



FURNITURE INSIGHTS®

Smith Leonard PLLC's Industry Newsletter

May 2026



HIGHLIGHTS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New orders were up 1% compared to the prior month of February 2026, but down 2% compared to March 2025. Year to date, new orders are even with 2025.

March 2026 shipments were up 6% compared to February 2026 and up 2% from March 2025. Year to date, shipments are down 1% from 2025.

March 2026 backlogs were down 1% compared to February 2026 and up 1% with March 2025.

Receivable levels were down 1% from February 2026 and down 3% compared to March 2025.

Inventories were down 2% from February 2026, but up 4% from March 2025.

Payrolls were up 8% compared to February 2026 and up 4% compared to March 2025.

Employee levels are again materially in line with recent months and the downward trend from prior year.



**Mark Laferriere (left) with Ben Duckett,
Tax Partner**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

National

Consumer Confidence

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® dipped 0.7 points to 93.1 (1985=100) in May, down from an upwardly revised 93.8 in April.

The Present Situation Index—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—retreated by 3.2 points to 121.2.

The Expectations Index—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—rose by 1.0 points to 74.4. The survey period for this month's preliminary results was May 1–19, encompassing the ongoing war in the Middle East that is placing upward pressure on prices globally.

“Consumer confidence edged downward in May as the inflationary impacts of the war in the Middle East intensified,” said Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist, The Conference Board. “Consumer appraisals of current business conditions and the current labor market were moderately less positive compared to last month. This was somewhat offset by modest improvements in consumers' expectations for business conditions and the labor market six months from now. Meanwhile, income expectations eased in May, as those anticipating less income rose.”

Consumers' plans to buy big-ticket items over the next six months continued to shift from “yes” to “no” in May. Homebuying expectations inched higher on a six-month rolling basis overall, as plans to buy existing homes rose, offsetting a small dip in newly built units. Spending plans for white goods, home furnishings, and electronics eased a tad or were unchanged on a six-month moving average basis.

Housing

Existing-home sales increased by 0.2% month-over-month in April, according to the National Association of REALTORS® Existing-Home Sales report.

Month-over-month sales increased in the Midwest and the South, were unchanged in the Northeast, and declined in the West. On a year-over-year basis, sales rose in the South, were flat in the West, and fell in both the Northeast and Midwest.

“Despite mixed macroeconomic signals—including a record-high stock market and historically low consumer confidence—home sales were modestly boosted by the continued improvement in housing affordability,” said NAR Chief Economist Dr. Lawrence Yun. “Mortgage rates are lower from a year ago, and average income growth is outpacing home price gains.”

Total Existing-Home Sales for March

- 0.2% increase in existing-home sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.02 million.
- No change in sales year-over-year.

Single-Family-Homes Sales in March

- No change in sales month-over-month with a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.64 million, down 0.3% from April 2025.
- \$422,300: Median home price, up 1.0% from last year.

Condominiums and Co-ops Sales in March

- 2.7% increase in sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 380,000
- 2.7% increase from last year.
- \$374,100: Median price, up 1.1% from April 2025.

Mortgage Rates

- 6.33%: The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage in April, according to Freddie Mac, up from 6.18% in March and down from 6.73% one year ago.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

Thoughts

Similar to much of the economic data included throughout this report, monthly new orders and shipments continue to be uneven for the participants in our stats program as year-to-date March 2026 new orders and shipments are now flat and down 1%, respectively, compared to the same period in 2025.

As to retail in general, a recent report stated sales were up just under 1% for Top 100 Retailers in 2025, which is materially in line with the 1% overall decline experienced by our participants for the same period.

In current events, military conflicts and other tensions in the Middle East continue to be drag on consumer confidence as well as aggravating existing inflationary pressures, particularly on freight rates and certain raw material costs. But on the bright side, industry reporting on Memorial Day activity was largely positive despite the current headwinds. Tariff refunds have begun to flow, with NBC News reporting that \$20 billion has already been refunded through May 2026. Based upon recent discussions with a handful of people in the industry, we have heard that tariff refunds are slowly coming to those who got an early start.

Looking ahead, the Fed has another meeting scheduled for mid-June, so it will be interesting to see what actions may be taken under new leadership and how it will impact a lackluster housing market and ultimately furniture sales for the remainder of the year.

Sales of new single-family houses in April 2026 were at a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 622,000, according to estimates released jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is 6.2 percent below the March 2026 rate of 663,000, and is 11.3 percent below the April 2025 rate of 701,000.

Compared to April 2025 on a seasonally-adjusted basis, sales were down 11.3% overall with sales also down 14.7% in the South, down 12.9% in the Northeast, and down 21.4% in the Midwest, but up 4.6% in the West.

Gross Domestic Product

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 1.6 percent in the first quarter of 2026 (January, February, and March), according to the second estimate released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the fourth quarter of 2025, real GDP increased 0.5 percent.

Compared to the fourth quarter of 2025, the acceleration in real GDP in the first quarter of 2026 reflected upturns in government spending and exports and an acceleration in investment that were partly offset by a deceleration in consumer spending. Imports turned up.

The price index for gross domestic purchases increased 3.5 percent in the first quarter, revised down 0.1 percentage point from the previous estimate. The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index increased 4.5 percent, the same as previously estimated, and the PCE price index excluding food and energy increased 4.4 percent, revised up 0.1 percentage point.

HIGHLIGHTS – MONTHLY RESULTS

New Orders

According to our latest survey of residential furniture manufacturers and distributors, new orders were down 2% in March 2026 compared to March 2025. Despite the overall decrease, approximately 60% of participants reported increases versus decreases in March compared to a year ago.

New orders were up 1% compared to the prior month of February 2026.

Year to date, new orders are now flat (0%) compared to the same period last year.

Shipments and Backlogs

March 2026 shipments were up 2% compared to March 2025. Shipments in March were up for approximately one-half of the participants compared to the prior year.

Shipments were up 6% from February 2026.

Year to date, shipments are down 1% compared to the same period last year.

March 2026 backlogs were up 1% compared to March 2025, but down 1% from the prior month as shipments outpaced new orders.

Receivables and Inventories

Receivable levels were down 1% from February 2026 and down 3% from March 2025.

Inventories were down 2% from February 2026, but up 4% from March 2025 continuing the trends from recent months.

Factory and Warehouse Employees and Payroll

The number of factory and warehouse employees were down 5% from March a year ago, and down 1% from the prior month.

Payroll expense was up 8% in March 2026 compared to February 2026 and up 4% compared to March 2025. Year to date, payroll expenses are up 1% compared to the same period last year.

| ESTIMATED BUSINESS ACTIVITY (MILLIONS) | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2026 | | |
| | MAR | FEB | 3 MO |
| New Orders | 2,108 | 2,099 | 6,259 |
| Shipments | 2,305 | 2,179 | 6,550 |
| Backlog | 2,386 | 2,384 | |
| | 2025 | | |
| | MAR | FEB | 3 MO |
| New Orders | 2,151 | 2,083 | 6,284 |
| Shipments | 2,260 | 2,147 | 6,634 |
| Backlog | 2,374 | 2,373 | |

MONTHLY RESULTS – MAY 2026

KEY MONTHLY INDICATORS (PERCENT CHANGE)

| | Mar 2026 from Feb 2026 | Mar 2026 from Mar 2025 | 3 Mos 2026 vs 3 Mos 2025 |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| New Orders | +1 | -2 | - |
| Shipments | +6 | +2 | -1 |
| Backlog | -1 | +1 | |
| Payrolls | +8 | +4 | +1 |
| Employees | -1 | -5 | |
| Receivables | -1 | -3 | |
| Inventories | -2 | +4 | |

PERCENT INCREASE/DECREASE COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR

New Orders Shipments Backlog Employment

| | New Orders | Shipments | Backlog | Employment |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------|------------|
| 2025 | | | | |
| March | +1 | +1 | -6 | -4 |
| April | -9 | -2 | -10 | -4 |
| May | -1 | -2 | -10 | -4 |
| June | +3 | -4 | -8 | -4 |
| July | +13 | +3 | -4 | -3 |
| August | -3 | -6 | - | -3 |
| September | +7 | +6 | +2 | -2 |
| October | -1 | +4 | -2 | -2 |
| November | -2 | -6 | -1 | -3 |
| December | +1 | - | -2 | -3 |
| 2026 | | | | |
| January | - | -7 | - | -4 |
| February | +1 | +2 | - | -5 |
| March | -2 | +2 | +1 | -5 |

A DEEPER DIVE – NATIONAL

Consumer Confidence

The Conference Board **Consumer Confidence Index** dipped 0.7 points to 93.1 (1985=100) in May, down from an upwardly revised 93.8 in April.

The Present Situation Index—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—retreated by 3.2 points to 121.2.

The Expectations Index—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—rose by 1.0 points to 74.4. The survey period for this month's preliminary results was May 1–19, encompassing the ongoing war in the Middle East that is placing upward pressure on prices globally.

“Consumer confidence edged downward in May as the inflationary impacts of the war in the Middle East intensified,” said Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist, The Conference Board. “Consumer appraisals of current business conditions and the current labor market were moderately less positive compared to last month. This was somewhat offset by modest improvements in consumers' expectations for business conditions and the labor market six months from now. Meanwhile, income expectations eased in May, as those anticipating less income rose.”

The Present Situation Index cooled again in May, as net views of current business conditions—the share saying conditions are “good” versus “bad”—fell by 2.8 pts to +1.4%. Perceptions of employment conditions declined slightly, with the labor market differential—the share of consumers saying jobs are “plentiful” minus the share saying jobs are “hard to get”—ticking down by 0.6 pts to +6.9%.

The Expectations Index increased by 1.0 point in May, with two of its three components—net expectations for business and labor market conditions six months from now—inched up. Expected household income was slightly less positive.

Among age groups, confidence ticked up for consumers aged 35–54, but trended downward for older and younger consumers, both month-over-month and on a six-month moving average basis. By income, confidence among higher income groups trended upward on a six-month moving average basis. By generation, confidence improved for the Silent Generation (the oldest group) but was little changed or lower among other generations. By political affiliation, Republicans remained the most optimistic, while Independents were the only group that saw confidence tick up on a month-over-month basis.

Consumers' write-in responses on factors affecting the economy continued to skew towards pessimism in May. References to prices and oil and gas increased in frequency for a second consecutive month, while mentions of war, geopolitics, and conflict remained elevated—likely signaling consumers' underlying concerns about the inflationary impacts of the war in the Middle East on their wallets.

Consumers' average and median 12-month inflation expectations ticked downward but remained elevated. The percentage of consumers saying interest rates over the next 12 months will be higher on net stood at nearly 50% in May. The ongoing stock market rally—largely fueled by the tech sector and rising hopes for an end

NATIONAL UPDATE

Leading Economic Indicators

The **Conference Board Leading Economic Index®** (LEI) for the US rose slightly by 0.1% in April 2026 to 97.4 (2016=100), following a 0.6% decline in March. Overall, the LEI fell by 0.7% over the six months between October 2025 and April 2026, a less severe rate of decline than its 1.0% contraction over the previous six months (April to October 2025).

“The US LEI increased slightly in April, driven mainly by a rebound in stock prices and an increase in building permits, only for two and more units,” said Justyna Zabinska-La Monica, Senior Manager, Business Cycle Indicators, at The Conference Board. “The leading index rose in two of the past three months, but the gains did not offset the steep fall registered in March. As a result, the LEI's six- and twelve-month growth rates were negative, signaling fragile economic conditions ahead. Strong investment in AI infrastructure, data centers, and energy production likely will have a positive impact on growth and sustain business spending but may only partially offset weakness on the consumer side. Higher gasoline and energy costs—paired with weak hiring—will likely erode household purchasing power in the months ahead, particularly for lower- and middle-income consumers. The Conference Board is currently projecting 1.7% y/y GDP growth in 2026, revised up slightly from last update of 1.6%.”

The **Conference Board Coincident Economic Index®** (CEI) for the US increased by 0.3% in April to 115.6 (2016=100), after remaining unchanged in March. Overall, the CEI expanded by 0.8% over the six months between October 2025 and April 2026, a dramatic improvement from its decline of 0.1% over the previous six months. The CEI's four component indicators—payroll employment, personal income less transfer payments, manufacturing and trade sales, and industrial production—are included among the data used to determine recessions in the US. All components of the CEI made positive contributions in April, led by industrial production.

The **Conference Board Lagging Economic Index®** (LAG) for the US rose by 0.4% to 120.8 (2016=100) in April 2026, after increasing by 0.3% in March. As a result, the LAG's six-month change was positive, growing by 0.8% between October 2025 and April 2026, up from its 0.5% growth over the previous six months (April to October 2025).

to the Middle East conflict-likely influenced consumer expectations of higher stock prices a year from now.

Consumers' net views of their Family's Current Financial Situation and Family's Future Financial Situation were both somewhat less positive in May. Meanwhile, the share of consumers who said a US recession over the next 12 months is "very likely" and "somewhat likely" rose. Those saying recession is "not likely" declined.

Consumers' plans to buy big-ticket items over the next six months continued to shift from "yes" to "no" in May. Nonetheless, the proportion saying "yes" remained well above the other responses. Buying plans for autos continued rising on a six-month moving average basis in May, with used cars remaining the clear preference over new cars. Homebuying expectations inched higher on a six-month rolling basis overall, as plans to buy existing homes rose, offsetting a small dip in newly built units. Spending plans for white goods, home furnishings, and electronics eased a tad or were unchanged on a six-month moving average basis.

Consumers planning more spending on services over the next six months shifted from "yes" and "maybe" to "no" in May. Future spending plans on services were mixed. Consumer spending trends in 2026 remained focused on "cheap thrills" and necessary services, but there was some increase in demand for discretionary services like personal travel, fitness, amusement parks, and gambling. Among all service categories, restaurants/bars/take-out, streaming/internet/mobile services, and beauty and personal care, remained among the top three spending targets.

Travel intentions for six months ahead ticked up in May, and consumers continued to favor domestic destinations over international travel. Overall expected spending on hotel/motel and airfare/trains for personal travel increased in May, correlating with an uptick in vacation plans.

These findings are supplemented by a set of special questions ran in May 2026:

- Two-thirds of consumers cited cutting back on spending overall due to rising prices, as of May
- Most who are cutting back bought fewer items and delayed expensive purchases
- Many who said they are delaying purchases of items they want rather than need, plan to buy them in the next six months
- Consumers planned to economize on clothing and footwear, hobby items, and games/toys

Present Situation

Consumers' assessments of current business conditions eroded in May.

- 18.5% of consumers said business conditions were "good," down from 22.3% in April.
- However, 17.1% said business conditions were "bad," down from 18.1%.

On net, consumers' views of the labor market improved moderately in April.

- 25.5% of consumers said jobs were "plentiful," down from 26.9% in April.
- Conversely, 18.6% of consumers said jobs were "hard to get," down from 19.4%.

Expectations Six Months Hence

Overall, consumers were moderately more optimistic about future business conditions in May.

- 19.0% of consumers expected business conditions to improve, down from 19.4% in April.
- Conversely, 22.5% expected business conditions to worsen, down from 23.8%.

Consumers were also more positive about the labor market outlook in May.

- 17.5% of consumers expected more jobs to be available, up from 16.7% in April.
- 26.0% anticipated fewer jobs, down from 26.8%.

On net, consumers' outlook for their income prospects was slightly more pessimistic in May.

- 20.0% of consumers expected their incomes to increase, up from 19.4% in April.
- However, 13.7% expected their income to decline, up from 12.4%.

A DEEPER DIVE – NATIONAL, CONT.

Gross Domestic Product

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 1.6 percent in the first quarter of 2026 (January, February, and March), according to the second estimate released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the fourth quarter of 2025, real GDP increased 0.5 percent.

The contributors to the increase in real GDP in the first quarter were exports, investment, consumer spending, and government spending. Imports, which are a subtraction in the calculation of GDP, increased.

Real GDP was revised down 0.4 percentage point from the advance estimate, primarily reflecting downward revisions to investment and consumer spending.

Compared to the fourth quarter of 2025, the acceleration in real GDP in the first quarter of 2026 reflected upturns in government spending and exports and an acceleration in investment that were partly offset by a deceleration in consumer spending. Imports turned up.

Real final sales to private domestic purchasers, the sum of consumer spending and gross private fixed investment increased 2.4 percent in the first quarter, revised down 0.1 percentage point from the previous estimate.

The price index for gross domestic purchases increased 3.5 percent in the first quarter, revised down 0.1 percentage point from the previous estimate. The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index increased 4.5 percent, the same as previously estimated, and the PCE price index excluding food and energy increased 4.4 percent, revised up 0.1 percentage point.

Real gross domestic income (GDI) increased 0.9 percent in the first quarter of 2026, compared with an increase of 1.6 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025. The average of real GDP and real GDI increased 1.3 percent, compared with an increase of 1.1 percent.

Profits from current production (corporate profits with inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments) increased \$40.4 billion in the first quarter, compared with an increase of \$246.9 billion in the fourth quarter of 2025.

A DEEPER DIVE – HOUSING

Existing-Home Sales

Existing-home sales increased by 0.2% month-over-month in April, according to the National Association of REALTORS® Existing-Home Sales report. The report provides the real estate ecosystem—including agents, homebuyers and sellers—with data on the level of home sales, price, and inventory.

Month-over-month sales increased in the Midwest and the South, were unchanged in the Northeast, and declined in the West. On a year-over-year basis, sales rose in the South, were flat in the West, and fell in both the Northeast and Midwest.

“Despite mixed macroeconomic signals—including a record-high stock market and historically low consumer confidence—home sales were modestly boosted by the continued improvement in housing affordability,” said NAR Chief Economist Dr. Lawrence Yun. “Mortgage rates are lower from a year ago, and average income growth is outpacing home price gains.”

“Inventory still remains tight,” Yun added. “Multiple offers, though not as intense as a few years ago, are still occurring. At the same time, days on market are lengthening on average, implying that consumers are taking their time before making decisions.”

“The increase in second-home purchases reflects stronger finances among higher-income households, as well as the post-COVID rise in remote work and hybrid job schedules.”



A DEEPER DIVE – HOUSING, CONT.

National Snapshot

Total Existing-Home Sales for April

- 0.2% increase in existing-home sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.02 million.
- No change in sales year-over-year.

Inventory in April

- 1.47 million units: Total housing inventory, up 5.8% from March and 1.4% from April 2025.
- 4.4-month supply of unsold inventory, up from 4.2 months last month and up from 4.3 months one year ago.

Median Sales Price in April

- \$417,700: Median existing-home price for all housing types
- 0.9% increase from one year ago (\$414,000)—the 34th consecutive month of year-over-year price increases.

Housing Affordability in April

- The Housing Affordability Index registered at 110.6, up from 101.4 a year ago
- Year-over-year, affordability improved across all regions.
 - Northeast +4.7%
 - Midwest +5.9%
 - South +9.6%
 - West +12.5%

Single-Family-Homes Sales in April

- No change in sales month-over-month with a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.64 million, down 0.3% from April 2025.
- \$422,300: Median home price, up 1.0% from last year.

Condominiums and Co-ops Sales in April

- 2.7% increase in sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 380,000
- 2.7% increase from last year.
- \$374,100: Median price, up 1.1% from April 2025.

Regional Snapshot for Existing-Home Sales in April

Northeast

- Unchanged sales month-over-month at an annual rate of 450,000
 - Down 8.2% year-over-year
- \$510,800: Median price, up 4.8% from April 2025

Midwest

- 2.2% increase in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 950,000
 - Down 1.0% year-over-year
- \$324,500: Median price, up 3.6% from April 2025.

South

- 0.5% increase in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 1.87 million
 - Up 2.7% year-over-year
- \$366,600: Median price, up 0.4% from April 2025

West

- 2.6% decrease in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 750,000
 - Unchanged from last year
- \$619,600: Median price, down 1.4% from April 2025.

REALTORS® Confidence Index for April

- 32 days: Median time on market for properties, down from 41 days last month
- Up from 29 days in April 2025
- 33% of sales were first-time homebuyers, up from 32% in March
- Down slightly from 34% one year ago
- 25% of transactions were cash sales, down from 27% last month
- Unchanged from 25% in April 2025
- 16% of transactions were individual investors or second-home buyers, down from 18% last month
- Up slightly from 15% one year ago
- 2% of sales were distressed sales⁴ (foreclosures and short sales)
- Unchanged from last month and a year ago.

Mortgage Rates

- 6.33%: The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage in April, according to Freddie Mac, up from 6.18% in March and down from 6.73% one year ago.

New Residential Sales

Sales of new single-family houses in April 2026 were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 622,000, according to estimates released jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is 6.2 percent below the March 2026 rate of 663,000 and is 11.3 percent below the April 2025 rate of 701,000.

The median sales price of new houses sold in April 2026 was \$422,500. This is 8.0 percent above the March 2026 price of \$391,100 and is 2.2 percent above the April 2025 price of \$413,600. The average sales price of new houses sold in April 2026 was \$508,800. This is 0.7 percent above the March 2026 price of \$505,200 and is 1.1 percent below the April 2025 price of \$514,300.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of new houses for sale at the end of April 2026 was 489,000. This is 1.7 percent above the March 2026 estimate of 481,000 and is 2.2 percent below the April 2025 estimate of 500,000.

This represents a supply of 9.4 months at the current sales rate. The month's supply is 8.0 percent above the March 2026 estimate of 8.7 months and is 9.3 percent above the April 2025 estimate of 8.6 months.

Compared to April 2025 on a seasonally adjusted basis, sales were down 11.3% overall with sales also down 14.7% in the South, down 12.9% in the Northeast, and down 21.4% in the Midwest, but up 4.6% in the West.

Housing Starts

Privately-owned housing starts in April were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,465,000. This is 2.8 percent below the revised March estimate of 1,507,000 but is 4.6 percent above the April 2025 rate of 1,400,000.

Single-family housing starts in April were at a rate of 930,000; this is 9.0 percent below the revised March figure of 1,022,000.

The April rate for units in buildings with five units or more was 529,000 (446,000 last month).

Single-family starts compared to April 2025, on a seasonally-adjusted basis, were down 2.4% in total, as well as down 33.3% in the Northeast, down 12.1% in the Midwest, but up 1.7% in the South and up 7.3% in the West.

Housing Completions

Privately-owned housing completions in April were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,449,000. This is 4.8 percent above the revised March estimate of 1,382,000 but is 2.0 percent below the April 2025 rate of 1,479,000.

Single-family housing completions in April were at a rate of 903,000; this is 1.0 percent below the revised March rate of 912,000.

The April rate for units in buildings with five units or more was 529,000 (452,000 last month).

Single-family completions compared to April 2025, on a seasonally-adjusted basis, were down 7.0% in total, as well as down 6.9% in the South, down 10.8% in the Midwest, down 5.1% in the West, and down 6.3% in the Northeast.

A DEEPER DIVE – OTHER NATIONAL

Retail Sales

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April 2026, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$757.1 billion, up 0.5 percent from the previous month, and up 4.9 percent from April 2025. Total sales for the February 2026 through April 2026 period were up 4.4 percent from the same period a year ago. The February 2026 to March 2026 percent change was revised from up 1.7 percent to up 1.6 percent.

Retail trade sales were up 0.5 percent from March 2026, and up 5.2 percent (± 0.5 percent) from last year. Nonstore retailers were up 11.1 percent from last year, while food services and drinking places were up 2.7 percent from April 2025.

Sales at furniture and home furnishings stores in April 2026 were down 2.0 compared to March 2026 on a seasonally-adjusted basis, and down 3.6% from April 2025. Year to date on a non-adjusted basis, sales were down 3.0% (down 2.8% last month).

Consumer Prices

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.6 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis in April, after rising 0.9 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. Over the last 12 months, the all-items index increased 3.8 percent before seasonal adjustment.

The index for energy rose 3.8 percent in April, accounting for over forty percent of the monthly all items increase. The shelter index also increased in April, rising 0.6 percent. The index for food increased 0.5 percent over the month as the index for food at home rose 0.7 percent and the index for food away from home increased 0.2 percent.

The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.4 percent in April. Indexes that increased over the month include household furnishings and operations, airline fares, personal care, apparel, and education. Conversely, the indexes for new vehicles, communication, and medical care were among the major indexes that decreased in April.

The all-items index rose 3.8 percent for the 12 months ending April, after rising 3.3 percent for the 12 months ending March. The all items, less food and energy index rose 2.8 percent over the year, following a 2.6 percent increase over the 12 months ending March. The energy index increased 17.9 percent for the 12 months ending April. The food index increased 3.2 percent over the last year.

Employment

Total nonfarm payroll employment edged up by 115,000 in April, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.3 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. Job gains occurred in health care, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade. Federal government employment continued to decline.

The average workweek for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls edged up by 0.1 hour to 34.3 hours in April. In manufacturing, the average workweek edged up by 0.1 hour to 40.4 hours, and overtime was unchanged at 3.0 hours. The average workweek for production and nonsupervisory employees on private nonfarm payrolls remained at 33.8 hours.

Durable Goods Orders and Factory Shipments

New orders for manufactured goods in March, up four of the last five months, increased \$9.1 billion or 1.5 percent to \$630.4 billion, the U.S. Census Bureau reported. This followed a 0.3 percent February increase. Shipments, up five of the last six months, increased \$8.8 billion or 1.4 percent to \$633.9 billion. This followed a 1.7 percent February increase. Unfilled orders, up twenty of the last twenty-one months, increased \$1.6 billion or 0.1 percent to \$1,540.9 billion. This followed a 0.1 percent February increase. The unfilled orders-to-shipments ratio was 6.88, down from 6.92 in February. Inventories, up six consecutive months, increased \$5.8 billion or 0.6 percent to \$956.3 billion. This followed a 0.1 percent February increase. The inventories-to-shipments ratio was 1.51, down from 1.52 in February.

On a seasonally-adjusted basis, March shipments for furniture and related products were down 1.2% compared to the prior month, while new orders were down 0.2%. On a non-adjusted basis, March 2026 year-to-date shipments for furniture and related products were up 2.5% compared to the prior year, while year-to-date new orders were up 2.0%.