

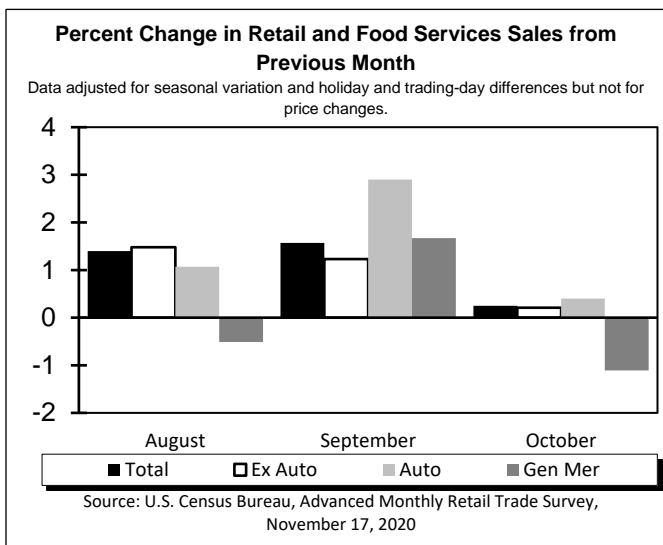
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, OCTOBER 2020

Release Number: CB20-169

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](#).

November 17, 2020 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for October 2020:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
October 2020	\$553.3 billion	0.3%*
September 2020 (revised)	\$551.9 billion	1.6%
Next release: December 16, 2020		
<small>* 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, November 17, 2020.</small>		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for October 2020, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$553.3 billion, an increase of 0.3 percent (± 0.5 percent)* from the previous month, and 5.7 percent (± 0.7 percent) above October 2019. Total sales for the August 2020 through October 2020 period were up 5.1 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The August 2020 to September 2020 percent change was revised from up 1.9 percent (± 0.5 percent) to up 1.6 percent (± 0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.3 percent (± 0.5 percent)* from September 2020, and 8.5 percent (± 0.7 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 29.1 percent (± 1.6 percent) from October 2019, while building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 19.5 percent (± 2.3 percent) from last year.

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General Information

The November 2020 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on December 16, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. EST. 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.

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

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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.

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 third quarter 2020 Advance Quarterly Services Report will be available on November 18, 2020 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>>

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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				
		10 Month Total		2020			2019		2020			2019	
		2020	% Chg. 2019	Oct. ³ (a)	Sep. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sep.	Oct. ³ (a)	Sep. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sep. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	5,092,380	0.0	557,149	534,013	550,342	525,539	496,074	553,329	551,934	543,404	523,587	521,030
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	4,062,223	0.1	441,663	420,428	433,626	421,738	396,537	438,414	437,481	432,178	419,755	417,809
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	4,739,992	1.5	519,534	497,458	512,376	481,937	454,138	517,091	515,848	508,021	481,459	479,591
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	3,709,835	2.0	404,048	383,873	395,660	378,136	354,601	402,176	401,395	396,795	377,627	376,370
	Retail	4,577,466	2.8	500,180	479,757	494,467	460,534	433,299	497,695	496,230	488,998	458,712	456,046
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	102,132	108,754	106,593	100,089	(*)	110,379	106,248	109,031	108,958
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,030,157	-0.3	115,486	113,585	116,716	103,801	99,537	114,915	114,453	111,226	103,832	103,221
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	948,405	-0.5	106,733	104,978	107,764	95,254	91,783	106,626	105,931	102,535	95,829	95,309
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	85,648	85,823	79,452	75,986	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,607	8,952	8,547	7,754	(*)	8,522	8,691	8,003	7,912
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	89,126	-7.2	10,575	10,650	10,554	9,995	9,839	10,408	10,451	10,388	9,896	9,938
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,801	5,573	5,186	5,363	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,849	4,981	4,809	4,476	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	64,213	-14.6	7,352	7,158	7,574	7,604	7,638	7,755	7,664	7,752	8,072	8,195
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	367,215	13.2	39,442	38,074	37,793	33,719	30,948	38,139	37,809	37,653	31,908	31,833
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,691	33,633	29,701	27,570	(*)	32,901	32,877	27,862	27,877
445	Food & beverage stores	706,519	12.0	71,469	68,914	71,363	64,051	61,668	70,737	70,897	70,780	64,117	64,079
4451	Grocery stores	631,346	11.8	63,157	61,080	63,293	57,258	55,217	62,532	62,775	62,666	57,258	57,220
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,854	6,099	4,913	4,680	(*)	6,066	6,111	4,983	5,005
446	Health & personal care stores	299,237	1.0	32,043	30,989	30,431	31,088	28,706	31,415	31,461	31,052	30,271	29,809
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,399	25,913	26,097	23,630	(*)	27,187	26,361	25,045	24,718
447	Gasoline stations	352,388	-16.1	37,615	36,555	37,966	43,602	41,936	36,238	36,086	35,383	42,128	41,439
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	145,200	-30.0	18,778	17,756	18,138	21,177	19,464	19,361	20,209	17,792	22,158	22,249
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	360	326	674	662	(*)	359	356	666	668
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,556	2,440	3,390	3,080	(*)	2,784	2,552	3,376	3,396
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,324	7,666	9,359	8,219	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,341	2,523	2,851	2,762	(*)	2,700	1,987	3,168	3,219
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	64,869	2.8	7,271	7,626	8,000	6,372	6,276	7,590	7,919	7,333	6,750	6,741
452	General merchandise stores	586,789	3.0	61,393	56,710	62,166	58,560	54,515	61,249	61,937	60,919	59,750	59,426
4521	Department stores	85,626	-17.0	9,424	8,927	9,624	10,456	9,762	9,809	10,281	9,399	11,130	11,141
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	47,783	52,542	48,104	44,753	(*)	51,656	51,520	48,620	48,285
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,432	45,026	41,175	38,367	(*)	43,852	43,715	41,760	41,433
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,351	7,516	6,929	6,386	(*)	7,804	7,805	6,860	6,852
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	107,771	-2.2	12,427	11,666	11,917	12,228	11,011	11,724	11,836	11,712	11,533	11,449
454	Nonstore retailers	763,982	21.9	86,329	80,074	81,849	68,337	61,761	88,164	85,508	87,008	68,297	67,667
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	72,977	75,162	60,568	54,922	(*)	77,884	79,452	60,811	60,090
722	Food services & drinking places	514,914	-19.3	56,969	54,256	55,875	65,005	62,775	55,634	55,704	54,406	64,875	64,984

(*) 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, November 17, 2020. 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					
		Oct. 2020 Advance from --		Sep. 2020 Preliminary from --		Aug. 2020 through Oct. 2020 from --	
		Sep. 2020 (p)	Oct. 2019 (r)	Aug. 2020 (r)	Sep. 2019 (r)	May 2020 through Jul. 2020	Aug. 2019 through Oct. 2019
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.3	5.7	1.6	5.9	6.1	5.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.2	4.4	1.2	4.7	6.2	4.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.2	7.4	1.5	7.6	5.8	6.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.2	6.5	1.2	6.6	5.9	6.1
	Retail	0.3	8.5	1.5	8.8	5.0	7.9
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.4	10.7	2.9	10.9	5.7	8.9
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	0.7	11.3	3.3	11.1	6.2	9.1
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.4	5.2	0.6	5.2	14.8	5.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	-3.9	-1.1	-6.5	22.5	-4.9
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	0.9	19.5	0.4	18.8	2.2	18.3
445	Food & beverage stores	-0.2	10.3	0.2	10.6	-1.6	10.2
4451	Grocery stores	-0.4	9.2	0.2	9.7	-2.0	9.2
446	Health & personal care stores	-0.1	3.8	1.3	5.5	6.0	4.5
447	Gasoline stations	0.4	-14.0	2.0	-12.9	10.1	-13.9
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-4.2	-12.6	13.6	-9.2	34.6	-14.0
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-4.2	12.4	8.0	17.5	0.6	13.2
452	General merchandise stores	-1.1	2.5	1.7	4.2	1.2	2.9
4521	Department stores	-4.6	-11.9	9.4	-7.7	7.2	-12.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.9	1.7	1.1	3.4	11.2	2.4
454	Nonstore retailers	3.1	29.1	-1.7	26.4	3.7	27.9
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.1	-14.2	2.4	-14.3	16.9	-14.8

(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, November 17, 2020. 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 Oct. 2020

(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	0.3	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
	Retail, total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.5	1.1	0.6	1.2	0.6	0.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.5	1.2	0.6	1.3	0.7	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.9	1.3	0.9	1.7	1.1	1.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	1.0	0.6	1.2	0.5	1.0
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	1.6	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.4	1.1
445	Food & beverage stores	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.3	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.8
447	Gasoline stations	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.8	0.9	1.0	1.2	-1.2	1.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	3.0	0.9	1.2	2.4	-0.2	1.6
452	General merchandise stores	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.1
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.4	4.0	1.8	4.8	0.3	1.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.9	-0.3	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places	3.5	1.3	0.8	2.1	0.0	1.0

(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, November 17, 2020. 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>.