



Citi Wealth

Global Strategy *Data Watch*



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Fed Easing on lock, what's next?

- Initial jobless claims jumped meaningfully higher this week, while still well below historic recessions (and even many expansions), highlighting the odd mix of low hiring and low layoffs. The uptick was enough to push Fed funds futures to fully price in a rate cut on September 17th.
- With such unanimity about easing, the details of the press conference and the expectations baked into the Summary of Economic Projections will likely hold additional importance to markets. Futures are currently pricing in 25 basis point cuts in October and December.
- Inflation remains well above target. The August CPI release was in line with expectations, but core goods prices are still climbing, and core services remain sticky. At roughly 3%, this is still too high. Language about inflation in the Fed's communications next week will be crucial to anticipate the magnitude of the easing cycle that is set to kick off.
- One area that could still offer relief comes from housing, where a very low reading for new tenant rent changes suggests that there could still be additional softening in owner's equivalent rent. This will matter more for CPI than for the Fed's preferred PCE inflation metric, which has a lower weight for housing.
- Recent nonfarm payrolls reports have shown a sharp slowing, but annual revision data for the March-to-March period suggests this may have started earlier. However, if the same sampling biases are impacting current year data it could be that future revisions will show employment was actually contracting at this time. The large revisions highlight how difficult the Fed's job is when the basic facts about the economy are uncertain.
- One data point that is unlikely to be revised significantly is the unemployment rate, which remains low at 4.3% as the product of a direct survey of consumers; there is little room for revisions, except small ones from late survey returns and changes to seasonal adjustment.
- Either way, consumer sentiment remains weak. Inflation and hiring concerns remain front of mind, with the University of Michigan survey already at recessionary levels despite low unemployment.
- One key area we are watching is money supply to see if monetary policy can ease without reigniting inflation pressures. So far M2 is growing at a normal pace but an acceleration could drive prices higher.

FIGURE 1: Initial jobless claims jumped higher, reinforcing Fed easing expectations

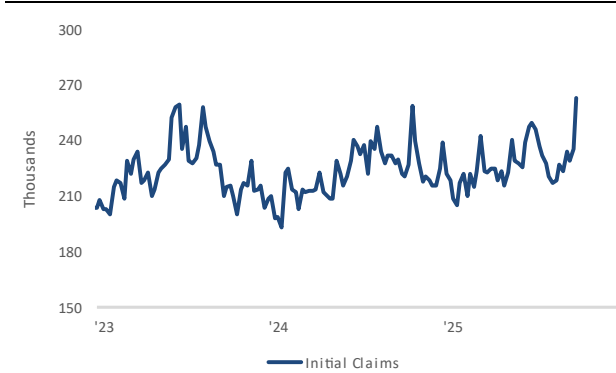
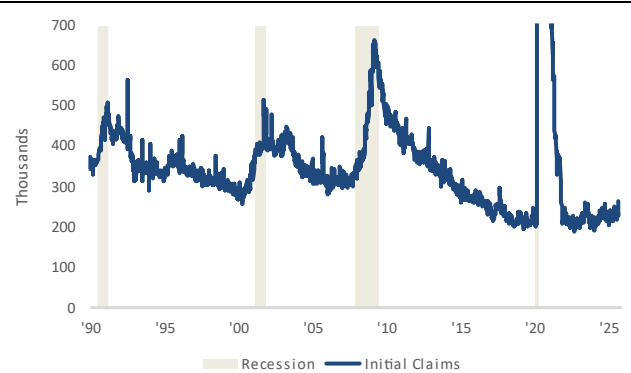


FIGURE 2: Looked at from a longer timeline we can see that layoff remain very low relative to historic downturns



Sources: Haver as of September 12, 2025.

FIGURE 3: CPI inflation was largely in line with expectations, but goods prices continue to climb in response to higher tariffs

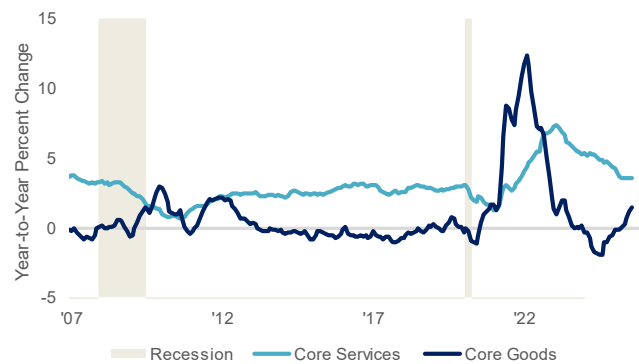
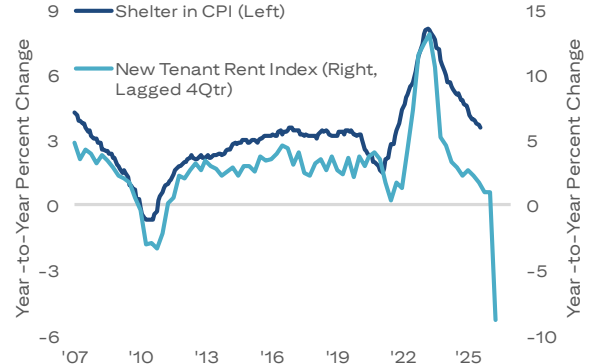


FIGURE 4: New tenant rent changes suggest there is further slowing in shelter in the CPI ahead



Source: Haver as of September 12, 2025.

FIGURE 5: Annual revisions (if evenly spread) paint a picture of a slower economy starting prior to the Trump administration

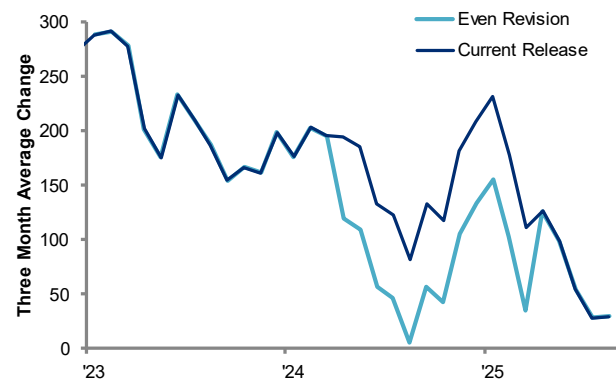
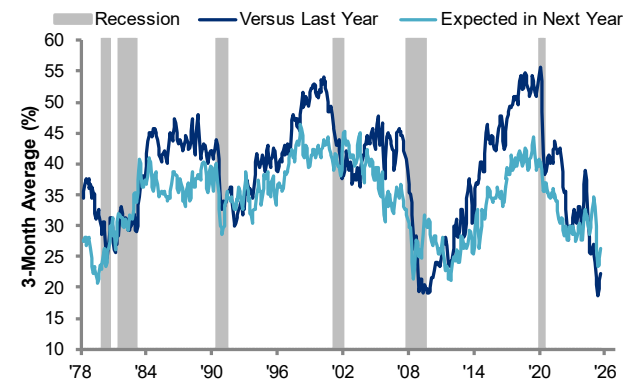


FIGURE 6: Consumers reporting better personal finances are at recessionary levels both backward and forward looking



Source: Haver as of September 12, 2025. Note: We know March to March payrolls will be revised down by 911K jobs, here we display that evenly spread over the year.

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Not Investment Grade			
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Low grade (speculative)	B	B	B
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Most speculative	Ca	CC	CC
No interest being paid or bankruptcy petition filed	C	D	C
In default	C	D	D

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