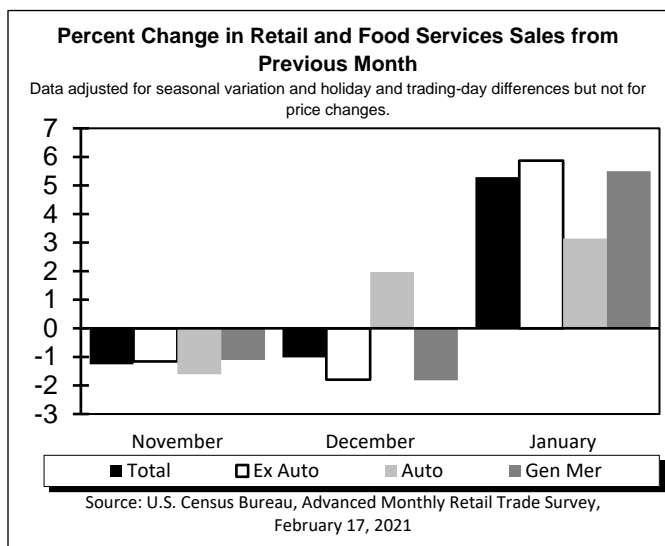
Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for January 2021, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $568.2 billion, an increase of 5.3 percent (±0.5 percent) from the previous month, and 7.4 percent (±0.7 percent) above January 2020. Total sales for the November 2020 through January 2021 period were up 4.6 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The November 2020 to December 2020 percent change was revised from down 0.7 percent (±0.5 percent) to down 1.0 percent (±0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 5.1 percent (±0.5 percent) from December 2020, and 10.8 percent (±0.7 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 28.7 percent (±1.8 percent) from January 2020, while

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sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book stores were up 22.5 percent (±4.0 percent) from last year.

General Information

The February 2021 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on March 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <www.census.gov/retail/>.

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 5,500 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.

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, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,500 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey. 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>.

Reliability of Estimates

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

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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 ±1.753 x 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 ±1.753 x CV x (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.

Weather Information
For information on the impact of weather events 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

The Rest of the Consumer Spending Story
Retail and services together represent what's commonly referred to as consumer spending. Quarterly Services Survey (QSS) revenue comprises roughly 2/3 of the personal consumption expenditures component of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

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The fourth quarter 2020 Advance Quarterly Services Report will be available on February 19, 2021 at 10:00 AM. Learn about historical revenue trends for certain industries going back 15 years and other data, such as in-patient days and discharges for hospitals, by visiting <https://www.census.gov/services/index.html>

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

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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]				
		1 Month Total		2021	2020		2019		2021	2020			2019
		2021	% Chg. 2020	Jan.[3] (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.[3] (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**509,802**	**5.8**	**509,802**	**616,649**	**546,321**	**481,862**	**591,380**	**568,215**	**539,670**	**545,248**	**528,892**	**526,355**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	406,850	4.7	406,850	499,798	442,689	388,594	487,917	449,379	424,453	432,255	423,726	421,288
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	474,297	7.1	474,297	581,073	512,610	442,922	551,177	528,983	501,944	509,837	486,335	483,357
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	371,345	6.2	371,345	464,222	408,978	349,654	447,714	410,147	386,727	396,844	381,169	378,290
	Retail	458,610	8.9	458,610	565,303	495,784	421,093	526,295	513,581	488,579	491,713	463,408	461,465
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	142,653	116,363	94,367	147,511	(*)	105,909	107,104	109,833	109,293
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**102,952**	**10.4**	**102,952**	**116,851**	**103,632**	**93,268**	**103,463**	**118,836**	**115,217**	**112,993**	**105,166**	**105,067**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	95,195	10.9	95,195	108,960	95,696	85,823	96,073	110,179	106,928	104,700	97,195	97,043
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	92,050	79,030	71,757	82,445	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,891	7,936	7,445	7,390	(*)	8,289	8,293	7,971	8,024
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**10,122**	**9.3**	**10,122**	**11,635**	**10,718**	**9,257**	**11,003**	**11,348**	**10,135**	**10,208**	**10,161**	**9,789**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,870	5,621	4,904	5,163	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	4,353	5,840	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**7,419**	**-4.1**	**7,419**	**10,082**	**8,924**	**7,736**	**11,807**	**7,801**	**6,803**	**7,279**	**8,084**	**8,070**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**	**31,705**	**13.7**	**31,705**	**35,506**	**35,701**	**27,887**	**29,493**	**40,055**	**38,276**	**38,313**	**33,671**	**32,972**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	31,025	31,587	24,555	25,787	(*)	33,432	33,496	29,372	28,780
445	**Food & beverage stores**	**70,984**	**11.6**	**70,984**	**76,316**	**70,968**	**63,590**	**68,992**	**72,020**	**70,322**	**71,337**	**64,398**	**64,548**
4451	Grocery stores	64,173	11.3	64,173	65,886	62,824	57,667	59,812	64,045	62,510	63,331	57,495	57,622
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,758	6,086	4,388	6,630	(*)	5,846	6,014	5,114	5,065
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**31,025**	**3.3**	**31,025**	**35,376**	**30,301**	**30,047**	**33,194**	**31,886**	**31,473**	**31,174**	**30,017**	**29,905**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,343	25,626	25,209	26,509	(*)	26,700	26,391	24,715	24,500
447	**Gasoline stations**	**35,505**	**-8.8**	**35,505**	**35,576**	**33,711**	**38,940**	**40,203**	**39,232**	**37,726**	**35,411**	**42,557**	**42,998**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**14,738**	**-11.3**	**14,738**	**30,448**	**20,228**	**16,612**	**34,541**	**20,014**	**19,057**	**18,573**	**22,508**	**22,655**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	550	863	(*)	(S)	(S)	663	656
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,477	2,795	2,532	4,496	(*)	2,587	2,511	3,426	3,365
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,866	8,836	6,953	14,517	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,474	2,384	2,293	4,296	(*)	2,527	2,375	3,211	3,187
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**7,087**	**22.0**	**7,087**	**11,042**	**8,180**	**5,807**	**9,506**	**8,165**	**7,558**	**7,666**	**6,667**	**6,620**
452	**General merchandise stores**	**56,997**	**7.8**	**56,997**	**76,708**	**66,408**	**52,885**	**77,648**	**63,518**	**60,209**	**61,328**	**59,972**	**59,798**
4521	Department stores	8,334	-1.7	8,334	14,267	10,755	8,479	18,403	10,705	8,670	9,001	11,041	11,012
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	62,441	55,653	44,406	59,245	(*)	51,539	52,327	48,931	48,786
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters...............................	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,007	47,515	38,360	50,606	(*)	44,209	44,657	42,061	41,962
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,434	8,138	6,046	8,639	(*)	7,330	7,670	6,870	6,824
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**11,278**	**6.9**	**11,278**	**13,954**	**11,939**	**10,552**	**12,525**	**12,809**	**12,588**	**11,932**	**11,932**	**11,423**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**78,798**	**22.1**	**78,798**	**111,809**	**95,074**	**64,512**	**93,920**	**87,897**	**79,215**	**85,499**	**68,275**	**67,620**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	103,242	87,480	56,350	85,217	(*)	71,946	78,037	61,117	60,097
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**51,192**	**-15.8**	**51,192**	**51,346**	**50,537**	**60,769**	**65,085**	**54,634**	**51,091**	**53,535**	**65,484**	**64,890**

(*) 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) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see http://www.census.gov/eos/www/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, February 17, 2021. 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]					
		Jan. 2021 Advance from --		Dec. 2020 Preliminary from --		Nov. 2020 through Jan. 2021 from --	
		Dec. 2020 (p)	Jan. 2020 (r)	Nov. 2020 (r)	Dec. 2019 (r)	Aug. 2020 through Oct. 2020	Nov. 2019 through Jan. 2020
	Retail & food services, total	**5.3**	**7.4**	**-1.0**	**2.5**	**0.3**	**4.6**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	5.9	6.1	-1.8	0.8	-0.1	3.4
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	5.4	8.8	-1.5	3.8	0.0	6.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	6.1	7.6	-2.5	2.2	-0.5	5.1
	Retail	5.1	10.8	-0.6	5.9	0.8	7.8
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers ....**	**3.1**	**13.0**	**2.0**	**9.7**	**1.8**	**9.5**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	3.0	13.4	2.1	10.2	2.1	9.8
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores ....**	**12.0**	**11.7**	**-0.7**	**3.5**	**1.7**	**6.0**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores ....**	**14.7**	**-3.5**	**-6.5**	**-15.7**	**-5.2**	**-9.6**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers....................................**	**4.6**	**19.0**	**-0.1**	**16.1**	**3.0**	**17.9**
445	**Food & beverage stores..........................**	**2.4**	**11.8**	**-1.4**	**8.9**	**0.9**	**10.5**
4451	Grocery stores	2.5	11.4	-1.3	8.5	1.2	10.0
446	**Health & personal care stores ....**	**1.3**	**6.2**	**1.0**	**5.2**	**0.9**	**5.2**
447	**Gasoline stations ....**	**4.0**	**-7.8**	**6.5**	**-12.3**	**4.6**	**-12.1**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores ....**	**5.0**	**-11.1**	**2.6**	**-15.9**	**-0.8**	**-14.2**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores ....**	**8.0**	**22.5**	**-1.4**	**14.2**	**1.5**	**18.2**
452	**General merchandise stores...................**	**5.5**	**5.9**	**-1.8**	**0.7**	**-0.4**	**3.2**
4521	Department stores	23.5	-3.0	-3.7	-21.3	-3.4	-14.4
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers ....**	**1.8**	**7.3**	**5.5**	**10.2**	**5.6**	**6.7**
454	**Nonstore retailers ....**	**11.0**	**28.7**	**-7.3**	**17.1**	**-2.5**	**24.1**
722	**Food services & drinking places ....**	**6.9**	**-16.6**	**-4.6**	**-21.3**	**-3.8**	**-18.2**

(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, February 17, 2021. 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 Jan. 2021

(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 Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services, total	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
	Retail, total	**0.7**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.2**	**0.4**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.5**	**1.0**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**0.5**	**0.4**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.6	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.6	0.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	**3.0**	**1.1**	**0.9**	**1.7**	**0.9**	**0.9**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**1.7**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**0.0**	**1.7**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**.....................................	**1.8**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**0.1**	**1.0**
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.7**	**0.1**	**0.2**
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.2
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**2.6**	**0.6**	**0.5**	**1.2**	**0.4**	**0.6**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**1.4**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.8**	**0.3**	**0.6**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**3.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.3**	**-1.2**	**1.5**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**3.0**	**0.8**	**1.2**	**2.3**	**0.2**	**1.6**
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	**0.9**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.5**	**0.4**
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.3
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**4.4**	**3.9**	**1.8**	**4.8**	**0.6**	**1.5**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**1.6**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**1.0**	**-0.6**	**0.7**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**3.5**	**1.3**	**0.8**	**2.0**	**0.0**	**0.4**

(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, February 17, 2021. 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>.