

Business Trends and Outlook Survey



WHAT IS THE BUSINESS TRENDS OUTLOOK SURVEY?

The Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS) provides insight into the state of the economy by providing timely data for key economic measures and business expectations about future conditions. By providing detailed geographic and subsector data, BTOS provides local, state, and federal officials near real-time data for policy and decision-making including after natural disasters or during economic crises. The BTOS provides insight into recovery after these events.

WHICH BUSINESS TYPES ARE COVERED?

For the data period from July 2022 to September 2023, BTOS data are representative of all single location employer businesses in the U.S. economy, excluding farms. For data collected after September 2023, the BTOS sample includes all employer businesses (single and multiple location) in the United States, excluding farms. Data are released every 2 weeks and are available by 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sector by state, employment size, and for the 25 most populous metropolitan statistical areas. Data are also available by subsector (three-digit NAICS) and state by sector. Data released after September 2023 are also available by additional employment size classes.

WHAT IS THE SAMPLE SIZE? HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY?

The BTOS sample consists of approximately 1.2 million businesses split into six panels (approximately 200,000 cases per panel). Businesses in each panel will be asked to report

once every 12 weeks for 1 year. Data collection will occur every 2 weeks. The BTOS is comprised of a set of core questions and supplemental content (included as needed).

HOW OFTEN ARE DATA RELEASED? WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS ARE COVERED?

Data are released biweekly and are available by sector, state, employment size, and the 25 most populous metropolitan statistical areas.

HOW OFTEN ARE DATA RELEASED? WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS ARE COVERED?

Beginning in September 2023, the BTOS made several changes regarding data collection and release. As mentioned above, multiunit businesses were added to the sample. New questions were added to the BTOS questionnaire that address the following topics: artificial intelligence, inventories, interest rates, and severe weather events. Questions regarding hiring difficulties, supply chain impacts, online platforms, and forecast horizons were removed. Data are now available by additional employment size classes: 1-4 employees, 5-9 employees, 10-19 employees, 20-49 employees, 50-99 employees, 100-249 employees, and 250 or more employees.

Because of the change in sample composition, BTOS data from before September 11, 2023, are not directly comparable with data after that date.

CONTACT US

[<econ.btos@census.gov>](mailto:econ.btos@census.gov)

