

# LANGER RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

SURVEY RESEARCH DESIGN • MANAGEMENT • ANALYSIS

---

## **Bloomberg ® Consumer Comfort Index™ Weekly Analysis**

**Embargoed for Release after 9:45 a.m. Thursday, June 19, 2014**

**Contact: Langer Research Associates, 212 456-2621  
info@langerresearch.com**

Americans' ratings of the current economy reached their second best level in nearly six and a half years this week, lifting the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index to one of its highest readings since the start of the Great Recession.

In a separate measure, views that the economy is improving reached their highest in a year.

At 37.1 on its scale of 0 to 100, the CCI overall is back to its level at the beginning of May, just 0.8 points off its high for the year, reached at the end of April. That in turn has been surpassed just once since January 2008, 38.3 early last August.

The index has gained 3.8 points in the last three weeks, rebounding from a 4.6-point drop in May.

The weekly CCI, produced by [Langer Research Associates](#), is based on an ongoing national survey measuring Americans' ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. This week's gains are based chiefly on improving views of the economy: Other than one reading last August, the economy subindex, at 27.0 is its highest since late January 2008. And while still the weakest of the three subindices, it's gained 6.4 points in the past month.

In a monthly gauge of expectations, views of the economy's direction also have rebounded from May's pessimism. Twenty-nine percent now see the economy as improving, up 6 points from last month to the most in a year. Thirty-one percent say it's getting worse, down an identical 6 points. The non-significant 2-point gap between positive and negative expectations has narrowed from a 14-point negative score last month.

Other economic indicators have been mixed, which helps explain the unsettled nature of consumer sentiment – up in April, down in May, now back up. While unemployment, a strong correlate of consumer sentiment, remains high, 200,000-plus jobs were added in May for the fourth month straight – perhaps enough to start showing an impact. Gas prices, an irritant when they're on the rise, have essentially flattened in the past seven weeks after jumping 42 cents per gallon in the previous three months. Equities, another correlate of consumer views, are scoring another strong year. Concerns continue, though, including higher inflation numbers and weak housing starts and retail sales.

The CCI, accordingly, remains well off its average in weekly polling since late 1985, 41.7, and further from its pre-recession average, 45.3.

Among its three subindices, the buying climate subindex, at 32.0, is up 3.0 points in the last three weeks to its best since mid-May, while at 52.1 the personal finances subindex is up 2.6 points in the same period to its highest in a month. They're just 3.7 and 3.2 points, respectively, from their averages.

As mentioned, the economy subindex has fared well lately, though at 27.0 it remains the weakest of the three, 7.1 points off its long-term average.

The index among women, at 36.9, has reached a more than six-and-a-half-year peak for the third time in as many weeks. In contrast to the past two weeks, the CCI is numerically higher among men, 37.2, as is the norm.

The CCI is much closer to its long-term level among women than men, 0.5 vs. 7.8 points off their respective averages in available data since mid-1990. At the same time, views that the economy is improving gained 11 points among men in the past month, vs. an insignificant 2 points among women, indicating that further advances in current sentiment among men may be in the offing.

The index among full-time workers, 45.5, is its best in nearly a year, just 0.3 points from its long-term average; that compares with 31.3 among part-time workers, 7.8 points from the average for this group. The 14.2-point gap between full- vs. part-time workers is its largest since late August.

The CCI reached other notable long-term highs this week among single adults (39.4), its best since early August, and high school graduates (32.8), its highest since the first week of 2014.

There are across-the-board improvements in income groups. At 26.4, the index is its best since early May among those with household incomes less than \$50,000, including a three-month high among those in the lowest income category, less than \$15,000. Likewise, at 50.9, the CCI is its highest since early spring among \$50,000-plus earners. Its level among those earning \$100,000 or more, 60.7, marks only the sixth time since the start of the Great Recession that the CCI's topped 60.0 among the highest earners.

A substantial partisan gap is back for the first time in eight weeks, with the index higher among Democrats than among Republicans, 43.6 vs. 38.3. It's lower among political independents, 31.9.

Lastly, for its part, the overall 6-point rise in positive economic expectations includes double-digit increases among single adults, full-time workers, 18- to 34-year-olds, men (as noted), Democrats, Northeasterners and Southerners, as well as those lacking a high school diploma.

*The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index is produced by Langer Research Associates LLC (Langer). CONSUMER COMFORT INDEX™ is a trademark or service mark of Langer. BLOOMBERG® is a trademark or service mark of Bloomberg Finance L.P. Bloomberg Finance L.P. and its affiliates (collectively, "Bloomberg") or Bloomberg's*

*licensors own all proprietary right in such mark. Neither Langer nor Bloomberg guarantee the timeliness, accuracy or completeness of any data or information relating to the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index. Langer and Bloomberg makes no warranty, express or implied, as to the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index or any data or values relating thereto or results to be obtained therefrom, and expressly disclaims all warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose with respect thereto. To the maximum extent allowed by law, Langer, Bloomberg, their licensors, and their respective employees, contractors, agents, suppliers and vendors shall have no liability or responsibility whatsoever for any injury or damages - whether direct, indirect, consequential, incidental, punitive or otherwise - arising in connection with the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index or any data or values relating thereto - whether arising from their negligence or otherwise. Nothing in the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index shall constitute or be construed as an offering of financial instruments or as investment advice or investment recommendations (i.e., recommendations as to whether or not to "buy," "sell," "hold" or to enter or not to enter into any other transaction involving any specific interest or interests) by Langer, Bloomberg or its affiliates or a recommendation as to an investment or other strategy by Langer, Bloomberg or its affiliates.*

**Click [here](#) for CCI details.**

**For subscription information: Langer Research Associates, [info@langerresearch.com](mailto:info@langerresearch.com)**