Executive Summary

In 2014, the retail trade sector comprised 11.8 percent of all covered employment (both public and private sector) in Iowa, providing jobs for 178,905 workers who have an average annual wage of $24,674. This wage was 42.0 percent lower than the statewide average annual of $42,536 for all industries.

Retail employment in Iowa had been declining before the great recession, but that pace accelerated during the deep recession years of 2009 and 2010. Between 2006 and 2010, retail trade shed 7,131 jobs or 4.0 percent of employment. Employment has since recovered but has yet to reach 2006 levels. Between 2006 and 2014, this sector contracted by 1,240 jobs or 0.7 percent.

Wages in this sector are low both for the region and the nation. In our region, only Nebraska and Wisconsin have lower wages, and Iowa’s average annual wage is 14.2 percent lower than the national average. It is unclear from this data whether this would be due to lower hourly wages or less hours worked.

Women make up 52.3 percent of this 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.census.gov/naics
In 2014, there were 12,082 retail trade industry locations across Iowa. Gasoline stations had the most establishments in Iowa with 1,778. However, food & beverage retail accounts for the most employment, supplying 22.2 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.
2014 Average Annual Wage for Covered Employment in Retail Trade

State Comparisons by Private Ownership

- North Dakota: $29,692
- South Dakota: $26,180
- Nebraska: $24,605
- Kansas: $24,992
- Minnesota: $27,183
- Wisconsin: $24,506
- Iowa: $24,673
- Illinois: $27,532
- Indiana: $25,090
- Michigan: $27,328
- Ohio: $26,146
- South Dakota: $26,180

United States Average: $28,743

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Industry Distribution by Age and Gender

2013 Average Annual

Source: Local Employment Dynamics, Iowa Workforce Development and U.S. Census Bureau