

# Annual Business Survey

## WHAT IS THE ANNUAL BUSINESS SURVEY?

The Annual Business Survey (ABS) provides the only comprehensive, regularly collected source of information on selected economic and demographic characteristics of employer businesses and business owners. The ABS measures research and development for microbusinesses and new business topics, such as innovation and technology, as well as other business characteristics. The ABS is sponsored by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) and conducted jointly with the U.S. Census Bureau. The ABS replaces the 5-year Survey of Business Owners (SBO) for employer businesses (those with at least one paid employee), the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE), the Business R&D and Innovation for Microbusinesses (BRDI-M), and the Innovation part of the Business R&D and Innovation Survey (BRDIS).

## WHAT DATA VARIABLES ARE INCLUDED?

The ABS includes national, state, and substate regional estimates of the number of employer firms, sales and receipts, employment, and annual payroll by the demographics of the majority business owners (i.e., sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status) across 20 North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) industry sectors.

## WHICH BUSINESS TYPES ARE COVERED?

The ABS is conducted on a company or firm basis from an annual sample of nonfarm employer businesses filing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax forms as individual proprietorships, partnerships, or any other type of corporation, with receipts of \$1,000 or more. The ABS sampled approximately 850,000 employer firms for survey years 2017 and 2023, and approximately 300,000 employer firms annually for survey years 2018–2022 to reduce the burden on the respondents.

## HOW FREQUENTLY IS IT CONDUCTED?

The ABS is authorized to collect data annually (2018–2024) for reference years 2017 through 2023. The collection year is the year that data are collected. A reference year is the year that is referenced on the survey, from which the statistics are tabulated. For example, the 2023 ABS collection produces statistics mostly for the 2022 reference year.

## WHAT INDUSTRY LEVELS ARE PUBLISHED?

Detailed estimates are published at the 2- through 6-digit NAICS levels in select ABS tables for reference year 2022. Because of the reduced survey sample, summary-level estimates are published at the 2-digit NAICS level only for reference years 2018 through 2022.

## WHAT GEOGRAPHY LEVELS ARE PUBLISHED?

Detailed estimates are published for the United States, states, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), counties, and economic places in select ABS tables for reference year 2022. Because of the reduced survey sample, summary-level estimates are published at the U.S., state, and MSA geographic levels only for reference years 2018 through 2021.

## ARE DATA KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Title 13, United States Code, Section 9, requires the U.S. Census Bureau to keep information confidential and use responses only to produce statistics. The Census Bureau is not permitted to release responses in a way that could identify a business, organization, or institution. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit data.

## WHERE DO THE DATA COME FROM?

Statistics are compiled by combining the responses from the completed ABS report forms with data from administrative records, the economic census, and other economic surveys.

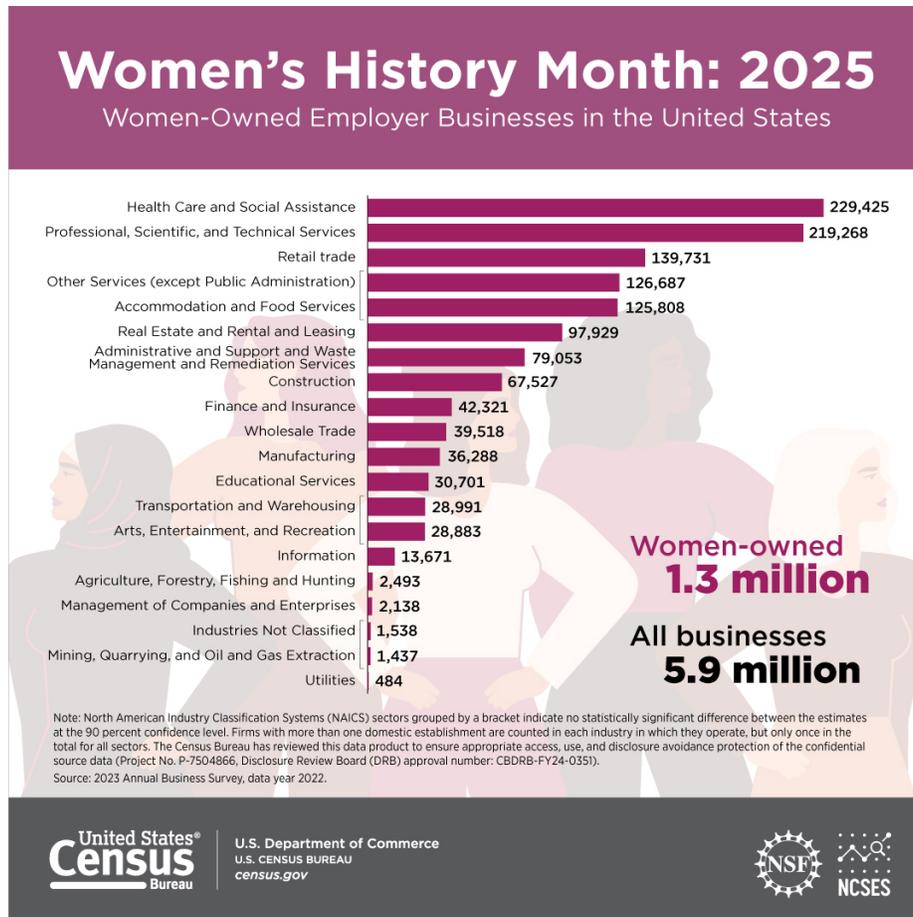
## WHERE CAN I ACCESS THE DATA?

ABS data can be found at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data.html) and within the central statistical platform at [www.data.census.gov](http://www.data.census.gov).

For developers, ABS data can be found with other Census Bureau data at: [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/api.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/api.html).



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## ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SIMILAR DATA?

The Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics (NES-D) series augments the Annual Business Survey as a new annual data product that replaces the 5-year SBO for nonemployer businesses (those with no paid employees) and provides similar information on the demographic characteristics of nonemployers. The NES-D is not a survey; rather, it leverages existing individual-level administrative records to assign demographic characteristics to the universe of nonemployer businesses. Demographic characteristics, including sex, ethnicity, race, veteran status, owner's age, place of birth, and U.S. citizenship, are assigned to nonemployer business owners. NES-D data are published annually by detailed geography and industry levels, receipt-size class, and legal form of organization (LFO) at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/ned.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/ned.html). Similar data are provided by the ABS's predecessors—the 5-year SBO [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sbo.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sbo.html) and the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE) [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ase.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ase.html). Detailed statistics from the 5-year economic censuses [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census.html) are also available.

## WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For information, email [adep.annual.business.survey@census.gov](mailto:adep.annual.business.survey@census.gov), call 301-763-3316, or visit [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.html).