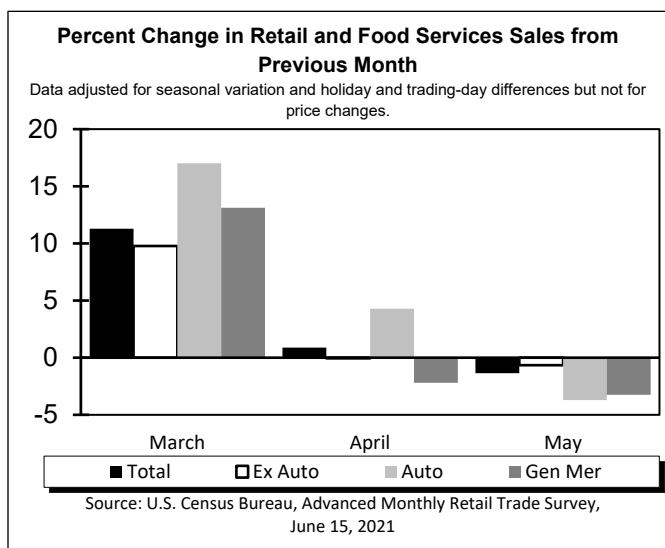# ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, MAY 2021

Release Number: CB21-90

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.

June 15, 2021 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May 2021:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES</td></tr>
<tr><td>**May 2021**</td><td>**$620.2 billion**</td><td>**-1.3%**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**April 2021 (revised)**</td><td>**$628.7 billion**</td><td>**0.9%**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">**Next release: July 16, 2021**</td></tr>
</table>

* 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, June 15, 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, June 15, 2021

Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May 2021, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $620.2 billion, a decrease of 1.3% (±0.5 percent) from the previous month, but 28.1 percent (±0.7 percent) above May 2020. Total sales for the March 2021 through May 2021 period were up 36.2 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The March 2021 to April 2021 percent change was revised from virtually unchanged (±0.5 percent)* to up 0.9 percent (±0.2 percent).

Retail trade sales were down 1.7 percent (± 0.5 percent) from April 2021, but up 24.4 percent (± 0.7 percent) above last year. Clothing and clothing accessories stores were up 200.3 percent (±2.8 percent) from May 2020, while food services and drinking places were up 70.6 percent (±3.0 percent) from last year.

General Information

The June 2021 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on July 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

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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 and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

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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 first quarter 2021 Advance Quarterly Services Report will be available on May 20, 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

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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.

<div align="center">###</div>

* 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 5 Month Total 2021	% Chg. 2020	2021 May[3] (a)	2021 Apr. (p)	2021 Mar. (r)	2020 May	2020 Apr.	Adjusted[2] 2021 May[3] (a)	2021 Apr. (p)	2021 Mar. (r)	2020 May (r)	2020 Apr. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**2,910,841**	**23.9**	**644,362**	**625,636**	**633,078**	**504,607**	**407,227**	**620,214**	**628,678**	**623,119**	**483,980**	**409,819**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,268,878	19.5	500,451	481,542	486,171	397,245	337,693	484,235	487,456	487,687	383,125	341,621
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	2,693,248	23.6	594,146	578,128	586,718	472,562	380,417	573,932	582,732	576,666	454,500	383,688
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	2,051,285	18.7	450,235	434,034	439,811	365,200	310,883	437,953	441,510	441,234	353,645	315,490
	Retail	2,603,774	23.7	573,043	558,417	567,933	462,286	377,210	552,932	562,583	559,871	444,538	379,892
	GAFO[4]	**(*)**	**(*)**	**(*)**	**119,677**	**126,263**	**91,042**	**68,637**	**(*)**	**127,146**	**129,221**	**89,051**	**72,279**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers ....**	**641,963**	**42.5**	**143,911**	**144,094**	**146,907**	**107,362**	**69,534**	**135,979**	**141,222**	**135,432**	**100,855**	**68,198**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	596,934	44.6	134,218	134,193	136,709	98,852	62,554	126,382	131,562	125,883	92,471	61,388
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	105,257	107,329	77,773	50,131	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores...........	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,901	10,198	8,510	6,980	(*)	9,660	9,549	8,384	6,810
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores ....**	**57,449**	**49.5**	**12,106**	**12,082**	**12,551**	**7,349**	**3,977**	**12,241**	**12,507**	**12,414**	**7,349**	**4,160**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,792	7,128	4,259	2,004	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	3,090	1,973	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores ....**	**36,109**	**35.9**	**7,542**	**7,318**	**7,980**	**3,952**	**3,040**	**8,171**	**8,460**	**8,339**	**4,272**	**3,527**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.................................**	**198,260**	**21.1**	**46,696**	**47,210**	**43,520**	**42,422**	**35,916**	**39,933**	**42,437**	**43,458**	**36,149**	**32,184**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,971	37,395	35,986	30,023	(*)	37,079	38,080	31,539	27,851
445	**Food & beverage stores.........................**	**358,089**	**0.9**	**76,249**	**71,639**	**72,656**	**76,438**	**71,064**	**74,228**	**73,494**	**72,955**	**73,714**	**72,048**
4451	Grocery stores	320,214	-0.3	67,911	63,766	64,734	68,436	64,383	65,997	65,200	64,605	65,931	65,033
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,712	5,727	5,950	4,938	(*)	6,064	6,112	5,749	5,281
446	**Health & personal care stores ....**	**155,269**	**11.2**	**33,012**	**32,082**	**33,172**	**26,251**	**25,724**	**32,979**	**32,406**	**32,081**	**26,251**	**25,958**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,348	27,972	23,648	23,910	(*)	27,321	27,078	23,648	23,838
447	**Gasoline stations ....**	**217,593**	**28.2**	**50,216**	**47,508**	**46,360**	**32,045**	**26,810**	**46,282**	**45,946**	**46,453**	**29,480**	**26,131**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores ....**	**106,242**	**81.3**	**26,244**	**23,519**	**24,171**	**8,787**	**2,744**	**25,247**	**24,521**	**25,012**	**8,407**	**2,836**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	678	569	155	86	(*)	613	588	138	77
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,135	3,159	1,099	469	(*)	3,035	3,061	986	450
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,339	9,424	3,089	688	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,306	3,678	1,624	462	(*)	3,283	3,463	1,571	455
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores ....**	**41,317**	**55.2**	**8,952**	**8,966**	**9,554**	**6,353**	**3,484**	**9,626**	**9,703**	**9,931**	**6,680**	**3,771**
452	**General merchandise stores................**	**318,647**	**10.1**	**69,261**	**65,674**	**69,886**	**63,381**	**54,576**	**67,341**	**69,604**	**71,164**	**61,072**	**57,089**
4521	Department stores	48,279	19.5	11,207	10,039	10,825	8,768	5,941	11,416	11,241	11,309	8,918	6,334
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,635	59,061	54,613	48,635	(*)	58,363	59,855	52,154	50,755
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters...............................	(*)	(*)	(*)	47,252	50,973	46,287	41,322	(*)	49,844	51,644	44,125	43,405
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores...........	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,383	8,088	8,326	7,313	(*)	8,519	8,211	8,029	7,350
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers ....**	**63,167**	**33.2**	**14,281**	**13,591**	**13,605**	**9,812**	**7,319**	**12,981**	**13,662**	**13,746**	**8,815**	**7,361**
454	**Nonstore retailers ....**	**409,669**	**21.0**	**84,573**	**84,734**	**87,571**	**78,134**	**73,022**	**87,924**	**88,621**	**88,886**	**81,494**	**76,629**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	75,910	77,955	72,558	67,339	(*)	79,737	80,201	75,424	70,809
722	**Food services & drinking places ....**	**307,067**	**25.5**	**71,319**	**67,219**	**65,145**	**42,321**	**30,017**	**67,282**	**66,095**	**63,248**	**39,442**	**29,927**

(*) 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, June 15, 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]					
		May 2021 Advance from --		Apr. 2021 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2021 through May 2021 from --	
		Apr. 2021 (p)	May 2020 (r)	Mar. 2021 (r)	Apr. 2020 (r)	Dec. 2020 through Feb. 2021	Mar. 2020 through May 2020
	Retail & food services, total	**-1.3**	**28.1**	**0.9**	**53.4**	**11.9**	**36.2**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.7	26.4	0.0	42.7	10.4	29.5
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-1.5	26.3	1.1	51.9	11.8	35.0
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	-0.8	23.8	0.1	39.9	10.1	27.4
	Retail …………………………………..	-1.7	24.4	0.5	48.1	11.0	33.1
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**-3.7**	**34.8**	**4.3**	**107.1**	**17.8**	**67.0**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	-3.9	36.7	4.5	114.3	18.1	70.8
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**-2.1**	**66.6**	**0.7**	**200.6**	**8.7**	**88.3**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**-3.4**	**91.3**	**1.5**	**139.9**	**18.5**	**79.2**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**.............................	**-5.9**	**10.5**	**-2.3**	**31.9**	**9.2**	**24.4**
445	**Food & beverage stores**..........................	**1.0**	**0.7**	**0.7**	**2.0**	**2.0**	**-3.4**
4451	Grocery stores	1.2	0.1	0.9	0.3	1.6	-4.9
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**1.8**	**25.6**	**1.0**	**24.8**	**8.5**	**17.9**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**0.7**	**57.0**	**-1.1**	**75.8**	**13.5**	**53.6**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**3.0**	**200.3**	**-2.0**	**764.6**	**21.3**	**228.9**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**-0.8**	**44.1**	**-2.3**	**157.3**	**20.2**	**81.8**
452	**General merchandise stores**..................	**-3.3**	**10.3**	**-2.2**	**21.9**	**9.2**	**13.2**
4521	Department stores	1.6	28.0	-0.6	77.5	15.1	40.4
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**-5.0**	**47.3**	**-0.6**	**85.6**	**6.8**	**55.0**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**-0.8**	**7.9**	**-0.3**	**15.6**	**8.0**	**17.2**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**1.8**	**70.6**	**4.5**	**120.9**	**20.6**	**70.2**

(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, June 15, 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 May 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	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5
	Retail, total	**0.7**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.3**	**0.4**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.4**	**0.8**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**0.6**	**0.7**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.5	0.9	0.7	1.3	0.6	0.6
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	**3.0**	**1.0**	**0.8**	**1.7**	**0.8**	**1.0**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**1.7**	**0.7**	**0.7**	**1.4**	**-0.3**	**1.7**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**.....................................	**1.9**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**-0.1**	**0.7**
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.7**	**-0.1**	**0.2**
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.7	-0.1	0.3
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**2.7**	**0.7**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**0.5**	**0.6**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**1.3**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.9**	**0.1**	**0.5**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**3.0**	**1.0**	**1.2**	**1.6**	**-0.1**	**2.5**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**2.9**	**0.8**	**1.0**	**2.2**	**0.7**	**1.1**
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	**1.0**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.5**	**0.5**
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**4.4**	**3.2**	**1.8**	**4.8**	**0.8**	**1.3**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**1.6**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**1.0**	**0.1**	**1.0**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**3.5**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**1.7**	**0.9**	**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, June 15, 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>.