FOR RELEASE AT 8:30 AM EDT, THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, MARCH 2021

Release Number: CB21-54

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales estimates were revised based on the results of the 2019 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the Service Annual Survey and the results of the 2017 Economic Census. This report no longer contains the most up to date estimates. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates were released 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.

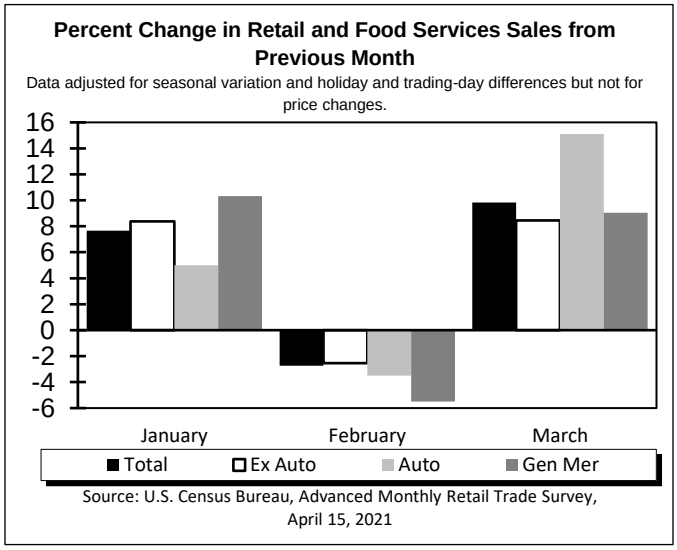
April 15, 2021 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2021:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES

March 2021	**$619.1 billion**	**9.8%**
February 2021 (revised)	**$563.7 billion**	**-2.7%**

Next release: May 14, 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, April 15, 2021



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2021, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $619.1 billion, an increase of 9.8 percent (±0.5 percent) from the previous month, and 27.7 percent (±0.7 percent) above March 2020. Total sales for the January 2021 through March 2021 period were up 14.3 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The January 2021 to February 2021 percent change was revised from down 3.0 percent (±0.5 percent) to down 2.7 percent (±0.2 percent).

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Retail trade sales were up 9.4 percent (±0.5 percent) from February 2021, and up 26.9 percent (±0.7 percent) above last year. Motor vehicle and parts dealers were up 71.1 percent (±2.3 percent) from March 2020, while food services and drinking places were up 36.0 percent (±3.0 percent) from last year.

General Information

The April 2021 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on May 14, 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

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/>

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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]				
		3 Month Total		2021			2020		2021			2020	
		2021	% Chg. 2020	Mar.[3] (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.[3] (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**1,640,728**	**13.7**	**627,885**	**493,085**	**519,758**	**481,513**	**479,868**	**619,105**	**563,733**	**579,552**	**484,724**	**528,541**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	1,287,497	10.1	482,648	389,706	415,143	398,836	382,009	484,977	447,203	458,798	406,331	422,769
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1,523,106	14.1	582,319	457,514	483,273	447,927	443,605	572,704	521,885	539,237	450,312	487,333
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1,169,875	10.3	437,082	354,135	378,658	365,250	345,746	438,576	405,355	418,483	371,919	381,561
	Retail	1,474,410	15.8	563,850	443,136	467,424	434,185	417,777	556,935	508,904	523,699	438,996	463,251
	GAFO[4]	**(*)**	**(*)**	**(*)**	**93,675**	**100,864**	**94,807**	**96,592**	**(*)**	**110,304**	**116,364**	**98,346**	**109,409**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**353,231**	**29.0**	**145,237**	**103,379**	**104,615**	**82,677**	**97,859**	**134,128**	**116,530**	**120,754**	**78,393**	**105,772**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	328,159	30.3	135,376	95,880	96,903	75,298	90,701	124,886	108,095	112,156	71,305	97,949
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	77,003	79,650	59,312	74,033	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,499	7,712	7,379	7,158	(*)	8,435	8,598	7,088	7,823
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**31,703**	**20.4**	**11,792**	**9,634**	**10,277**	**7,881**	**9,191**	**11,629**	**10,985**	**11,521**	**7,921**	**10,111**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,424	5,813	4,288	5,035	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	3,593	4,156	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**22,263**	**4.9**	**8,114**	**6,663**	**7,486**	**6,269**	**7,218**	**8,505**	**7,694**	**7,847**	**6,620**	**8,020**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**	**106,566**	**20.9**	**43,812**	**30,540**	**32,214**	**33,087**	**27,164**	**43,940**	**39,189**	**40,319**	**33,946**	**33,996**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,485	28,033	28,830	23,883	(*)	33,825	34,910	29,938	29,816
445	**Food & beverage stores**	**207,298**	**1.4**	**71,674**	**64,940**	**70,684**	**79,859**	**60,983**	**71,969**	**71,473**	**71,716**	**81,622**	**64,329**
4451	Grocery stores	185,183	0.1	63,649	57,968	63,566	72,608	54,814	63,522	63,215	63,439	73,714	57,337
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,228	5,344	5,521	4,533	(*)	6,216	6,243	6,021	5,145
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**94,650**	**4.2**	**34,500**	**29,163**	**30,987**	**32,025**	**28,746**	**33,333**	**31,528**	**31,880**	**31,583**	**30,164**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,858	26,610	27,839	23,934	(*)	26,445	26,933	27,700	24,776
447	**Gasoline stations**	**117,622**	**8.1**	**45,566**	**35,571**	**36,485**	**33,586**	**36,263**	**46,401**	**41,848**	**40,315**	**34,412**	**41,208**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**53,037**	**14.7**	**22,167**	**15,787**	**15,083**	**10,833**	**18,813**	**22,862**	**19,333**	**20,451**	**11,368**	**22,141**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	303	321	267	527	(*)	390	384	283	644
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,148	2,124	1,564	2,797	(*)	2,719	2,863	1,544	3,399
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,864	5,842	4,264	7,557	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,971	2,019	1,730	2,873	(*)	2,284	2,808	1,691	3,161
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**22,732**	**37.2**	**9,246**	**6,245**	**7,241**	**5,190**	**5,573**	**9,591**	**7,767**	**8,342**	**5,527**	**6,666**
452	**General merchandise stores**	**179,436**	**5.8**	**66,799**	**53,653**	**58,984**	**62,961**	**53,811**	**68,053**	**62,406**	**66,038**	**65,035**	**60,033**
4521	Department stores	26,043	2.2	10,350	7,644	8,049	7,871	9,139	10,811	9,565	10,347	8,606	11,013
4529	Other general merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	46,009	50,935	55,090	44,672	(*)	52,841	55,691	56,429	49,020
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,492	44,051	47,185	38,426	(*)	45,393	47,778	48,296	42,134
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,517	6,884	7,905	6,246	(*)	7,448	7,913	8,133	6,886
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**34,989**	**13.7**	**13,376**	**10,505**	**11,108**	**9,741**	**10,469**	**13,414**	**12,301**	**12,658**	**10,224**	**11,849**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**250,883**	**27.8**	**91,567**	**77,056**	**82,260**	**70,076**	**61,687**	**93,110**	**87,850**	**91,858**	**72,345**	**68,962**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	68,472	73,903	62,588	53,979	(*)	79,711	83,981	65,332	61,620
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**166,318**	**-2.3**	**64,035**	**49,949**	**52,334**	**47,328**	**62,091**	**62,170**	**54,829**	**55,853**	**45,728**	**65,290**

(*) 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, April 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]					
		Mar. 2021 Advance from --		Feb. 2021 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2021 through Mar. 2021 from --	
		Feb. 2021 (p)	Mar. 2020 (r)	Jan. 2021 (r)	Feb. 2020 (r)	Oct. 2020 through Dec. 2020	Jan. 2020 through Mar. 2020
	Retail & food services, total	**9.8**	**27.7**	**-2.7**	**6.7**	**7.7**	**14.3**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	8.4	19.4	-2.5	5.8	7.6	11.0
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	9.7	27.2	-3.2	7.1	7.0	14.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	8.2	17.9	-3.1	6.2	6.7	11.3
	Retail	9.4	26.9	-2.8	9.9	7.7	16.4
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**15.1**	**71.1**	**-3.5**	**10.2**	**8.3**	**28.3**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	15.5	75.1	-3.6	10.4	8.5	29.5
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**5.9**	**46.8**	**-4.7**	**8.6**	**11.1**	**21.1**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**10.5**	**28.5**	**-1.9**	**-4.1**	**10.4**	**5.9**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**	**12.1**	**29.4**	**-2.8**	**15.3**	**8.0**	**21.8**
445	**Food & beverage stores**	**0.7**	**-11.8**	**-0.3**	**11.1**	**1.6**	**2.3**
4451	Grocery stores	0.5	-13.8	-0.4	10.3	1.1	0.9
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**5.7**	**5.5**	**-1.1**	**4.5**	**3.0**	**5.4**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**10.9**	**34.8**	**3.8**	**1.6**	**17.4**	**8.7**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**18.3**	**101.1**	**-5.5**	**-12.7**	**9.1**	**11.8**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**23.5**	**73.5**	**-6.9**	**16.5**	**11.6**	**36.3**
452	**General merchandise stores**	**9.0**	**4.6**	**-5.5**	**4.0**	**7.3**	**6.1**
4521	Department stores	13.0	25.6	-7.6	-13.1	12.7	0.2
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**9.0**	**31.2**	**-2.8**	**3.8**	**5.6**	**13.2**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**6.0**	**28.7**	**-4.4**	**27.4**	**8.7**	**30.2**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**13.4**	**36.0**	**-1.8**	**-16.0**	**8.0**	**-2.1**

(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, April 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 Mar. 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	0.4	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4
	Retail, total	**0.7**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**0.4**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.5**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**0.7**	**0.5**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.6	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.6
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**3.0**	**1.1**	**0.9**	**1.7**	**0.5**	**0.9**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**1.7**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**-0.3**	**1.7**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**	**1.9**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**1.4**	**0.2**	**0.6**
445	**Food & beverage stores**	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**0.2**
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.7	-0.1	0.2
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**2.6**	**0.7**	**0.5**	**1.3**	**0.5**	**0.6**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**1.3**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.8**	**0.4**	**0.6**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**3.2**	**1.3**	**1.0**	**1.3**	**-1.5**	**2.6**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**3.0**	**0.8**	**1.2**	**2.2**	**0.0**	**1.6**
452	**General merchandise stores**	**1.0**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.9**	**0.4**
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.8
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**5.0**	**3.7**	**1.8**	**4.7**	**0.8**	**1.3**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**1.6**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**1.0**	**0.0**	**1.1**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**3.5**	**1.1**	**0.8**	**1.7**	**0.5**	**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, April 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>.