

News Release

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What is the Midwest Economy Index?

The index is a weighted average of 129 state and regional indicators encompassing the entirety of the five states in the Seventh Federal Reserve District (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin). The index measures growth in nonfarm business activity based on indicators of four broad sectors of the Midwest economy: 1) manufacturing, 2) construction and mining, 3) services, and 4) consumer spending.

Why are there two index values?

Over long periods, growth in Midwest economic activity has historically tended to coincide with growth in national economic activity. However, over shorter periods of time this has not always been the case. To highlight such differences, we construct two separate index values. The MEI captures both national and regional factors driving Midwest growth, and the relative MEI provides a picture of Midwest growth conditions relative to those of the nation.

What do the index numbers mean?

A zero value for the MEI has been associated with the Midwest economy expanding at its historical trend (average) rate of growth; positive values with above-average growth (in standard deviation units); and negative values with below-average growth. A zero value for the relative MEI has been associated with the Midwest economy growing at a rate historically consistent with the growth of the national economy; positive values with above-average relative growth (in standard deviation units); and negative values with below-average relative growth.

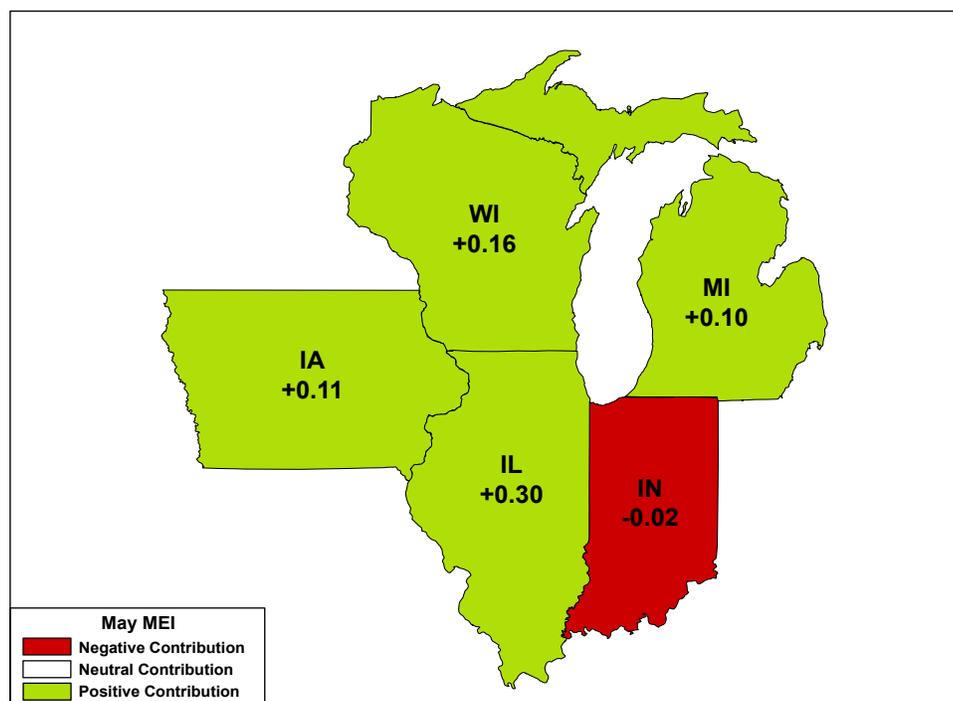
Midwest Economy Index

Index points to little change in Midwest growth through May

The MEI will be discontinued following this June 30, 2021, release. For further details, go to chicagofed.org/mei.

The Midwest Economy Index (MEI), which approximates quarterly growth at a monthly frequency, moved up to +0.69 in May from +0.63 in April. Contributions to the May MEI from three of the four broad sectors of nonfarm business activity and two of the five Seventh Federal Reserve District states increased from April. The relative MEI increased to +0.79 in May from +0.47 in April. Contributions to the May relative MEI from two of the four sectors and four of the five states increased from April.

MEI and the Seventh Federal Reserve District States



Note: The map's coloring summarizes the most recent contribution to growth in Midwest economic activity from each of the five states in the Seventh Federal Reserve District (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin).

Sectoral and Geographic Contributions to the MEI and Relative MEI

May 2021

MEI	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.17	+0.01	+0.11	0.00	+0.14	+0.01	+0.44
Construction	0.00	+0.02	+0.01	0.00	+0.01	0.00	+0.04
Services	+0.05	-0.03	-0.01	+0.08	+0.01	0.00	+0.10
Consumer	+0.08	-0.01	0.00	+0.02	0.00	+0.02	+0.11
	+0.30	-0.02	+0.11	+0.10	+0.16	+0.03	+0.69

Relative MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.37	0.00	+0.19	-0.02	+0.25	0.00	+0.80
Construction	+0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Services	+0.04	-0.16	-0.08	+0.10	-0.03	0.00	-0.13
Consumer	+0.01	+0.03	+0.01	+0.05	+0.01	+0.01	+0.12
	+0.44	-0.14	+0.13	+0.11	+0.23	+0.02	+0.79

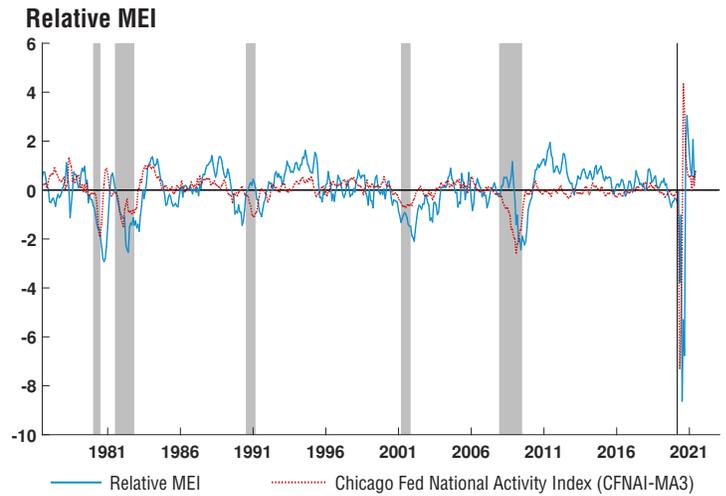
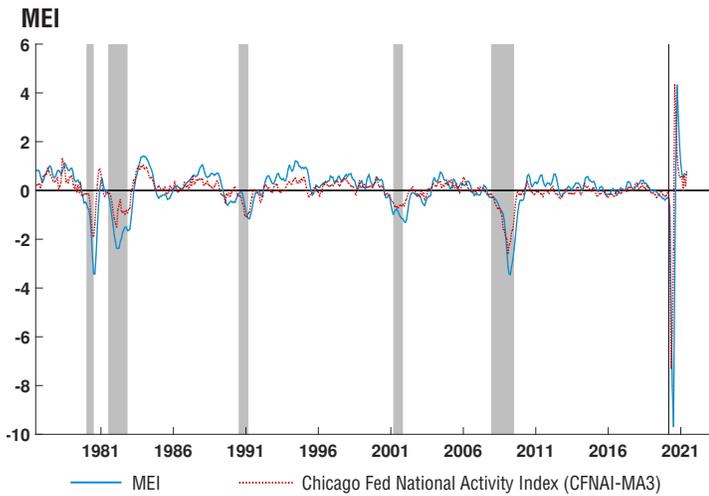
Notes: The table summarizes the most recent contribution to the MEI and relative MEI by sector and geography. The sectoral (rows) and geographic (columns) contributions may not sum to the index in each time period because of rounding. Manufacturing and construction and mining are composed of production and employment indicators. Services contains only employment indicators, while consumer spending contains employment, unemployment, per capita personal income, and home and retail sales indicators.

The manufacturing sector's contribution to the MEI moved up to +0.44 in May from +0.39 in April. The pace of manufacturing activity increased in Illinois and Wisconsin, but decreased in Iowa and was unchanged in Indiana and Michigan. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI increased to +0.80 in May from +0.60 in April.

The construction and mining sector contributed +0.04 to the MEI in May, up slightly from -0.02 in April. The pace of construction and mining activity was faster in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin, but unchanged in Michigan. Construction and mining's contribution to the relative MEI increased to a neutral value in May from -0.14 in April.

The service sector's contribution to the MEI moved down to +0.10 in May from +0.17 in April. The pace of service sector activity was down in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but unchanged in Iowa. The service sector's contribution to the relative MEI ticked down to -0.13 in May from -0.12 in April.

The contribution from consumer spending indicators to the MEI edged up to +0.11 in May from +0.09 in April. Consumer spending indicators were, on balance, up in Illinois, but down in Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin and steady in Iowa. Consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI edged down to +0.12 in May from +0.14 in April.



Notes: Both the MEI and the CFNAI-MA3 have been standardized to have a zero mean and are expressed in standard deviation units. MEI values greater than zero point to growth in Midwest economic activity above its historical trend, and CFNAI-MA3 values greater than zero point to growth in national economic activity above its historical trend; negative values suggest the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research; the vertical line indicates the most recent business cycle peak.

Notes: Both the relative MEI and the CFNAI-MA3 have been standardized to have a zero mean and are expressed in standard deviation units. The relative MEI is constructed from the standardized residuals from linear regressions of each of the 129 MEI indicators on the CFNAI-MA3. Relative MEI values greater than zero point to growth in Midwest economic activity that is higher on average than would historically be suggested based on the CFNAI-MA3; negative values suggest the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research; the vertical line indicates the most recent business cycle peak.