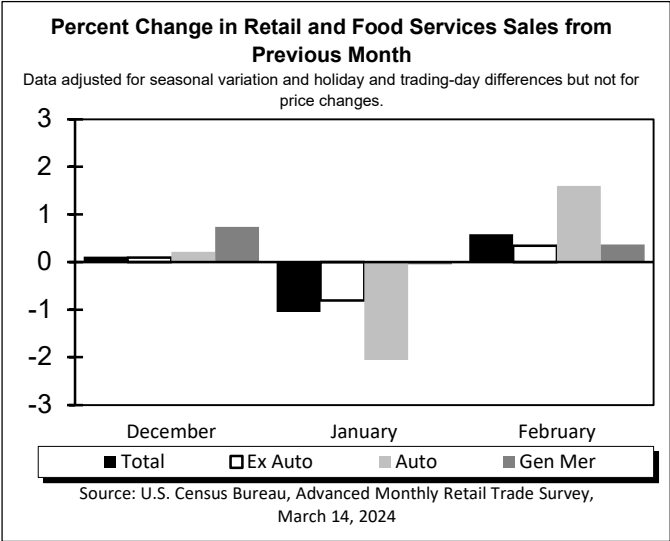# ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2024

Release Number: CB24-40

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2022 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the Service Annual Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

March 14, 2024 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2024:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
February 2024	**$700.7 billion**	**+0.6%**
January 2024 (revised)	**$696.7 billion**	**-1.1%**

Next release: April 15, 2024

* 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, March 14, 2024

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, March 14, 2024

Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2024, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $700.7 billion, up 0.6 percent (±0.5 percent) from the previous month, and up 1.5 percent (±0.7 percent) above February 2023. Total sales for the December 2023 through February 2024 period were up 2.1 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2023 to January 2024 percent change was revised from down 0.8 percent (±0.5 percent) to down 1.1 percent (±0.4 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.6 percent (±0.5 percent) from January 2024, and up 0.8 percent (±0.5 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 6.4 percent (±1.6 percent) from last year, while food services and drinking places were up 6.3 percent (±2.1 percent) from February 2023.

General Information

The March 2024 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on April 15, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

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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 <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 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, 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, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 4,800 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>.

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-FY24-0003).

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). The fourth quarter 2023 Quarterly Services Report was released on February 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM. Learn

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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.

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]				
		2 Month Total		2024		2023			2024		2023		
		2024	% Chg. 2023	Feb.[3] (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb.[3] (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**1,281,200**	**3.4**	**643,391**	**637,809**	**767,712**	**609,578**	**629,035**	**700,727**	**696,710**	**704,107**	**690,375**	**696,426**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,036,704	3.5	517,649	519,055	636,750	490,443	511,052	566,790	564,878	569,500	558,249	561,715
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1,187,520	4.1	596,341	591,179	718,729	561,973	578,703	647,683	644,140	650,807	634,827	639,682
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	943,024	4.4	470,599	472,425	587,767	442,838	460,720	513,746	512,308	516,200	502,701	504,971
	Retail	1,108,875	3.0	555,127	553,748	671,582	529,374	547,156	607,425	603,825	610,322	602,624	606,350
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	110,674	168,994	110,441	112,264	(*)	129,192	129,169	129,967	131,490
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**244,496**	**3.1**	**125,742**	**118,754**	**130,962**	**119,135**	**117,983**	**133,937**	**131,832**	**134,607**	**132,126**	**134,711**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	223,309	2.7	115,261	108,048	120,340	109,406	108,108	122,618	120,455	123,173	121,158	123,977
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	90,601	102,771	87,828	89,104	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,706	10,622	9,729	9,875	(*)	11,377	11,434	10,968	10,734
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**19,557**	**-9.2**	**9,904**	**9,653**	**11,340**	**10,567**	**10,965**	**10,593**	**10,714**	**10,688**	**11,780**	**12,432**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,587	6,237	5,987	6,168	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**14,437**	**3.3**	**7,206**	**7,231**	**10,071**	**6,756**	**7,225**	**7,773**	**7,660**	**7,454**	**7,625**	**7,727**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**..................................	**66,820**	**-4.2**	**33,868**	**32,952**	**36,876**	**34,324**	**35,432**	**40,417**	**39,536**	**41,320**	**43,042**	**43,313**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,624	31,775	29,628	30,810	(*)	33,915	35,582	36,943	37,255
445	**Food & beverage stores**........................	**158,112**	**2.8**	**77,493**	**80,619**	**89,906**	**74,421**	**79,445**	**82,579**	**82,484**	**82,765**	**82,243**	**81,754**
4451	Grocery stores	143,548	2.7	70,009	73,539	78,563	67,365	72,370	74,084	74,132	74,186	73,946	73,323
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,009	8,021	5,071	5,093	(*)	5,935	6,142	5,959	6,107
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**70,532**	**5.7**	**34,343**	**36,189**	**40,526**	**32,496**	**34,230**	**35,999**	**36,117**	**36,642**	**35,399**	**34,716**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,731	32,616	26,870	28,685	(*)	30,217	30,597	29,175	28,685
447	**Gasoline stations**	**93,680**	**-4.3**	**47,050**	**46,630**	**48,983**	**47,605**	**50,332**	**53,044**	**52,570**	**53,300**	**55,548**	**56,744**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**41,329**	**2.4**	**21,909**	**19,420**	**41,187**	**20,937**	**19,405**	**26,289**	**26,413**	**26,625**	**25,949**	**26,534**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,423	4,684	2,735	2,514	(*)	3,324	3,416	3,398	3,468
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,038	16,823	7,999	7,786	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,176	4,544	2,618	2,299	(*)	3,224	3,278	3,256	3,406
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**13,908**	**-1.0**	**6,794**	**7,114**	**11,995**	**6,796**	**7,257**	**8,461**	**8,459**	**8,489**	**8,724**	**8,764**
452	**General merchandise stores**..................	**131,686**	**2.4**	**66,349**	**65,337**	**91,556**	**63,367**	**65,276**	**73,785**	**73,513**	**73,548**	**73,239**	**73,340**
4521	Department stores	18,364	-2.1	9,491	8,873	16,631	9,466	9,296	11,064	11,081	10,974	11,579	11,785
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	56,464	74,925	53,901	55,980	(*)	62,432	62,574	61,660	61,555
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters..............................	(*)	(*)	(*)	48,468	63,700	46,467	48,504	(*)	53,262	53,529	52,924	52,952
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,996	11,225	7,434	7,476	(*)	9,170	9,045	8,736	8,603
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**27,691**	**4.1**	**13,981**	**13,710**	**16,123**	**13,103**	**13,500**	**15,783**	**15,690**	**15,662**	**15,294**	**15,649**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**226,627**	**10.0**	**110,488**	**116,139**	**142,057**	**99,867**	**106,106**	**118,765**	**118,837**	**119,222**	**111,655**	**110,666**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	105,010	131,803	89,207	94,787	(*)	109,158	109,653	101,372	100,516
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**172,325**	**6.3**	**88,264**	**84,061**	**96,130**	**80,204**	**81,879**	**93,302**	**92,885**	**93,785**	**87,751**	**90,076**

(*) 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 <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, March 14, 2024. 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]					
		Feb. 2024 Advance from --		Jan. 2024 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2023 through Feb. 2024 from --	
		Jan. 2024 (p)	Feb. 2023 (r)	Dec. 2023 (r)	Jan. 2023 (r)	Sep. 2023 through Nov. 2023	Dec. 2022 through Feb. 2023
	Retail & food services, total	**0.6**	**1.5**	**-1.1**	**0.0**	**-0.5**	**2.1**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.3	1.5	-0.8	0.6	-0.4	2.0
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.6	2.0	-1.0	0.7	-0.2	2.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.3	2.2	-0.8	1.5	0.0	2.9
	Retail	0.6	0.8	-1.1	-0.4	-0.6	1.5
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.6**	**1.4**	**-2.1**	**-2.1**	**-0.8**	**2.7**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	1.8	1.2	-2.2	-2.8	-0.8	2.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**-1.1**	**-10.1**	**0.2**	**-13.8**	**-1.4**	**-10.2**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**1.5**	**1.9**	**2.8**	**-0.9**	**-0.8**	**2.1**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**	**2.2**	**-6.1**	**-4.3**	**-8.7**	**-2.2**	**-5.9**
445	**Food & beverage stores**	**0.1**	**0.4**	**-0.3**	**0.9**	**-0.2**	**0.7**
4451	Grocery stores	-0.1	0.2	-0.1	1.1	-0.2	0.5
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**-0.3**	**1.7**	**-1.4**	**4.0**	**-2.7**	**5.3**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**0.9**	**-4.5**	**-1.4**	**-7.4**	**-4.4**	**-6.0**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**-0.5**	**1.3**	**-0.8**	**-0.5**	**1.4**	**1.9**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**0.0**	**-3.0**	**-0.4**	**-3.5**	**-0.9**	**-3.0**
452	**General merchandise stores**	**0.4**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**0.2**	**0.7**	**1.2**
4521	Department stores	-0.2	-4.4	1.0	-6.0	2.2	-4.3
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**0.6**	**3.2**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**3.0**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**-0.1**	**6.4**	**-0.3**	**7.4**	**1.2**	**7.7**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**0.4**	**6.3**	**-1.0**	**3.1**	**0.0**	**6.6**

(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, March 14, 2024. 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 Feb. 2024

(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
	Retail & food services, total	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Retail, total	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	1.6	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.0	0.1
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	3.0	1.8	0.8	1.7	-0.2	0.6
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	2.2	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.6
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**....................................	2.7	0.8	0.5	1.1	-0.2	0.3
445	**Food & beverage stores**..........................	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.3
446	**Health & personal care stores**	3.2	0.5	0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.3
447	**Gasoline stations**	1.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.5
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	3.0	1.0	0.6	1.3	-0.1	0.2
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	2.4	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.2	0.4
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.3	-0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	5.2	2.4	1.3	2.5	0.3	1.1
454	**Nonstore retailers**	2.0	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.4
722	**Food services & drinking places**	3.5	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.0	0.3

(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, March 14, 2024. 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>.