US Consumer Confidence Edged Down in July

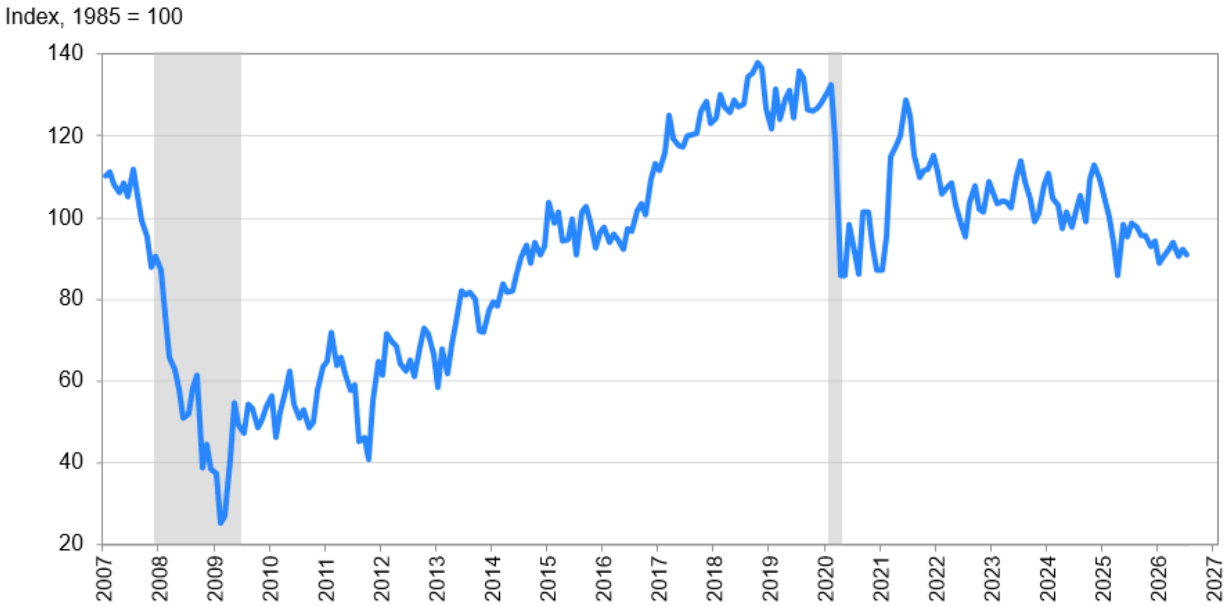
Updated 28 July 2026

Consumer assessments of the present situation softened for a third straight month

The Conference Board ***Consumer Confidence Index®*** decreased by 1.4 points to 90.8 (1985=100) in July, down from an upwardly revised 92.2 in June. The ***Present Situation Index***—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—fell by 3.6 points to 114.9, its third consecutive monthly decline. The ***Expectations Index***—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—remained unchanged at 74.7. The survey period for this month's preliminary results was July 1–22, encompassing ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

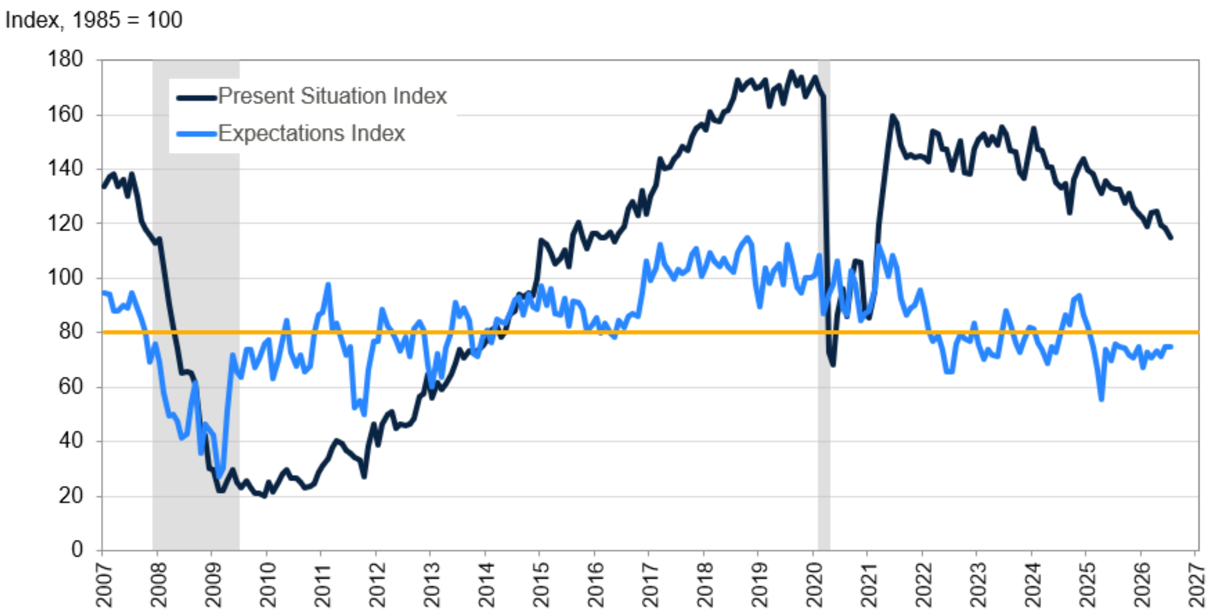
"Consumer confidence moderated slightly in July, continuing a general downward sloping trajectory since late 2021," said **Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist, The Conference Board**. "The Present Situation Index was less positive for a third consecutive month while the Expectations Index remained in negative territory. Consumer appraisals of current business conditions and, to a lesser extent, perceptions of the current labor market both softened. Looking ahead, consumers anticipate little improvement in business conditions over the next six months, but expectations for the labor market were slightly less negative. 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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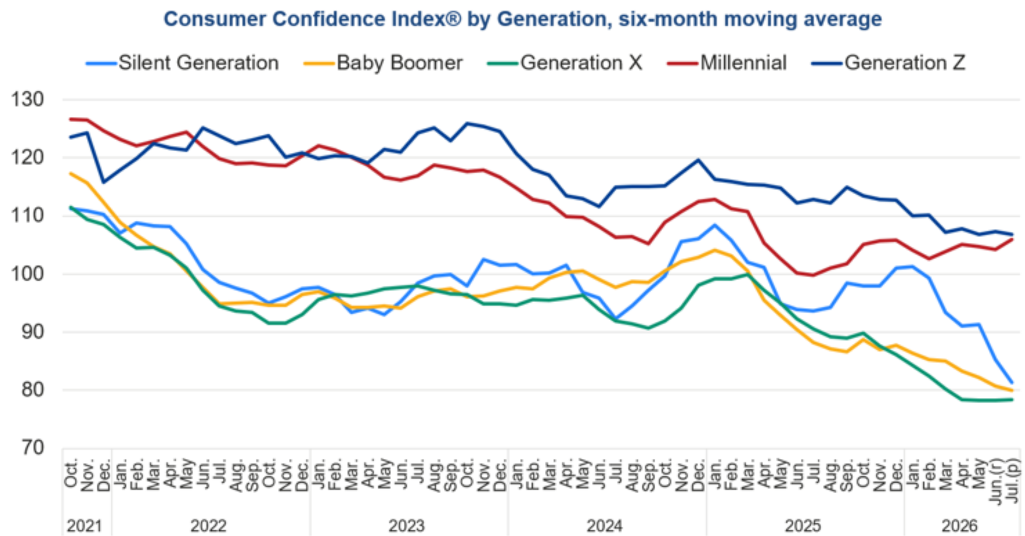
Sources: The Conference Board; NBER

The *Present Situation Index* declined in July. Net views of current **business conditions**—the share saying conditions are "good" versus "bad"—fell by 2.6 ppt to +1.1%, barely holding onto positive territory. Perceptions of current **employment conditions** alsodeclined, with the labor market differential—the share of consumers saying jobs are "plentiful" minus the share saying jobs are "hard to get"—dipping by 0.7 ppts to +3.1%. This downshift was driven by fewer consumers reporting that jobs are "plentiful", while the those saying jobs are "hard to get" dipped slightly over the month.

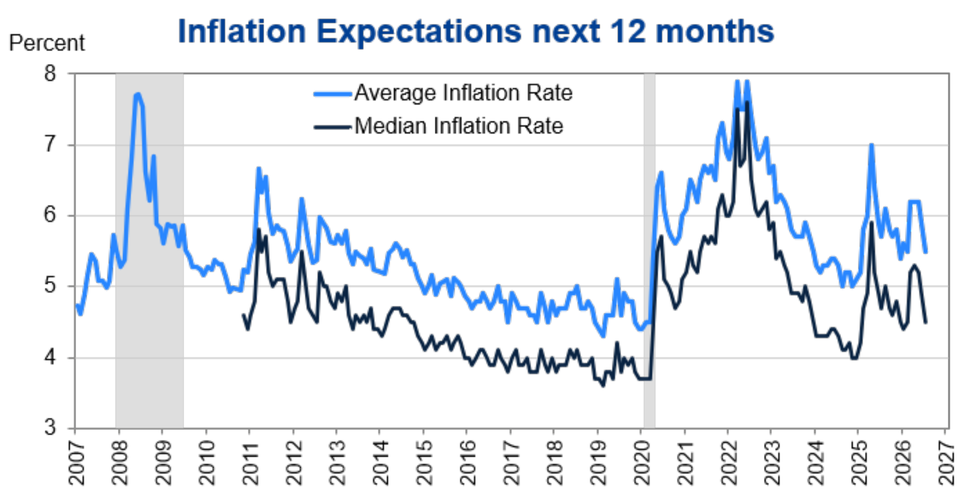
The *Expectations Index* remained unchanged in July. Two of its three components declined—with net expectations for **business conditions** dipping by 1.5 ppts to –3.3%. Net expectations for household income also softened, by a milder 0.5 ppts, to +7.3%. Net expectations for **labor market** conditions improved by 1.3 ppts but remained in negative territory.

On a six-month moving average basis, by **age,** confidence for consumers under 35 remained the highest, while confidence among those aged 35-54 showed the greatest improvement. By **income**, confidence was mixed, but generally higher-income groups were more optimistic. By **generation**, confidence for Gen Z and Millennials remained the highest, while confidence fell the most for the Silent Generation on a six-month moving average basis. By **political affiliation,** confidence among Independents and Democrats softened while Republicans were somewhat more positive.



Source: The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey®

Consumers' **write-in responses** on factors affecting the economy continued to be mostly pessimistic in July. References to prices and oil and gas eased in frequency but remain elevated. Comments about food and grocery prices increased. Mentions of war, geopolitics, and conflict eased during the sample period. However, as the fighting has reaccelerated quite recently there could be an increase in these mentions in the revised data for July. Notably, references to jobs and unemployment picked up slightly.



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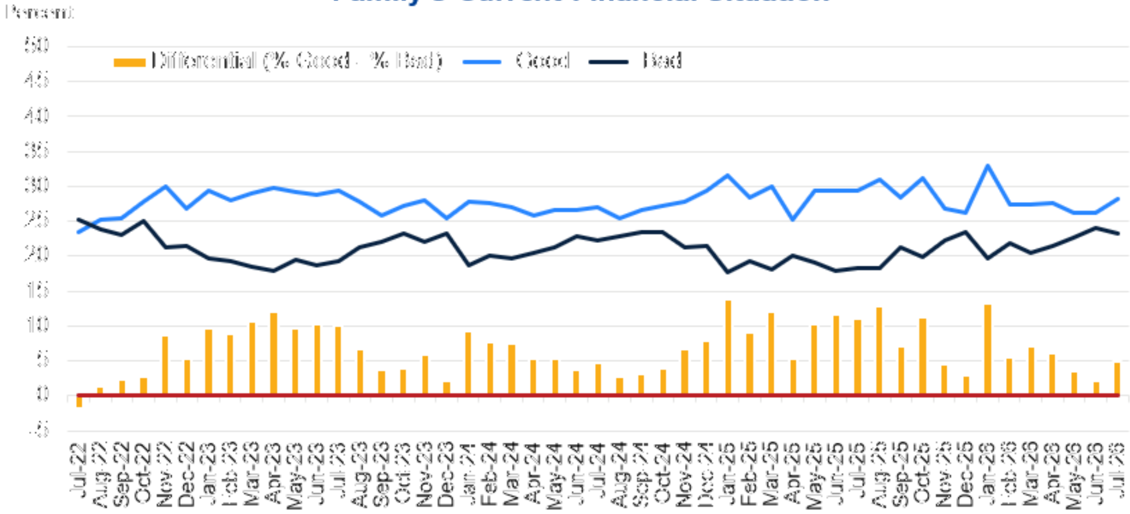
Sources: The Conference Board;NBER

Consumers' average and median **12-month inflation expectations** were less elevated in July. Most consumers—61.3%, unchanged from June—still expected higher **interest rates** over the next 12 months. Notwithstanding recent volatility in the equity markets, consumers still expected higher **stock prices** a year from now.

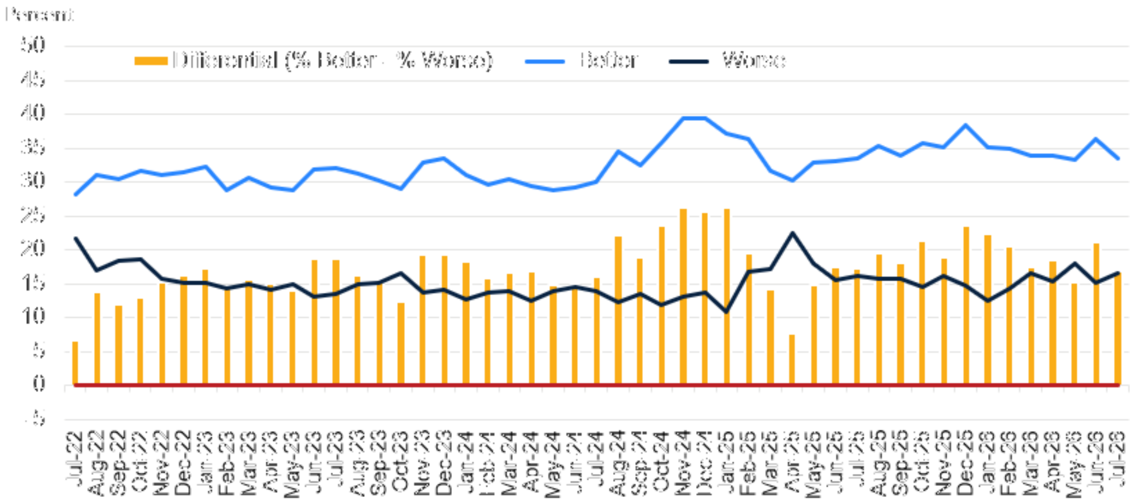
Consumers' net views of their **Family's *Current* Financial Situation** improved after deteriorating for three consecutive months. Views of their **Family's *Future* Financial Situation** were healthy but slightly less optimistic in July compared to June. Meanwhile, the share of consumers who said a **US recession over the next 12 months** is "somewhat likely" continued to rise, but overall recession expectations remain low, with those saying recession is "very likely" declining. (These measures are not included in calculating the Consumer Confidence Index®).

Family's *Current* Financial Situation



Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

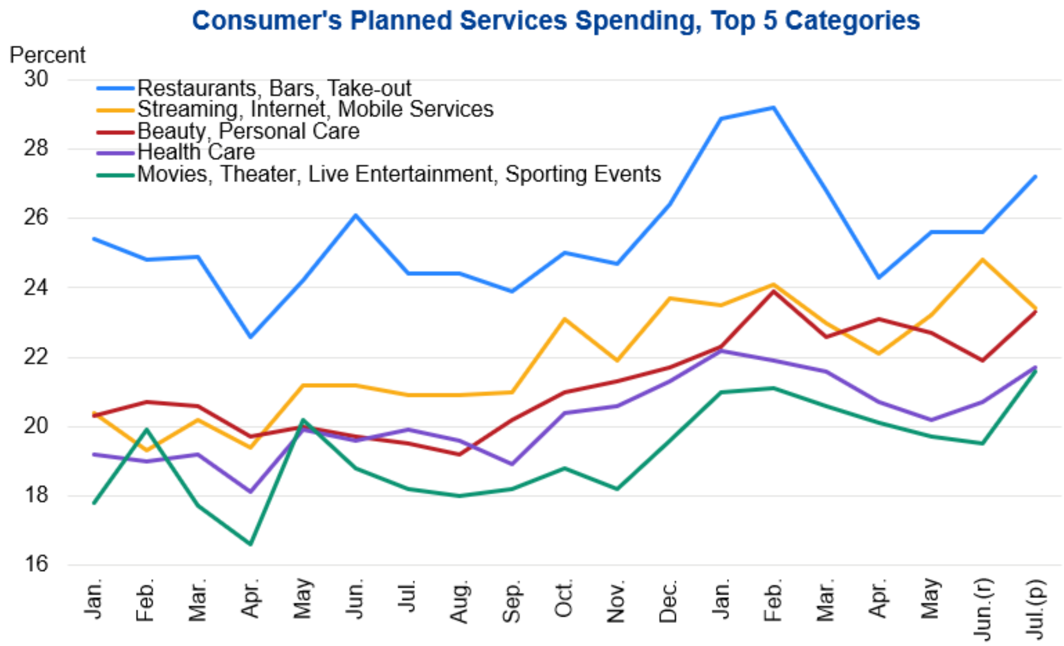
Family's *Expected* Financial Situation, Six Months Hence



Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Survey®

Homebuying and **auto** purchasing expectations continued their upward trend on a six-month moving average basis. Among consumers' planned purchases of **durable goods** within six months, *furniture* and *smartphones* remained the most desired items, but expectations for smartphones moderated in July. Spending plans for *TV sets, refrigerators, and washing machines* rose on a six-month moving average basis.

Consumers planned to spendmore on **services over the next six months**. Among all service categories, *restaurants/bars/take-out, streaming/internet/mobile services,* and *beauty and personal care* remained among the top three spending targets. Beyond the top three, consumers anticipated spending more on many activities in the next six months, such as *movies, hotels for personal travel, airfare, and amusement parks, and museums and historical sites* Accordingly, overall **travel intentions** within six months perked up in July after easing for most of the year. Domestic travel plans recovered while foreign travel plans softened a bit.



Source: The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey®

Present Situation

Consumers' views of **current business conditions** worsened in July.

- 18.9% of consumers said business conditions were "good," down from 20.2% in June.
- 17.8% said business conditions were "bad," up from 16.5%.

On net, consumers' views of the **labor market** continued to soften in July.

- 24.6% of consumers said jobs were "plentiful," down from 25.5% in June.
- Conversely, 21.5% of consumers said jobs were "hard to get," down slightly from 21.7%.

Expectations Six Months Hence

Consumers were less optimistic about **future business conditions** in July.

- 17.8% of consumers expected business conditions to improve, down from 18.9% in June.
- 21.1% expected business conditions to worsen, up from 20.7%.

In July, consumers were less negative about the **labor market outlook**.

- 16.7% of consumers expected more jobs to be available in July, up from 15.6% in June.
- Additionally, 25.3% anticipated fewer jobs, down slightly from 25.5%.

Consumers' outlook for their **income prospects** was somewhat less optimistic in July.

- 20.3% of consumers expected their incomes to increase, down from 20.7% in June.
- 13.0% expected their incomes to decline, up from 12.9%.

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 July 22.**

Source: July 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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