

News Release

Embargoed for release:
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
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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 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 indicates that the Midwest economy is expanding at its historical trend rate of growth; positive values indicate above-average growth; and negative values indicate below-average growth. A zero value for the relative MEI indicates that the Midwest economy is growing at a rate historically consistent with the growth of the national economy; positive values indicate above-average relative growth; and negative values indicate below-average relative growth.

The next MEI will be released:
May 30, 2014
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

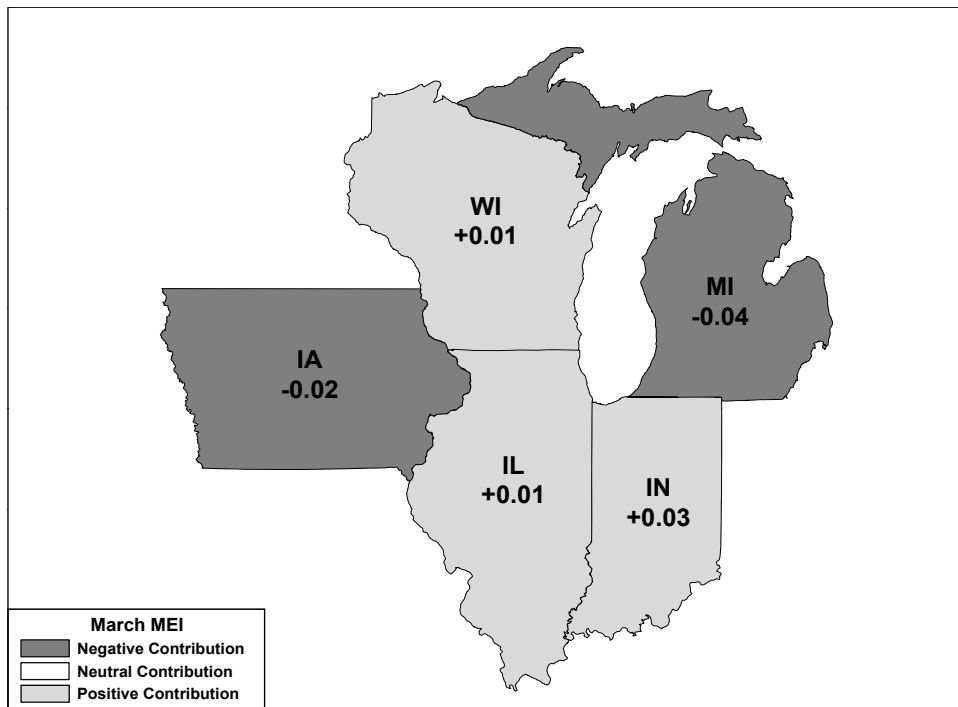
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF CHICAGO

Midwest Economy Index

Index shows Midwest economic growth near average in March

Led by declines in the service sector, the Midwest Economy Index (MEI) decreased to -0.02 in March from $+0.05$ in February, falling below zero for the first time since June 2013. Moreover, the relative MEI decreased to -0.13 in March from $+0.27$ in the previous month. March's value for the relative MEI indicates that Midwest economic growth was somewhat lower than would typically be suggested by the growth rate of the national economy.

MEI and the Seventh Federal Reserve District States



Note: The map's shading 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

March 2014

MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.05	+0.02	+0.04	-0.02	+0.03	0.00	+0.12
Construction	-0.02	-0.05	-0.04	+0.01	+0.03	-0.01	-0.08
Services	-0.05	+0.01	-0.02	-0.08	-0.06	0.00	-0.21
Consumer	+0.03	+0.05	0.00	+0.05	+0.02	-0.02	+0.14
	+0.01	+0.03	-0.02	-0.04	+0.01	-0.03	-0.02

Relative MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.11	+0.02	-0.02	-0.04	+0.06	0.00	+0.13
Construction	0.00	-0.05	-0.05	+0.05	+0.04	0.00	-0.01
Services	-0.15	-0.02	-0.06	-0.15	-0.10	0.00	-0.47
Consumer	+0.04	+0.05	0.00	+0.06	+0.05	+0.03	+0.22
	0.00	0.00	-0.12	-0.08	+0.04	+0.03	-0.13

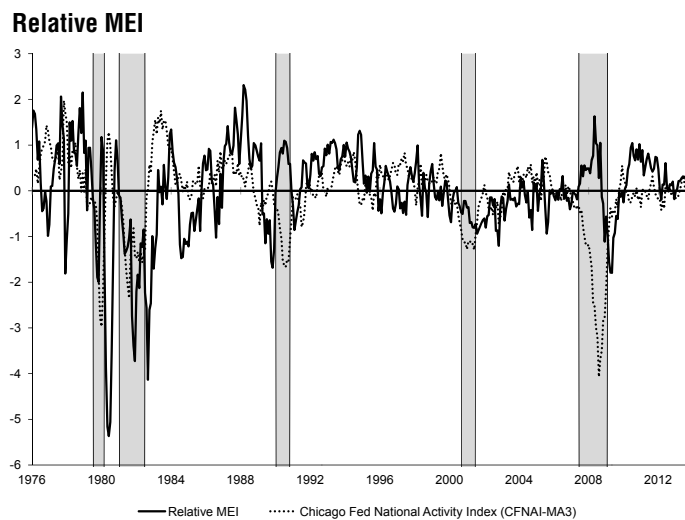
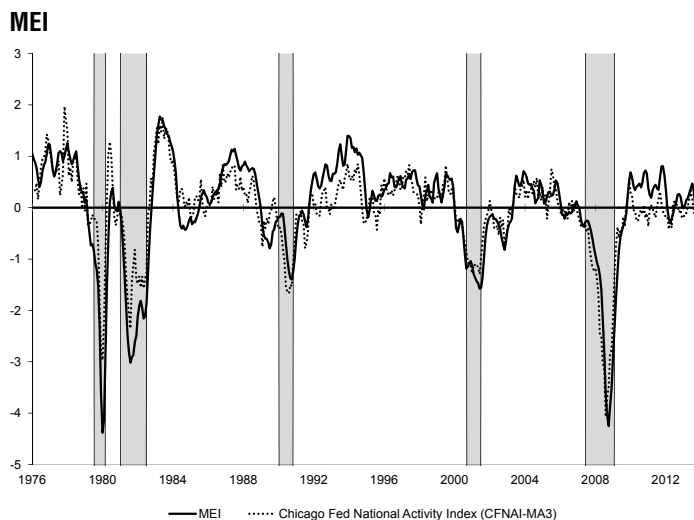
Notes: The table summarizes the most recent contribution to the MEI and relative MEI by sector and geography. The sectoral (rows) and geographic (columns) contributions may not sum to the index in each time period because of rounding. Manufacturing and construction and mining are composed of production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

Manufacturing's contribution to the MEI increased to +0.12 in March from +0.09 in February. The pace of manufacturing activity increased in Indiana and Wisconsin, but decreased in Illinois and was unchanged in Iowa and Michigan. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI decreased to +0.13 in March from +0.25 in February.

The construction and mining sector's contribution to the MEI moved up to -0.08 in March from -0.09 in February. The pace of construction and mining activity was higher in Michigan and Wisconsin, but lower in Indiana and steady in Illinois and Iowa. Construction and mining's contribution to the relative MEI moved up to -0.01 in March from -0.03 in February.

The service sector contributed -0.21 to the MEI in March, down from -0.06 in February. The pace of service sector activity decreased in all five Seventh District states. The service sector's contribution to the relative MEI decreased to -0.47 in March from -0.15 in February.

The contribution from consumer spending indicators to the MEI increased to +0.14 in March from +0.11 in February. Consumer spending indicators were, on balance, up in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but down in Iowa. Consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI increased to +0.22 in March from +0.19 in February.



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 indicate growth in Midwest economic activity above its historical trend, and CFNAI-MA3 values greater than zero indicate growth in national economic activity above its historical trend; negative values indicate the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

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 indicate that growth in Midwest economic activity is higher on average than would typically be suggested based on the CFNAI-MA3; negative values indicate the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

2014 MEI Release Dates

<i>Date of Release</i>	<i>Monthly Data for</i>	<i>GSP Growth Forecasts through</i>
May 30, 2014	April 2014	2013:Q4
June 30, 2014	May 2014	2014:Q1
July 31, 2014	June 2014	
August 29, 2014	July 2014	
September 30, 2014	August 2014	2014:Q2
October 31, 2014	September 2014	
December 3, 2014	October 2014	
December 30, 2014	November 2014	2014:Q3

MEI historical data and background information are available at www.chicagofed.org/mei.

Gross state product (GSP) growth forecasts are available at www.chicagofed.org/webpages/region/midwest_economy/index_data.cfm.