US Consumer Confidence Edged Down Slightly in August

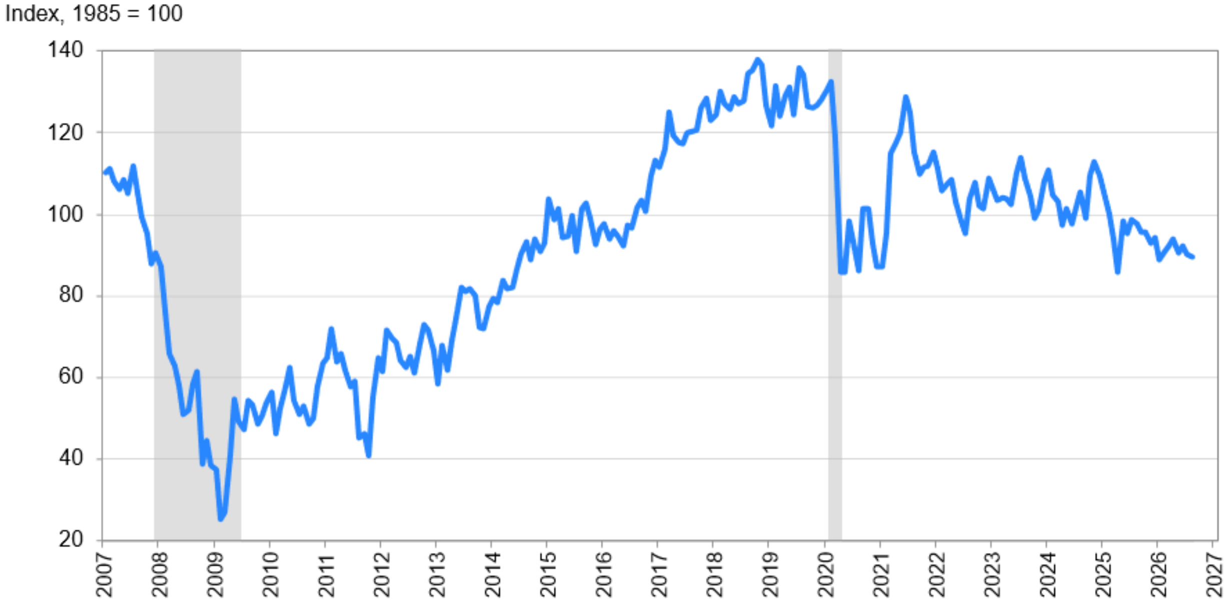
Updated 25 August 2026

Expectations for the future became more pessimistic, offsetting improved assessments of the present situation

The Conference Board **Consumer Confidence Index®** decreased by 0.8 points to 89.4 (1985=100) in August, down from 90.2 in July. The **Present Situation Index**—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—rose by 6.8 points to 121.2, following three months of consecutive decline. The **Expectations Index**—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—fell by 5.8 points to 68.2. The survey period for this month's preliminary results was August 3–16.

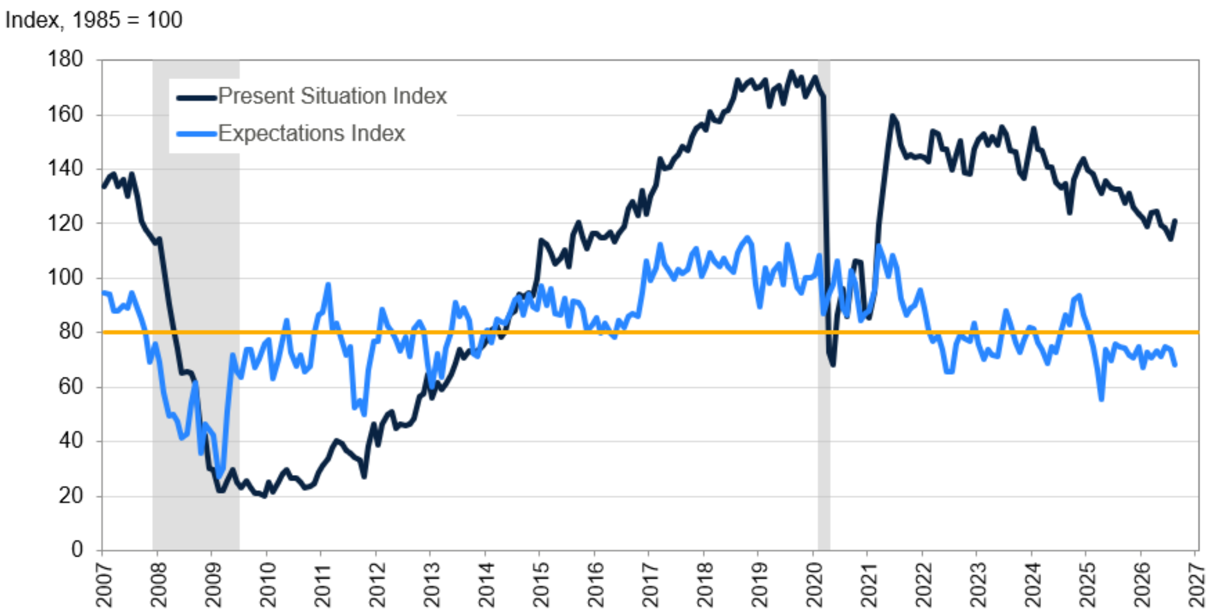
"Consumer confidence moderated slightly in August for a second consecutive month," said **Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist, The Conference Board**. "The Expectations Index slipped further into negative territory, which was offset by a moderate rise in the Present Situation Index after declining in the past three months. Consumer appraisals of current business conditions were mildly positive. Perceptions of the current labor market improved, reversing three months of moderate decline. Looking ahead, consumers were more pessimistic about business conditions and the labor market over the next six months. Expectations for household incomes moderated but remained optimistic overall."

Consumer Confidence Index®



*Shaded areas represent periods of recession.
Sources: The Conference Board; NBER

Present Situation and Expectations Index



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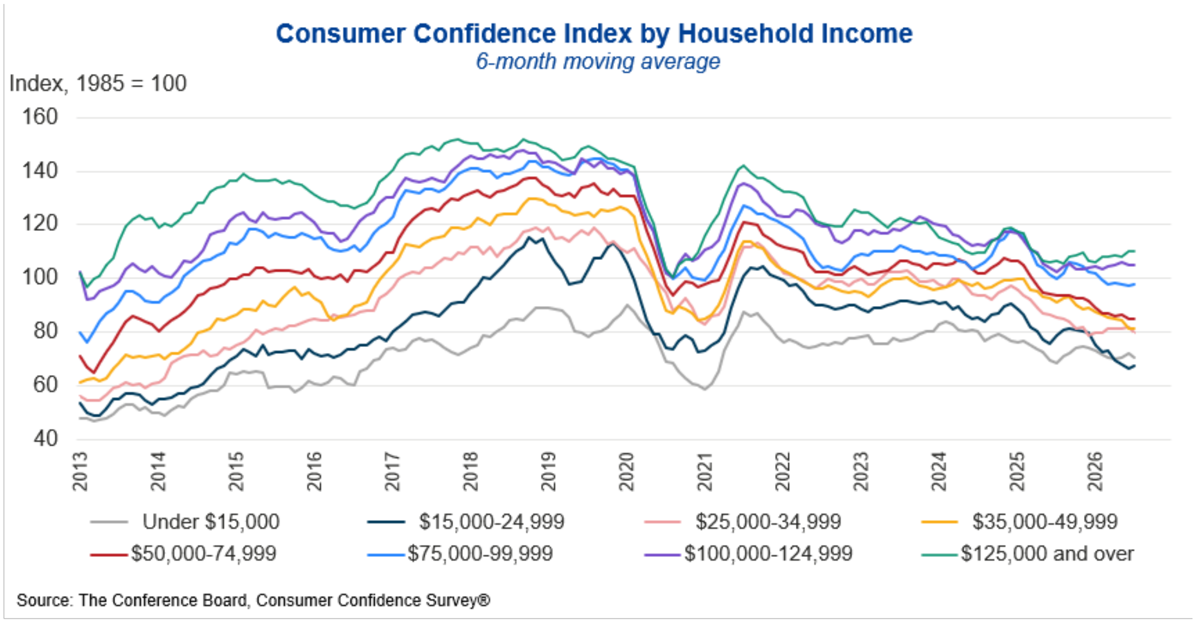
Sources: The Conference Board; NBER

Consumers' **write-in responses** on factors affecting the economy were slightly more pessimistic in August. References to prices in general—and oil and gas specifically—remain elevated. Comments about war/conflict, food/groceries, trade, and jobs rose in August.

The *Present Situation Index* improved in August. Net views of current **business conditions**—the share saying conditions are "good" versus "bad"—rose slightly by 0.1 ppt to +1.3%. Perceptions of current **employment conditions** improved significantly, with the labor market differential—the share of consumers saying jobs are "plentiful" minus the share saying jobs are "hard to get"—rising by 4.8 ppts to +7.5%. This increase was largely driven by more consumers reporting that jobs are "plentiful" in August, while those saying jobs are "hard to get" declined.

The *Expectations Index* declined in August. All three of its components deteriorated—with net expectations for **business conditions** dipping by 2.5 ppts to –6.3%. Net expectations for **labor market** also softened, by 2.6 ppts, to –11.5%. Net expectations for **household income** fell by 3.1 ppts but remained in positive territory at +3.8%.

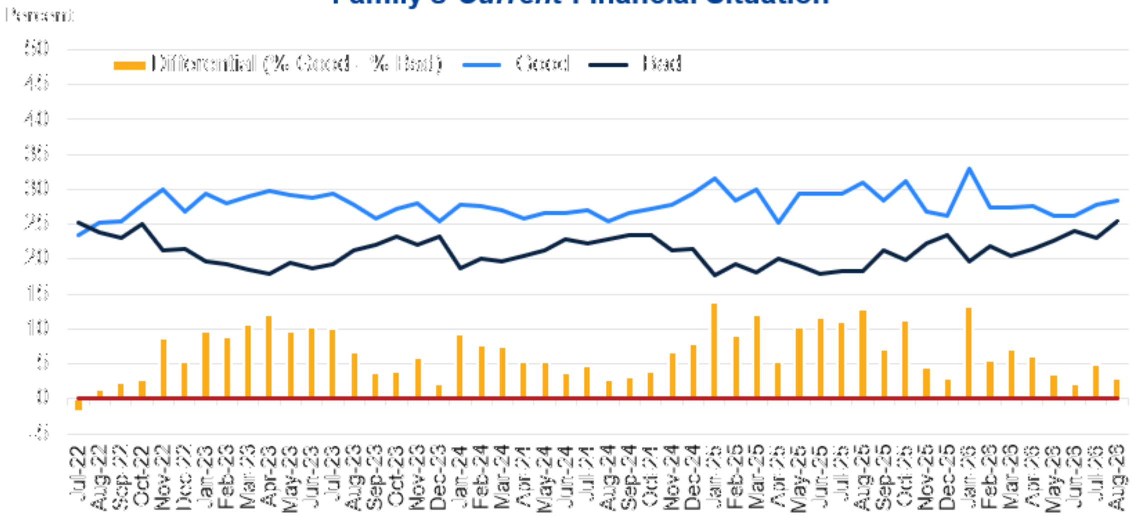
On a six-month moving average basis, confidence across all **age groups** trended down slightly, remaining highest among consumers under 35. By **income**, confidence was mixed, but generally higher-income groups were more optimistic. By **generation**, confidence for Gen Z remained the highest, followed closely by Millennials on a six-month moving average basis. The three oldest generations—Generation X, Baby Boomer, and Silent Generation—trailed in confidence by a wider margin. By **political affiliation,** confidence among Independents and Republicans softened while Democrats were somewhat more positive in August.



Consumers' average and median **12-month inflation expectations** were slightly more elevated in August. Most consumers—61.3%—still anticipated higher **interest rates** over the next 12 months, down moderately from 62% in July. Meanwhile, consumers still expected higher **stock prices** a year from now.

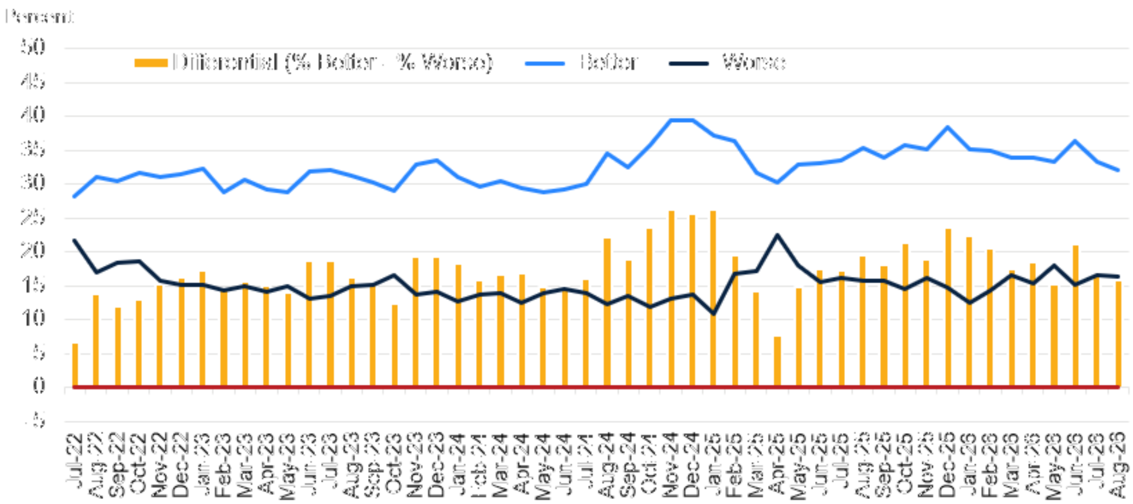
Consumers' net views of their **Family's *Current* Financial Situation** softened a bit in August after improving last month, as the share of consumers who said their finances were "bad" rose in August. Views of their **Family's *Future* Financial Situation** remained healthy but slightly less optimistic in August compared to June and July. While the share of consumers who said a **US recession over the next 12 months** is "very likely" ticked up, consumers still perceived a low likelihood of a recession in 12 months. (These measures are not included in calculating the Consumer Confidence Index®).

Family's *Current* Financial Situation



Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

Family's *Expected* Financial Situation, Six Months Hence

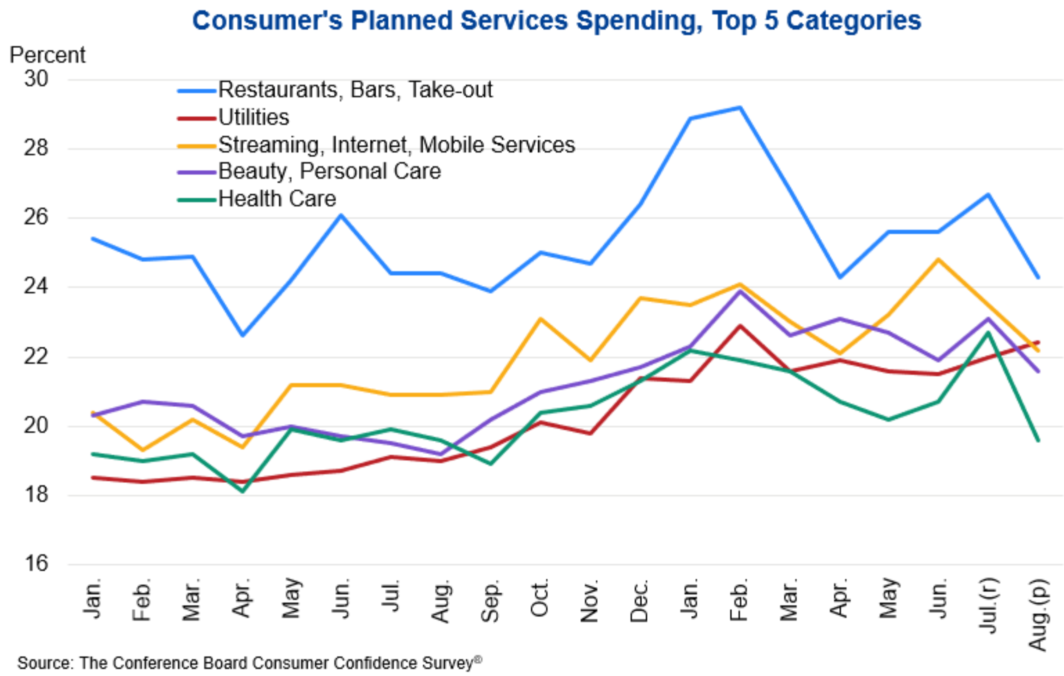


Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

On a six-month moving average basis**, auto** purchasing expectations remained strong. **Homebuying** expectations declined slightly for the month but maintained an upward trend after slumping to decade-lows in early 2024. Among consumers' planned purchases of **durable goods** within six months, *furniture* and *smartphones* remained the most desired items, but expectations for smartphones continued to moderate in August. Spending plans for *televisions* fell the moston a six-month moving average basis,while plans for most other durable goods moderated slightly.

Anticipated spending on services pared back in August after a pop in most discretionary activities last month, as lower gas prices and the summer's World Cup likely boosted consumer's desire to spend in July. Despite this, consumers still planned to spendmore overall on**services over the next six months**.

Among all service categories, *restaurants/bars/take-out, utilities*, and *streaming/internet/mobile services,* ranked among the top three spending targets, while planned spending on *beauty and personal care* fell. Beyond the top three, consumers anticipated spending less on many activities within the next six months, such as *movies, hotels for personal travel, airfare, amusement parks, and museums and historical sites,* although spendingplans for *pet care* remained strong.



Present Situation

Consumers' views of **current business conditions** improved slightly in August:

- 18.9% of consumers said business conditions were "good," down from 19.1% in July.
- 17.6% said business conditions were "bad," down from 17.9%.

Consumers' views of the **labor market** improved in August, recovering to April levels:

- 27.0% of consumers said jobs were "plentiful," up from 24.4% in July.
- Conversely, 19.5% of consumers said jobs were "hard to get," down from 21.7%.

Expectations Six Months Hence

Consumers were less optimistic about **future business conditions** in August:

- 16.8% of consumers expected business conditions to improve, down from 17.8% in July.
- 23.1% expected business conditions to worsen, up from 21.6%.

Consumers were more negative about the **labor market outlook** in August:

- 14.6% of consumers expected more jobs to be available, down from 16.4% in July.
- Additionally, 26.1% anticipated fewer jobs, up slightly from 25.3%.

Consumers' outlook for their **income prospects** was less optimistic in August:

- 17.6% of consumers expected their income to increase, down from 19.5% in July.
- 13.8% expected their income to decline, up from 12.6%.

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 August 16.**

Source: August 2026 ***Consumer Confidence Survey®***

The Conference Board

The Conference Board publishes the Consumer Confidence Index® at 10 a.m. ET on the last Tuesday of every month. Subscription information and the technical notes to this series are available on The Conference Board website: https://www.conference-board.org/data/consumerdata.cfm.

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