

# NOWCASTING REPORT

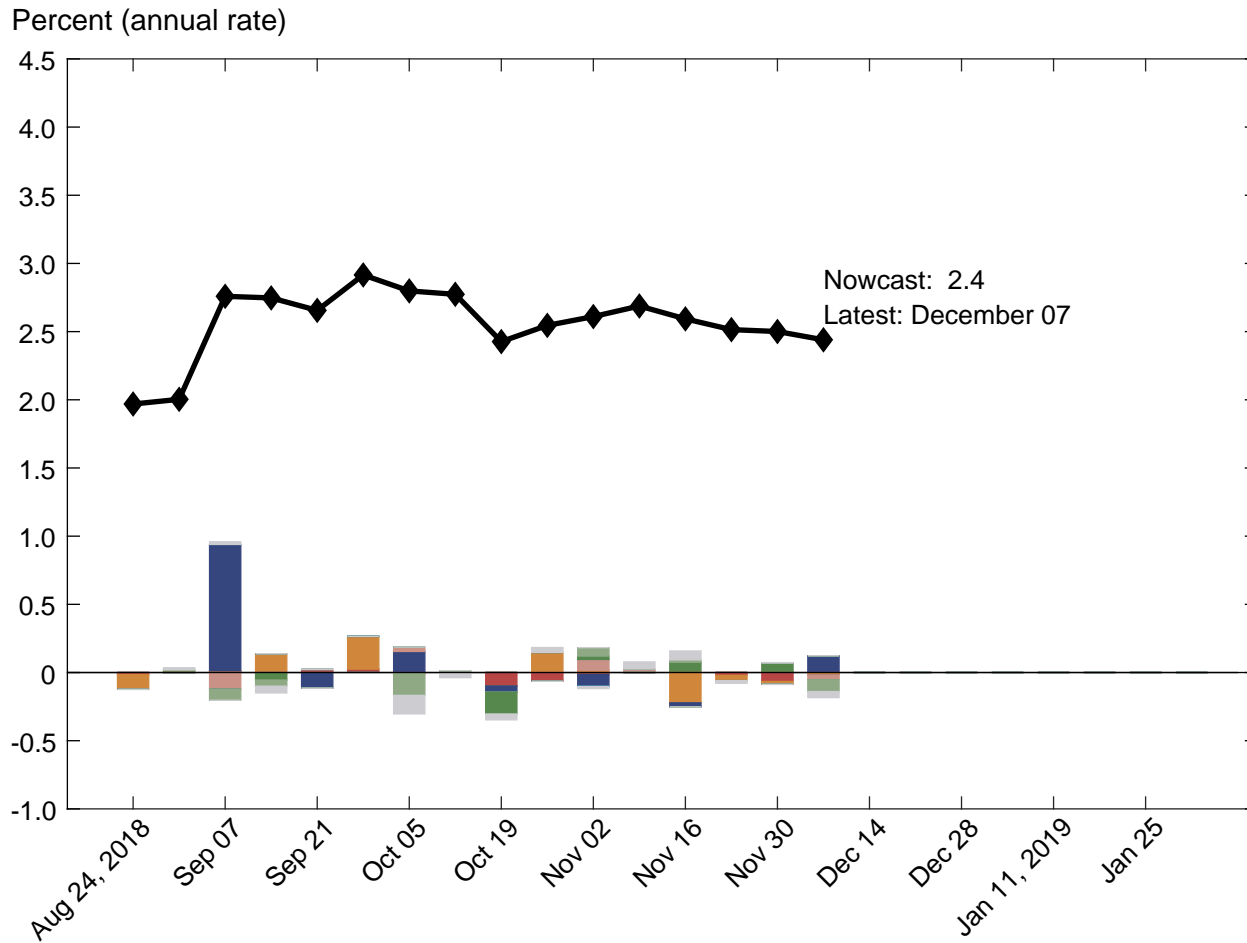
Updated: December 7, 2018

- The New York Fed Staff Nowcast stands at 2.4% for both 2018:Q4 and 2019:Q1.
- News from this week's data releases decreased the nowcast for 2018:Q4 by 0.1 percentage point and increased the nowcast for 2019:Q1 by 0.1 percentage point.
- For 2018:Q4, negative surprises from lower than expected exports and imports data were only partially offset by positive surprises from the ISM manufacturing survey, while for 2019:Q1, the impact of positive surprises from the ISM manufacturing survey dominated.

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The New York Fed Staff Nowcast is not an official forecast of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, its president, the Federal Reserve System, or the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC).

# 1 | 2018:Q4 GDP Growth



**Key**

- ◆ New York Fed Staff Nowcast

**Data Releases**

- Housing and construction
- Manufacturing
- Surveys
- Retail and consumption
- Income
- Labor
- International trade
- Others

Source: Authors' calculations, based on data accessed through Haver Analytics.  
Note: Colored bars reflect the impact of each data release on the nowcast.

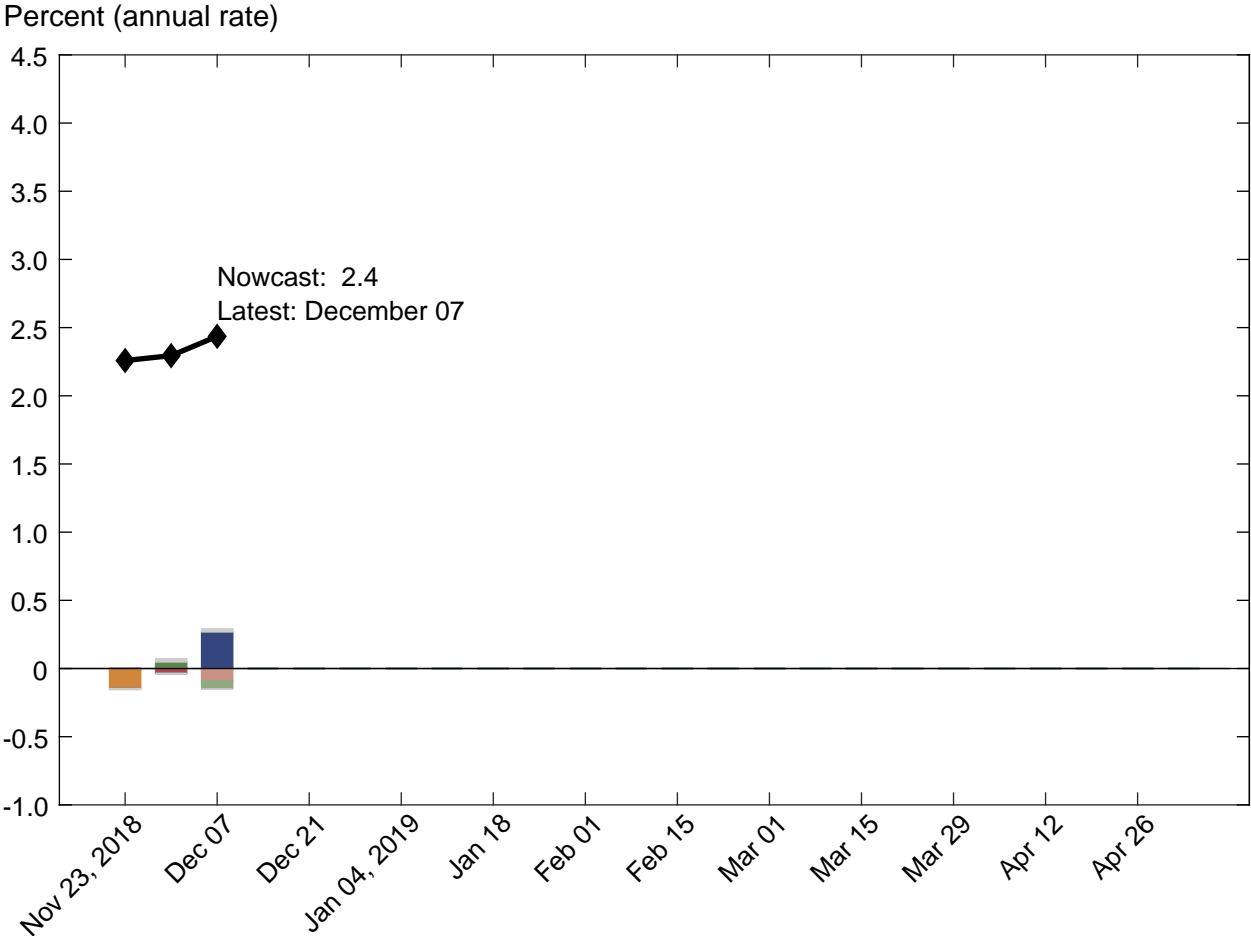
# 1.1 | Nowcast Detail

<span style="color: red;">■</span> Housing and construction <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Manufacturing <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Surveys <span style="color: green;">■</span> Retail and consumption <span style="color: cyan;">■</span> Income <span style="color: brown;">■</span> Labor <span style="color: olive;">■</span> International trade <span style="color: grey;">■</span> Others									
Update	Release Date	Data Series	Reference Period	Units	Forecast	Actual	Weight	Impact	Nowcast GDP Growth
					[a]	[b]	[c]	[c(b - a)]	
Nov 09									<b>2.69</b>
	8:30 AM Nov 14	■ CPI-U: All items	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.166	0.331	0.128	0.021	
	8:30 AM Nov 14	■ CPI-U: All items less food and energy	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.150	0.193	0.148	0.006	
	8:30 AM Nov 15	■ Retail sales and food services	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.545	0.765	0.344	0.076	
	8:30 AM Nov 15	■ Import price index	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.296	0.469	0.032	0.006	
	8:30 AM Nov 15	■ Empire State Mfg. Survey: General business conditions	Nov	Index	20.6	23.3	0.007	0.019	
	8:30 AM Nov 15	■ Export price index	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.196	0.393	0.058	0.011	
	8:30 AM Nov 15	■ Phila. Fed Mfg. business outlook: Current activity	Nov	Index	22.7	12.9	0.005	-0.049	
	9:10 AM Nov 16	■ Industrial production index	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.318	0.104	0.389	-0.083	
	9:10 AM Nov 16	■ Capacity utilization	Oct	Ppt. chg.	0.210	-0.064	0.507	-0.139	
		■ Data revisions						0.038	
Nov 16									<b>2.59</b>
	8:30 AM Nov 20	■ Housing starts	Oct	MoM % chg.	3.00	1.49	0.018	-0.027	
	8:30 AM Nov 20	■ Building permits	Oct	Level chg. (thousands)	-10.3	-7.00	0.002	0.007	
	8:30 AM Nov 21	■ Manufacturers' new orders: Durable goods	Oct	MoM % chg.	1.01	-4.42	0.021	-0.112	
	8:30 AM Nov 21	■ Manufacturers' shipments: Durable goods	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.300	-0.554	0.127	-0.109	
	8:30 AM Nov 21	■ Mfrs.' unfilled orders: All manufacturing industries	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.747	-0.170	-0.023	0.021	
	8:30 AM Nov 21	■ Manufacturers' inventories: Durable goods	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.539	-0.024	-0.284	0.160	
		■ Data revisions						-0.019	
Nov 23									<b>2.51</b>
	8:30 AM Nov 28	■ Merchant wholesalers: Inventories: Total	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.541	0.678	-0.156	-0.021	
	8:30 AM Nov 28	■ Real gross domestic income	Q3	QoQ % chg. AR	2.26	3.97	0.013	0.023	
	10:00 AM Nov 28	■ New single family houses sold	Oct	MoM % chg.	-0.140	-8.88	0.007	-0.065	
	8:30 AM Nov 29	■ Real disposable personal income	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.213	0.342	0.025	0.003	
	8:30 AM Nov 29	■ PCE less food and energy: Chain price index	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.153	0.102	0.254	-0.013	
	8:30 AM Nov 29	■ PCE: Chain price index	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.160	0.181	0.144	0.003	
	8:40 AM Nov 29	■ Real personal consumption expenditures	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.214	0.436	0.307	0.068	
		■ Data revisions						-0.011	
Nov 30									<b>2.50</b>
	10:00 AM Dec 03	■ ISM mfg.: PMI composite index	Nov	Index	57.0	59.3	0.049	0.111	
	10:00 AM Dec 03	■ ISM mfg.: Prices index	Nov	Index	69.6	60.7	0.008	-0.069	
	10:00 AM Dec 03	■ Value of construction put in place	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.203	-0.149	0.024	-0.009	
	10:00 AM Dec 03	■ ISM mfg.: Employment index	Nov	Index	55.7	58.4	0.027	0.073	
	8:05 AM Dec 06	■ ADP nonfarm private payroll employment	Nov	Level chg. (thousands)	205.7	179.0	0.543*	-0.014	
	8:30 AM Dec 06	■ Exports: Goods and services	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.743	-0.148	0.073	-0.065	
	8:30 AM Dec 06	■ Imports: Goods and services	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.618	0.234	0.056	-0.022	
	10:00 AM Dec 06	■ ISM nonmanufacturing: NMI composite index	Nov	Index	59.8	60.7	0.007	0.007	
	10:00 AM Dec 06	■ Inventories: Total business	Oct	MoM % chg.	0.467	0.558	-0.099	-0.009	
	8:30 AM Dec 07	■ All employees: Total nonfarm	Nov	Level chg. (thousands)	199.2	155.0	0.316*	-0.014	
	8:30 AM Dec 07	■ Civilian unemployment rate	Nov	Ppt. chg.	-0.071	0.000	-0.106	-0.007	
		■ Data revisions						-0.044	
Dec 07									<b>2.44</b>

Source: Authors' calculations, based on data accessed through Haver Analytics.

Notes: MoM % chg. indicates month over month percentage change. QoQ % chg. indicates quarter over quarter percentage change. The weights with the asterisk are multiplied by 1,000 for legibility.

# 2 | 2019:Q1 GDP Growth



**Key**

- ◆ New York Fed Staff Nowcast

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- Surveys
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- Income
- Labor
- International trade
- Others

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Note: Colored bars reflect the impact of each data release on the nowcast.

## 2.1 | Nowcast Detail

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	10:00 AM Dec 03	■ ISM mfg.: Prices index	Nov	Index	69.6	60.7	0.021	-0.191		
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# Nowcasting Report Q&A

## 1. What is the ultimate goal of the exercise?

Our model produces a “nowcast” of GDP growth, incorporating a wide range of macroeconomic data as it becomes available. With this approach, we aim to read the real-time flow of information and evaluate its effects on current economic conditions. The platform provides a model-based counterpart to the more routine analysis at the bank, which has traditionally been based on expert knowledge.

## 2. What is the modeling strategy?

The platform employs Kalman-filtering techniques and a dynamic factor model. The approach has a number of desirable features. It is based on:

- a reliable big data framework that captures in a parsimonious way the salient features of macroeconomic data dynamics;
- a design that digests the data as “news,” mimicking the way markets work.

## 3. What are the input data? What has been driving the data selection?

We include all the market-moving indicators—the same data that are also constantly monitored by market participants and commentators.

## 4. Why should we trust the model?

Extensive back-testing of the model, research, and practical experience have shown that the platform is able to approximate best practices in macroeconomic forecasts. The model produces forecasts that are as accurate as, and strongly correlated with, predictions based on best judgment.

The methodology has been tested for accuracy in many countries, including large developed economies (the Euro area, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada), small open economies (Australia, Ireland, Belgium, New Zealand, the Czech

Republic, and Scotland), fast-growing economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and developing economies (Mexico, Indonesia, and Argentina).

## 5. How should we read the output of the model?

- The model produces forecasts for all variables taking into account their dynamic interactions.
- Since it is a fully specified dynamic model, the platform provides an intuitive reading of the incoming data as “news.”
- The difference between two consecutive forecasts (that is, the forecast revision) is the weighted average of the news during the week.
- News is defined as the difference between released data and model predictions. The weights account for the information content as well as the timeliness of the data releases.
- The contribution of new data to the forecast revision is reported in the two charts with colored bars. To make the charts easier to read, we grouped variables in a few broad categories. Detailed information about the composition of the groupings is provided in the accompanying tables.

## References

- *Banbura, M., D. Giannone, M. Modugno, and L. Reichlin.* 2013. “Nowcasting and the Real-Time Data Flow.” In G. Elliott and A. Timmermann, eds., *Handbook of Economic Forecasting*, Vol. 2. Amsterdam: Elsevier-North Holland.
- *Bok, B., D. Caratelli, D. Giannone, A. Sbordone, and A. Tambalotti.* 2017. “Macroeconomic Nowcasting and Forecasting with Big Data.” *Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports*, no. 830, November.
- *Giannone, D., L. Reichlin, and D. Small.* 2008. “Nowcasting: The Real-Time Informational Content of Macroeconomic Data.” *Journal of Monetary Economics* 55, no.4 (May): 665-76.

## **Nowcasting Report FAQs**

### **1. What is the schedule for reporting and updating the nowcast for each quarter?**

We start reporting the nowcast of GDP growth for a reference quarter one week after the publication of the second official GDP estimate for two quarters prior. For example, we began reporting the nowcast for 2017:Q2 on Friday, March 10, 2017, following the government's second estimate of 2016:Q4 GDP on Tuesday, February 28, 2017. We continue to update the nowcast for a reference quarter until the release of the advance GDP estimate, roughly one month after the end of the quarter. For 2017:Q2, this occurred on July 28, 2017, at which point we stopped updating the nowcast for this quarter. We retain the reference quarter's progression plot and detail table in the Nowcasting Report until the publication of the second GDP estimate, roughly two months after the end of the quarter. Following the second estimate of 2017:Q2 GDP on August 30, 2017, we removed 2017:Q2 from the Nowcasting Report and began reporting the nowcast for 2017:Q4.

### **2. What are the major conceptual differences between the New York Fed Staff Nowcast and the Atlanta Fed's Nowcast?**

The New York Fed Staff Nowcast and the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow are both based on statistical filtering techniques applied to a dynamic factor model. These techniques are very common in big data analytics since they effectively summarize the information contained in large data sets through a small number of common factors. The general framework for macroeconomic nowcasting has been developed in the academic literature over the past ten years, as discussed in the Q&A included in this report. The New York Fed Staff Nowcast is a straightforward application of the most advanced techniques developed in this academic literature. GDPNow adapts these techniques to mimic the methods used by the

BEA to estimate real GDP growth, as well explained by GDPNow's own FAQs.

Because GDPNow and the New York Fed Staff Nowcast are different models, they can generate different forecasts of real GDP growth. Our policy is not to comment on or interpret any differences between the forecasts of these two models.

### **3. Is the “annual rate” the y/y growth rate?**

No. We track the annualized quarterly (“q/q”) growth rate of real GDP, not the four-quarter (“y/y”) growth rate.

### **4. Can we obtain the data underlying this analysis?**

To make it easier for nowcast followers to better understand and replicate our results, we share the MATLAB code for our model and a snapshot of data sets from the past year on Github at <https://github.com/FRBNY-TimeSeriesAnalysis/Nowcasting>. The newest releases for all data series are publicly available from source websites; real-time historical data for most series can be retrieved from the St. Louis Fed's ALFRED database. Unfortunately, we cannot provide the complete data set used in our model because the historical data for a handful of series (including the ISM manufacturing and nonmanufacturing indexes) are proprietary. As a consequence, the replication files do not exactly reproduce the published version of the New York Fed Staff Nowcast.

### **Authors**

New York Fed Time-Series Analysis Team