Chicago Fed National Activity Index

Index points to a pickup in economic growth in December

Led by improvements in production-related indicators, the Chicago Fed National Activity Index (CFNAI) moved up to +0.27 in December from +0.11 in November. Two of the four broad categories of indicators that make up the index increased from November, and three of the four categories made positive contributions to the index in December. The index’s three-month moving average, CFNAI-MA3, ticked down to +0.42 in December from +0.43 in November.

The CFNAI Diffusion Index, which is also a three-month moving average, edged down to +0.23 in December from +0.26 in November. Forty-three of the 85 individual indicators made positive contributions to the CFNAI in December, while 42 made negative contributions. Thirty-seven indicators improved from November to December, while 47 indicators deteriorated and one was unchanged. Of the indicators that improved, nine made negative contributions.

The next CFNAI will be released:
February 26, 2018
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

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The contribution from production-related indicators to the CFNAI rose to +0.25 in December from –0.02 in November. Total industrial production increased 0.9 percent in December after moving down 0.1 percent in November. The sales, orders, and inventories category made a contribution of +0.08 to the CFNAI in December, up slightly from +0.04 in November.

Employment-related indicators contributed +0.01 to the CFNAI in December, down from +0.12 in November. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 148,000 in December after increasing by 252,000 in November. The contribution of the personal consumption and housing category to the CFNAI edged down to –0.07 in December from –0.03 in November. Housing starts decreased to 1,192,000 annualized units in December from 1,299,000 in November.

The CFNAI was constructed using data available as of January 18, 2018. At that time, December data for 49 of the 85 indicators had been published. For all missing data, estimates were used in constructing the index. The November monthly index value was revised to +0.11 from an initial estimate of +0.15, and the October monthly index value was revised to +0.87 from last month’s estimate of +0.76. Revisions to the monthly index can be attributed to two main factors: revisions in previously published data and differences between the estimates of previously unavailable data and subsequently published data. The revisions to both the November and October monthly index values were primarily due to the former.