

News Release

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For Release 10:00 AM ET, January 25, 2018

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. Increased in December

Economic Growth to Continue Through First Half of 2018

NOTE: This month's release incorporates annual benchmark revisions to the composite economic indexes, which bring them up-to-date with revisions in the source data. Also, with this benchmark revision, the base year of the composite indexes was changed to 2016 = 100 from 2010 = 100. These revisions do not change the cyclical properties of the indexes. The indexes are updated throughout the year, but only for the previous six months. Data revisions that fall outside of the moving six-month window are not incorporated until the benchmark revision is made and the entire histories of the indexes are recomputed. As a result, the revised indexes, in levels and month-on-month changes, will not be directly comparable to those issued prior to the benchmark revision. For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.conference-board.org/data/bci.cfm> or contact us at indicators@conference-board.org.

NEW YORK, January 25, 2018...The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. increased 0.6 percent in December to 107.0 (2016 = 100), following a 0.5 percent increase in November, and a 1.3 percent increase in October.

"The U.S. LEI continued rising rapidly in December, pointing to a continuation of strong economic growth in the first half of 2018. The passing of the tax plan is likely to provide even more tailwind to the current expansion," said Ataman Ozyildirim, Director of Business Cycles and Growth Research at The Conference Board. "The gains among the leading indicators have been widespread, with most of the strength concentrated in new orders in manufacturing, consumers' outlook on the economy, improving stock markets and financial conditions."

The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index® (CEI) for the U.S. increased 0.3 percent in December to 102.8 (2016 = 100), following a 0.1 percent increase in November, and a 0.4 percent increase in October.

The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index® (LAG) for the U.S. increased 0.7 percent in December to 104.0 (2016 = 100), following a 0.1 percent increase in November and a 0.3 percent increase in October.

About The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S.

The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The leading, coincident, and lagging economic indexes are essentially composite averages of several individual leading, coincident, or lagging indicators. They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component – primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

The ten components of **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index®** for the U.S. include:

- Average weekly hours, manufacturing
- Average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance
- Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials
- ISM® Index of New Orders
- Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft orders
- Building permits, new private housing units
- Stock prices, 500 common stocks
- Leading Credit Index™*
- Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds
- Average consumer expectations for business conditions

For full press release and technical notes:

<http://www.conference-board.org/data/bcicountry.cfm?cid=1>

For more information about The Conference Board global business cycle indicators:

<http://www.conference-board.org/data/bci.cfm>

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