

Opportunity Wisconsin: “\$1,400 stimulus checks helped March retail sales soar 9.8%”

Posted on Friday, Apr 16, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis.—In case you missed it, yesterday the Associated Press reported on the enormous impact the American Rescue Plan’s \$1,400 direct payments had on retail sales in March. More than 3.8 million Wisconsin adults and 1.3 million children received relief checks of up to \$1,400 thanks to the American Rescue Plan.

“This is a huge indicator that the American Rescue Plan is working for Wisconsin. Thanks to our Congressional leaders like Senator Baldwin and Representatives Kind, Moore and Pocan for their unwavering support for this game changing relief,” said Meghan Roh, Opportunity Wisconsin program director. “As Wisconsin starts to dig out of the devastation we’ve experienced, we can’t forget who fought for us and who failed us. Senator Johnson and Wisconsin’s Republican Congressional representatives stood in the way of Wisconsin’s recovery and we must hold them all accountable for it.”

When asked how additional financial support from the American Rescue Plan would impact her [during an event with Senator Tammy Baldwin last month](#), Barbara Cerda, a Milwaukee area mother, responded, “I got my stimulus check this morning, and my first trip was to the gas station to fill up my tank. I had been putting in little bits at a time, and this morning I was able to fill up my tank...Long term, I can pay my rent for six months, I can use that money to fix my car that has been in my garage for the past four months. It means I can buy my children new clothes, we’ve been using our summer clothes.” [\[WATCH\]](#)

Associated Press: [\\$1,400 Stimulus Checks Helped March Retail Sales Soar 9.8%](#)

April 15, 2021

By Joseph Pisani

NEW YORK (AP) — Newly vaccinated and armed with \$1,400 stimulus checks, Americans went on a spending spree last month, buying new clothes and going out to eat again.

Retail sales surged a seasonally adjusted 9.8% in March after dropping about 3% the month before, the Commerce Department said Thursday. The increase was the biggest since May of last year, when stores reopened after closing at the start of the pandemic. It was also much larger than the 5.5% increase Wall Street analysts had expected.

Thursday's report, which covers about a third of overall consumer spending, is the latest sign that the economy is improving as vaccinations accelerate, business restrictions are relaxed and more people are willing to head out to shop or eat. Employers, for example, added 916,000 jobs last month, the most since August. And U.S. consumer confidence surged in March to the highest level in a year.

A third round of stimulus checks was sent out beginning in the middle of March, with most adults receiving \$1,400. So far, about 159 million direct payments have been paid out to households, totaling \$376 billion, the U.S. government said.

The New York Federal Reserve Bank, which surveyed more than 1,000 people, said households planned to spend about a quarter of their most recent stimulus checks on goods. The rest of the money would be used to pay down debt or put aside for savings.

Teresa Golden of Renton, Washington, said she used the first two stimulus checks to catch up on rent and bill payments. With the most recent one, she spent \$500 on Levi's jeans, Old Navy clothing and shoes from Finish Line. Another \$500 went to restocking her pantry with things that will last a long time on the shelf, such as ketchup, sugar, spices and Clorox wipes.

"I finally caught up on my bills and could go on a bit of a spending spree," says Golden, who works in accounts receivable at a school system.

Read more here: <https://apnews.com/article/retail-sales-economy--2f20ee18d72ed056412fde0fe94f9fae>