

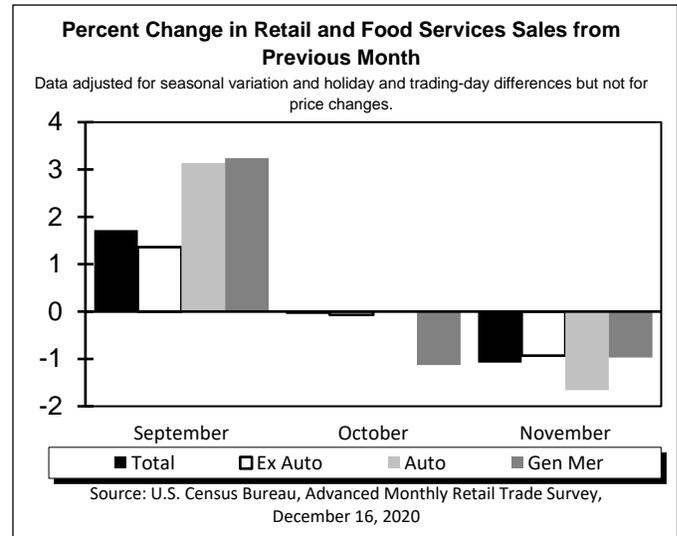
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, NOVEMBER 2020

Release Number: CB20-189

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](#).

December 16, 2020 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November 2020:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
November 2020	\$546.5 billion	-1.1%
October 2020 (revised)	\$552.5 billion	-0.1%*
Next release: January 15, 2021		
<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, December 16, 2020.</small>		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November 2020, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$546.5 billion, a decrease of 1.1 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the previous month, but 4.1 percent (± 0.7 percent) above November 2019. Total sales for the September 2020 through November 2020 period were up 5.2 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The September 2020 to October 2020 percent change was revised from up 0.3 percent (± 0.5 percent)* to down 0.1 percent (± 0.2 percent)*.

Retail trade sales were down 0.8 percent (± 0.5 percent) from October 2020, but 7.1 percent (± 0.7 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 29.2 percent (± 1.6 percent) from November 2019, while food services and drinking places were down 17.2 percent (± 3.7 percent) from last year.

General Information

The December 2020 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on January 15, 2021 at 8:30

Data Inquiries

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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 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 $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ 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 Quarterly Services Report was released on December 10, 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>

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.

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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					
		11 Month Total		2020			2019		2020			2019	
		2020	% Chg. 2019	Nov. ³ (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. ³ (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	5,641,170	0.3	548,824	556,093	535,035	535,352	525,539	546,504	552,484	552,767	524,997	523,718
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	4,507,090	0.3	444,796	440,768	421,394	434,251	421,738	433,672	437,745	438,043	418,588	419,805
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	5,255,659	1.7	515,368	518,754	498,537	494,622	481,937	511,398	516,512	516,737	482,658	481,590
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	4,121,579	2.2	411,340	403,429	384,896	393,521	378,136	398,566	401,773	402,013	376,249	377,677
	Retail	5,076,209	3.1	498,546	499,346	480,788	473,026	460,534	493,300	497,067	497,072	460,743	458,843
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	109,806	103,583	121,326	106,593	(*)	110,182	111,498	108,535	108,866
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,134,080	0.0	104,028	115,325	113,641	101,101	103,801	112,832	114,739	114,724	106,409	103,913
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1,044,479	-0.1	96,173	106,578	105,034	93,242	95,254	104,650	106,472	106,202	98,357	95,925
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	87,345	85,704	78,496	79,452	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,747	8,607	7,859	8,547	(*)	8,267	8,522	8,052	7,988
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	99,979	-6.4	10,824	10,643	10,611	10,782	9,995	10,309	10,424	10,403	9,946	9,857
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,746	5,819	5,523	5,186	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	4,792	5,259	4,809	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	73,163	-14.1	8,994	7,299	7,167	9,985	7,604	7,415	7,683	7,600	8,085	8,072
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	402,647	13.4	36,012	38,857	38,079	30,731	33,719	38,269	37,843	37,793	32,229	32,075
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,192	33,688	27,087	29,701	(*)	33,068	32,898	28,040	27,967
445	Food & beverage stores	776,988	11.6	71,022	71,040	68,790	65,442	64,051	71,372	70,277	70,776	64,352	64,114
4451	Grocery stores	693,935	11.4	62,968	62,905	60,953	58,185	57,258	63,476	62,282	62,644	57,438	57,258
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,050	5,855	5,312	4,913	(*)	5,955	6,074	5,040	4,983
446	Health & personal care stores	329,068	1.1	30,076	31,860	30,927	29,312	31,088	30,942	31,174	31,398	29,910	30,212
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,385	26,405	23,964	26,097	(*)	26,459	27,194	24,503	25,021
447	Gasoline stations	385,511	-16.4	33,456	37,339	36,498	40,730	43,602	35,106	35,972	36,030	42,339	42,128
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	166,084	-28.5	20,153	19,234	18,031	24,928	21,177	18,483	19,836	20,526	22,031	22,153
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	358	714	674	(*)	(S)	357	663	666
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,696	2,557	3,850	3,390	(*)	2,641	2,785	3,365	3,376
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,452	7,520	11,269	9,359	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,427	2,414	3,265	2,851	(*)	2,644	2,784	3,139	3,168
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	73,385	4.3	8,307	7,502	7,604	7,289	6,372	7,785	7,831	7,896	6,508	6,750
452	General merchandise stores	655,820	3.1	66,713	62,467	57,954	66,027	58,560	61,575	62,181	62,893	59,572	59,626
4521	Department stores	96,267	-17.5	10,740	9,361	8,891	13,401	10,456	8,990	9,741	10,240	11,101	11,133
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,106	49,063	52,626	48,104	(*)	52,440	52,653	48,471	48,493
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	45,184	41,603	45,257	41,175	(*)	44,604	44,734	41,597	41,633
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,922	7,460	7,369	6,929	(*)	7,836	7,919	6,874	6,860
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	119,395	-2.2	11,672	12,397	11,648	11,882	12,228	11,741	11,801	11,806	11,641	11,591
454	Nonstore retailers	860,089	22.6	97,289	85,383	79,838	74,817	68,337	87,471	87,306	85,227	67,721	68,352
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	77,084	72,789	67,037	60,568	(*)	79,142	77,683	60,123	60,811
722	Food services & drinking places	564,961	-19.4	50,278	56,747	54,247	62,326	65,005	53,204	55,417	55,695	64,254	64,875

(*) 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, December 16, 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					
		Nov. 2020 Advance from --		Oct. 2020 Preliminary from --		Sep. 2020 through Nov. 2020 from --	
		Oct. 2020 (p)	Nov. 2019 (r)	Sep. 2020 (r)	Oct. 2019 (r)	Jun. 2020 through Aug. 2020	Sep. 2019 through Nov. 2019
	Retail & food services,						
	total	-1.1	4.1	-0.1	5.5	2.6	5.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.9	3.6	-0.1	4.3	2.5	4.2
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-1.0	6.0	0.0	7.3	2.6	7.0
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	-0.8	5.9	-0.1	6.4	2.5	6.4
	Retail	-0.8	7.1	0.0	8.3	2.4	8.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-1.7	6.0	0.0	10.4	3.1	9.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	-1.7	6.4	0.3	11.0	3.7	9.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-1.1	3.6	0.2	5.8	2.2	4.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-3.5	-8.3	1.1	-4.8	3.3	-6.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	1.1	18.7	0.1	18.0	1.9	18.5
445	Food & beverage stores	1.6	10.9	-0.7	9.6	-0.8	10.3
4451	Grocery stores	1.9	10.5	-0.6	8.8	-0.8	9.6
446	Health & personal care stores	-0.7	3.5	-0.7	3.2	1.7	4.0
447	Gasoline stations	-2.4	-17.1	-0.2	-14.6	3.0	-14.9
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-6.8	-16.1	-3.4	-10.5	13.3	-11.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-0.6	19.6	-0.8	16.0	-0.1	17.6
452	General merchandise stores	-1.0	3.4	-1.1	4.3	1.8	4.5
4521	Department stores	-7.7	-19.0	-4.9	-12.5	1.8	-13.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.5	0.9	0.0	1.8	2.9	1.9
454	Nonstore retailers	0.2	29.2	2.4	27.7	2.7	27.6
722	Food services & drinking places	-4.0	-17.2	-0.5	-14.6	4.8	-15.4

(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, December 16, 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 Nov. 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	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	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	1.3	0.5	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.6	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.6	0.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.0	1.2	0.9	1.8	1.1	1.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	1.0	0.6	1.2	0.6	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	1.7	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.4	1.1
445	Food & beverage stores	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.5	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.8
447	Gasoline stations	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.9	0.9	1.0	1.2	-1.1	1.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	3.0	0.8	1.2	2.4	0.3	1.6
452	General merchandise stores	0.9	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	0.2	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, December 16, 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>.