

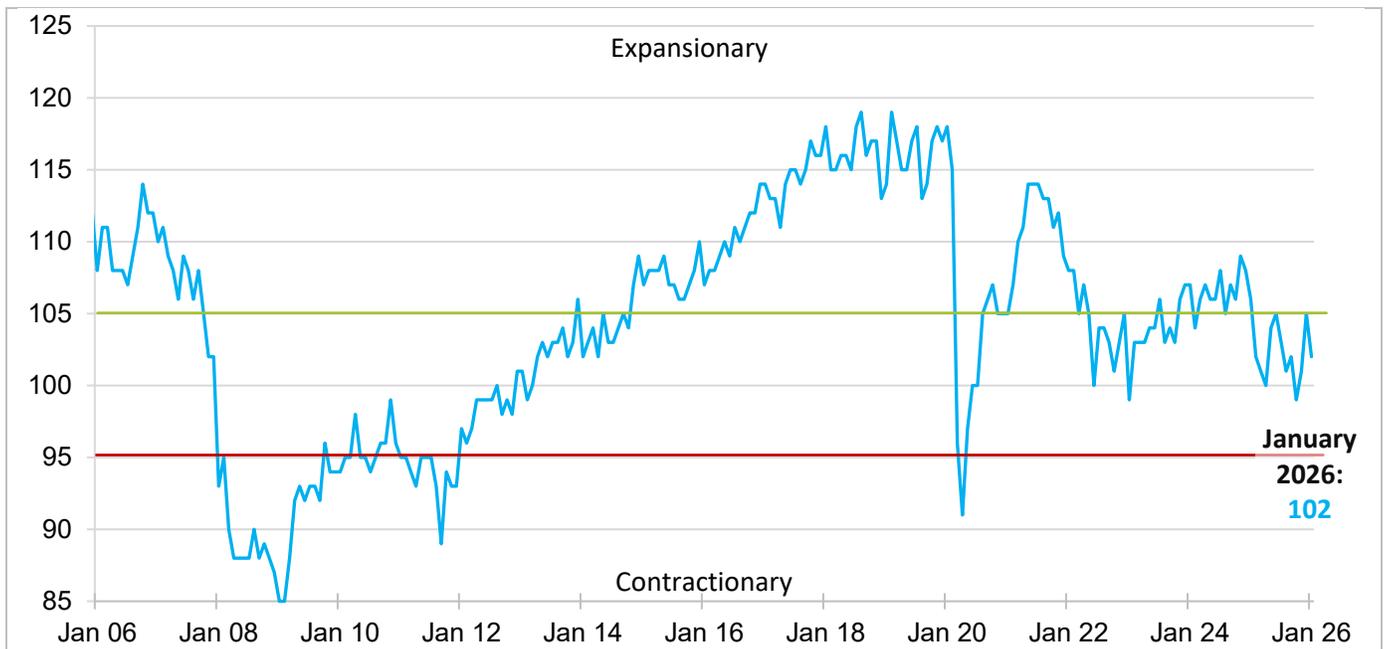


Decision Analyst's January Economic Index Shows Signs of a Troubling Economy

Arlington, Texas—The Decision Analyst U.S. Economic Index for January 2026 was 102, a decline of 3 points from the previous month and a 4-point decline from January 2025. The recent downtrend in the Economic Index seems to be driven by inflation fears and weakening of the job market. The percent of U.S. residents who say “Jobs are plentiful and easy to find” has fallen from about 18.5% a year ago to 13.5% today. The U.S. economy is now very similar to its status (or level) in 2013, 2014, and 2015, as the U.S. economy was digging out of the Great Recession. The U.S. Economic Index tends to be a leading indicator of the U.S. economy as the history of the Economic Index below indicates:

United States Economic Index

January 2006–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026

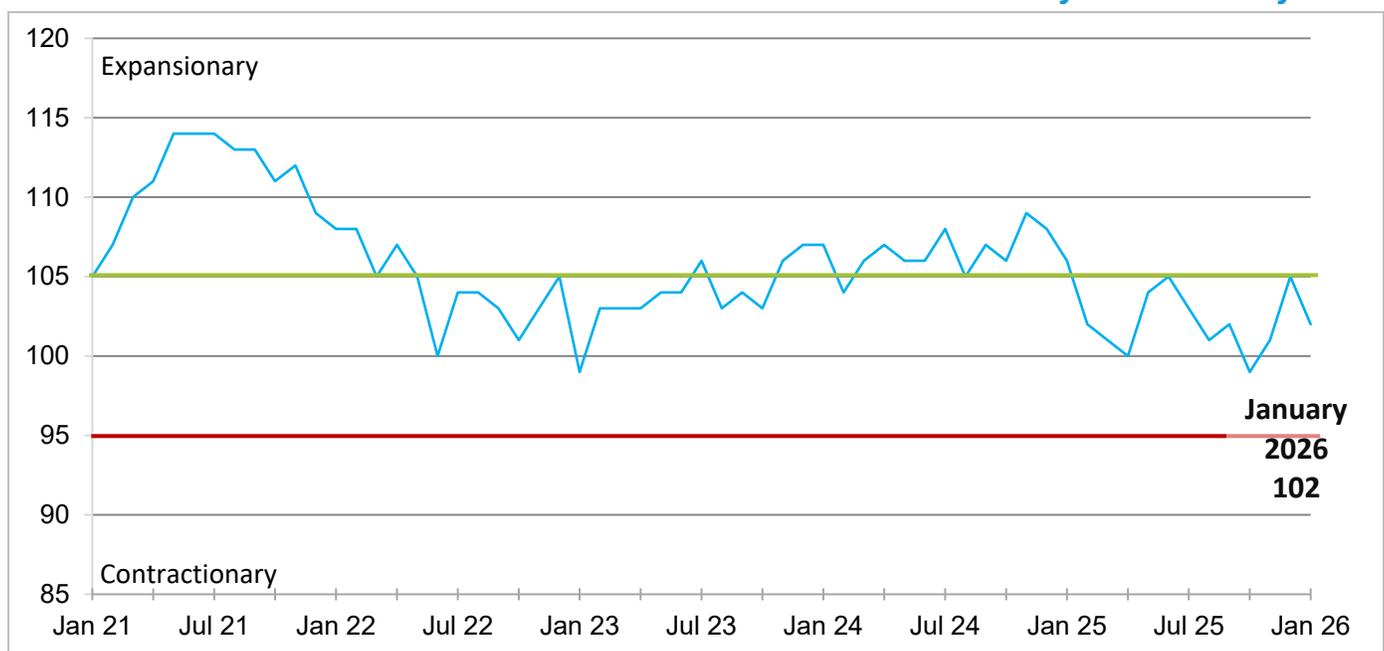


As the Close-Up below clearly shows, the U.S. economy has been in a slump since the Fall of 2024, an 18-to-20-month downtrend. This downtrend has been supported by growing weaknesses in the labor market and continued inflation pressures on middle and lower-income households.

Close-Up of the Past 5 Years

United States Economic Index

January 2021–January 2026



“The percent of U.S. residents who say “Jobs are plentiful and easy to find” has declined about 5 percentage points over the past 12 months, a downtrend that started 5 years ago. The percent who say “prices are increasing rapidly” remains stubbornly high (45.8%). Those “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about losing their jobs stands at around 47%,” said Jerry W. Thomas, CEO of Decision Analyst. “Some consumer spending plans over the next 12 months are showing signs of weakness, but other product categories are showing upticks, so no clear pattern of future spending plans is evident. The economy is probably still expanding, but the expansion is facing many headwinds and recession risks are growing,” said Thomas, “because the effects of increased tariffs take a year or two to fully show up in the prices that consumers pay.”

Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026

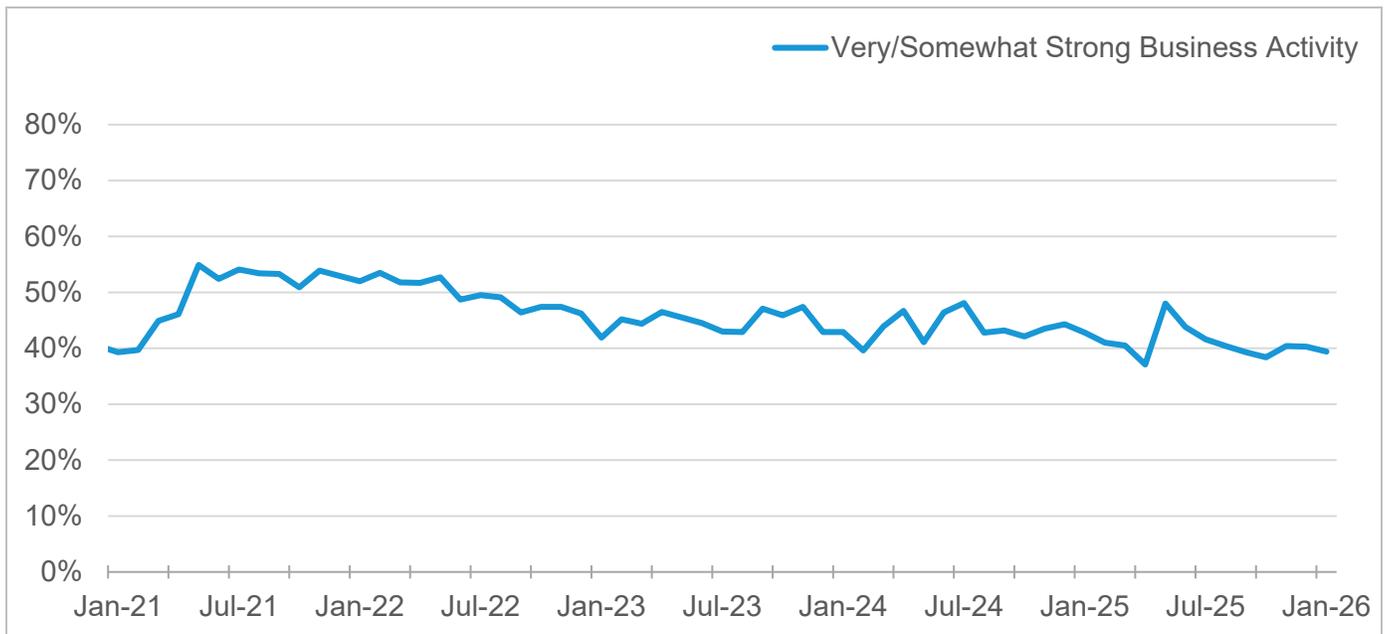


General Business Activity

General business activity (where people work) has gradually trended downward over the past 4-5 years. A trend also reflected in the chart on job availability (next page).

Consumer Perceptions of General Business Activity

January 2021–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026



Job Availability Perceptions

The job market is definitely weakening, a trend that began at least five years ago, as indicated by the decline in the percent of U.S. residents who say “jobs are plentiful and easy to find.” The percent fell from the 50% level in January 2021 to less than 15% in January 2026.

Job Availability

January 2021–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026

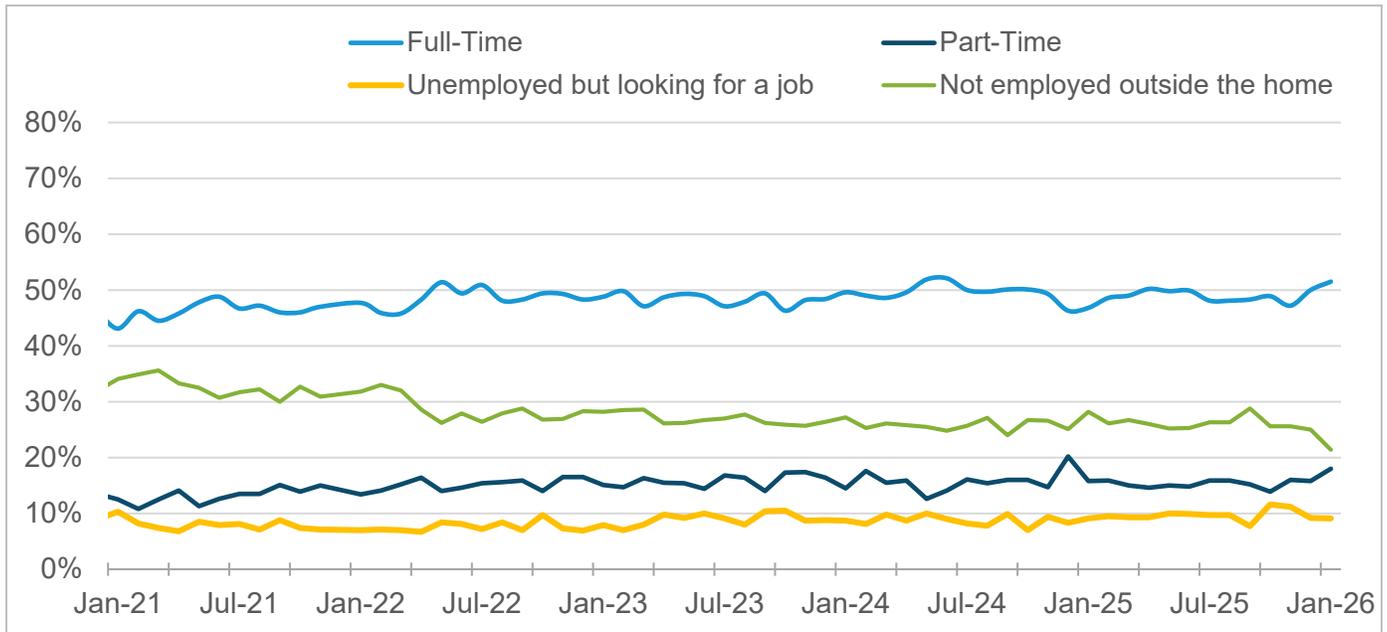


Employment Status

Full-time employment and part-time employment have remained relatively steady over the past 5 years, showing modest growth in both metrics. However, the unemployment rate (i.e., those unemployed and actively looking for jobs) has gradually increased over the past 5 years. There are indications that some retired or inactive workers have moved back into the labor force during 2025 because of inflation and financial stress.

Employment Status

January 2021–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026

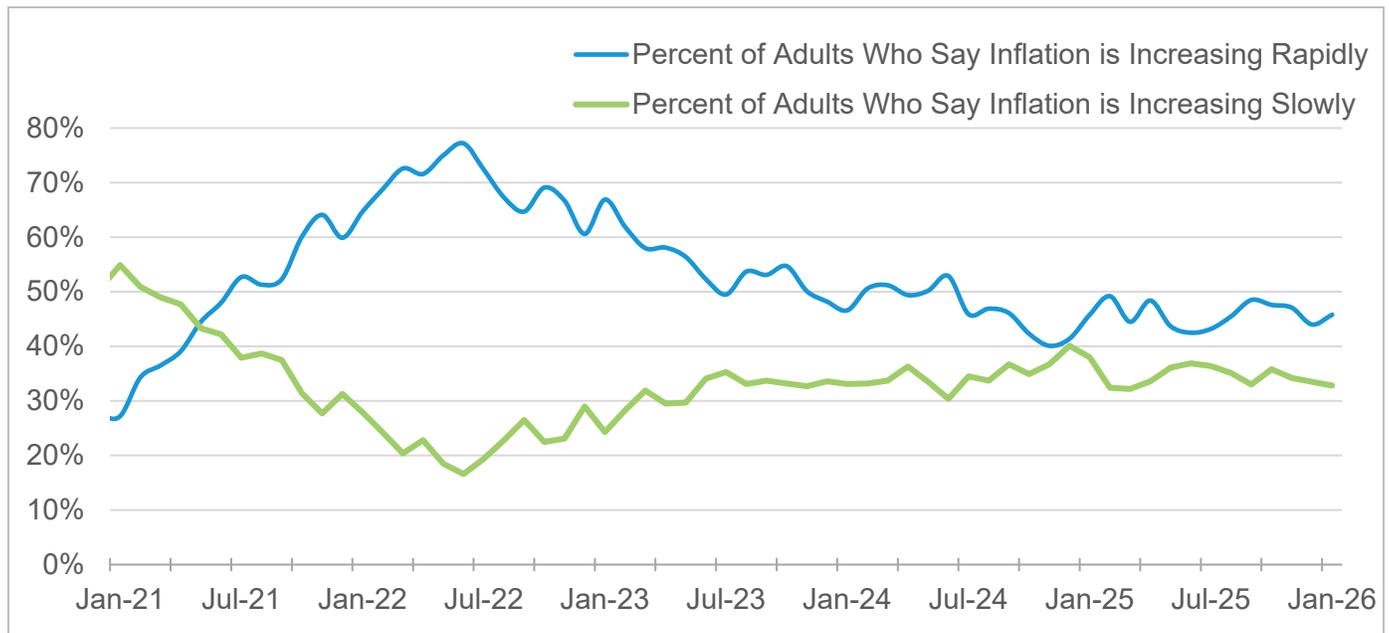


Consumer Perceptions of Prices

Consumers continue to express serious concerns over rising prices. While inflation is moderating in 2026 compared to the previous 3 or 4 years, over 44% of U.S. adults continue to report that prices are “increasing rapidly, so perceived inflation remains an important issue among U.S. residents.

Consumer Perceptions of Rising Prices

January 2021–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026

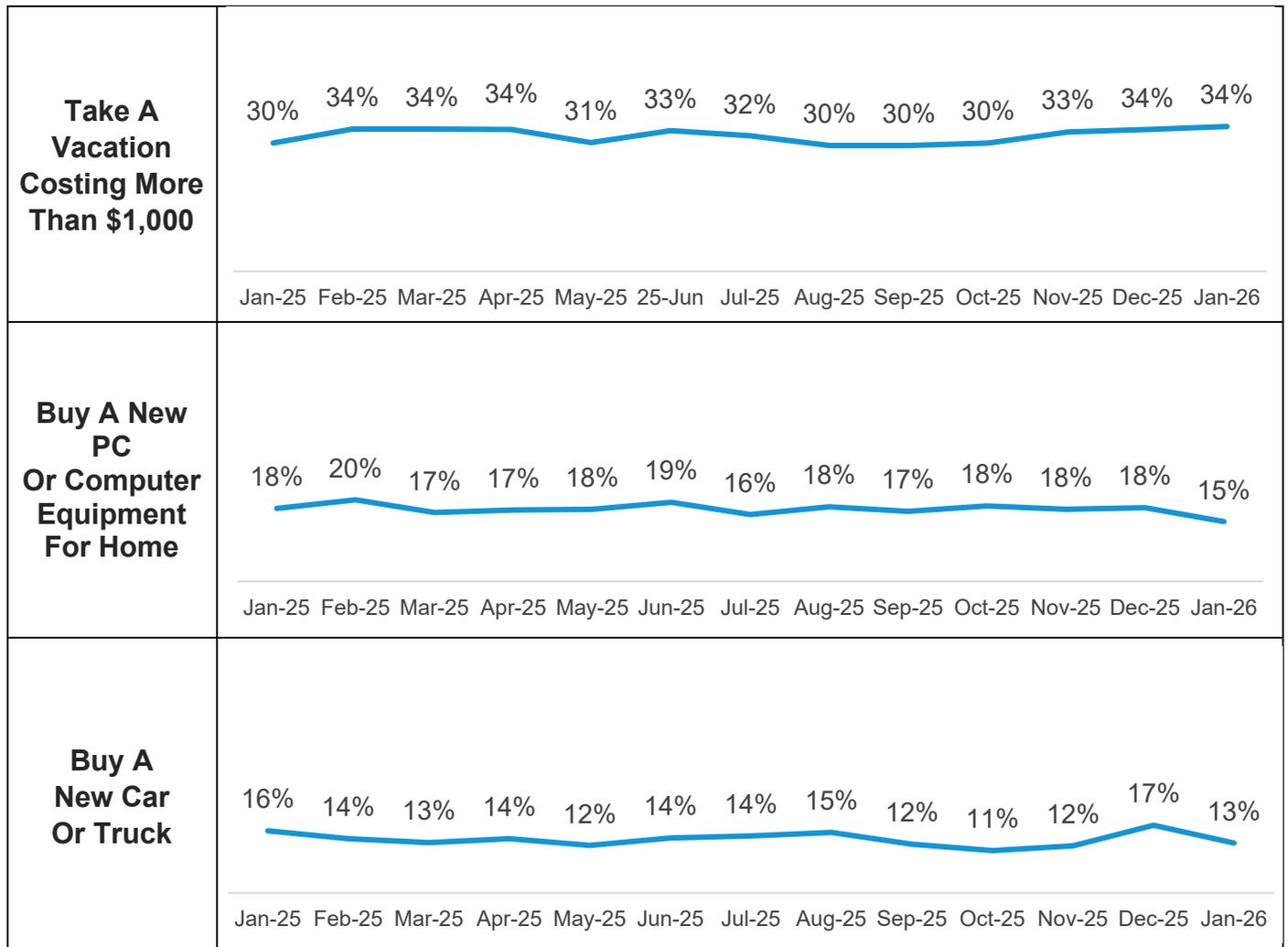


Future Purchase Intent

A quick look at the trend charts reveals that consumers' spending plans are basically flat to a little down in some categories. Consumer spending is a major driver of the U.S. economy (roughly 70%), so as consumer spending waxes and wanes, the U.S. economy tends to move in parallel.

Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months

January 2025–January 2026



Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026



Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months

January 2025–January 2026

<p>Buy New Furniture For Home</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Jan-25</td><td>19%</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-25</td><td>17%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mar-25</td><td>16%</td></tr> <tr><td>Apr-25</td><td>16%</td></tr> <tr><td>May-25</td><td>21%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-25</td><td>20%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul-25</td><td>18%</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-25</td><td>15%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep-25</td><td>17%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-25</td><td>15%</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov-25</td><td>16%</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-25</td><td>17%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan-26</td><td>18%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Percentage	Jan-25	19%	Feb-25	17%	Mar-25	16%	Apr-25	16%	May-25	21%	Jun-25	20%	Jul-25	18%	Aug-25	15%	Sep-25	17%	Oct-25	15%	Nov-25	16%	Dec-25	17%	Jan-26	18%
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<p>Buy A Newly-Built Home</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Jan-25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mar-25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Apr-25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>May-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-25</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov-25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-25</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan-26</td><td>2%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Percentage	Jan-25	2%	Feb-25	3%	Mar-25	2%	Apr-25	2%	May-25	3%	Jun-25	3%	Jul-25	3%	Aug-25	2%	Sep-25	3%	Oct-25	1%	Nov-25	2%	Dec-25	3%	Jan-26	2%
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Decision Analyst Economic Index

January 2026



Methodology

The Decision Analyst Economic Index is based on a monthly online survey of several thousand households balanced by gender, age, and geography. The scientific survey is conducted in the last 10 days of each month. The Economic Index is calculated from 9 different economic measurements using a sophisticated econometric model. The result is a snapshot of future economic activity in each country surveyed, as seen through the eyes of representative consumers living in their respective countries.

Whenever the Decision Analyst Economic Index is greater than 105, it tends to signal an expanding economy. An Index value below 95 indicates recession, and an Index of 110 or above indicates rapid expansion of the U.S. economy. These guidelines vary by country, however.

About Decision Analyst

Decision Analyst (www.decisionanalyst.com) is a global research and analytical consulting firm specializing in strategy research, new product development, advertising testing, and advanced modeling for marketing decision optimization. For more than 45 years, the firm has delivered competitive advantage to clients throughout the world in consumer-packaged goods, high technology, retail, medical, automotive, and other major industries.

To learn more, contact Jerry W. Thomas, CEO, at jthomas@decisionanalyst.com.

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