



## Report for March 2026

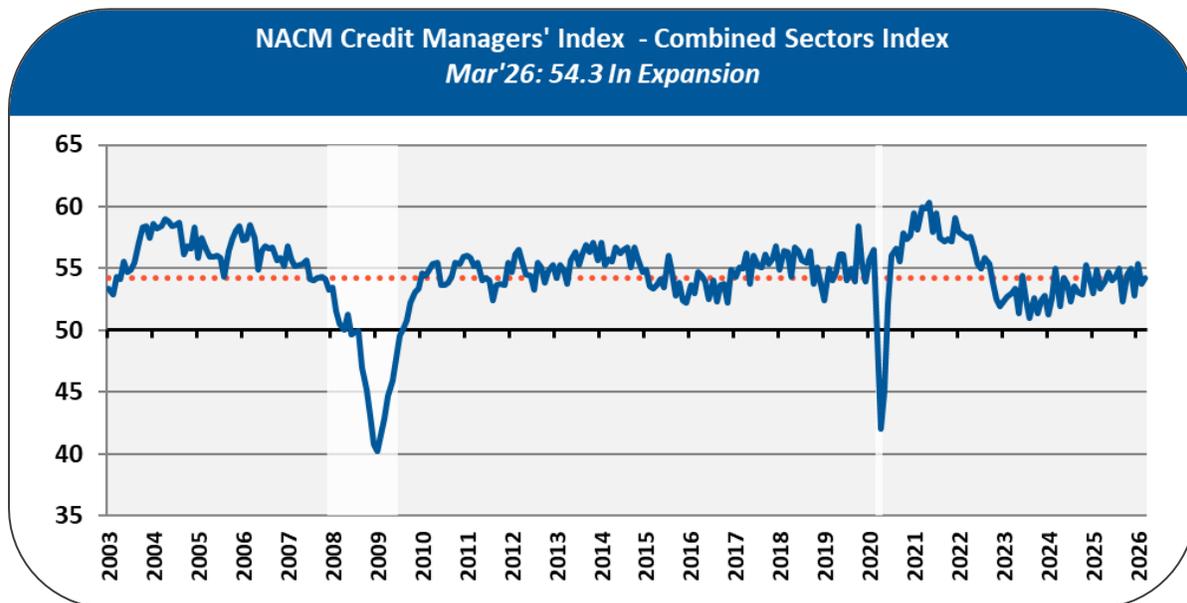
Issued April 1, 2026

National Association of Credit Management

### Credit Managers' Index Combined Factors

The National Association of Credit Management's seasonally adjusted combined Credit Managers' Index (CMI) for March 2026 improved 0.5 points to 54.3, reflecting business conditions for the month just completed. "Favorable factors are driving the gain this month, especially the Dollar Sales factor," said NACM Economist Amy Crews Cutts, Ph.D., CBE®. "Respondents are indicating optimism on new orders but caution that they are still experiencing slow payments and requests for extended terms."

Cutts continued, "The conflict in Iran is not affecting this month's numbers as the survey asked about February activity. Looking ahead, higher energy costs at home and higher shipping costs relating to oil price shocks for those that participate in international trade are likely to affect both demand and payment activity negatively."



*The CMI is centered on a value of 50, with values greater indicating expansion and values lower indicating economic contraction. Seasonal adjustment factors for prior periods were updated for this report.*

<b>Combined Manufacturing and Service Sectors (seasonally adjusted)</b>	<b>Mar '25</b>	<b>Apr '25</b>	<b>May '25</b>	<b>Jun '25</b>	<b>Jul '25</b>	<b>Aug '25</b>	<b>Sep '25</b>	<b>Oct '25</b>	<b>Nov '25</b>	<b>Dec '25</b>	<b>Jan '26</b>	<b>Feb '26</b>	<b>Mar '26</b>
Dollar Sales	54.9	58.0	61.9	55.8	60.9	63.3	52.8	61.3	60.6	55.3	67.4	56.8	60.4
New Credit Applications	56.8	58.8	56.5	57.4	56.4	57.0	59.6	58.1	60.8	53.3	59.9	59.1	60.5
Dollar Collections	54.8	62.6	61.8	59.8	60.8	62.4	56.5	64.1	60.2	56.1	62.5	60.1	60.8
Amount of Credit Extended	59.6	59.5	62.1	58.4	59.9	61.3	62.0	59.3	61.7	57.5	60.6	62.3	62.8
<b>Index of Favorable Factors</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>61.1</b>
Rejections of Credit Applications	50.2	50.8	50.4	50.7	50.2	50.8	49.7	51.9	50.5	51.8	50.6	50.1	50.7
Accounts Placed for Collection	49.7	49.2	47.9	50.1	47.7	45.5	43.7	47.4	47.1	45.3	46.6	48.1	44.3
Disputes	51.3	49.1	51.3	51.8	49.7	50.8	49.1	48.8	50.6	51.6	49.9	49.4	49.2
Dollar Amount Beyond Terms	52.1	48.3	52.0	50.7	52.9	53.0	47.0	51.8	54.2	51.3	51.3	48.4	50.1
Dollar Amount of Customer Deductions	51.1	50.4	51.3	52.0	51.7	52.1	50.8	52.1	51.3	52.7	52.7	51.1	52.1
Filings for Bankruptcies	53.0	52.9	52.0	54.2	52.8	53.5	52.3	50.3	53.2	53.1	51.9	52.4	51.8
<b>Index of Unfavorable Factors</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>49.7</b>
<b>NACM Combined CMI</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>54.3</b>

## CMI Combined Sectors Factors

### Key Findings:

- The Index for Unfavorable Factors deteriorated 0.2 points to 49.7 points. This index has not wavered much above or below the 50-point line denoting the break between contraction and expansion since the summer of 2021.
- Half of the six unfavorable factors deteriorated in the March survey. The largest decline was in the Accounts Placed for Collection factor, which lost 3.8 points and remains in contraction at 44.3 points. This marks the 42<sup>nd</sup> of the last 43 months this factor has remained in contraction; the number of accounts placed for collections at respondent firms has increased every month for 3.5 years with the exception of June of 2025 when it was essentially at neutral.
- The Index for Favorable Factors improved by 1.5 points to 61.1 in this month’s survey. The primary driver of the improvement was an increase in the Dollar Sales factor which gained 3.6 points.
- All of the favorable factors are in expansion.

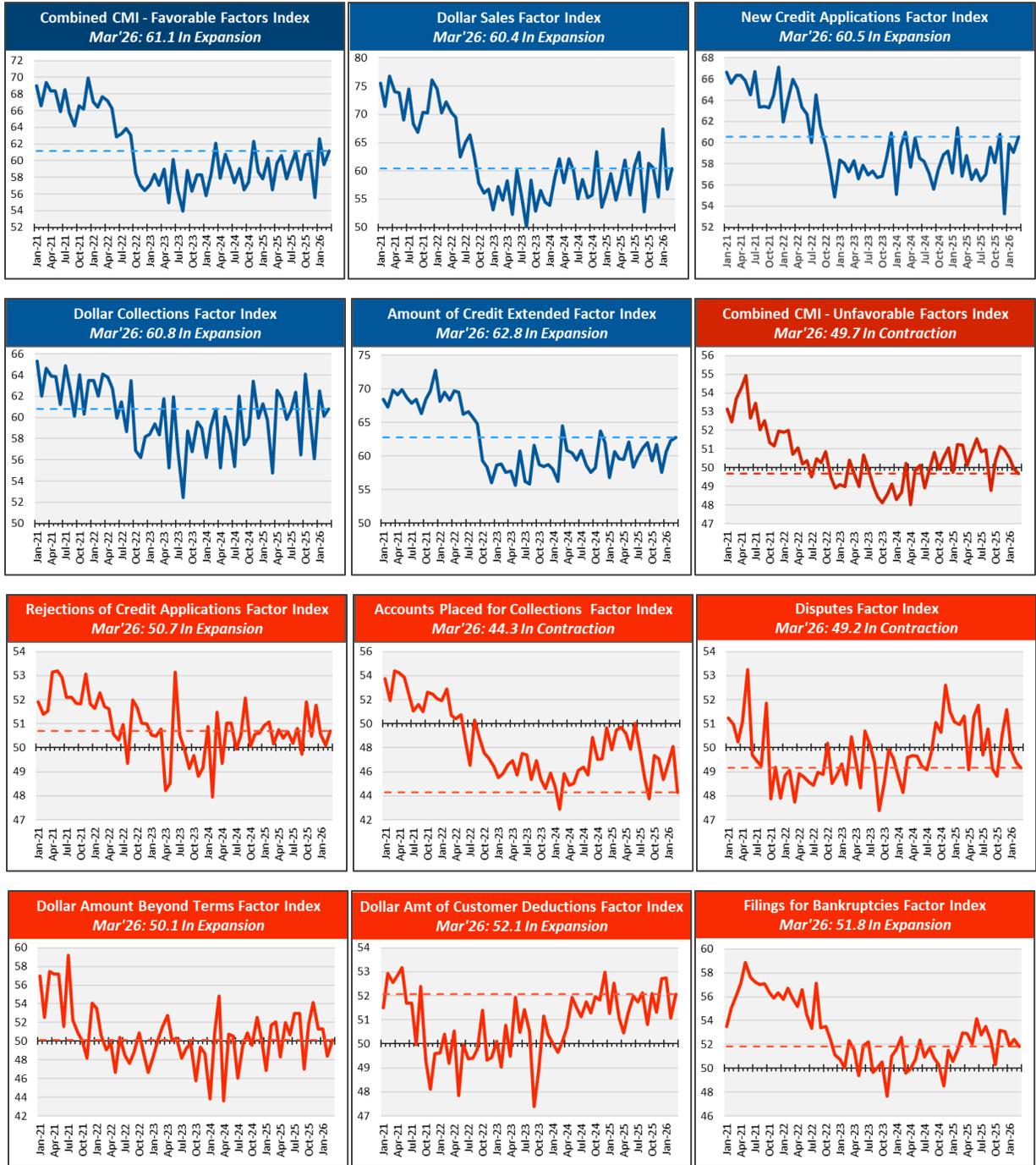
“None of the respondents noted any effects from the winter storms in January and February that affected most of the East coast,” said Cutts. “However, tariff costs and surging energy prices were brought up. One said that they saw an uptick in orders but then received holds on shipments due to concerns about rising energy and shipping costs. Another said that tariffs are causing them to lose quite a few sales to international competitors.”

Cutts continued, “Wildfire season is already underway due to tough drought conditions in many places west of the Mississippi River. The lasting drought conditions will have an impact on farm crops and livestock for the rest of the year, which will affect consumer prices, exports and demand for farm equipment.”

# CMI Combined Sectors Factors Charts

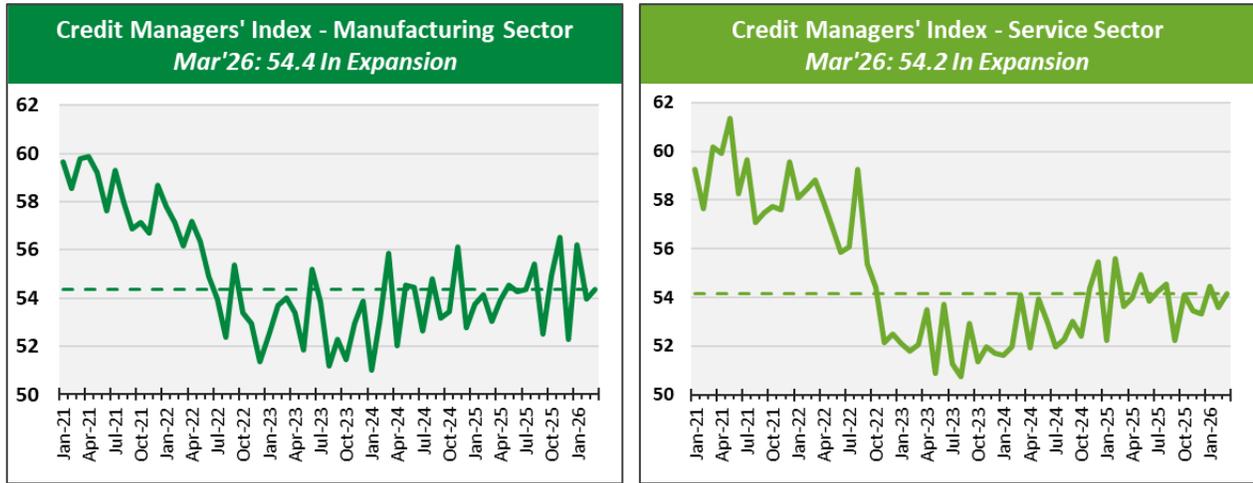
All charts contain seasonally adjusted data.

Please note that the vertical axes are not scaled identically, and the dotted line represents the most recent value.



## CMI Manufacturing versus CMI Service Sectors

The Manufacturing Sector CMI improved 0.4 points in the March CMI survey, which reflects February activity, to a level of 54.4. The Service Sector CMI improved 0.6 points to 54.2.



The data in the charts are seasonally adjusted.

## CMI Manufacturing Sector Factor Indexes

Among the CMI Manufacturing Sector Factors, favorable factors improved by 0.4 points to 58.3. The Unfavorable Factors Index also gained 0.4 points to 54.4.

### Key Findings:

- Half of the four favorable factors improved in this month's survey. All remain in expansion.
- The New Credit Applications factor improved 2.6 points to 58.4 and the Dollar Sales factor improved by 1.5 points to 57.1.
- The Customer Disputes factor moved back into expansion, gaining 0.9 points to sit at 50.1 after two months in contraction.
- The Accounts Placed for Collections factor deteriorated 4.7 points moving back into contraction at 47.5. This factor has been in contraction for 7 of the past 8 months.

### What Manufacturing Sector respondents are saying:

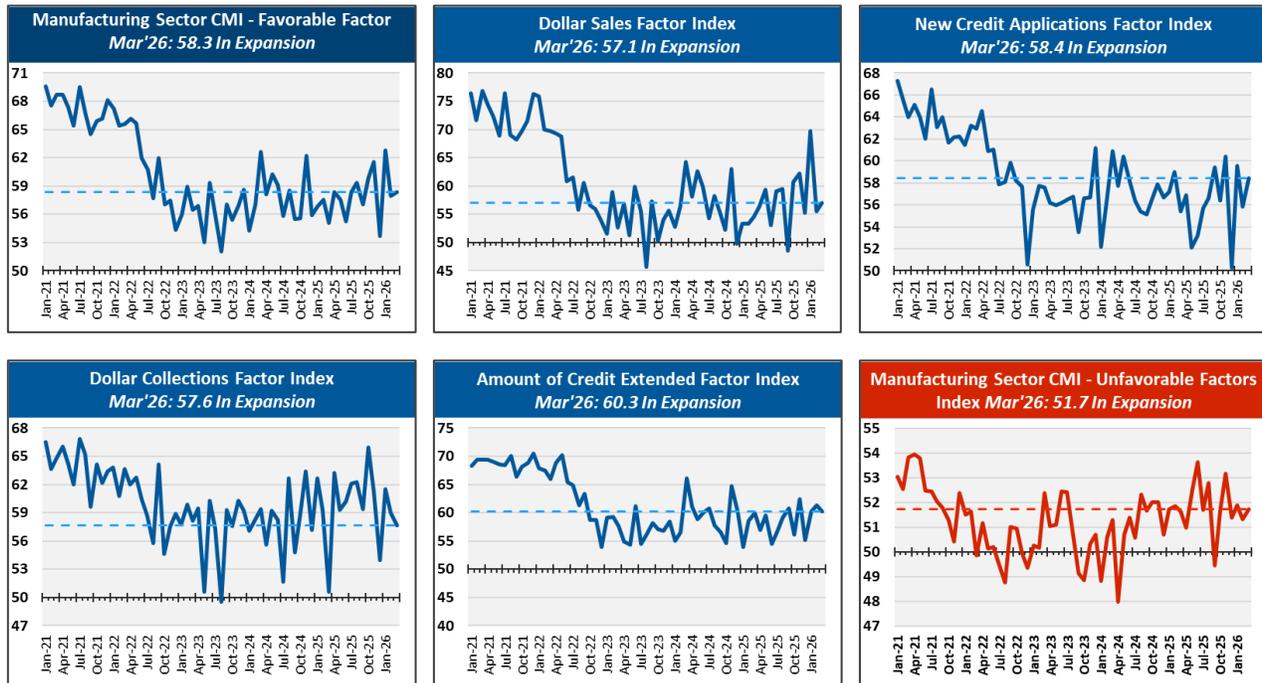
- "Manufacturing is ramping up for fall in-store orders, with new customers increasing due to seasonal trade shows."
- "New orders received but not yet shipped are higher, however concerns with rising oil costs have caused some to go on hold."
- "We are seeing significant slowing of payments coming from general contractors on large jobs."
- "Small increase in sales, but huge pressure from struggling businesses to undercut us."

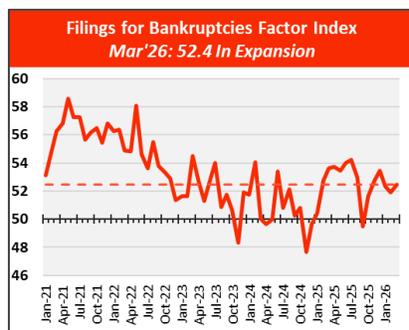
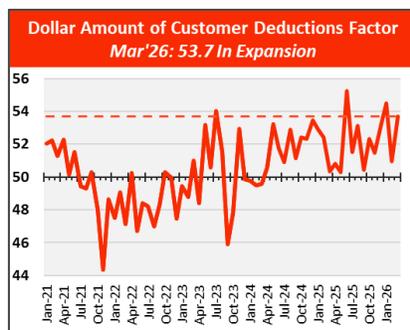
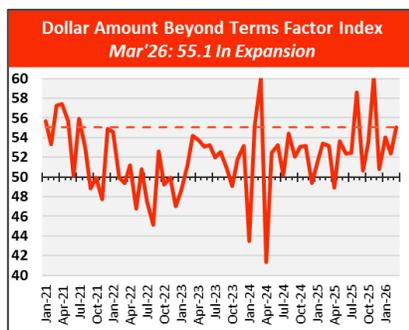
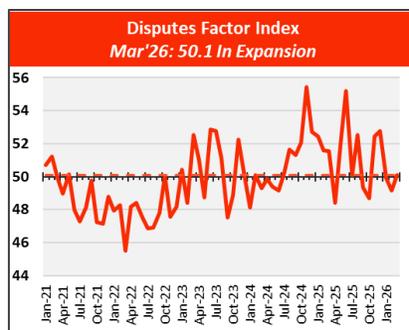
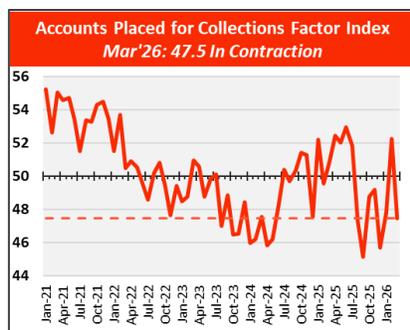
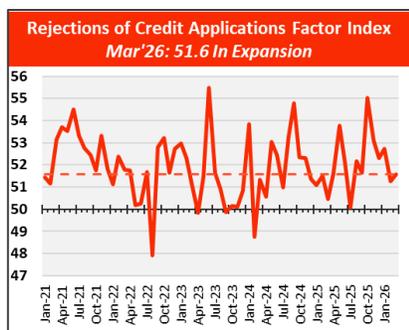
	Mar '25	Apr '25	May '25	Jun '25	Jul '25	Aug '25	Sep '25	Oct '25	Nov '25	Dec '25	Jan '26	Feb '26	Mar '26
<b>Manufacturing Sector (seasonally adjusted)</b>													
Dollar Sales	54.5	56.4	59.3	53.1	59.1	59.4	48.6	60.7	62.2	55.2	69.7	55.6	57.1
New Credit Applications	55.4	56.9	52.1	53.2	55.7	56.6	59.4	56.4	60.4	50.3	59.6	55.8	58.4
Dollar Collections	50.6	63.3	59.3	60.2	62.1	62.3	59.4	65.9	61.2	54.0	61.5	59.0	57.6
Amount of Credit Extended	59.9	56.9	59.5	54.5	56.6	59.1	60.8	56.2	62.5	55.2	60.3	61.3	60.3
<b>Index of Favorable Factors</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>58.3</b>
Rejections of Credit Applications	50.5	51.6	53.8	52.1	50.1	52.2	51.7	55.0	53.1	52.3	52.7	51.3	51.6
Accounts Placed for Collection	50.8	52.4	52.0	52.9	51.8	47.3	45.1	48.7	49.2	45.7	47.8	52.2	47.5
Disputes	51.5	48.4	52.0	55.2	50.1	52.5	49.4	48.7	52.5	52.8	49.9	49.2	50.1
Dollar Amount Beyond Terms	53.2	48.9	53.6	52.4	52.5	58.6	50.7	53.6	60.2	50.8	54.0	52.3	55.1
Dollar Amount of Customer Deductions	50.3	50.8	50.3	55.3	51.5	53.1	50.4	52.3	51.5	53.1	54.5	50.9	53.7
Filings for Bankruptcies	53.6	53.7	53.4	54.0	54.2	53.0	49.5	51.7	52.8	53.5	52.3	51.9	52.4
<b>Index of Unfavorable Factors</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>51.7</b>
<b>NACM Manufacturing CMI</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>54.4</b>

## CMI Manufacturing Sector Factors Charts

All charts contain seasonally adjusted data.

Please note that the vertical axes are not scaled identically, and the dotted line represents the most recent value.





## CMI Service Sector Factors

The CMI Service Sector Favorable Factors Index marked a 2.7-point improvement to 63.9. The sector's Unfavorable Factors Index fell 0.8 points to 47.7, its third consecutive month in contraction.

### Key Findings:

- The Unfavorable Factors Index has been in contraction for 39 of the past 45 months with another two months sitting exactly at neutral (at 50.0) and it has risen above a level of 51 only once.
- All of the favorable factors improved this month, with the Dollar Sales factor leading with a 5.8-point rise to 63.7.
- The Accounts Placed for Collections factor fell by 2.9 points to 41.1, marking its 44<sup>th</sup> month in contraction out of the last 46 months. During that period the factor was in expansion only in August 2022 and December 2024.
- Four of the six unfavorable factors are in contraction.

### What Service Sector respondents are saying:

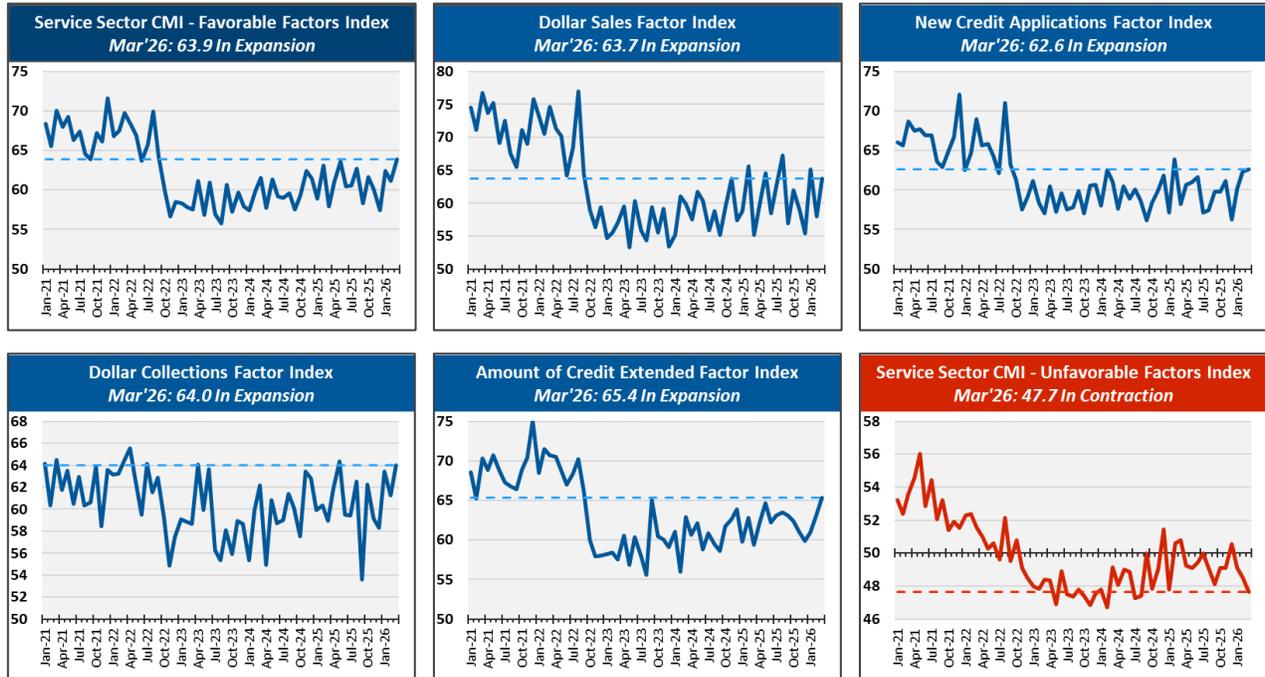
- "Activity picked up considerably coming out of February and going into March. Our open orders have skyrocketed partly due to taking on new book of business. At the same time, we still have some companies struggling with cash flow and/or having repercussions from their clients filing bankruptcy. It's a very mixed environment."
- "All customers that are behind keep telling me they are waiting to get paid—a very common reply."
- "We're definitely seeing an increase in new applications that are not passing our scoring models, even with additional research."
- "Higher dollar amount of bids being won for work but not starting for shipment until 2027."
- "Outdoor apparel industry has been greatly impacted by seasonal slowness."

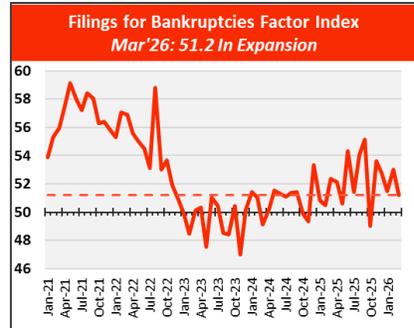
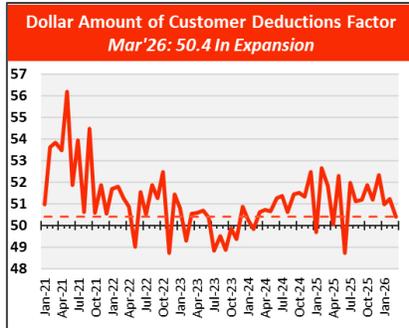
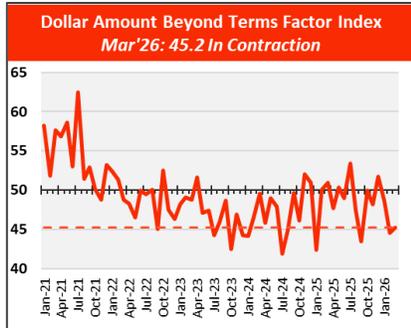
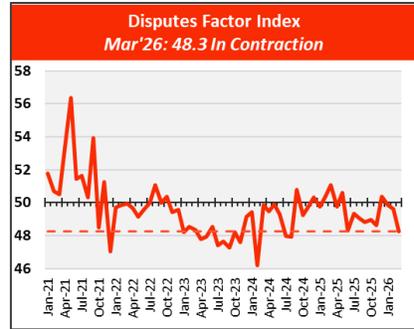
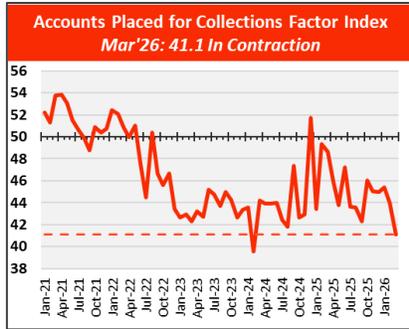
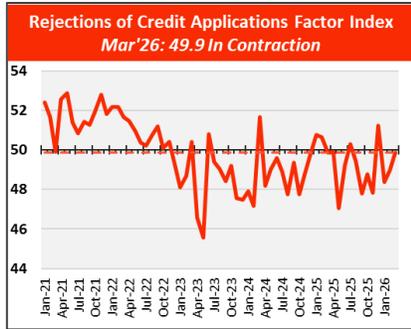
- “Use Open AI (ChatGPT) to find email addresses, phone numbers and contacts in AP or Finance. It won't produce all the time but more often than you think.”
- We're still losing quite a few sales to international competitors due to tariffs.”

Service Sector (seasonally adjusted)	Mar '25	Apr '25	May '25	Jun '25	Jul '25	Aug '25	Sep '25	Oct '25	Nov '25	Dec '25	Jan '26	Feb '26	Mar '26
Dollar Sales	55.2	59.7	64.5	58.4	62.7	67.3	57.0	61.9	58.9	55.4	65.2	57.9	63.7
New Credit Applications	58.2	60.6	61.0	61.6	57.2	57.5	59.8	59.8	61.1	56.2	60.2	62.3	62.6
Dollar Collections	58.9	61.9	64.4	59.5	59.4	62.6	53.6	62.3	59.2	58.3	63.5	61.3	64.0
Amount of Credit Extended	59.3	62.0	64.7	62.3	63.1	63.5	63.1	62.4	61.0	59.9	61.0	63.2	65.4
<b>Index of Favorable Factors</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>63.9</b>
Rejections of Credit Applications	49.9	49.9	47.0	49.2	50.3	49.4	47.8	48.8	47.9	51.2	48.4	49.0	49.9
Accounts Placed for Collection	48.7	46.0	43.8	47.2	43.6	43.6	42.3	46.0	45.1	45.0	45.4	44.0	41.1
Disputes	51.1	49.8	50.6	48.3	49.3	49.0	48.8	48.9	48.7	50.4	49.9	49.6	48.3
Dollar Amount Beyond Terms	51.0	47.7	50.4	48.9	53.4	47.4	43.4	50.0	48.2	51.8	48.6	44.5	45.2
Dollar Amount of Customer Deductions	51.8	50.1	52.3	48.7	52.0	51.1	51.2	51.9	51.2	52.3	51.0	51.2	50.4
Filings for Bankruptcies	52.3	52.1	50.6	54.3	51.4	54.1	55.2	49.0	53.6	52.7	51.5	53.0	51.2
<b>Index of Unfavorable Factors</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>47.7</b>
<b>NACM Service CMI</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>54.2</b>

## CMI Service Sector Factor Charts

All charts contain seasonally adjusted data. Please note that the vertical axes are not scaled identically, and the dotted line represents the most recent value.





View CMI archives at <https://www.nacm.org/cmi/cmi-archive.html>.

Source: National Association of Credit Management

Contacts: Sara Asomaning, 410-423-1837

Website: [www.nacm.org](http://www.nacm.org)

Twitter: @NACM\_National



## Methodology Appendix

CMI data has been collected and tabulated monthly since May 2002. The index, published since May 2003, is based on a survey of approximately 1,000 trade credit managers in the first half of each month, with about equal representation between the manufacturing and service sectors. The survey asks respondents to comment whether they are seeing improvement, deterioration, or no change for various favorable and unfavorable factors. There is representation from all states, except some of the less populated, such as Vermont and Wyoming. The computation of seasonality is based on the formula used by the U.S. Census Bureau and most of the federal government's statistical gathering apparatus, making it possible to compare the CMI diffusion index with comparable indices, such as the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) and other manufacturing and service sector indices.

### Factors Making Up the Diffusion Index

As shown in the table below, 10 equally weighted items determine the index. These items are classified into two categories: favorable factors and unfavorable factors. A diffusion index is calculated for each item with the overall CMI being a simple average of the 10 items. Survey responses for each item capture the change—higher, lower or the same—in the current month compared to the previous month.

For positive indicators, the calculation is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of "higher" responses} + \frac{1}{2} \times \text{number of "same" responses}}{\text{Total number of responses}}$$

For negative indicators, the calculation is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of "lower" responses} + \frac{1}{2} \times \text{number of "same" responses}}{\text{Total number of responses}}$$

A resulting CMI number of more than 50 indicates an economy in expansion; less than 50 indicates contraction.

<b>Favorable Factors</b>	<b>Why Favorable</b>
Sales	Higher sales are considered more favorable than lower sales.
New credit applications	An increase in credit applications says that demand is greater, which represents increased business if credit is extended.
Dollar collections	Higher dollar collections represent improved cash flow for the selling firm and the ability of buying firms to pay.
Amount of credit extended	An increase for this item means business activity is expanding with greater sales via trade credit.
<b>Unfavorable Factors*</b>	<b>Why Unfavorable</b>
Rejections of credit applications	Increased rejections of credit applications mean more marginal creditworthy customers are seeking trade credit and being denied.
Accounts placed for collection	As this item increases, the selling firm is having trouble collecting accounts, or conversely, there is an increase in buyers not paying.

Disputes	Higher dispute activity often is associated with cash flow problems of customers. They dispute the invoice to defer payment until later.
Dollar amount of receivables beyond terms	As this item becomes higher, it means customers are taking longer to pay.
Dollar amount of customer deductions	Higher deductions often are associated with cash flow problems of customers.
Filings for bankruptcies	Higher bankruptcy filings mean cash flow difficulties of customers are increasing.

*\*Note: When survey respondents report increases in unfavorable factor activities, the index numbers drop, reflecting worsening conditions.*

### **About the National Association of Credit Management**

NACM, headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, supports more than 32,000 business credit and financial professionals at more than 8,000 companies worldwide with premier industry services, tools and information. NACM and its network of affiliated associations are the leading resource for credit and financial management information, education, products and services designed to improve the management of business credit and accounts receivable. NACM’s collective voice has influenced our nation’s policy makers on federal legislation concerning commercial business and trade credit for more than 100 years and continues to play an active role in legislative issues that pertain to business credit and corporate bankruptcy. Its annual Credit Congress & Expo is the largest gathering of credit professionals in the world. NACM has a wealth of member experts in the fields of business-to-business credit and law. Consider using NACM as a resource in the development of your next credit or finance story. View CMI archives at <https://www.nacm.org/cmi/cmi-archive.html>.