

US Consumer Confidence Edged Up Again in April

Latest Press Release

Updated: Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Confidence Inched Higher Despite Spiking Prices Amid Middle East Turmoil

The Conference Board *Consumer Confidence Index*[®] edged up by 0.6 points to 92.8 (1985=100) in April, from 92.2 in March's upwardly revised reading.

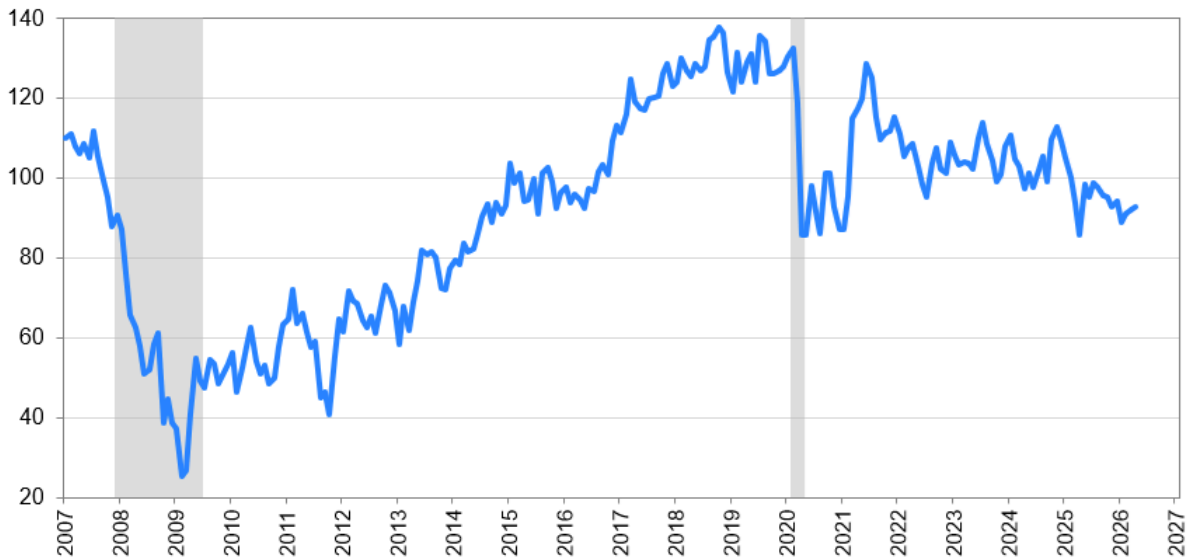
The *Present Situation Index*—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—retreated by 0.3 points to 123.8.

The *Expectations Index*—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—rose by 1.2 points to 72.2. The survey period for this month's preliminary results was April 1–22, a period that included the temporary two-week ceasefire in the Middle East conflict beginning April 8 and the subsequent rebound in US equities.

“Consumer confidence edged up in April but was overall little changed, despite material concern about rising gasoline prices as the war in the Middle East prompted a surge in Brent crude oil prices,” said Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist, The Conference Board. “Consumer appraisals of current and expected business conditions declined moderately compared to last month. This was offset by modest improvements in consumers' perceptions of the labor market, both current and expected, as well as income expectations, which were slightly more optimistic in April.”

Consumer Confidence Index®

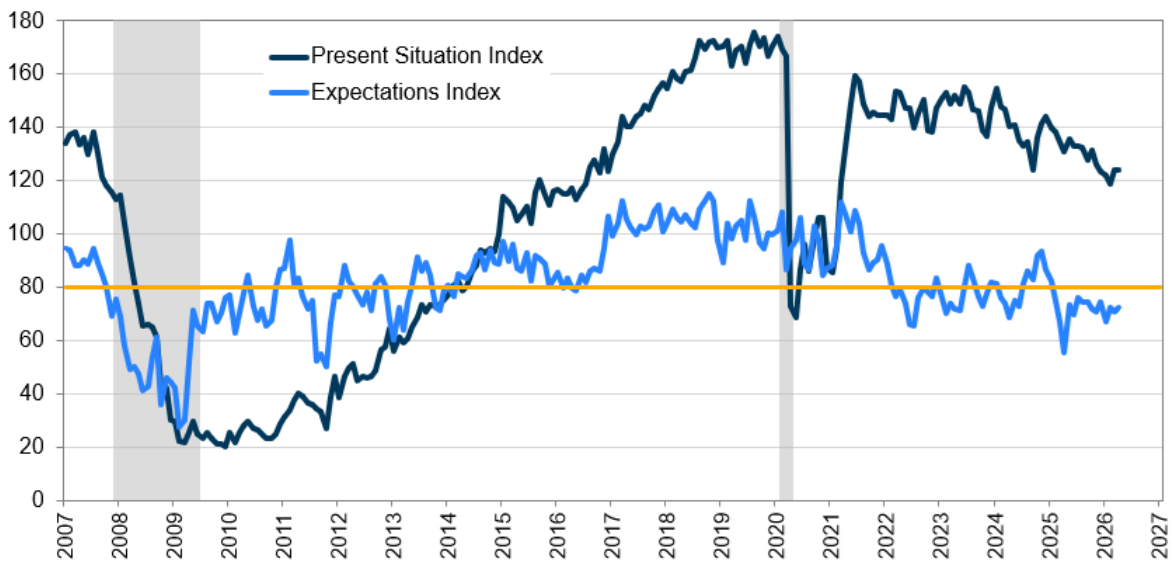
Index, 1985 = 100



*Shaded areas represent periods of recession.
Sources: The Conference Board; NBER
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Present Situation and Expectations Index

Index, 1985 = 100



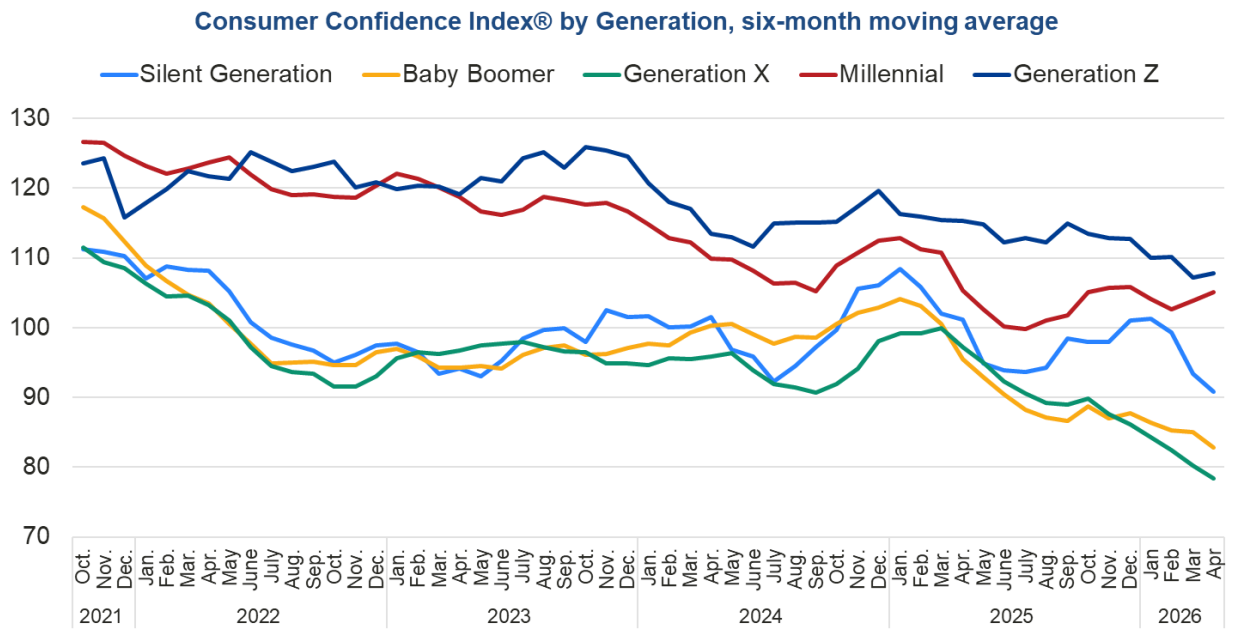
*Shaded areas represent periods of recession.
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The *Present Situation Index* cooled slightly in April, as net views of current business conditions (the share saying conditions are “good” versus “bad”)

fell by 1.8 pts to +4.1%. Perceptions of employment conditions improved slightly, with the labor market differential—the share of consumers saying jobs are “plentiful” minus the share saying jobs are “hard to get”—ticking up by 1.4 pts to +7.5%. The *Expectations Index* increased by 1.2 points in April, as two of its three components—net perceptions of labor market and household income conditions six months from now—edged up. Expected business conditions were slightly more pessimistic.

Among demographic groups, confidence continued to trend downward on a six-month moving average basis for consumers aged 35 and up while younger consumers were a tad more confident in April. Respondents under 35 remained the most optimistic and those 55 and over the least.

On a six-month moving average basis, confidence improved among Millennials and Gen Z but declined among older generations. By income, confidence on a six-month moving average basis varied, but most income groups expressed less optimism. By political affiliation, Republicans remained the most optimistic, while confidence fell for Independents and improved slightly for Democrats.



Source: The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey®

Consumers’ write-in responses on factors affecting the economy continued to skew towards pessimism in April. Comments about prices, oil and gas, and war

increased in frequency compared to March—a likely signal of consumers' underlying worries about how the war in the Middle East will impact their pockets.

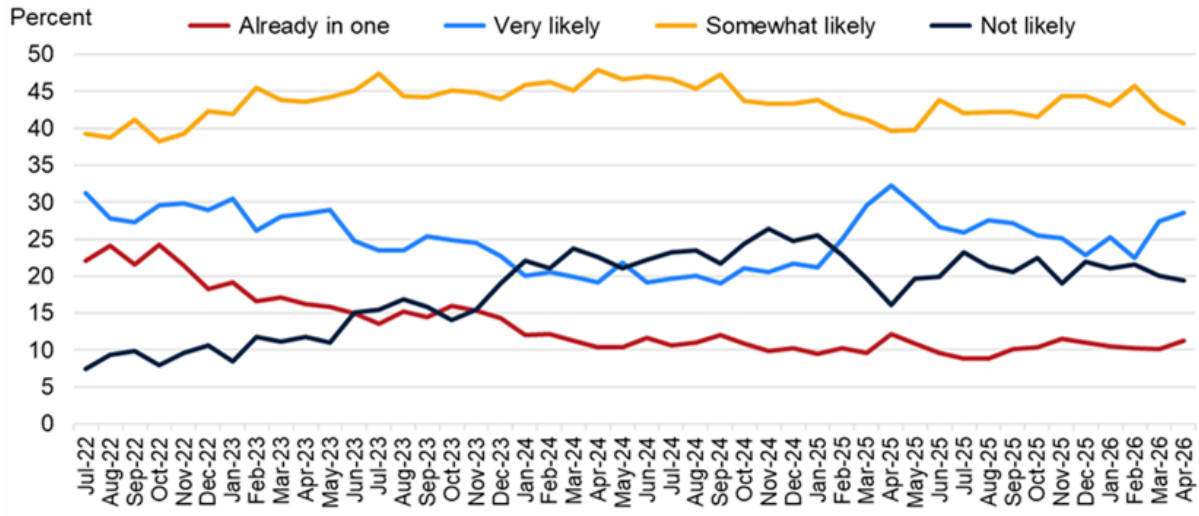
A two-week ceasefire and a rebound in stock market indices within the survey-sample period (April 1–22) likely helped ease concerns about financial indicators somewhat in April after spiking in March. Still, consumers remained wary.

Consumers' average and median 12-month inflation expectations ticked downward but continued to be elevated. The percentage of consumers saying interest rates over the next 12 months will be higher on net rose to nearly 50%. Expectations for higher stock prices a year from now ticked up.



Consumers' net views of their Family's Current Financial Situation and Family's Future Financial Situation were both slightly less optimistic in April. Meanwhile, the share of consumers who said a US recession over the next 12 months is "very likely" rose again, while those saying "somewhat likely" or "not likely" fell. The cohort believing the US is already in a recession inched up. (These measures are not included in calculating the Consumer Confidence Index®).

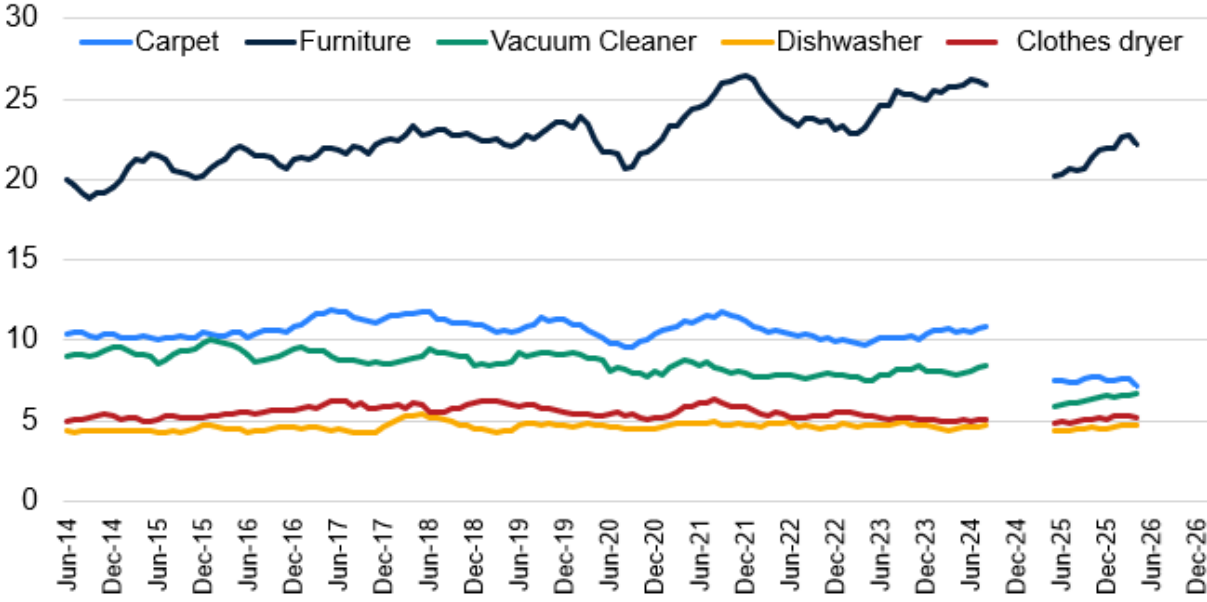
Perceived likelihood of a US recession over the next 12 months



Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

Consumers' plans to buy big-ticket items over the next six months continued to shift from "yes" and "maybe" in February, to "no" in April. Nonetheless, the proportion saying "yes" remained well above the other responses. *Used cars, furniture, TVs, and smartphones* remained the most popular items within their respective categories for future purchases. Among pricy items, furniture remains the top expected purchase.

Plans to Buy Selected Durable Goods Within Six Months (6mma)

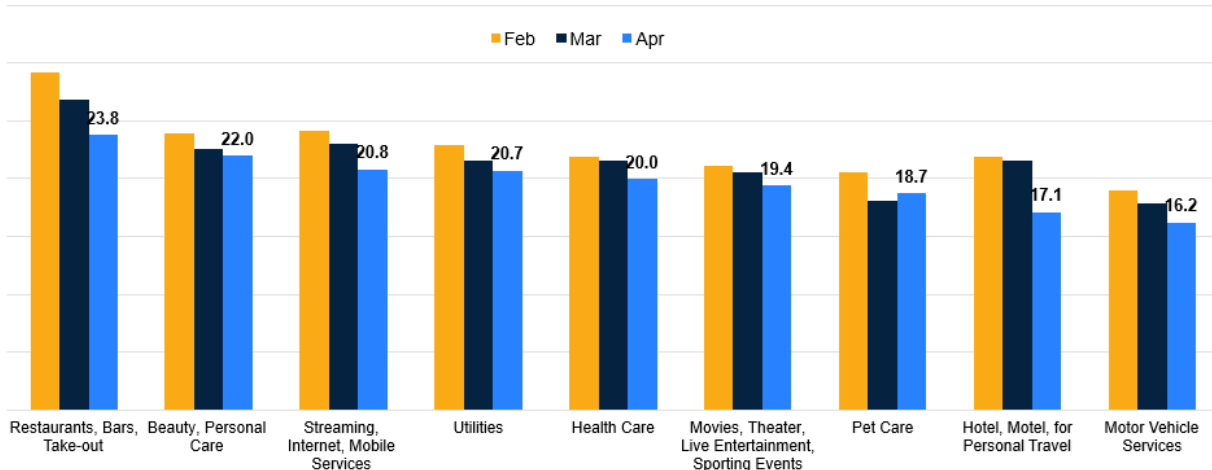


Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

Buying plans for autos continued rising on a six-month moving average basis in April, with used cars remaining the clear preference over new cars. Homebuying expectations staged a mild recovery on a six-month rolling basis for both existing and new units in the month, with consumers continuing to prefer existing homes to newly built ones. Purchase plans for all types of *home furnishings, white goods, and electronics* on a six-month moving average basis continued to improve in April.

Consumers planning more spending on services over the next six months also shifted from “yes” and “maybe” to “no” in April. Consumer spending trends in 2026 remain focused on “cheap thrills” and necessary services, and away from expensive and highly discretionary activities.

Services Consumers Expect to Spend More On in the Next Six Months (Percent)

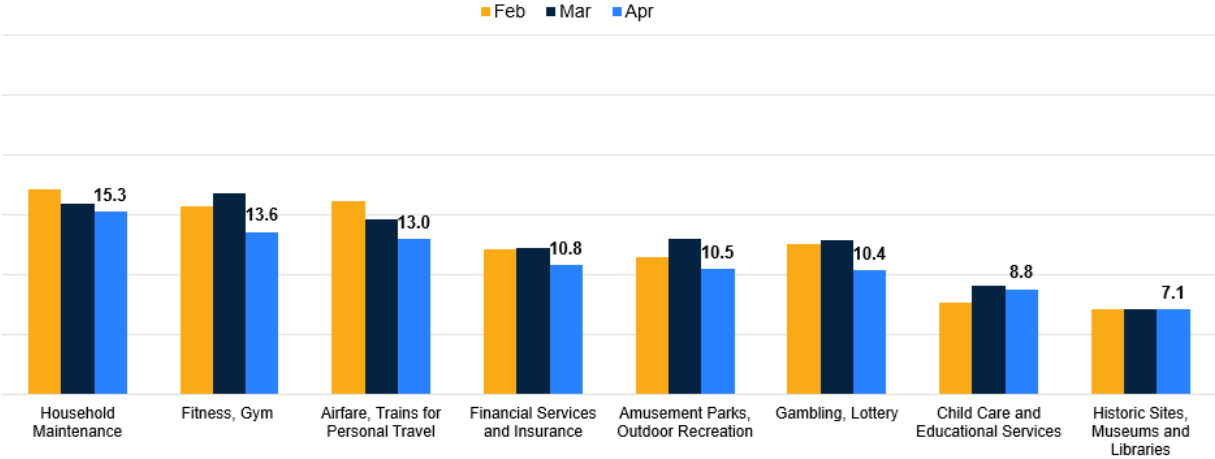


Source: The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey®

Among services, anticipated spending over the next six months fell for every category in April, except for *pet care*, which despite the increase was still below its January 2026 all-time peak. Notwithstanding the broad-based month-over-month downshift in future services spending, *restaurants/bars/take-out* remained the top category for expected purchases. *Beauty and personal care* and *streaming/internet/mobile services* followed. *Utilities* and *healthcare* continued to rank above *hotel/motel for personal travel* among the top five future spending categories. This displacement is consistent with the general downtrend in overall future vacation plans over the past six months. In April, travel intentions for six months ahead continued to favor

domestic destinations over international travel. However, while foreign travel plans partially recovered in April after collapsing in Q1 2026, domestic travel edged lower in April and has largely moved sideways through the first four months of the year. Overall expected spending on *airfare/trains for personal travel* fell again in April.

Services Consumers Expect to Spend More On in the Next Six Months (Percent)



Source: The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey®

Present Situation

Consumers' views of current business conditions eroded in April.

- 22.0% of consumers said business conditions were "good," up from 21.7% in March.
- However, 17.9% said business conditions were "bad," up from 15.8%.

On net, consumers' views of the labor market improved moderately in April.

- 27.3% of consumers said jobs were "plentiful," virtually unchanged from 27.4% in March.
- 19.8% of consumers said jobs were "hard to get," down from 21.3%.

Expectations Six Months Hence

Overall, consumers were slightly more pessimistic about future business conditions in April.

- 18.9% of consumers expected business conditions to improve, up from 18.1% in March.
- Conversely, 23.6% expected business conditions to worsen, up from 21.4%.

However, consumers were less negative about the labor market outlook in April.

- 16.1% of consumers expected more jobs to be available, up from 15.4% in March.
- 26.9% anticipated fewer jobs, down from 27.8%.

On net, consumers' outlook for their income prospects was also slightly more optimistic in April.

- 18.6% of consumers expected their incomes to increase, down from 19.2% in March.
- But only 12.3% expected their incomes to decline, also down from 13.6%.

The monthly Consumer Confidence Survey®, based on an online sample, is conducted for The Conference Board by Toluna, a technology company that delivers real-time consumer insights and market research through its innovative technology, expertise, and panel of over 36 million consumers. The cutoff date for the preliminary results was April 22.

Source: April 2026 *Consumer Confidence Survey*®