Executive Summary

In 2017, the Wholesale Trade sector comprised 4.3 percent of all public and private sector employment in Iowa, employing 66,501 workers with an average annual wage of $63,280. This wage was 37.3 percent higher than the statewide average of $46,073 for all industries. Over the last decade from 2008 to 2017 wages have increased each year.

However, employment in this industry has shown both gains and losses over the same period. Employment has dropped every year from 69,296 employees in 2013 to its current level of 66,501, a decline of 4.0 percent. All told, the sector has only gained 418 jobs (0.6 percent) since hitting a rock bottom of 66,083 in 2010.

Employment in this sector tends to be higher in counties in the northern half of the state due to a higher number of grain elevators and greater ethanol production.

Men hold a strong majority of the jobs in this industry, making up 76.3 percent of wholesale trade employment in 2017.
What is Wholesale Trade?

This sector comprises establishments engaged in wholesaling merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. The merchandise described in this sector includes the outputs of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and certain information industries, such as publishing.

The wholesaling process is an intermediate step in the distribution of merchandise. Wholesalers are organized to sell or arrange the purchase or sale of (a) goods for resale (i.e., goods sold to other wholesalers or retailers), (b) capital or durable non-consumer goods, and (c) raw and intermediate materials and supplies used in production.

Source: www.bls.gov/cew/bls_naics/ bls_naics_app.htm

2017 Industry Breakout by Employment in Iowa

Wholesale Trade NAICS Industry Coding
Percentage Employed and Average Annual Wage by Subsector

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

2008–2017 Employment in Wholesale 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 7,555 establishments in the Wholesale Trade industry across Iowa. Electronic market and agent broker wholesalers had the most locations in Iowa, with 2,660. Durable good wholesalers had the most locations in Iowa, with 2,619 locations. Finally, Nondurable wholesalers had 2,277 establishments statewide.

The employers listed to the left are classified in the subsector that reflects their primary industry, although each company may be engaged in other economic activities.
2017 Average Annual Wage for Covered Employment in Wholesale Trade

State Comparisons by Private Ownership

North Dakota $65,095
South Dakota $58,425
Nebraska $61,016
Kansas $66,999
Minnesota $83,368
Wisconsin $65,438
Iowa $63,280
Missouri $66,942
Illinois $80,599
Indiana $65,937
Michigan $73,968
Ohio $69,080

United States Average: $75,904

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://lehd.ces.census.gov/