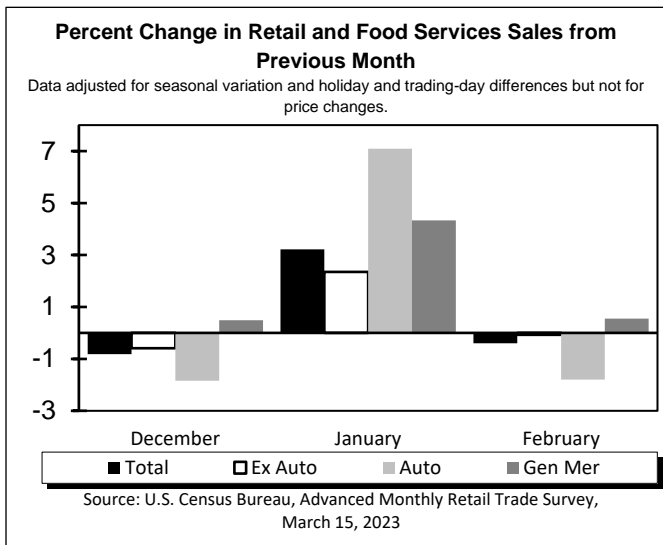# ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2023

Release Number: CB23-36

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2021 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the Service Annual Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

March 15, 2023 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2023:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES

February 2023	$697.9 billion	-0.4%*
January 2023 (revised)	$700.7 billion	3.2%

Next release: April 14, 2023

* 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 15, 2023

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 15, 2023

Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2023, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $697.9 billion, down 0.4 percent (±0.5 percent)* from the previous month, but up 5.4 percent (±0.7 percent) above February 2022. Total sales for the December 2022 through February 2023 period were up 6.4 percent (±0.4 percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2022 to January 2023 percent change was revised from up 3.0 percent (±0.5 percent) to up 3.2 percent (±0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent (±0.5 percent)* from January 2023, but up 4.0 percent (±0.7 percent) above last year. Food services and drinking places were up 15.3 percent (±2.6 percent) from February 2022, while general merchandise stores were up 10.5 percent (±0.2 percent) from last year.

General Information

The March 2023 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on April 14, 2023 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>.

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.

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.

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.

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 2022 Quarterly Services Report was released on March 14, 2023 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 2 Month Total 2023	% Chg. 2022	2023 Feb.[3] (a)	2023 Jan. (p)	2022 Dec. (r)	2022 Feb.	2022 Jan.	Adjusted[2] 2023 Feb.[3] (a)	2023 Jan. (p)	2022 Dec. (r)	2022 Feb. (r)	2022 Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	1,246,957	6.8	611,441	635,516	748,856	579,139	587,961	697,876	700,682	678,815	662,163	650,682
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,011,501	8.0	494,107	517,394	626,185	462,148	474,414	567,229	567,645	554,589	531,233	522,494
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1,146,770	7.3	562,870	583,900	694,634	529,564	538,863	639,497	641,961	619,491	602,649	595,078
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	911,314	8.8	445,536	465,778	571,963	412,573	425,316	508,850	508,924	495,265	471,719	466,890
	Retail	1,077,145	5.1	527,697	549,448	657,814	506,400	518,146	605,136	605,893	589,030	581,700	574,465
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	112,167	168,544	103,278	105,279	(*)	132,070	127,075	123,375	123,231
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	235,456	2.1	117,334	118,122	122,671	116,991	113,547	130,647	133,037	124,226	130,930	128,188
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	216,146	1.7	107,846	108,300	112,549	108,112	104,500	119,962	122,373	113,571	120,931	118,213
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	89,073	94,966	86,147	84,442	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,822	10,122	8,879	9,047	(*)	10,664	10,655	9,999	9,975
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	21,846	3.5	10,723	11,123	12,463	10,685	10,423	12,048	12,359	11,691	12,033	11,698
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,099	6,623	5,996	5,549	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	12,916	-1.7	6,283	6,633	9,109	6,426	6,718	7,214	7,194	6,752	7,420	7,310
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	68,817	2.3	33,754	35,063	38,766	33,529	33,771	42,587	42,636	42,477	42,334	42,025
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,664	33,424	29,463	29,770	(*)	36,945	36,770	37,154	36,935
445	Food & beverage stores	151,432	4.9	73,159	78,273	88,432	69,315	74,984	81,014	80,618	80,906	76,824	76,525
4451	Grocery stores	137,071	5.1	65,939	71,132	77,309	62,339	68,099	72,540	72,142	72,591	68,580	68,441
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,184	8,001	5,057	4,939	(*)	6,171	6,038	5,970	5,797
446	Health & personal care stores	66,574	7.1	32,328	34,246	37,442	29,947	32,224	34,799	34,487	33,460	32,236	32,815
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,357	29,525	24,847	27,297	(*)	27,965	27,212	26,775	27,297
447	Gasoline stations	100,187	1.5	48,571	51,616	54,222	49,575	49,098	58,379	58,721	59,324	59,514	55,604
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	40,899	5.9	21,349	19,550	40,615	20,509	18,113	26,691	26,906	26,147	25,595	24,729
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,429	4,461	2,729	2,422	(*)	3,360	3,372	3,433	3,327
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,627	16,126	7,054	6,734	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,350	4,615	2,639	2,218	(*)	3,451	3,361	3,299	3,229
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	15,247	5.8	7,383	7,864	13,461	7,142	7,270	9,381	9,429	9,387	9,029	8,738
452	General merchandise stores	127,509	8.6	62,650	64,859	89,493	56,575	60,884	73,794	73,392	70,349	66,783	68,308
4521	Department stores	18,372	3.3	9,226	9,146	17,002	8,983	8,799	11,579	12,056	10,208	11,302	11,368
4529	Other general merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,713	72,491	47,592	52,085	(*)	61,336	60,141	55,481	56,940
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters	(*)	(*)	(*)	48,237	61,654	40,730	45,340	(*)	52,489	51,464	47,360	48,910
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,476	10,837	6,862	6,745	(*)	8,847	8,677	8,121	8,030
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	27,234	7.5	13,373	13,861	16,256	12,836	12,496	15,860	16,158	15,294	15,128	14,652
454	Nonstore retailers	209,028	9.2	100,790	108,238	134,884	92,870	98,618	112,722	110,956	109,017	103,874	103,873
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	96,331	122,445	82,090	87,596	(*)	100,240	98,034	93,817	93,987
722	Food services & drinking places	169,812	19.1	83,744	86,068	91,042	72,739	69,815	92,740	94,789	89,785	80,463	76,217

(*) 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 15, 2023. 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

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	Feb. 2023 Advance from -- Jan. 2023 (p)	Feb. 2023 Advance from -- Feb. 2022 (r)	Jan. 2023 Preliminary from -- Dec. 2022 (r)	Jan. 2023 Preliminary from -- Jan. 2022 (r)	Dec. 2022 through Feb. 2023 from -- Sep. 2022 through Nov. 2022	Dec. 2022 through Feb. 2023 from -- Dec. 2021 through Feb. 2022
	Retail & food services, total	-0.4	5.4	3.2	7.7	0.8	6.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.1	6.8	2.4	8.6	0.7	7.6
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-0.4	6.1	3.6	7.9	1.5	6.8
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.0	7.9	2.8	9.0	1.6	8.2
	Retail	-0.1	4.0	2.9	5.5	0.3	4.8
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-1.8	-0.2	7.1	3.8	1.2	1.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	-2.0	-0.8	7.8	3.5	1.2	1.0
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-2.5	0.1	5.7	5.7	0.8	2.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.3	-2.8	6.5	-1.6	-0.4	-5.1
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....................................	-0.1	0.6	0.4	1.5	-0.7	1.6
445	Food & beverage stores...........................	0.5	5.5	-0.4	5.3	0.1	5.7
4451	Grocery stores	0.6	5.8	-0.6	5.4	0.1	6.0
446	Health & personal care stores	0.9	8.0	3.1	5.1	1.0	4.9
447	Gasoline stations	-0.6	-1.9	-1.0	5.6	-5.9	2.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.8	4.3	2.9	8.8	1.0	5.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-0.5	3.9	0.4	7.9	0.6	5.3
452	General merchandise stores...................	0.5	10.5	4.3	7.4	3.4	7.7
4521	Department stores	-4.0	2.5	18.1	6.1	0.4	2.8
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-1.8	4.8	5.6	10.3	0.9	6.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	8.5	1.8	6.8	1.0	9.7
722	Food services & drinking places	-2.2	15.3	5.6	24.4	4.0	17.9

(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 15, 2023. 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. 2023

(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	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3
	Retail, total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	1.6	0.9	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.6	1.0	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	2.7	1.1	0.7	1.7	0.4	0.9
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	2.1	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.6
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**....................................	2.6	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.1	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	0.1
446	**Health & personal care stores**	3.3	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.6
447	**Gasoline stations**	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.2	1.1
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	2.7	0.9	0.7	1.4	0.0	0.4
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	2.6	1.1	0.9	1.6	0.2	0.2
452	**General merchandise stores**....................	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	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	2.8	1.3	3.1	-0.4	2.3
454	**Nonstore retailers**	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	-0.1	0.5
722	**Food services & drinking places**	3.7	0.9	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.7

(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 15, 2023. 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>.