Executive Summary

In 2017, the Retail Trade sector comprised 11.8 percent of all public and private covered employment in Iowa, providing jobs for 181,746 workers. These workers had an average annual wage of $26,515, which was 42.5 percent lower than the average annual wage of $46,073 for all employment. The retail trade sector is the third-largest sector in the state of Iowa.

Since 2010, retail trade employment in Iowa has gradually increased each year, adding a total of 9,587 jobs through 2016. However, with consumer preferences moving more toward online shopping Iowa experienced a decrease in employment of approximately 900 workers in 2017.

This sector’s wages are low both regionally and nationally. In the Midwest, Iowa has the lowest average annual wage in the retail trade sector. Despite a year-over-year increase of $707, Iowa’s average annual wage is 15.1 percent lower than the national average.

The Retail Trade sector is not dominated by one gender, with women making up 51.0 percent of the sector’s workforce.
What is Retail Trade?

This sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

The retailing process is the final step in the distribution of merchandise; retailers are, therefore, organized to sell merchandise in small quantities to the general public. This sector comprises two main types of retailers: store and non-store retailers.

Source: www.bls.gov/cew/bls_naiics/bls_naiics_app.htm

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Iowa Workforce Development

2008–2017 Employment in Retail Trade in Iowa

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Iowa Workforce Development

https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/labor-market-information-division
In 2017, there were 11,815 Retail Trade industry establishments across Iowa. Gasoline stations had the most locations in Iowa with 1,758. However, the All other retail subsector accounted for the most employment, supplying 24.7 percent of all jobs in the sector.

Retail trade represents a wide variety of subsectors, specializing in different types of retail. There are twelve different subsectors in retail trade, and the five largest have been broken out for further examination in the pie chart on the previous page.
2017 Average Annual Wage for Covered Employment in Retail Trade

State Comparisons by Private Ownership

North Dakota $30,614
South Dakota $27,782
Nebraska $27,092
Kansas $26,629
Iowa $26,515
Missouri $27,810
Minnesota $29,513
Wisconsin $26,679
Illinois $30,411
Indiana $27,405
Michigan $30,111
Ohio $27,848

United States Average: $31,217

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Iowa Workforce Development

Industry Distribution by Age and Gender, 2nd Quarter 2017

Source: Local Employment Dynamics, Iowa Workforce Development and U.S. Census Bureau
https://lehdcensus.gov/