

News Release

Embargoed for release:
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
April 30, 2018

Contact:
Laura LaBarbera
Media Relations
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
312-322-2387

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.

The next MEI will be released:
May 31, 2018
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

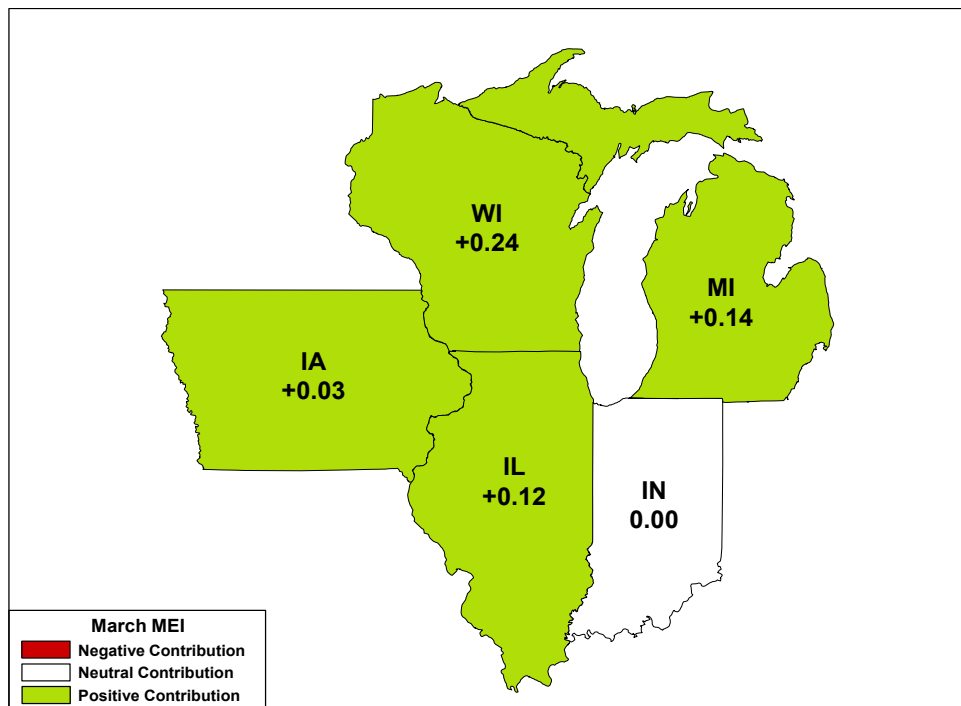
**FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
 OF CHICAGO**

Midwest Economy Index

Index points to a pickup in Midwest economic growth in March

The Midwest Economy Index (MEI) moved up to +0.52 in March from +0.41 in February. Contributions to the March MEI from three of the four broad sectors of nonfarm business activity and three of the five Seventh Federal Reserve District states increased from February. The relative MEI declined to +0.13 in March from +0.43 in February. Contributions to the March relative MEI from three of the four sectors and four of the five states decreased from February.

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 2018

MEI	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.12	+0.01	+0.07	+0.07	+0.20	0.00	+0.47
Construction	-0.01	+0.04	-0.01	+0.03	+0.02	0.00	+0.07
Services	-0.01	-0.06	-0.02	+0.05	+0.01	0.00	-0.04
Consumer	+0.01	+0.01	0.00	0.00	+0.01	-0.01	+0.02
	+0.12	0.00	+0.03	+0.14	+0.24	-0.01	+0.52

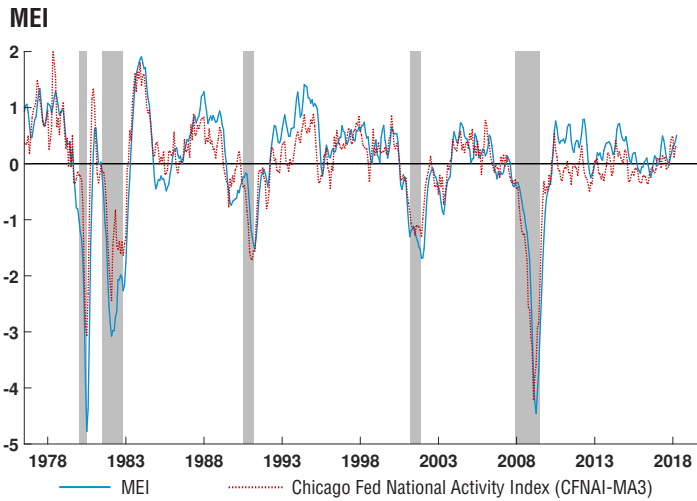
Relative MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.10	0.00	+0.03	+0.04	+0.16	0.00	+0.32
Construction	0.00	+0.07	-0.02	+0.03	+0.03	0.00	+0.11
Services	-0.12	-0.13	-0.08	+0.04	-0.02	0.00	-0.30
Consumer	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.01	+0.01	+0.01	0.00
	-0.03	-0.06	-0.08	+0.10	+0.18	+0.01	+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.

The manufacturing sector's contribution to the MEI edged up to +0.47 in March from +0.43 in February. The pace of manufacturing activity increased in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but decreased in Illinois. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI declined to +0.32 in March from +0.55 in February.

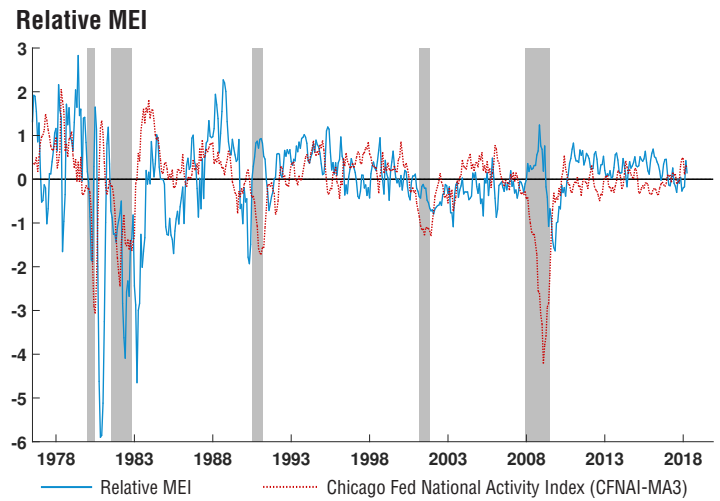
The construction and mining sector's contribution to the MEI increased to +0.07 in March from +0.01 in February. The pace of construction and mining activity was stronger in Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but unchanged in Illinois and Iowa. Construction and mining made a contribution of +0.11 to the relative MEI in March, up from +0.06 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 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 service sector contributed -0.04 to the MEI in March, down slightly from -0.03 in February. The pace of service sector activity was down in Iowa, but up in Michigan and Wisconsin and unchanged in Illinois and Indiana. The service sector's contribution to the relative MEI decreased to -0.30 in March from -0.20 in February.

Consumer spending indicators made a contribution of +0.02 to the MEI in March, up from -0.01 in February. Consumer spending indicators were, on balance, up in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but steady in Iowa. Consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI edged down to a neutral contribution in March from +0.02 in February.



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.

2018 MEI Release Dates

<i>Date of Release</i>	<i>Monthly Data for</i>
<i>May 31, 2018</i>	<i>April 2018</i>
<i>June 29, 2018</i>	<i>May 2018</i>
<i>July 31, 2018</i>	<i>June 2018</i>
<i>August 31, 2018</i>	<i>July 2018</i>
<i>September 28, 2018</i>	<i>August 2018</i>
<i>October 31, 2018</i>	<i>September 2018</i>
<i>November 30, 2018</i>	<i>October 2018</i>
<i>December 31, 2018</i>	<i>November 2018</i>

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