

# Annual Retail Trade Survey

## WHAT IS THE ANNUAL RETAIL TRADE SURVEY?

The Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS) is the only annual program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau covering North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sectors 44 and 45. It provides select information about U.S. retail businesses that are consistent, comparable, and comprehensive across the surveyed industries. It also serves as the annual benchmark for the Monthly Retail Trade Survey.

## WHAT DATA VARIABLES ARE INCLUDED?

The Annual Retail Trade Survey provides national estimates of total annual sales, e-commerce sales, sales taxes, end-of-year inventories, purchases, total operating expenses, and gross margins for retail businesses located in the United States. Additionally, in years ending in "2" and "7," the survey also generates detailed operating expense estimates through the Business Expenses Supplement (BES). Data are also shown by gross margins as a percentage of overall annual sales, per capita retail sales, total and e-commerce sales, as well as total and e-commerce sales by merchandise lines for U.S. Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses (NAICS 4541).

## WHAT BUSINESS TYPES ARE COVERED?

The ARTS covers employer businesses (businesses with one or more paid employees) within the retail trade (NAICS) sectors 44-45.

## HOW FREQUENTLY IS THE ARTS CONDUCTED AND RELEASED?

The ARTS is conducted every year but includes additional questions on business expenditures every 5 years (in years ending in "2" and "7").

## WHAT INDUSTRY LEVELS ARE PUBLISHED?

The ARTS provides selected data at the 3- through 6-digit NAICS codes, dependent upon the data variable. Most of tables are at the 3- through 4-digit NAICS levels, while sales are more detailed at the 3- through 6-digit levels.

## WHAT GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS ARE PUBLISHED?

Data are shown at the national level only.

## IS MY INFORMATION KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Title 13, United States Code, Section 9, requires the U.S. Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and can use your responses only to produce statistics. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify your business, organization, or institution.

## WHERE CAN I ACCESS THE DATA?

Selected data from the Annual Retail Trade Survey and measures of sampling variability are available at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts/data/tables.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts/data/tables.html). Historical data are available as far back as 1952.

One of our more popular tables is the Annual Retail Trade Survey Supplemental E-commerce Table introduced in June of 2017 and available at: [www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/econ/arts/supplemental-ecommerce.html](http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/econ/arts/supplemental-ecommerce.html).



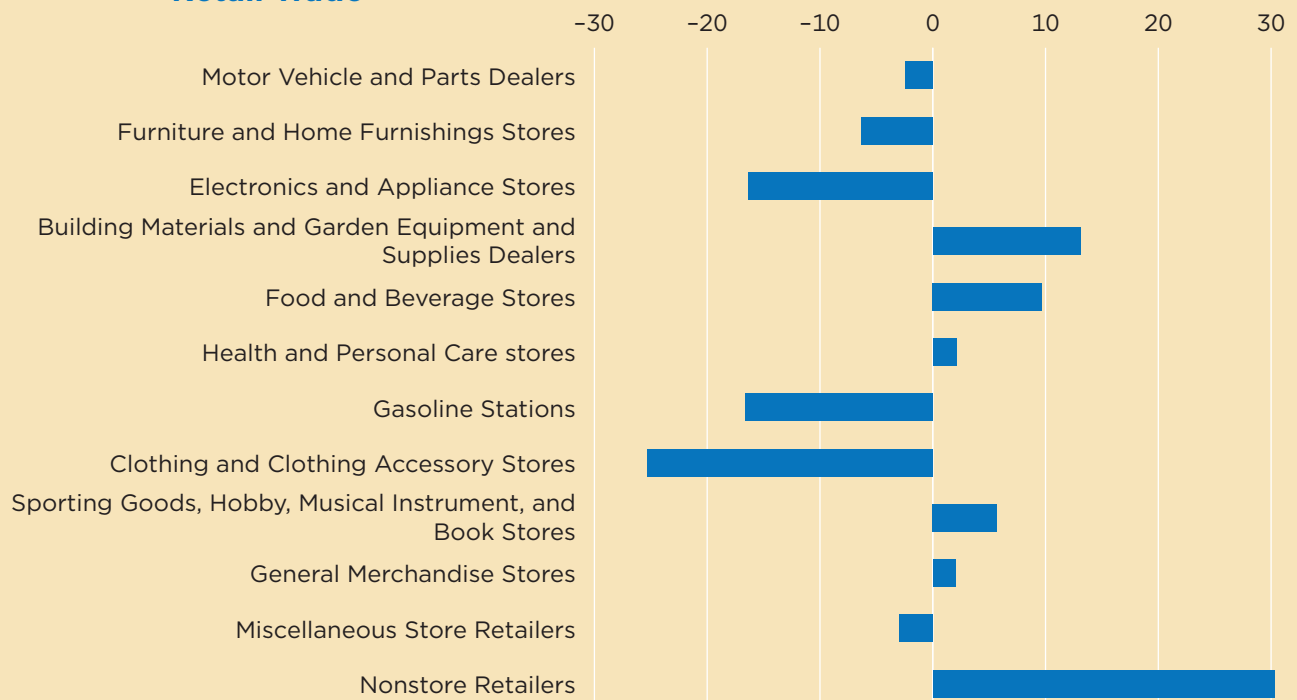
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## Estimated Sales for U.S. Retailers

Percent Change in Sales From 2019 to 2020



### Retail Trade



Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, quality suppressions, sampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts/technical-documentation/methodology.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts/technical-documentation/methodology.html). DMS-P-7500134/Approval ID: CBDRB-FY22-061.

Source: 2020 Annual Retail Trade Survey, [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/arts.html).

### ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SIMILAR DATA?

Data are available from the U.S. Census Bureau's Economic Indicators, including the Advance Retail Trade Survey [www.census.gov/retail](http://www.census.gov/retail) and the Quarterly Financial Report [www.census.gov/econ/qfr/](http://www.census.gov/econ/qfr/). Annual data are available from a variety of business surveys, including the County Business Patterns [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html). Detailed statistics from the 5-year Economic Census [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census.html) are also available.

### WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about the ARTS, e-mail us at [ewd.annual.retail.trade.survey@census.gov](mailto:ewd.annual.retail.trade.survey@census.gov) or call 301-763-5855.

