Executive Summary

In 2018, the Retail Trade sector comprised 11.5 percent of all public and private covered employment in Iowa, providing jobs for 178,819 workers. These workers had an average annual wage of $27,251, which was 42.6 percent lower than the average annual wage of $47,511 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 has experienced a 2.1 percent decrease in employment losing 3,826 workers since 2016.

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 an increase of $736 from 2017 to 2018, Iowa’s average annual wage is 15.8 percent lower than the national average.

The Retail Trade sector is not dominated by one gender, with women making up 51.1 percent of the sector’s workforce.
What is Retail Trade?

The Retail Trade 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_naiacs/bls_naiacs_app.htm

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

https://www.iowalmi.gov/qcew
In 2018, there were 11,746 Retail Trade industry establishments across Iowa. Gasoline stations had the most locations in Iowa with 1,738. However, the All other retail subsector accounted for the most employment, supplying 24.5 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.
2018 Average Annual Wage for Covered Employment in Retail Trade

State Comparisons by Private Ownership

North Dakota $31,114
South Dakota $28,594
Nebraska $27,776
Kansas $27,261
Iowa $27,251
Missouri $28,481
Minnesota $30,726
Wisconsin $27,739
Illinois $31,499
Indiana $28,000
Michigan $31,099
Ohio $28,654
United States Average: $32,362

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Bureau of Labor Statistics

Industry Distribution by Age and Gender, 2nd Quarter 2018

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