

# Regional Surveys of Business Activity

## Fifth District Survey of Manufacturing Activity

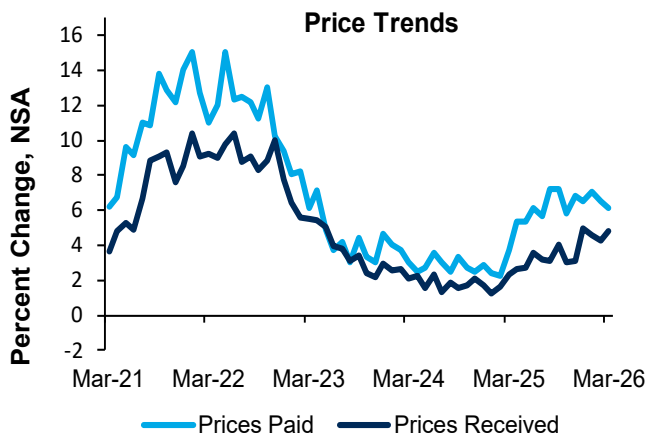
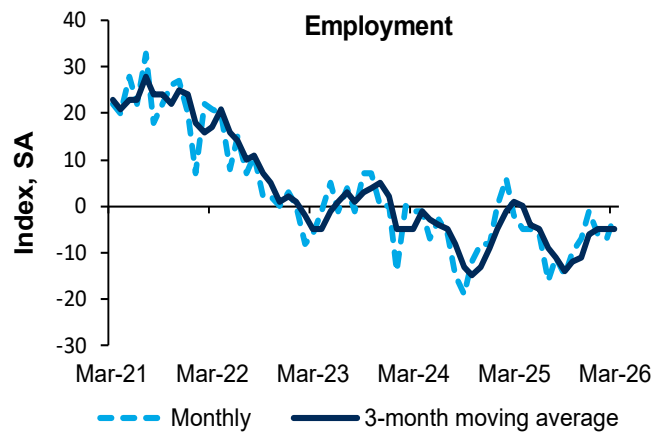
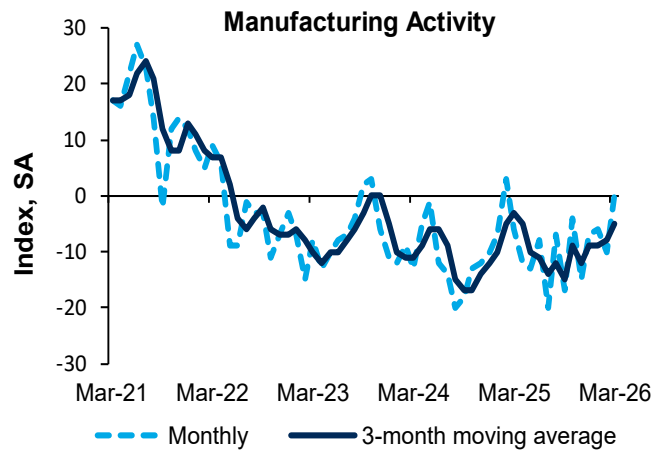
March 24, 2026

### Fifth District Manufacturing Activity Was Flat in March

Fifth District manufacturing activity was flat in March, according to the most recent survey from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. The composite manufacturing index increased to 0 in March from -10 in February. All three of its component indexes rose in March. Shipments increased to -2 from -13, new orders improved to 4 from -9, and employment rose to -2 from -7.

The local business conditions index increased to -5 in March from -15 in February. Meanwhile, the future local business conditions index decreased but remained in positive territory. The future indexes for shipments and new orders also decreased slightly but remained solidly in positive territory. The expectations index for employment rose to 14 from 6.

The average growth rate of prices paid decreased somewhat, while average growth in prices received increased in March. Firms expected growth in both price measures to moderate over the next 12 months.



# Regional Surveys of Business Activity

## Fifth District Survey of Manufacturing Activity

March 24, 2026

### Business Activity Indexes<sup>1</sup>

Manufacturing Indicators	Current Conditions			Expectations <sup>2</sup>		
	Mar-26	Feb-26	Jan-26	Mar-26	Feb-26	Jan-26
Fifth District Manufacturing Index <sup>3</sup>	0	-10	-6	--	--	--
Shipments	-2	-13	-5	26	29	34
Volume of New Orders	4	-9	-6	30	35	36
Backlog of Orders	-10	-14	-13	3	6	4
Capacity Utilization	-5	-12	-7	19	15	18
Vendor Lead Time	13	-1	0	10	-1	5
Local Business Conditions	-5	-15	-8	16	22	19
Capital Expenditures	-6	-5	-16	3	1	-4
Finished Goods Inventories	5	7	6	2	5	0
Raw Materials Inventories	4	11	8	-3	2	-2
Equipment & Software Spending	-8	-8	-12	-2	2	-3
Services Expenditures	-14	-20	-16	-11	-14	-10
<b>Employment</b>						
Number of Employees	-2	-7	-6	14	6	2
Wages	14	18	14	40	44	39
Availability of Skills Needed	-12	-15	-16	-1	-8	-9
<b>Price Trends<sup>4</sup></b>						
Prices Paid	6.11	6.52	7.06	4.65	4.70	5.02
Prices Received	4.85	4.25	4.58	3.55	3.81	4.54

#### Technical Notes:

- Each index equals the percentage of responding firms reporting increase minus the percentage reporting decrease. Results are based on responses from 148-165 firms. All firms surveyed are located within the Fifth Federal Reserve District, which includes the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and most of West Virginia. Data, excluding price trends, are seasonally adjusted. Seasonal adjustment factors are recalculated every July and the entire series is revised to better reflect current economic trends.
- Expectations refer to the time period six months out from the survey period.
- The manufacturing Index is a gauge of broad activity in the District's manufacturing sector. It is a composite index representing a weighted average of the shipments (33 percent), new orders (40 percent) and employment (27 percent) indexes.
- Current price changes are percentage changes over the last 12 months. Expected price changes are expected changes over the next 12 months.

For more information contact [Rich.RegionalSurveyTeam@rich.frb.org](mailto:Rich.RegionalSurveyTeam@rich.frb.org)