



Small Business Sales Grew Steadily in March as Higher Ticket Sizes Offset Softer Foot Traffic, Fiserv Data Shows

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Fiserv Small Business Index rises to 144; year-over-year sales grew +1.3%

MILWAUKEE, April 02, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Fiserv, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: FISV), a leading global provider of payments and financial services technology, has published the [Fiserv Small Business Index](#) for March 2026, indicating that U.S. small business sales continued to grow steadily in March, despite consumers being more selective in their spending. Higher average ticket sizes helped offset slower transaction volumes as small businesses closed out Q1 on solid footing.

The seasonally adjusted Index rose to 144. Year-over-year sales grew (+1.3%) despite transactions (foot traffic) slowing (-1.3%). Month-over-month sales (+0.7%) and foot traffic (+0.5%) both grew slightly compared to February. With total transactions easing, sales growth was buoyed by higher average tickets, which grew both year over year (+2.6%) and month over month (+0.2%).

“March reflects a small business economy that remains durable, supported by continued growth in consumer spend, but with signs of cautious behavior,” said Prasanna Dhore, Chief Data Officer, Fiserv. “With energy prices rising, households began weighing tradeoffs carefully. Their selectivity was visible with consumers eating out less and making more deliberate purchases.”

Key Takeaways

Higher gas prices influenced spending decisions

Geopolitical disruption sent Gasoline Station sales higher month over month (+10.3%), driven mostly by a jump in average tickets (+7.2%). Year-over-year sales (+12.7%) grew in line with the rise in average tickets (+12.9%). Consumers may have partially offset higher gas prices by moderating spend at Food Services and Drinking Places (-1.0% year over year). Limited-service restaurants saw sales decline year over year (-2.9%) as foot traffic fell sharply (-4.2%). Full-service restaurant sales were less affected, with sales growing slightly (+0.4%) and foot traffic declining (-0.3%) year over year.

Retail sales accelerated from February, while year-over-year growth was modest

Total retail sales rose month over month (+1.2%) and year over year (+0.7%). Gasoline sales accounted for most of the monthly gains. Building Materials (+3.5%), Motor Vehicle Parts (+1.6%) and Furniture (+1.7%) also contributed, with growth in these subsectors driven by higher foot traffic. Food and Beverage Stores (grocery) sales continued to soften (-0.5% month over month and -1.5% year over year) as consumers made more budget-conscious purchasing choices.

Discretionary and essential spending patterns were largely unchanged in March

Essential spending outpaced discretionary spending for the 12th consecutive month, reinforcing a consistent pattern of prioritization among consumers. Discretionary categories grew year over year (+0.8%) and month over month (+0.8%); essential categories also grew (+1.9%) year over year and (+0.6%) month over month.

To access the full Fiserv Small Business Index, visit fiserv.com/FiservSmallBusinessIndex.

About the Fiserv Small Business Index®

The Fiserv Small Business Index is published during the first week of every month and differentiated by its direct aggregation of consumer spending activity within the U.S. small business ecosystem. Rather than relying on survey or sentiment data, the Fiserv Small Business Index is derived from point-of-sale transaction data, including card, cash, and check transactions in-store and online across approximately 2 million U.S. small businesses, including hundreds of thousands leveraging the Clover point-of-sale and business management platform.

Benchmarked to 2019, the Fiserv Small Business Index provides a numeric value measuring consumer spending, with an accompanying transaction index measuring customer traffic. Through a simple interface, users can access data by region, state, and/or across business types categorized by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Featuring the most detailed classification available, the Fiserv Small Business Index provides visibility into 56 standardized level-6 national industries across 26 subsectors and 13 sectors, allowing users to track sales trends with precision and understand the diverse dynamics shaping the U.S. small business economy.

About Fiserv

Fiserv, Inc. (NASDAQ: FISV), a Fortune 500 company, moves more than money. As a global leader in payments and financial technology, the company helps clients achieve best-in-class results through a commitment to innovation and excellence in areas including account processing and digital banking solutions; card issuer processing and network services; payments; e-commerce; merchant acquiring and processing; and Clover®, the world's smartest point-of-sale system and business management platform.

Fiserv is a member of the S&P 500® Index and one of TIME Magazine's Most Influential Companies™. Visit [fiserv.com](https://www.fiserv.com) and [follow on social media](#) for more information and the latest company news.

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