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.

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

The Midwest Economy Index (MEI), which approximates quarterly growth at a monthly frequency, fell to +3.15 in October from +4.34 in September. Contributions to the October MEI from three of the four broad sectors of nonfarm business activity and all five Seventh Federal Reserve District states decreased from September. The relative MEI rose to +2.50 in October from +1.16 in September. Contributions to the October relative MEI from three of the four sectors and three of the five states increased from September.

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

The next MEI will be released:
December 31, 2020
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
The manufacturing sector's contribution to the MEI edged up to +0.43 in October from +0.40 in September. The pace of manufacturing activity increased in Iowa and Wisconsin, but decreased in Indiana and Michigan and was unchanged in Illinois. Manufacturing’s contribution to the relative MEI rose to −0.08 in October from −1.29 in September.

The construction and mining sector contributed +0.20 to the MEI in October, down slightly from +0.25 in September. The pace of construction and mining activity was slower in Indiana and Michigan, but faster in Illinois and Wisconsin and unchanged in Iowa. Construction and mining’s contribution to the relative MEI increased to −0.10 in October from −0.24 in September.

The service sector’s contribution to the MEI fell to +1.42 in October from +2.14 in September. The pace of service sector activity was down in all five states. The service sector’s contribution to the relative MEI edged down to +1.58 in October from +1.62 in September.

Consumer spending indicators contributed +1.11 to the MEI in October, down from +1.55 in September. Consumer spending indicators were, on balance, down in all five states. Consumer spending’s contribution to the relative MEI edged up to +1.10 in October from +1.08 in September.

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.