

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 for employer businesses and business owners by sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status. 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 Census Bureau. The ABS replaces the five-year Survey of Business Owners (SBO) for employer businesses, 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 for 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 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 year 2017, and 300,000 employer firms annually (survey years 2018 – 2021) to reduce the burden on the respondents.

HOW FREQUENTLY IS IT CONDUCTED?

The ABS is authorized to collect data annually (2018 – 2022) for reference years 2017 through 2021. The collection year is the year that data are collected. A reference year is the year that is referenced on the survey, from where the statistics are tabulated. For example, the 2019 ABS collection produces statistics mostly for the 2018 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 2017. Because of the reduced survey sample, summary-level estimates are published at the 2- digit NAICS level only for reference years 2018 through 2021.

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 2017. 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 <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data.html> and within the central statistical platform at <https://www.data.census.gov>.

For developers, ABS data can be found with other Census Bureau data at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/api.html>



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Business Owners' Ages

Over Half of U.S. Business Owners Were Age 55 and Over



Note: The Annual Business Survey is sponsored by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation. Owner age percentages shown do not represent all U.S. business owners. Estimates only represent responding owners for employer businesses (4.1 million). The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and has approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied (Approval ID: CBDRB-FY20-424).
Source: 2019 Annual Business Survey, data year 2018, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.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 (ABS) as a new annual data product that replaces the five-year Survey of Business Owners (SBO) for nonemployer businesses 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 <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/nescd.html>>. Similar data are provided by the ABS's predecessors -- the five-year SBO <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sbo.html>> and the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE) <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ase.html>>. Detailed statistics from the 5-year economic censuses <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, call 301-763-3316, or visit <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.html>.



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