

News Release

Embargoed for release:
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
December 31, 2020

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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.

The next MEI will be released:
January 29, 2021
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

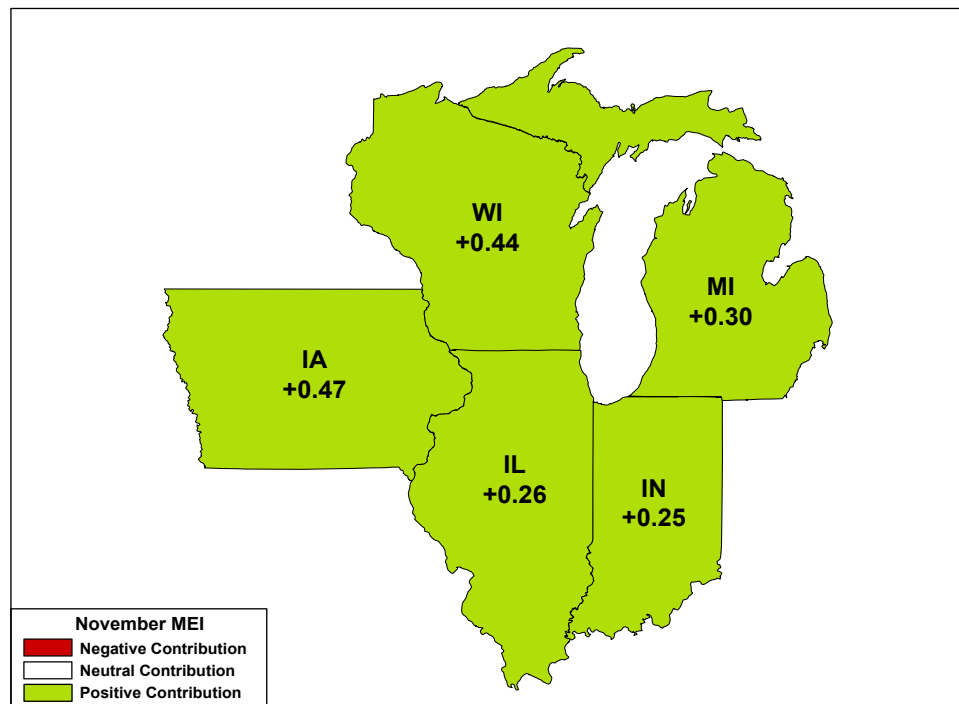
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF CHICAGO

Midwest Economy Index

Index suggests slower, but still above-trend Midwest growth through November

The Midwest Economy Index (MEI), which approximates quarterly growth at a monthly frequency, fell to +1.79 in November from +3.00 in October. Contributions to the November MEI from all four broad sectors of nonfarm business activity and all five Seventh Federal Reserve District states decreased from October. The relative MEI moved down to +1.99 in November from +2.78 in October. Contributions to the November relative MEI from two of the four sectors and three of the five states decreased from October.

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

November 2020

MEI	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	+0.04	+0.01	+0.19	+0.02	+0.09	+0.04	+0.40
Construction	-0.01	+0.02	+0.01	+0.02	+0.03	0.00	+0.05
Services	+0.12	+0.11	+0.11	+0.17	+0.14	0.00	+0.65
Consumer	+0.10	+0.11	+0.16	+0.09	+0.19	+0.04	+0.69
	+0.26	+0.25	+0.47	+0.30	+0.44	+0.08	+1.79

Relative MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	-0.12	-0.03	+0.36	-0.01	+0.07	+0.02	+0.28
Construction	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	+0.02	+0.02	+0.01
Services	+0.13	+0.13	+0.07	+0.23	+0.16	0.00	+0.73
Consumer	+0.24	+0.11	+0.27	+0.11	+0.25	-0.01	+0.97
	+0.23	+0.19	+0.69	+0.34	+0.50	+0.03	+1.99

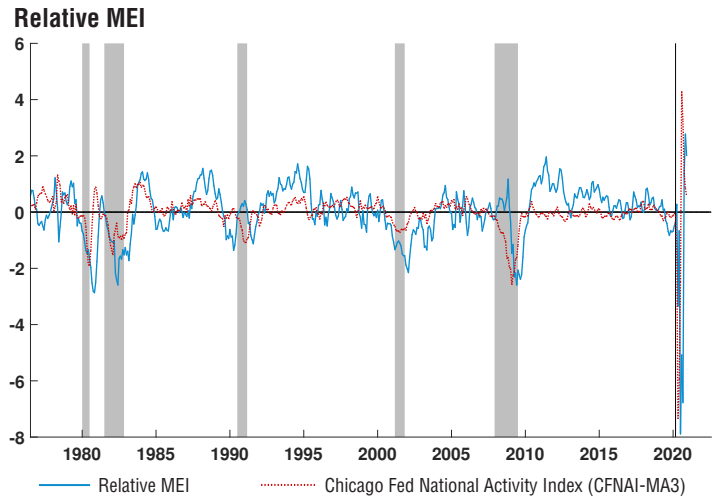
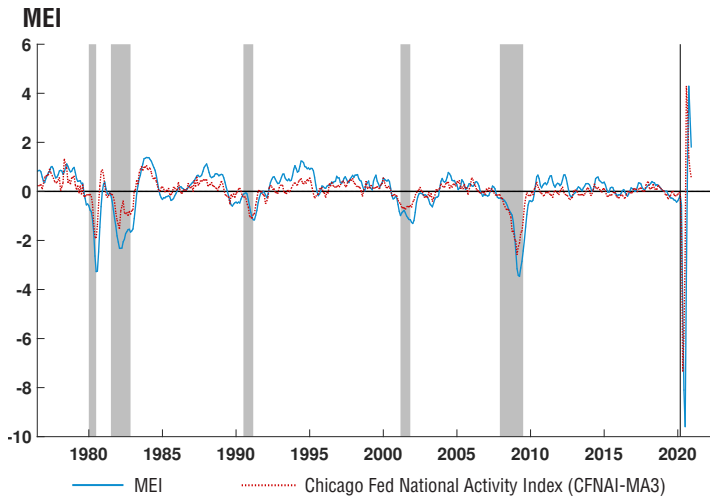
Notes: The table summarizes the most recent contribution to the MEI and relative MEI by sector and geography. The sectoral (rows) and geographic (columns) contributions may not sum to the index in each time period because of rounding. Manufacturing and construction and mining are composed of production 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 down to +0.40 in November from +0.45 in October. The pace of manufacturing activity decreased in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, but increased in Iowa and Wisconsin. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI moved up to +0.28 in November from -0.07 in October.

The construction and mining sector contributed +0.05 to the MEI in November, down slightly from +0.07 in October. The pace of construction and mining activity was slower in Indiana and Michigan, but faster in Illinois and Iowa and unchanged in Wisconsin. Construction and mining's contribution to the relative MEI edged up to +0.01 in November from -0.04 in October.

The service sector's contribution to the MEI fell to +0.65 in November from +1.44 in October. The pace of service sector activity was down in all five states. The service sector's contribution to the relative MEI decreased to +0.73 in November from +1.70 in October.

Consumer spending indicators contributed +0.69 to the MEI in November, down from +1.03 in October. Consumer spending indicators were, on balance, down in all five states. Consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI moved down to +0.97 in November from +1.20 in October.



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.

MEI Release Dates

<i>Date of Release</i>	<i>Monthly Data for</i>
<i>January 29, 2021</i>	<i>December 2020</i>
<i>March 31, 2021</i>	<i>January/February 2021</i>
<i>April 30, 2021</i>	<i>March 2021</i>
<i>May 28, 2021</i>	<i>April 2021</i>
<i>June 30, 2021</i>	<i>May 2021</i>
<i>July 30, 2021</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>August 31, 2021</i>	<i>July 2021</i>
<i>September 30, 2021</i>	<i>August 2021</i>
<i>October 29, 2021</i>	<i>September 2021</i>
<i>November 30, 2021</i>	<i>October 2021</i>
<i>December 30, 2021</i>	<i>November 2021</i>

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