Survey of Business Uncertainty Monthly Report

April 2026

Brent Meyer, Jose Maria Barrero, Nicholas Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Kevin Foster, and Emil Mihaylov

SBU

Federal Reserve Bank *of* Atlanta

Based on survey responses from 13-24 April 2026

Headline Results

April 2026 Survey of Business Uncertainty

1. Sales revenue growth expectations trended up over the past few months. (Slide 4)
2. Firms remain more uncertain about future sales growth than before the pandemic. (Slide 4)
3. Business executives forecast lower Federal Funds Rate than they did in the past two quarters. (Slides 7-8)
4. Adoption of AI technologies has increased from November 2025, driven largely by increases to generative AI adoption. (Slide 9)

SBU Survey of Business Uncertainty

About the Survey

The Survey of Business Uncertainty (SBU) is fielded each month by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

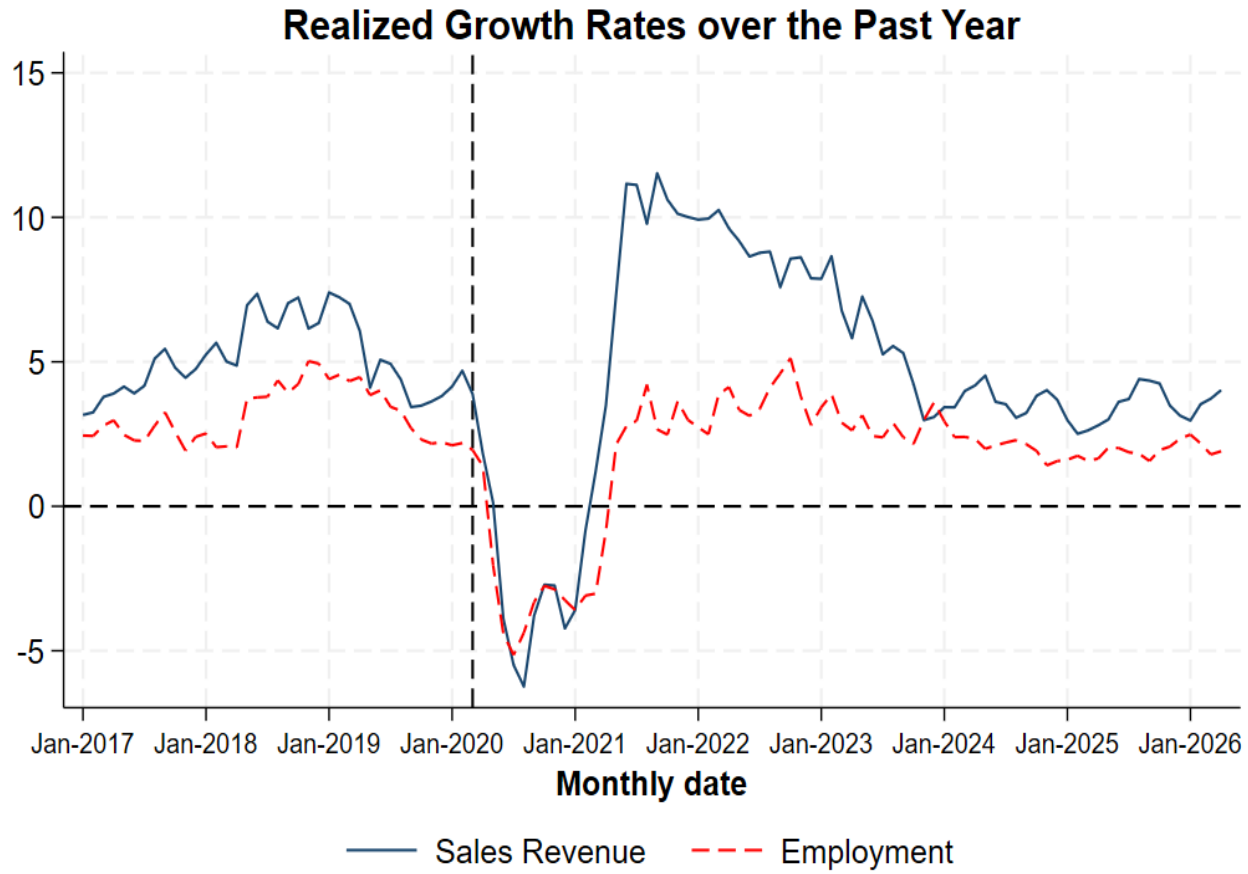
The SBU questionnaire goes to about 1500 panel members, who occupy senior finance and managerial positions at U.S. firms. We contact panel members each month by email, and they respond via a web-based instrument.

Survey questions pertain to current, past, and future outcomes at the respondent's firm. Our primary objective is to elicit the respondent's subjective forecast distributions over own-firm future sales growth rates and employment levels. We also ask special questions on timely topics.

For more information on survey design and methodology, please refer to the resources on the SBU page and "Surveying Business Uncertainty," published in the *Journal of Econometrics* and also available as NBER Working Paper 25956.

The recent uptick in nominal sales growth has stalled but remains in line with pre-pandemic growth. Recent employment growth is in line with pre-pandemic growth.

January 2017–April 2026



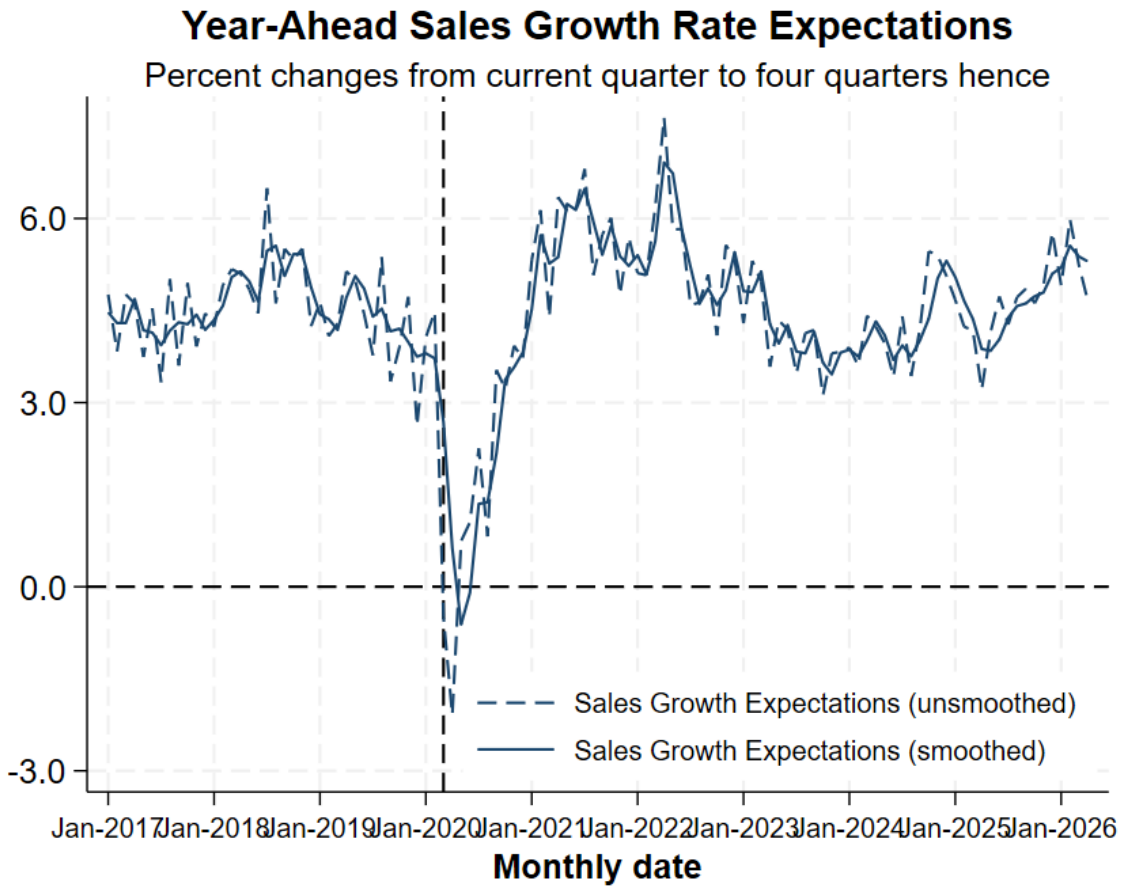
NOTE: Calculated using monthly data through April 2026. Realized growth rate series for sales revenue and employment are activity-weighted averages of firms' reported (look-back) growth rates over the past year (specifically, the previous four quarters for sales revenue and previous 12 months for employment).

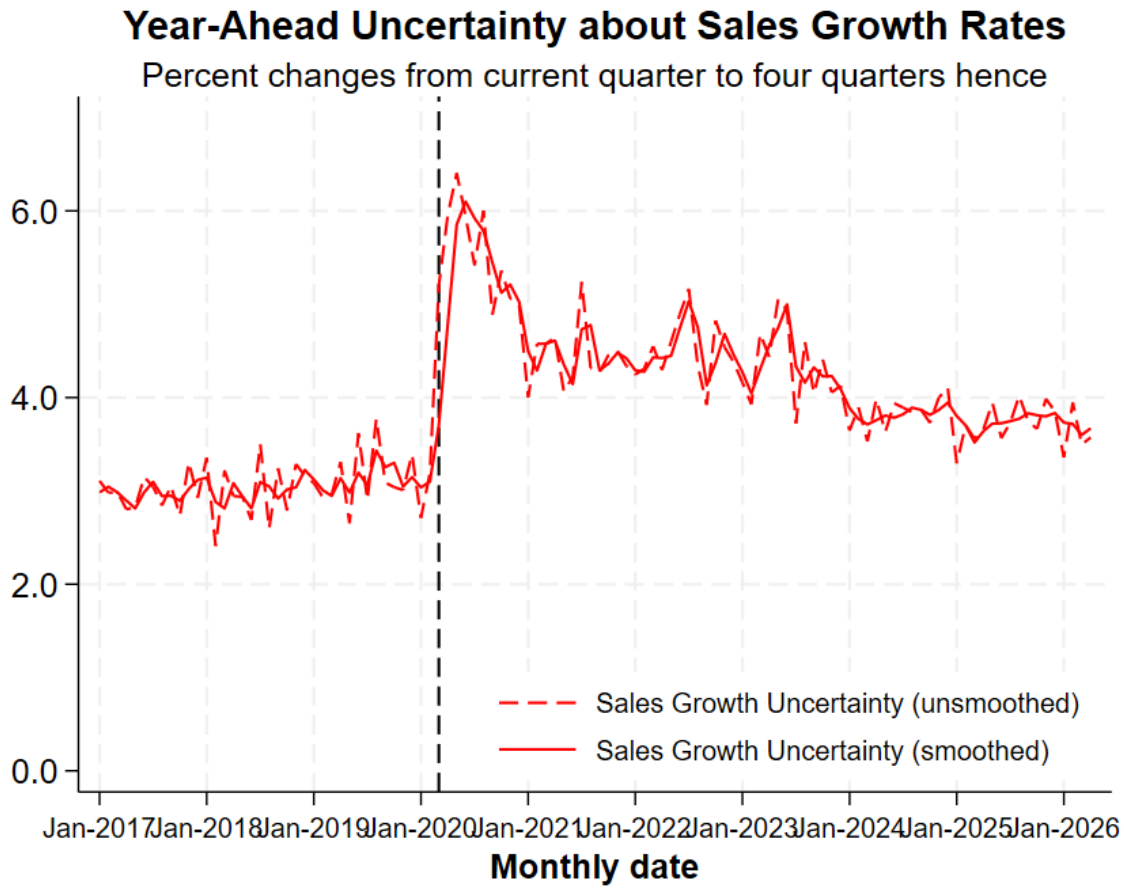
NOTE: The chart shows smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed line shown in the plot marks the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sales revenue growth expectations have risen in recent months after declining. Firms remain more uncertain about future revenue growth than they were before the pandemic.

January 2017–April 2026



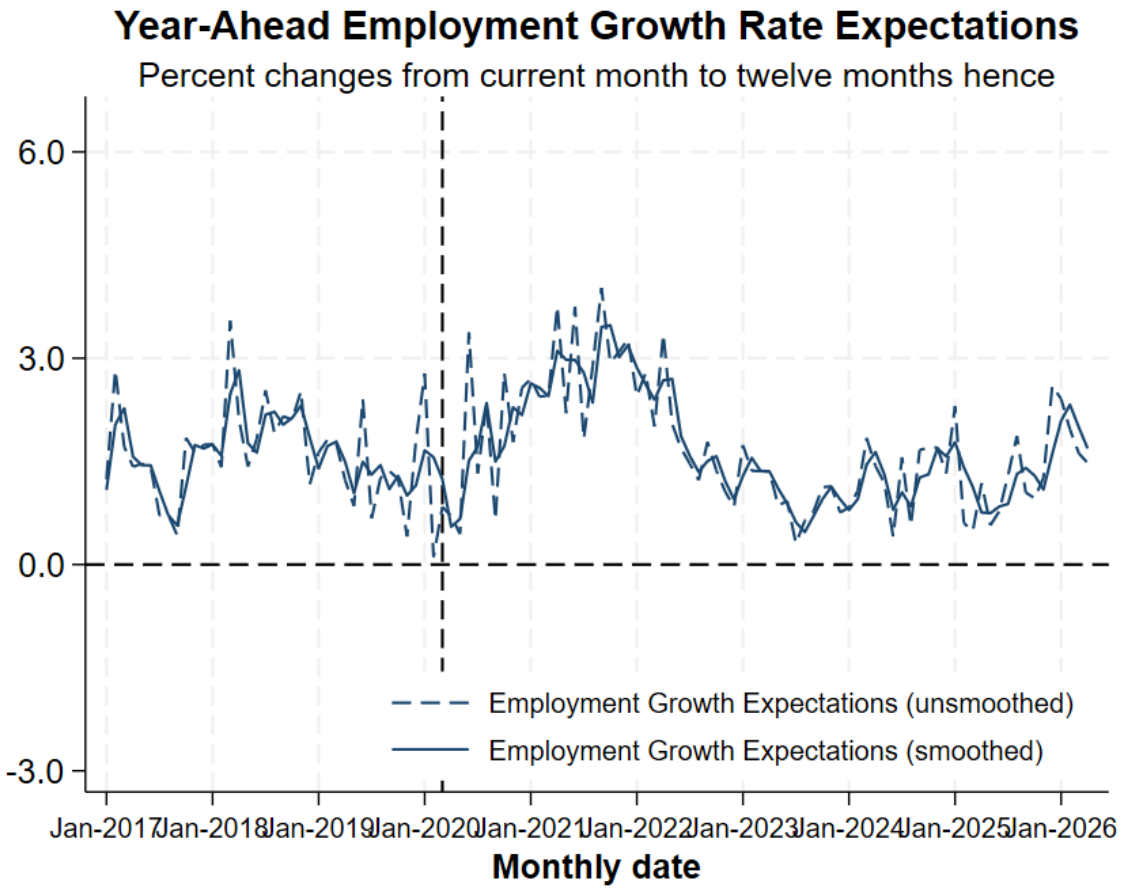


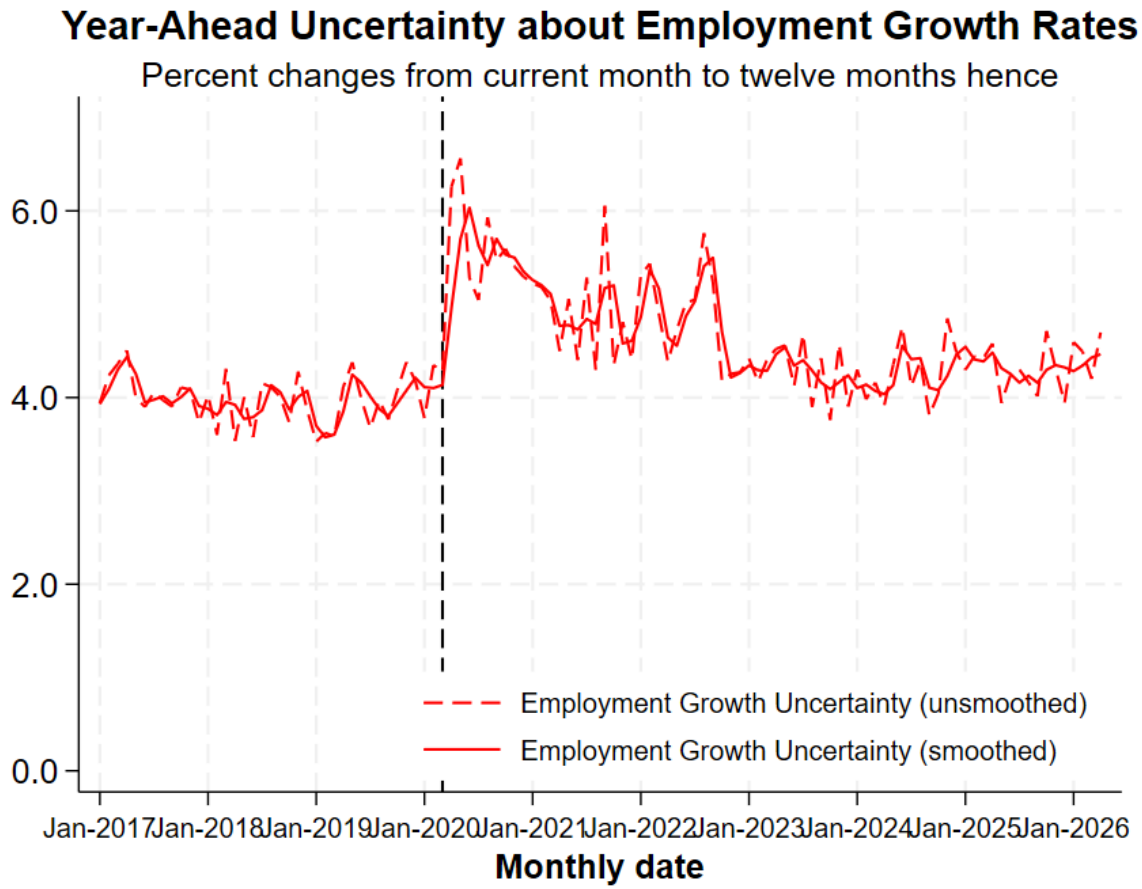
NOTE: The charts show smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed lines shown in the plots mark the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expected employment growth is in line with pre-pandemic levels. Uncertainty about employment growth is slightly elevated over pre-pandemic levels.

January 2017–April 2026



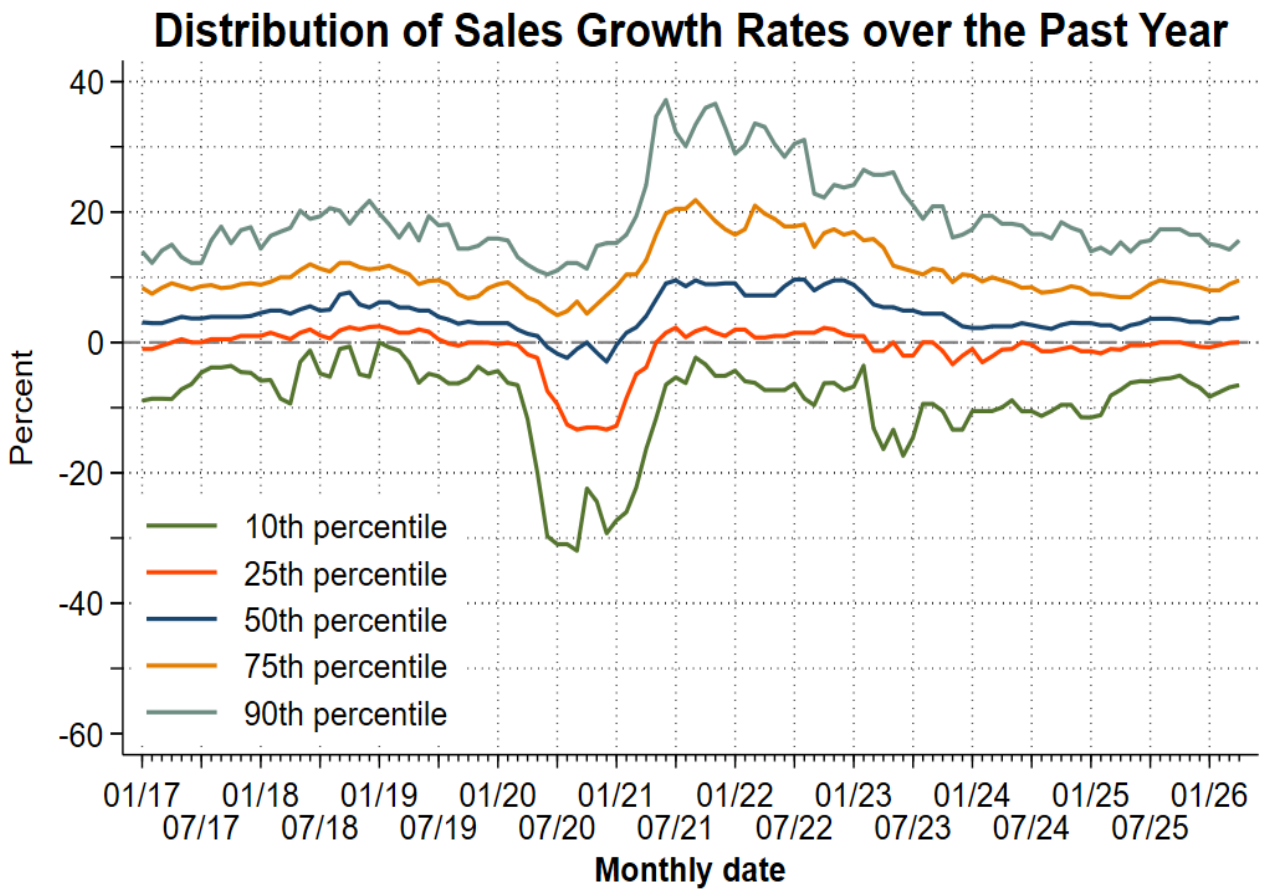


NOTE: The charts show smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed lines shown in the plots mark the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The distribution of sales growth rates across firms has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

January 2017–April 2026

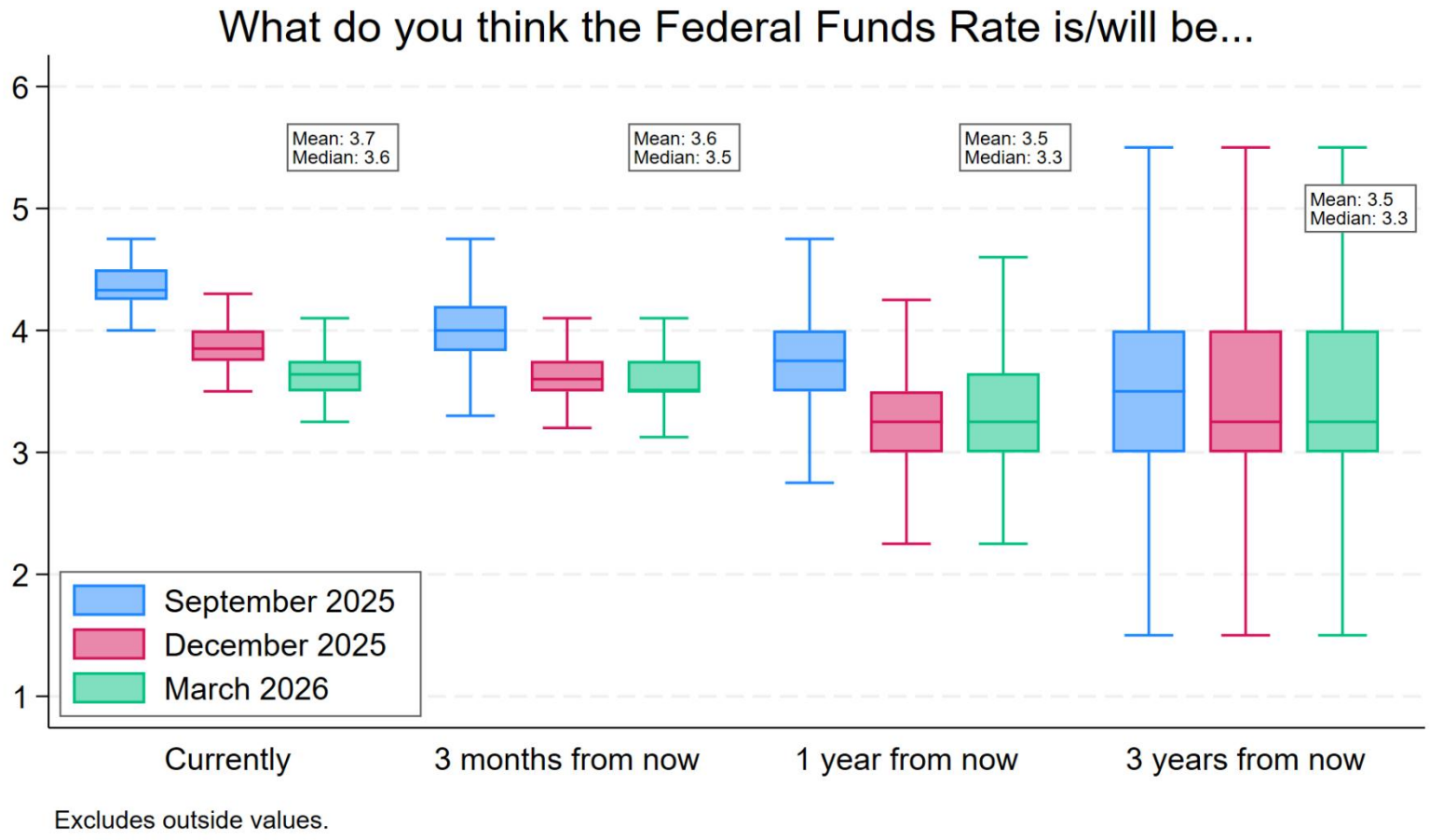


NOTES: Calculated using monthly data through April 2026. The chart shows smoothed series. Lines show percentiles of the activity-weighted distribution of firm-level sales growth rates over the past year.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Once again, business executives forecast lower Federal Funds Rate than they did in the past two quarters.

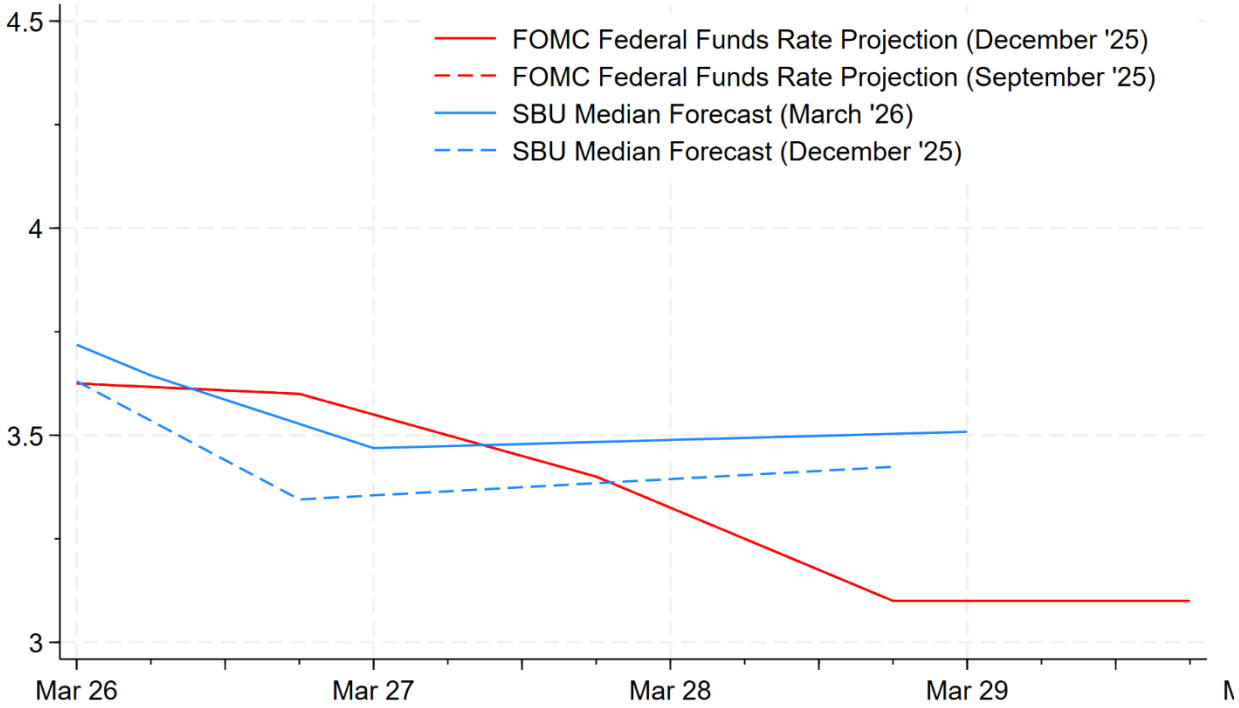
Question: *What do you think is the current Federal Funds Rate? What do you think the Federal Funds Rate will be [three months, one year, three years] from now?*

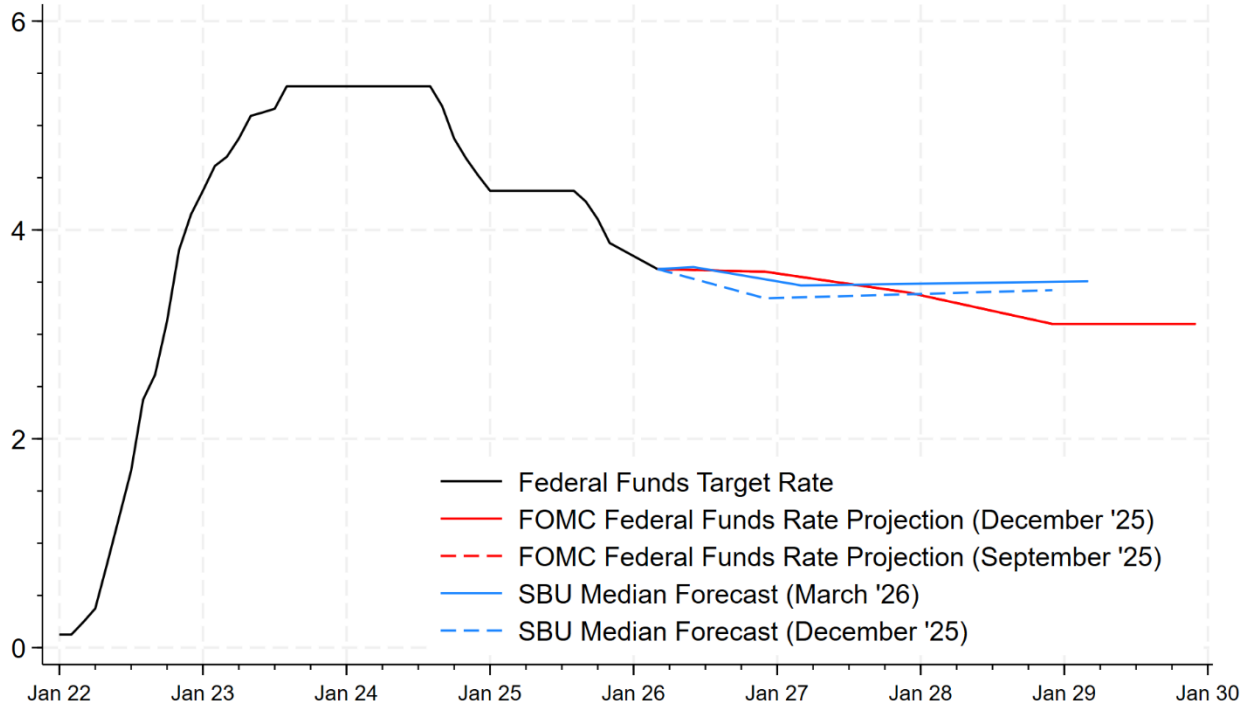


Note: The SBU survey fielded these questions to panelists from 3/9/26 – 3/13/26. The sample covers all U.S. states and major industry sectors. Observations beyond the IQR not shown. N = 997 (3/26).

SBU panelists reported lower FFR forecasts this quarter compared to last quarter. The sample's long-run expectations are higher than official projections.

Question: *What do you think is the current Federal Funds Rate? What do you think the Federal Funds Rate will be [three months, one year, three years] from now?*





Note: The SBU fielded these questions in the December 2025 and March 2026 survey waves (3/9/26 – 3/13/26). The sample covers all U.S. states and major industry sectors. N = 1,090 (12/25), N = 997 (3/26).

Adoption of AI technologies has increased from November 2025, driven largely by increases to generative AI adoption.

Question: *Which of the following artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, if any, does your firm currently use? And which do you expect to make use of over the next three years? Select all that apply.*

Firm AI technologies adoption
March 2026 SBU (% of firms, employment-weighted)

	Robotics & AVs		Data processing		Image processing		Generative AI		Visual content		Other		None	
	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26	Nov-25	Mar-26
Full sample (Employment-weighted)	**15.7**	**10.3**	**36.9**	**40.9**	**26.7**	**31.5**	**53.5**	**81.3**	**32.5**	**37.0**	**34.0**	**33.7**	**22.5**	**11.0**
Full sample (Equal-weighted)	9.2	6.5	26.9	27.0	19.6	21.0	46.4	74.1	26.1	29.5	29.7	23.9	30.6	19.5
Industry Class														
Construction, Real Estate, Mining, and Utilities	9.9	0.9	39.8	41.8	17.5	26.7	55.7	82.5	32.3	36.4	28.3	35.5	22.8	9.7
Manufacturing	30.8	30.0	17.5	40.9	22.4	26.7	49.9	84.5	32.2	33.0	28.6	21.4	23.5	8.3
Retail and Wholesale Trade and Transportation	16	15.5	38.7	33.0	23.8	37.4	54.1	80.0	35.0	36.3	36.4	26.2	25.9	17.7
Business and Professional Services	13.3	4.4	41.1	44.7	35.9	34.3	54.9	82.3	35.1	39.7	36.6	39.6	21.5	8.6
Other Services	10.4	6.3	42.3	40.5	21.3	28.0	51.1	76.4	24.5	36.7	35.8	38.9	20.1	12.7
Firm Size Class														
0-50 Employees	5.5	2.6	22.6	16.8	14.5	14.7	45.7	73.0	22.3	27.4	27.5	16.7	33.8	22.8
50-99 Employees	6.7	5.5	22.8	21.1	14.2	15.9	43.3	74.4	17.7	23.6	26.0	17.4	34.0	17.1
99-249 Employees	10.6	12.8	29.3	28.2	19.0	18.4	47.1	77.4	26.7	22.1	24.9	18.1	27.4	15.0
250+ Employees	18.4	10.6	41.0	48.0	30.6	37.7	56.5	83.6	36.0	43.0	37.5	40.6	19.6	8.5

Note: The SBU survey fielded these questions to panelists from 11/10/25 – 11/21/25 (November ’25 SBU) and from 3/9/26 – 3/13/26 (March ’26 SBU). The sample covers all U.S. states and major industry sectors. N_{Nov} = 1,032. N_{Mar} = 982.

Appendix: Technical Information

Computing Moments of the Firm-Level Subjective Forecast Distributions

We calculate first and second moments of the subjective growth rate distributions of employment and sales revenue over the next 12 months or four quarters, as appropriate. Following standard practice in the literature on business-level dynamics, we calculate the growth rate of *x* from *t–1* to *t* as $g_t = 2(x_t - x_{t-1})/(x_t + x_{t-1})$.*

Employment

$CEmp$ = firm's current employment level, as reported by the respondent

$FEmp_i$ = employment 12 months hence in scenario i, for $i = 1,2,3,4,5$

p_i = *the associated probabilities*, $i = 1,2,3,4,5$

Scenario-Specific Growth Rates

$$EGr_i = 2(FEmp_i - CEmp)/(FEmp_i + CEmp),\ i = 1,2,3,4,5$$

First and Second Moments of the Subjective Growth Rate Forecast Distribution

$$Mean(EGr) = \sum_{i=1}^{5} p_i\, EGr_i$$

$$Var(EGr) = \sum_{i=1}^{5} p_i (EmpGr_i - Mean(EGr))^2$$

$$SD(EGr) = \sqrt{Var(EGr)}$$

Sales Revenue

$CSale$ = firm's sales revenue in the current quarter, as reported by the respondent

$FSaleGr_i$ = respondent's scenario–specific sales growth rate from now to four quarters hence, $i = 1,2,3,4,5$

p_i = *the associated probabilities*, $i = 1,2,3,4,5$

Implied Future Sales Level

$$FSale_i = \left(1 + \frac{FSaleGr_i}{100}\right) CSale,\ i = 1,2,3,4,5$$

Scenario–Specific Growth Rates (re–expressing respondent growth rates to our growth rate measure)

$$SaleGr_i = 2(FSale_i - CSales)/(FSale_i + CSale) = 2FSaleGr_i/(FSaleGr_i + 2),\ i = 1,2,3,4,5$$

First and Second Moments of the Subjective Growth Rate Forecast Distribution

$$Mean(SaleGr) = \sum_{i=1}^{5} p_i\, SaleGr_i$$

$$Var(SaleGr) = \sum_{i=1}^{5} p_i (SaleGr_i - Mean(SaleGr)_i)^2$$

$$SD(SaleGr) = \sqrt{Var(SaleGr)}$$

Subjective Expectations and Uncertainty Indices

We construct a monthly activity-weighted expectations (first-moment) index for employment growth and sales growth looking one year ahead. We also construct a monthly activity-weighted uncertainty (second-moment) index for the employment growth and sales growth looking one year ahead.

- In month *t*, the index for employment (sales) takes a value equal to the activity-weighted average of subjective mean employment (sales) growth rates looking one year hence ($Mean(Gr)$), averaging across all firms responding that month. We compute these subjective mean growth rates as described on slide 3, and winsorize them at the first and 99th percentiles before using them to construct the index.
- The month-*t* index of year-ahead subjective uncertainty for employment (sales) growth is the activity-weighted mean of ($SD\ (Gr)$) values across firms responding in month *t*. We compute these subjective standard deviations over growth rates as described on slide 3, and winsorize them at the first and 99th percentiles before inputting them into the index construction formula.
- When constructing first- and second-moment employment growth indexes, we weight firm *i*'s subjective mean growth rate expectation and uncertainty by the average of its month-*t* employment ($CEmp_{it}$) and its expected employment level ($EEmp_{it}$). We top-code these weights at 500 to diminish the influence of outliers among very large firms.
- When constructing first- and second-moment sales revenue growth indexes, we weight firms *i*'s subjective mean growth rate expectation and uncertainty by the average of its month-*t* sales revenue ($CSale_{it}$) and its expected sales level ($ESale_{it}$). We winsorize these activity-weights at the 1st and 80th percentile.
- Finally, we smooth our topic-specific indices by taking a moving average. We set the window for the moving average to 2 or 3 months, to match the panel structure of our survey.

Topic-specific Expected Excess Reallocation Indices

We construct forward-looking indices of excess job and sales revenue reallocation. These series measure the volume of cross-firm reallocation in economic activity above the reallocation required to support aggregate growth. For ease of exposition, we often refer to these as simply "reallocation rates":

- First, in each month *t*, we compute the activity-weighted average of own-firm expected gross job creation and destruction rates, which boils down to the activity-weighted average of the absolute value of subjective mean growth rates $|Mean(EGr)\ |$.
- Then , in each month *t*, we compute the absolute value of the activity weighted average of own-firm expected employment growth $Mean(EGr)$. This is effectively the absolute value of the employment growth expectations index in month *t*.
- We then obtain the expected job reallocation rate index value for month *t* by subtracting the outcome of the second bullet from the first. Letting w_{it} be firm i's activity weight in month t,

$$Expected\ Job\ Reallocation\ Rate_t = \sum_i w_t \cdot |Mean(EGr)\ | - \left| \sum_i w_t \cdot Mean(EGr) \right|$$

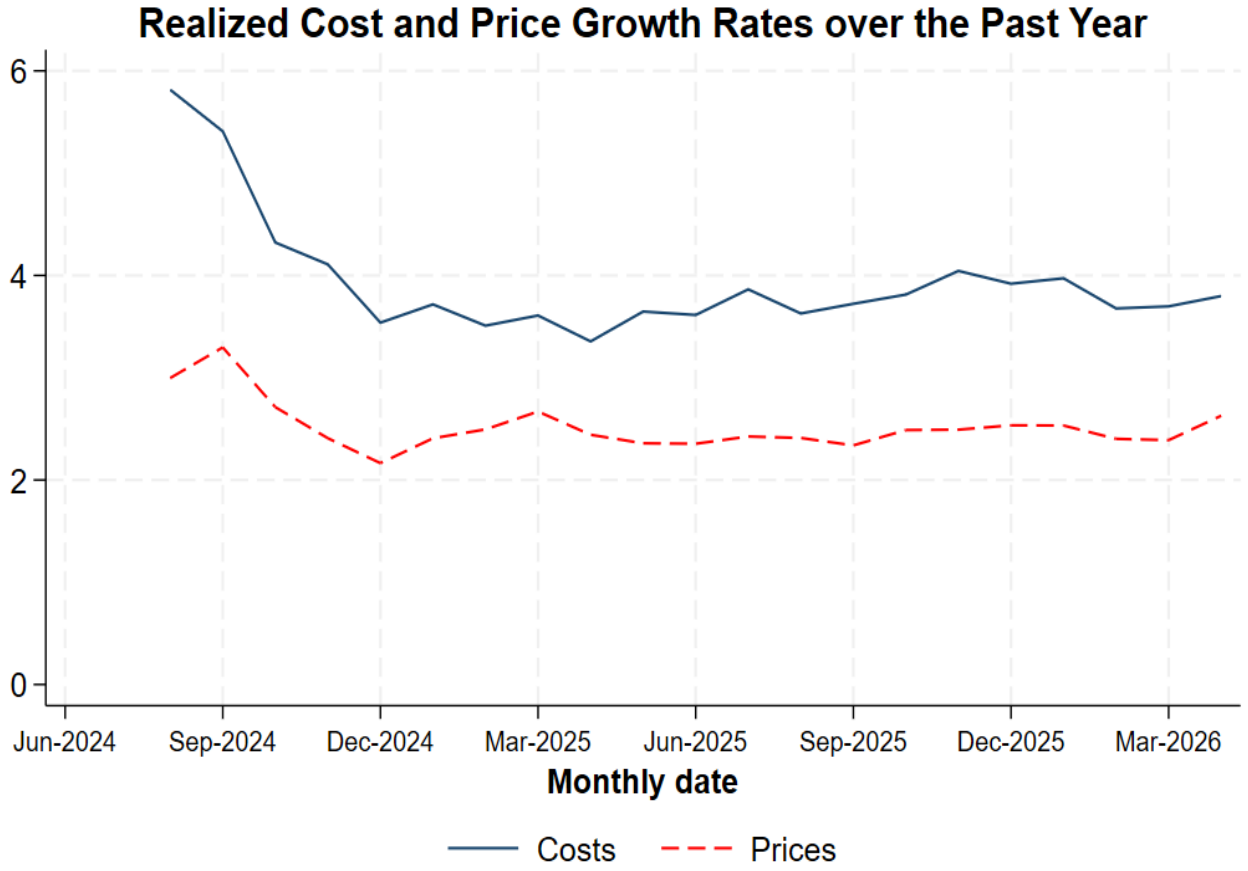
- Analogously, the expected sales revenue reallocation rate index in month *t* is the difference between the activity-weighted average of absolute expected sales growth rates, minus the absolute value of the average activity-weighted growth rate:

$$Expected\ Reallocation\ Rate\ For\ Sales\ Revenue_t = \sum_i w_t \cdot |Mean(SaleGr)\ | - \left| \sum_i w_t \cdot Mean(SaleGr) \right|$$

- We compute the subjective mean growth rates $Mean(EGr)$ and $Mean(SaleGr)$ as described on slides 18-21, and winsorize them at the 1st and 99th percentiles before using them to construct the index.
- Firm *i*'s activity weight w_{it} is the average of its month–*t* employment or sales level ($Cemp_{it}$ *or* $CSale_{it}$) and its expected employment or sales level twelve months hence ($FEmp_{it}$ *or* $FSale_{it}$). We top–code these weights at 500 for employment and at the 80th percentile for sales to diminish the influence of outliers among very large firms.

Nominal cost growth has risen slightly in the past few months. Nominal price growth has remained steady over the past year.

July 2024–April 2026



NOTE: Calculated using monthly data through April 2026. Realized growth rate series for costs and prices are activity-weighted averages of firms' reported (look-back) growth rates over the past year (specifically, the previous four quarters for sales revenue and previous 12 months for employment).

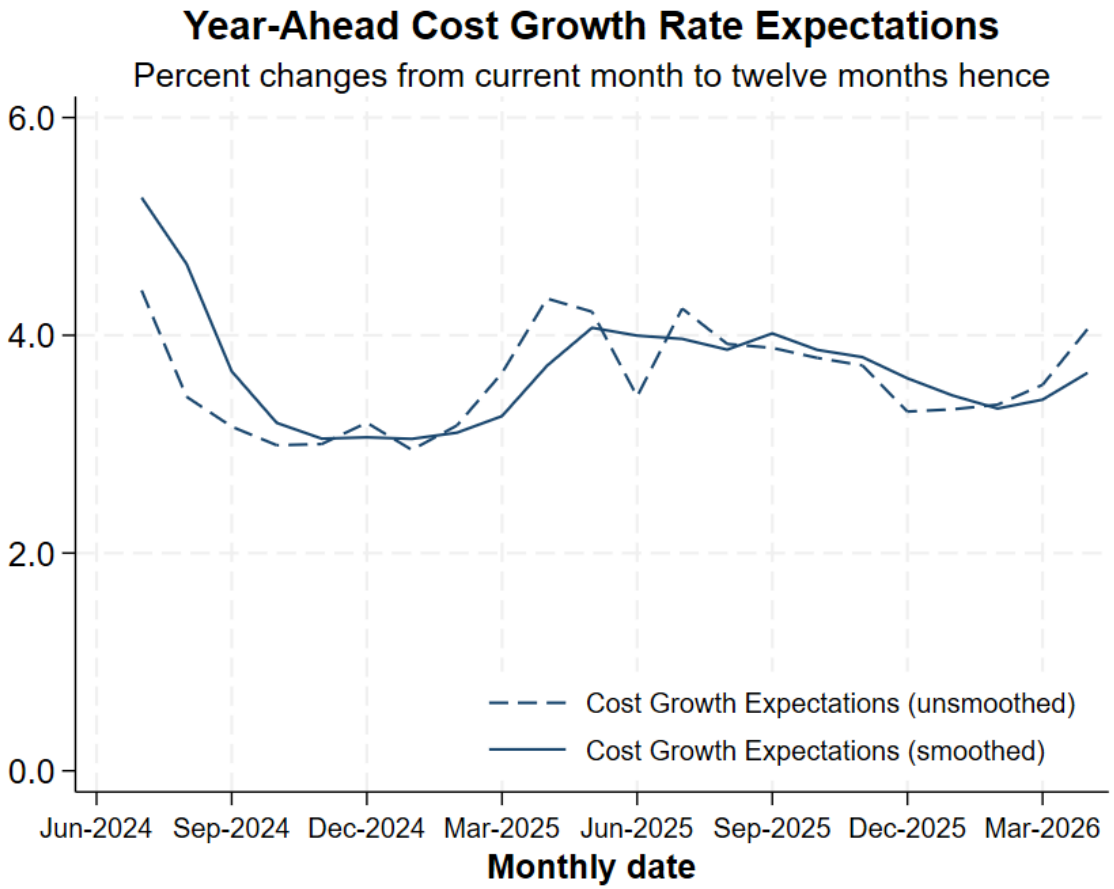
We measure the percentage change in the average price that a firm charges on all products and services and the percentage change in the average unit costs that a firm faces.

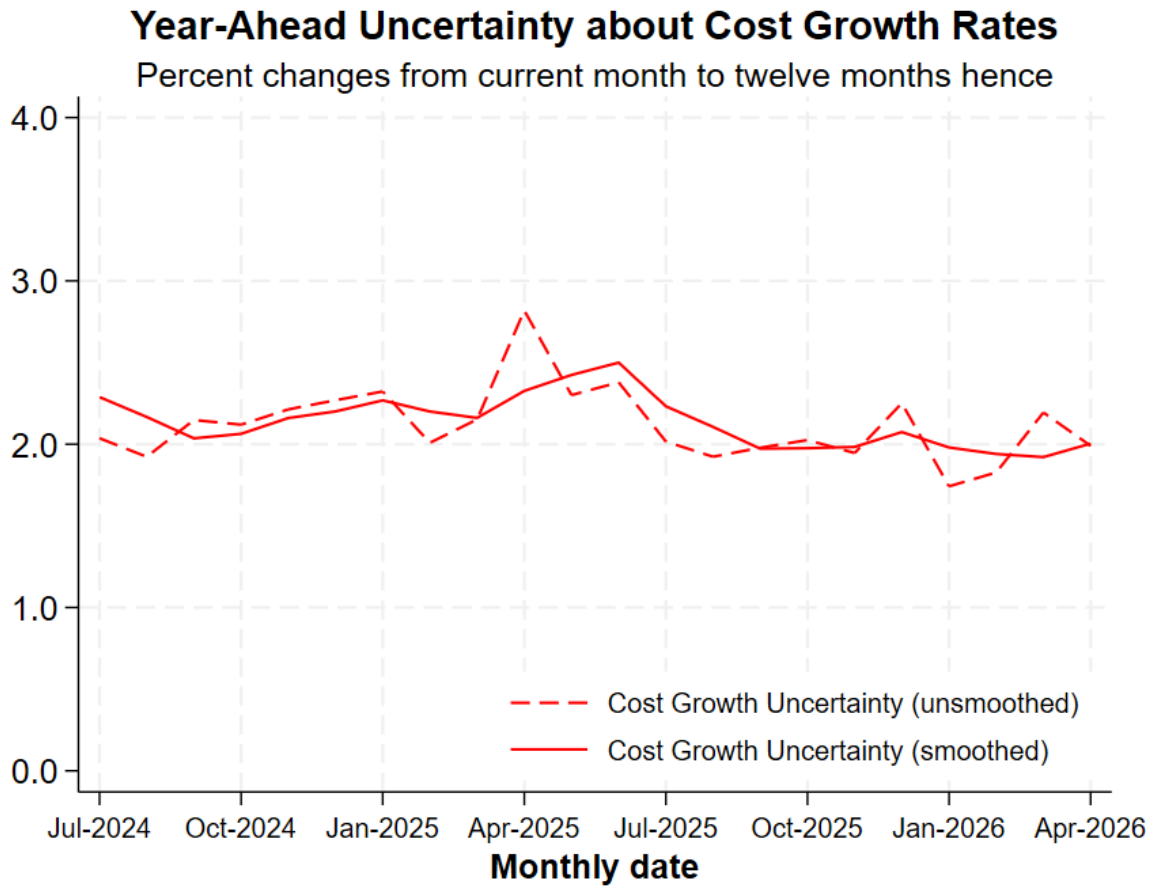
NOTE: The chart shows smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed line shown in the plot marks the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cost growth expectations remain slightly elevated after falling considerably last year. Cost growth uncertainty remains steady.

July 2024–April 2026



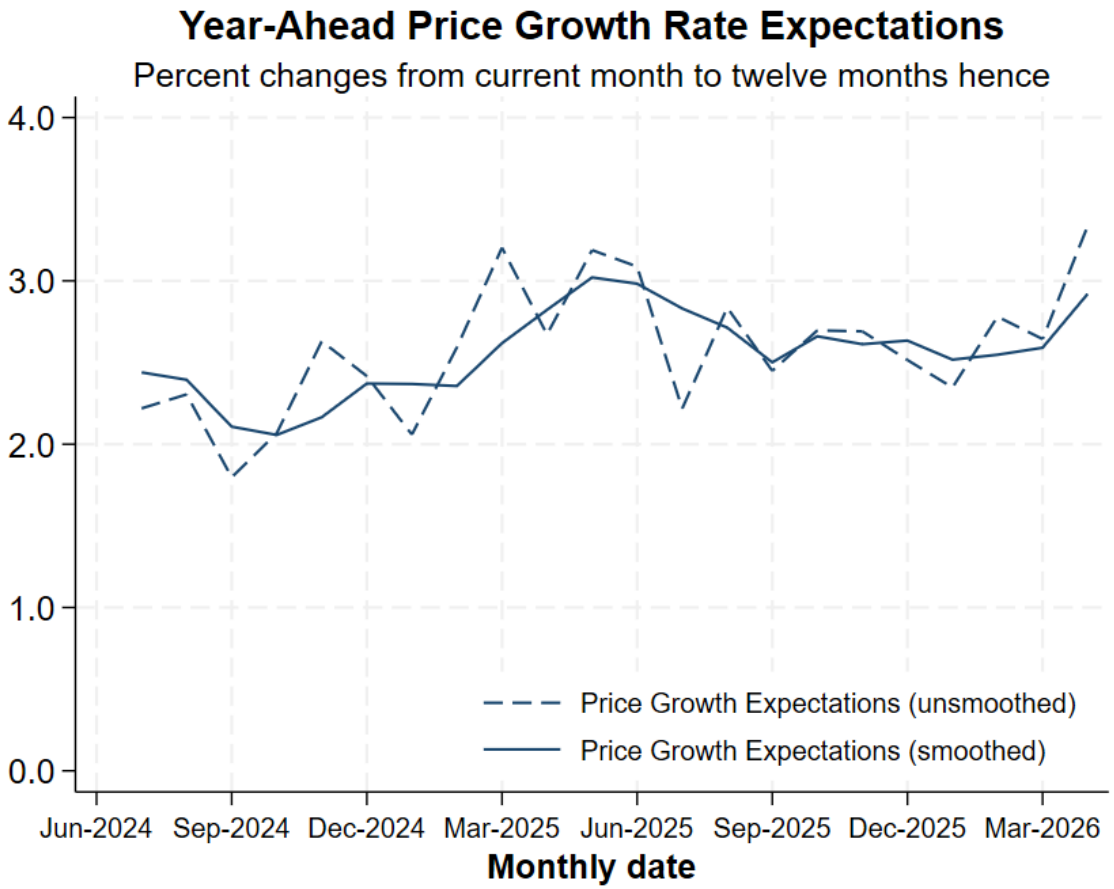


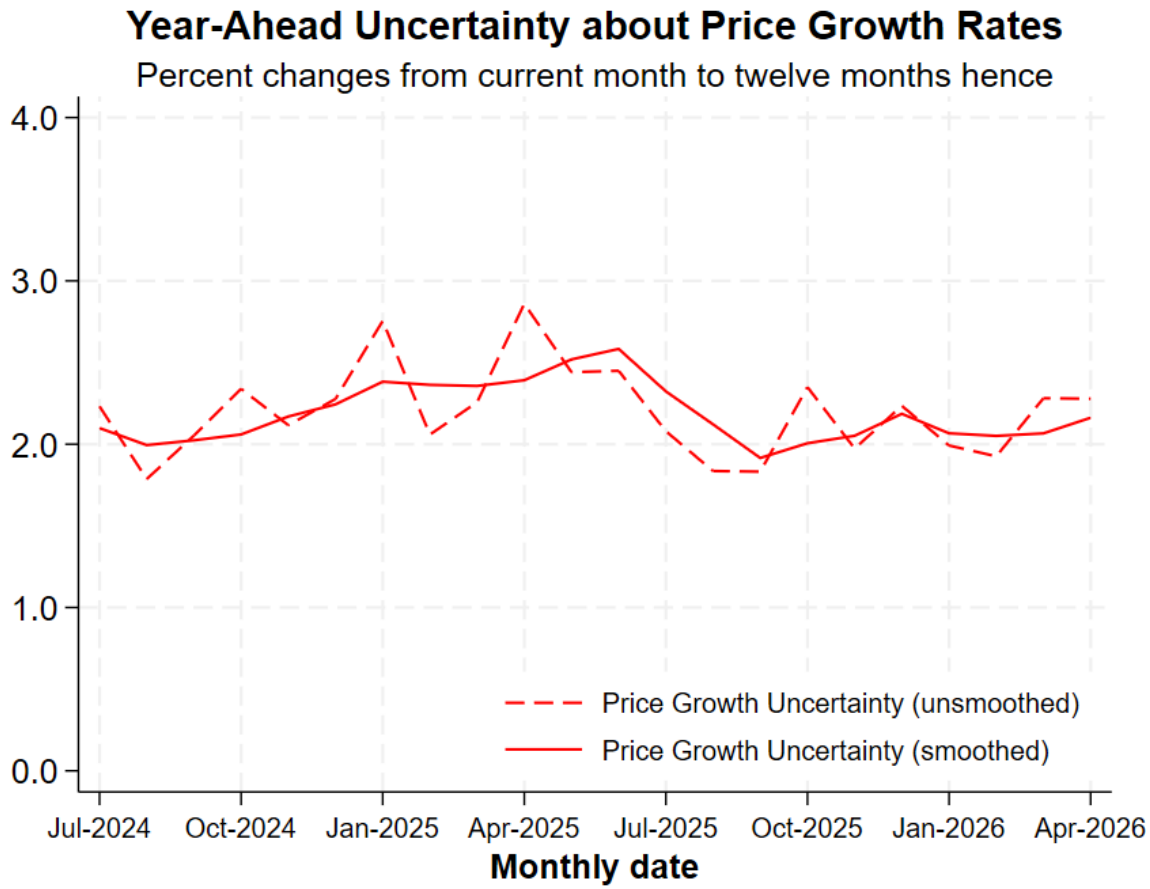
NOTE: The charts show smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed lines shown in the plots mark the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Price growth expectations have increased this month after declining from their peak last year. Price growth uncertainty has remained level over the past few months.

July 2024–April 2026



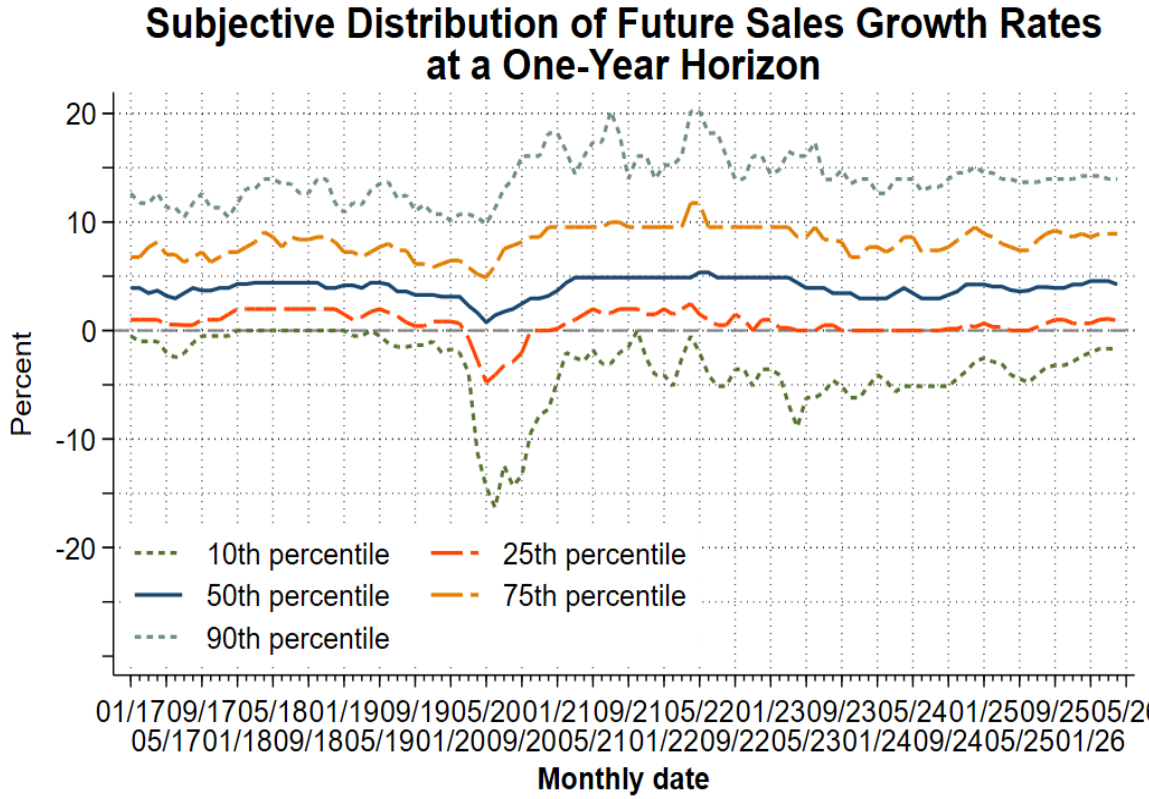


NOTE: The charts show smoothed series.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. For more information, see "Surveying Business Uncertainty" by David Altig, Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom, Steven J. Davis, Brent Meyer, and Nick Parker, NBER Working Paper No. 25956, February 2020. The vertical dashed lines shown in the plots mark the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix: Subjective Forecast Distribution of Future Sales Growth Rates at a One-Year Horizon

January 2017–April 2026

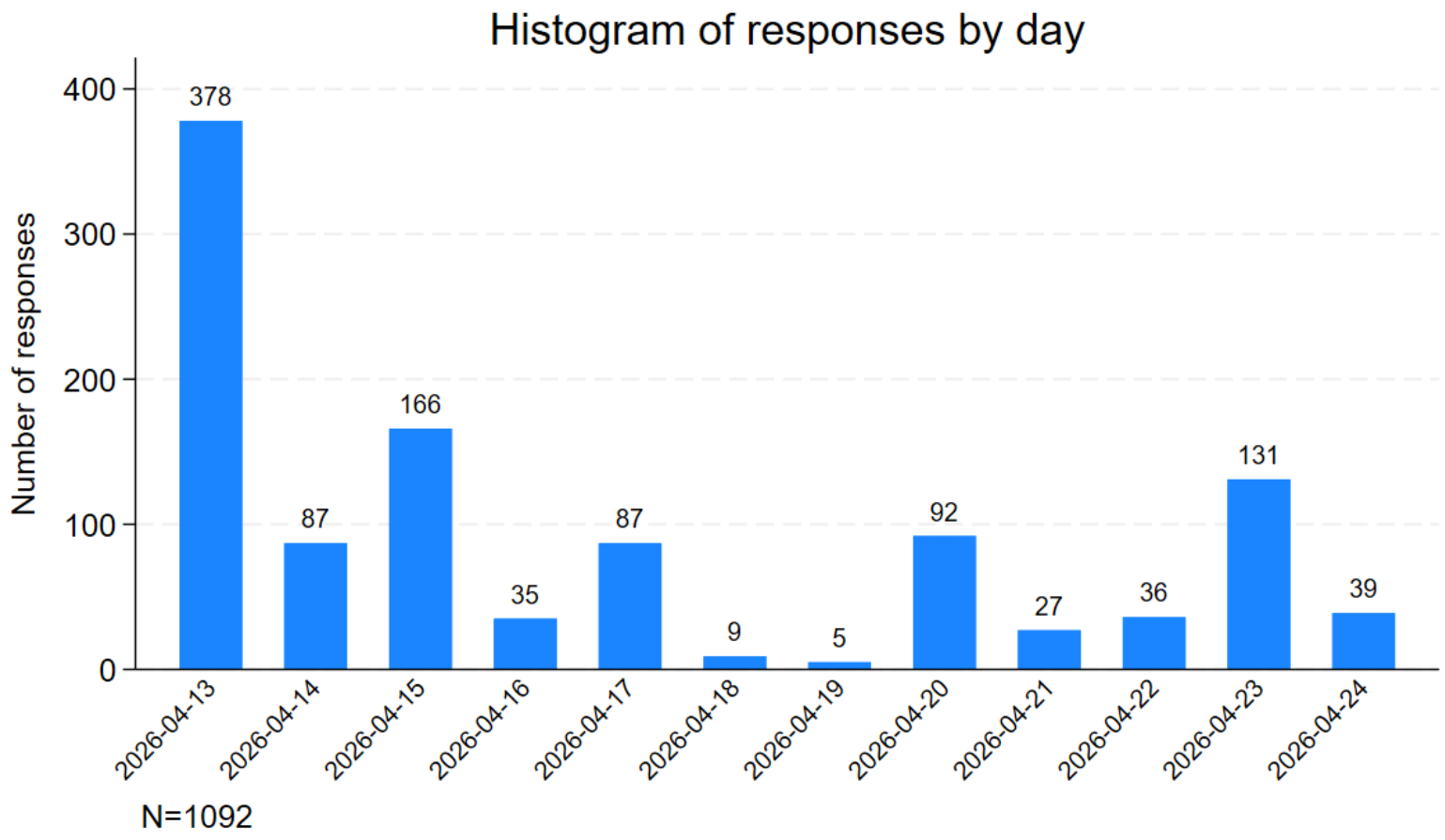


NOTES: Calculated using monthly data through April 2026. The charts show smoothed series. This is a plot of the subjective distribution for the representative firm's future sales growth rates over a 4-quarter look-ahead horizon. To calculate this distribution, we pool over all firm-level subjective forecast distributions in the indicated month and weight each firm by its activity level. Then we use the probabilities assigned to each possible future sales growth rate to obtain activity-weighted quantiles of the future sales growth rate distribution.

Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Appendix: Histogram of survey response frequency for the April 2026 survey wave

April 2026



Source: Survey of Business Uncertainty conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.