BusinessCounts

Version

Release 2026B

Introduction

BusinessCounts is a geographic summary database of business establishments and employees for 14.3 million businesses and 138.6 million employees. The database is available for all standard levels of geography including block group and is supplemented by occupational data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the County Business Patterns program. The primary variables available include:

- Total Establishments, Employees
- Head office locations
- Establishments by size
- Employment by occupation
- Establishments and employees by major industry
- Custom 104 group classification (2,3, and 4 digit NAICS)
- NAICS 4 digit establishments and employees
- Retail sector sales estimates, employees, and establishments

Base Geography

Census Block Group

Methodology

The core source is from 2026 dmPlus™ provided by Devonshire Associates. dmPlus™ is a multi-source business location database which utilizes a broad range of sources that together fill in the gaps found within the individual national compiled list vendors.

The database has been thoroughly cleansed for address consistency and geocoded. Virtually all records within the database are geocoded, although in some cases with less positional accuracy than others.

Occupational Classification

The occupational classification now corresponds to the updated occupational classification presently in use by the census bureau and is presented at the end of this document.

Headquarters/Branch Locations
We have added counts of employees and establishments for administrative or headquarters locations and for branch locations.

Special Categories
Employee and establishment counts are provided for women-owned businesses, minority-owned business, small businesses, government entities, and franchise businesses. In addition, breakdowns are provided by years in business and business formation type.

SIC Classifications
The classification by two-digit SIC code has been slightly re-worked in order to merge certain small related categories while splitting other large categories. The result is a slightly shorter list of categories at this detail level. For example, the categories 01 (Crop production), 02 (Livestock production), 08 (Forestry), and 09 (Fishing) have been aggregated into a single category.

A significant number of establishments are not SIC coded within business list files, most often including those small firms for which neither private nor public records exist. Many of these uncoded firms are simply individual holding companies, DBA ("doing business as") names, and new firms that have not yet been well documented in multiple sources.

NAICS Classifications
A few years ago, a new classification system known as NAICS (North American Industrial Classification System) was introduced to replace the aging and outdated SIC (Standard Industrial

Classification) system, which has been used for several decades (with some modifications over time).

The NAICS classification is intended to more accurately reflect the growing reliance on information-based companies which were not well classified under the SIC system, reflect the changes in retailing towards large, multi-faceted retailing (e.g. home stores, grocery and drug stores, etc.), and to eliminate business types which simply no longer exist. In most cases, the orientation is more towards the product/service being offered and less towards the style or raw materials of its creation. For example, the textile manufacturing SIC group has been split by whether the product is an "end-user" product or is simply a raw material in further manufacturing. The manufacture of automobile seat fabrics is now classified under the automobile manufacturing group rather than the textile manufacturing group, reflecting the ultimate use of the product rather than its composition.

NAICS classification data are presented at two levels of detail. The 4 digit detail is taken directly from the source database. The main classification which AGS believes is most relevant consists of a mixture of 104 groups taken from several levels of NAICS coding.

The mapping of these categories is included at the end of this document for interested readers.

Employees

The file includes both a size classification (e.g. 1 to 4 employees) and in a significant number of records, verified employee counts. When an actual employee count was given, this was used directly.

In order to estimate employees for those establishments either only a size class range is available, the latest County Business Patterns (CBP) database, published annually by the Census Bureau was thoroughly analyzed. For each four digit SIC code, the

average number of employees per establishment of each size class was computed in order to provide a base estimate. These were further refined by using major industry average sizes by county, since much of the county level detail is suppressed within the CBP in order to avoid the possible disclosure of individual establishment employee, payroll, and sales volumes.

Once the initial estimates were applied, the results were evaluated on a county level basis in order to ensure consistency with county totals for each major SIC group, and nationally to ensure consistency with the detailed four-digit SIC level.

It should be noted that the employee size estimates for the Public Administration (SIC 91-98) major group are not particularly accurate. Employee estimates for individual government offices are simply not easily obtained and are generally afforded less attention by the major business list providers than private sector establishments. Further, neither the CBP nor the Economic Census databases cover this important sector of the economy. The total employee estimate is therefore rather low for this sector as a whole.

Retail Sales

Retail sales estimates were computed at the establishment level for those retail establishments which were not identified as administrative. Using the Economic Census, County Business Patterns (CBP), and current retail trade statistics as benchmarks, estimates by NAICS code were created which related retail sales to employee counts. These receipts-per-employee relationships were derived at the deepest available geography and applied to block-level business counts by NAICS. On a nationwide level, these estimates were adjusted to reflect our current consumer expenditure data, along with current sales and e-commerce trends sourced from the Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS), the Census Bureau's newer Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES)

framework, and monthly and quarterly retail trade e-commerce statistics.

Comparability to Other Sources

Several additional sources of national and state level estimates from the BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) and the Census Bureau were used to verify summary counts in the final database. In general, the database agrees substantially with these estimates. The major sources of difference occur in several areas. These areas of disagreement are noted below:

- Manufacturing employment in BusinessCounts is higher than corresponding statistics from the BLS. In large part, this reflects the use of the "primary" industry within BusinessCounts. Often, many manufacturing companies also have wholesale trade and finance divisions. The employment within these divisions is attributed to the main SIC category in this file, hence manufacturing estimates are higher than in BLS sources.

- Agricultural establishments, specifically farms, tend to be underreported in the database, so total agricultural establishment and employment counts are low relative to other sources. The so-called "primary" sector is not typically well represented in either the economic censuses or the annual County Business Patterns files, and is subsequently difficult to estimate with reliability.

- Service employment in the BusinessCounts file is higher than in equivalent BLS sources, primarily as a result of classification issues. In official BLS reports, educational institutions and employment is reported within the appropriate level of government (e.g. state versus local) whereas in BusinessCounts, these are reported in the educational services category.

- In addition, many public and quasi-public agencies are coded to the type of service they provide rather than as public sector establishments. Public sector estimates in BusinessCounts are therefore lower than published figures by an amount roughly equivalent to the over-count in services. In addition, the tendency within business list products s to put more emphasis on private sector establishments than on public sector establishments. Subsequently, in many cases not only is there no actual employee count, but often no size class information as well. Since the Census Bureau surveys of establishments typically exclude public sector establishments, and what statistics are available are typically only at a state level, the public sector employment estimates are substantially underestimated and should not be relied upon for many analytical applications.

Occupation Classification

The occupational classification now corresponds to the updated occupational classification presently in use by the census bureau. The classification now consists of twenty-four groups, as below:

- Management
- Business and financial operations
- Computer and mathematical
- Architecture and engineering
- Life, physical, and social science
- Community and social service
- Legal
- Education, training, and library
- Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media
- Health diagnosing and treating practitioners
- Health technologists and technicians
- Healthcare support

- Protective service
- Food preparation and serving
- Building and grounds maintenance
- Personal care and service
- Sales
- Office and administrative support
- Farming, fishing, and forestry
- Construction and extraction
- Installation, maintenance, and repair
- Production
- Transportation
- Material moving

A detailed list of the specific occupations which are included in each of these groups is available.

NAICS Categories

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing
Agriculture/forest/fish (11 exc 115)
Agricultural services (115)

Mining
Oil and gas extraction (211)
Coal/ore mining (21 exc 211)

Utilities
Utilities (22)

Construction
General construction (23 exc 237)
Heavy construction (237)

Manufacturing
Food mfg (311)
Beverage, tobacco products (312)
Textile mills (313)

Textile products (314)
Apparel mfg (315)
Leather mfg (316)
Wood products (321)
Paper mfg (322)
Printing (323)
Petroleum, coal products (324)
Chemicals (325)
Plastics/rubber products (326)
Nonmetallic mineral products (327)
Primary metal mfg (331)
Fabricated metals (332)
Machinery mfg (333)
Computer, electronic products (334)
Electrical equipment, appliances (335)
Transportation equipment (336)
Furniture mfg (337)
Miscellaneous manufacturing (33 nec)

Wholesale trade
Durable goods (423)
Nondurable goods (424)
Electronic markets and brokers (425)

Retail Trade
Motor vehicle and parts dealers (441)
Furniture and home furnishings (442)
Electronics and appliances (443)
Building materials and garden supplies (444)
Food and beverage stores (445)
Health and personal care stores (446)
Gasoline stations (447)
Clothing and clothing accessories (448)
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music stores (451)
General merchandise stores (452)

Miscellaneous store retailers (453)
Non-store retailers (454)

Transportation and warehousing
Transportation (48)
Warehousing/storage, postal/courier service (49)

Information
Publishing (511 nec)
Software publishers (5112)
Motion pictures and video (512 nec)
Movie theaters (512131)
Broadcasting (except Internet) (515)
Telecommunications (517)
Data processing, hosting (518)
Other Information Services (519)

Finance and insurance
Banking and related (52 nec)
Insurance carriers and related (524)

Real estate, rental and leasing
Real estate (531)
Rental and leasing (53 nec)

Professional, scientific, technical services
Legal services (5411)
Accounting and related (5412)
Architectural, engineering and related (5413)
Specialized design (5414)
Computer systems design and related (5415)
Management, scientific, technical consulting (5416)
Scientific research and development (5417)
Advertising, public relations, and related (5418)
Other prof/scientific/tech services (5419)

Management of companies and enterprises
Management of companies and enterprises (55)

Administrative and waste management services
Administrative and support (561)
Waste management and remediation (562)

Educational Services
Elementary and Secondary Schools (6111)
Colleges, universities (6112-3)
Business schools, computer and mgnt training (6114)
Technical and trade schools (6115)
Educational services (611 nec)

Health care
Offices of physicians (6211)
Offices of dentists (6212)
Other health practitioners (6213)
Outpatient care (6214)
Medical and diagnostic laboratories (6215)
Home health care services (6216)
Ambulatory health care services (621 nec)
General medical and surgical hospitals (6221)
Psychiatric, substance abuse hospitals (6222)
Other hospitals (622 nec)
Nursing and residential care (623)

Social assistance
Individual and family services (6241)
Community relief services (6242)
Vocational rehabilitation (6243)
Child day care services (6244)

Arts, entertainment, and recreation

Performing arts (7111)
Spectator sports (7112)
Promoters of performing arts, sports (7113)
Agents and Managers (7114)
Independent artists, writers, performers (7115)
Museums, zoos, historical sites (712)
Amusement, gambling, and recreation (713 nec)
Fitness Centers (71394)

Accommodation and food services
Accommodation (721)
Food services and drinking places (722)

Other services
Repair and maintenance services (811)
Personal care services (812 nec)
Death care services (8122)
Religious, civic, professional orgs (813)

Public administration
Public administration (92)

Further Information

Contact customer service at 877-944-4AGS or email support@appliedgeographic.com.