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## About the Data

### PURPOSE

County Business Patterns provides annual statistics for businesses with paid employees within the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Island Areas (Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) at a detailed geography and industry level. This program is authorized under the United States Code, Titles 13 and 26.

### COVERAGE

Statistics are available on business establishments at the U.S. level and by State, County, Metropolitan area, and ZIP code levels. Data for Puerto Rico and the Island Areas are available at the State and county equivalent levels. County Business Patterns (CBP) covers most NAICS industries excluding crop and animal production; rail transportation; National Postal Service; pension, health, welfare, and vacation funds; trusts, estates, and agency accounts; private households; and public administration. CBP also excludes most establishments reporting government employees.

### CONTENT

Data for establishments are presented by geographic area, 6-digit NAICS industry, legal form of organization (U.S. only), and employment size class. Information is available on the number of establishments, employment during the week of March 12, first quarter payroll, and annual payroll. Precautions are taken to avoid disclosing the operations of an individual employer.

### FREQUENCY

Data reported are for activities occurring during the reference year. County Business Patterns has been published annually since 1964; similar data were reported for various periods since 1946.

### METHODS

County Business Patterns basic data items are extracted from the Business Register (BR), a database of all known single and multi-establishment employer companies maintained and updated by the U.S. Census Bureau. The BR contains the most complete, current, and consistent data for business establishments. The annual Company Organization Survey provides individual establishment data for multi-establishment companies. Data for single-establishment companies are obtained from various Census Bureau programs, such as the Economic Census, Annual Survey of Manufactures and Current Business Surveys, as well as from administrative record sources.

County Business Patterns data are processed through various automated and analytical edits to remove anomalies, validate geographic coding, addresses, and industry classification. For more information on industry and geography classification, refer to the [How the data are collected](#) page. Noise infusion methodology is applied to protect individual business establishments from disclosure. Noise infusion was first applied to CBP data in 2007. Prior to 2007, data were protected using the complementary cell suppression method.

### PRODUCTS

County Business Patterns statistics are available approximately 18 months after each reference year. In

In addition, ZIP Code Business Patterns data are available shortly after the release of CBP. The ZIP Code Business Patterns include the number of establishments by NAICS industry. Data are released in hypertext tables (html), in comma-delimited format (csv) for spreadsheet or database use, and in the American FactFinder.

## **USES**

The data are useful for studying economic activity of small areas. Federal agencies use the data to determine employee concentrations and trends by industry. Private businesses use the data for analyzing market potential, measuring the effectiveness of sales and advertising programs, setting sales quotas, and developing budgets. State and local government offices use the data to assess business changes, develop fiscal policies, and plan future policies and programs. County Business Patterns data are used to benchmark public and private sector business statistical series, surveys, and databases between economic census years.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

County Business Patterns statistics provide the only annual source of complete and consistent county-level data for U.S., Puerto Rico, and Island Areas business establishments with industry detail.

## **QUESTIONS?**

For frequently asked questions (FAQs) visit [Ask.Census.Gov](http://Ask.Census.Gov) or click the FAQs tab at the top of the screen. This link will open a new page within this window. Enter 'CBP' or 'County Business Patterns' into the search box to narrow the results.

For more information, contact the County Business Patterns staff at (301)763-2580 or by email.

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