INTRODUCTION

The retail workforce has a substantial presence in the American labor force. In 2018, 9.8 million workers were employed as either retail salespersons, cashiers, or first-line supervisors of retail sales workers. They are also some of the most common occupations in the United States (Table 1).

Since the 1970s, employment in the retail sector has expanded as consumer spending increased and the rise of dual-earner households in the 1980s led to an increased supply of female workers.\(^1\) Through the early 2000s and post Great Recession period, the retail industry has been shaped by larger economic forces, such as the consolidation of retail stores and the growth of online retail options, that may limit the growth of “brick and mortar” retail stores and limit the demand for retail workers.\(^2\) The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently projected that employment in retail sales occupations would decrease by 2.0 percent between 2018 and 2028, below the average of 5.0 percent for all occupations.\(^3\)

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, a health crisis of unprecedented size, has caused major disruptions in economic activities in the United States and around the world. Data from the BLS show that total nonfarm payroll employment declined by 20.5 million in April 2020. The retail trade industry alone lost 2.1 million jobs.\(^4\) Retail workers have been among the hardest hit during the pandemic for many reasons including stay-at-home orders that threaten their earnings. For those that continued to work, many were in work environments that put them in direct contact with others, increasing their likelihood of infection.

This report provides a detailed description of the demographic and employment characteristics of retail workers using the most recently available data from the 2018 American Community Surveys (ACS) 1-year estimates, as well as the 2000 Census and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates.\(^5\) The 2018 ACS 1-year estimates collected data on occupations throughout calendar year 2018, thus these data necessarily reflect the situation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of that, these data will provide a solid baseline for understanding the impact of the economic crisis and recession that began in February 2020.\(^6\) This report focuses on the numbers and characteristics of some of the most common sales and related occupations—first line supervisors of retail sales workers, cashiers, and


\(^3\) See <www.bls.gov/ohi/sales/retail-sales-workers.htm#tab-6>.


\(^5\) The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. CBDRB-FY20-POP001-0058.

retail salespersons, collectively referred to in this report as retail workers.7

HIGHLIGHTS

• In 2018, 9.8 million workers were employed as retail salespersons, cashiers, or first-line supervisors of retail sales workers. Together, these three detailed occupations accounted for 6.3 percent of the total labor force.

• Over half of all retail workers were aged 16 to 34. Cashiers had the youngest age profile with 48.3 percent between the ages of 16 and 24.

• Women were less likely than men to manage or supervise retail workers. About 47 percent of first-line supervisors of retail workers were women, compared with 53.4 percent who were men.

• Black and Hispanic retail workers were less likely than White retail workers to be in supervisory positions like first-line supervisors of retail sales workers.

• Cashiers were among the lowest paid members of the retail workforce. In 2018, the median earnings for full-time, year-round cashiers were $22,109, compared with $35,301 for retail salespersons and $42,421 for first-line supervisors of retail salespersons.

• Around 25 percent of cashiers were covered by Medicaid at some point in 2018, compared with 12.6 percent of retail salespersons and 7.8 percent of first-line supervisors of retail workers.

EMPLOYMENT IN RETAIL OCCUPATIONS

With over 550 occupations classified by the Census Bureau, the distribution of America's labor force is concentrated in a relatively small number of occupations.8, 9 Together, the three detailed occupations that make up retail workers account for about 9.8 million workers, or 6.3 percent of the total labor force in 2018 (Figures 1 and 2). Retail salespersons and cashiers include over 3.3 million workers each, followed by first-line supervisors of retail sales workers with 3.1 million workers.10 Other large occupations include elementary and middle school teachers, registered nurses, and janitors and building cleaners (Figure 1).

Despite ongoing technological changes in ways customers interact with retail businesses and the general consolidation of retail stores, there has been little change in the relative number

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7 First-line supervisors, cashiers, and retail salespersons are part of the major occupational group, sales and related occupations. This major group includes 18 detailed occupations including telemarketers, insurance sales agents, and counter and rental clerks. See the 2018 Census Occupation Code list for additional details, <www.census.gov/topics/employment/industry-occupation/guidance/code-lists.html>.


9 Occupation statistics are compiled from data coded based on the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) unless otherwise stated. All federal statistical agencies use the SOC to classify workers into occupational categories. The SOC manual is available online at <www.bls.gov/soc>.

10 The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All comparisons made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.
or share of retail workers.\textsuperscript{11} In 2018, there were 9.8 million retail workers, up from 8.8 million workers in 2000 (Figure 2). Retail workers’ share of total employment over this same time period fell slightly between 2010 and 2018, from 6.9 percent to 6.3 percent, respectively.\textsuperscript{12}

**CHARACTERISTICS OF RETAIL WORKERS**

Retail jobs offer numerous entry-level employment opportunities and are a common first job for young workers. However, retail jobs are also among those with

\textsuperscript{11} Werner Rinartz, “In the Future of Retail, We’re Never Not Shopping,” Harvard Business Review, March 10, 2016.

\textsuperscript{12} Estimates presented in this report do not reflect any possible economic impacts related to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, but instead serve as a precrisis benchmark for future research. Additional resources on more current workforce dynamics can be found at <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/data/>.
the lowest wages and lack access to health insurance or retirement or pension benefits. To shed light on this large workforce, this section focuses on select demographic and economic characteristics of retail workers in 2018. Data are presented for all retail workers as well as for each detailed occupation within this group of workers.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age and Sex
Overall, retail workers are younger than the total workforce, with workers between the ages of 16 and 34 making up the largest share of retail workers (Table 1). About half of employed retail workers fall within this age range, with 29.0 percent between the ages of 16 to 24, and 21.5 percent between the ages of 25 to 34. Across the selected retail occupations, cashiers were some of the youngest, with 48.3 percent between the ages of 16 and 24 and 18.0 percent between the ages of 25 to 34. Among the next youngest were retail salespersons, with 28.6 percent between the ages of 16 and 24 and 20.7 percent between the ages of 25 and 34. In contrast, 8.8 percent of first-line supervisors of retail sales workers were between the ages of 16 and 24, but the larger share of workers were between the ages of 25 and 34 (26.1 percent).

In general, retail workers were more likely to be women than men (56.5 percent compared with 43.5 percent, respectively). However, the representation of women differs by detailed retail occupations. For example, almost 3 out of 4 cashiers were women, while similar percentages of women and men were employed as retail salespersons (both around 50 percent, respectively). Women were less likely to manage or supervise retail salespersons. About 47 percent of first-line supervisors of retail sales workers were women, compared with 53.4 percent who were men.

Educational Attainment
Retail workers were less likely to have a bachelor’s degree or more compared to the total employed population. In 2018, 18.1 percent of retail workers had a bachelor’s degree or more, compared with 35.2 percent of all workers. Among the selected retail-related occupations, 25.8 percent of first-line supervisors and 21.2 percent of retail salespersons had a bachelor’s degree, compared with 7.8 percent of cashiers. The lack of a bachelor’s degree among retail workers reflects the younger age distribution of this occupation group, especially cashiers.

Race and Hispanic Origin
The racial and ethnic representation of all retail workers differed little from the overall workforce. About two-thirds of the total workforce in 2018 was non-Hispanic White, compared with 59.5 percent of retail workers. Blacks and Hispanics were relatively more likely to be employed in some type of retail occupation compared to their counterparts in the overall workforce. Asian workers constituted 5.9 percent of retail occupations, compared with 6.1 percent of all workers.

Although a majority of retail workers were non-Hispanic White, the racial and ethnic distribution varies by the selected retail occupations. For example, Black and Hispanic workers were overrepresented in cashier jobs. Nearly a quarter of cashiers were Hispanic, while Hispanics made up 18.7 percent of all retail workers. Black workers made up 12.5 percent of all retail workers but held 16.9 percent of cashier jobs. In contrast, non-Hispanic White retail workers were
## Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Retail Workers: 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Number (±)</th>
<th>Per cent (±)</th>
<th>Margin of Error % (±)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 24 years old</td>
<td>111,195,237</td>
<td>37.978</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years old</td>
<td>142,228</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years old</td>
<td>36,362</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years old</td>
<td>276,741</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years and Over</td>
<td>1,619,651</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEX</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9,886,390</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6,556,696</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE AND HISPANIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>1,262,954</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
<td>357,031</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Asian, not Hispanic</td>
<td>203,482</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other race, not Hispanic</td>
<td>2,937,254</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,683,403</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>111,195,237</td>
<td>37.978</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>276,741</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>1,619,651</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or</td>
<td>276,741</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than bachelor’s</td>
<td>1,619,651</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORK STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>111,195,237</td>
<td>37.978</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than full-time, year-round</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.
Selected Characteristics of Retail Workers: 2018—Con.
(Civilian employed, 16 years and over)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Retail workers</th>
<th>First-line supervisors of retail sales workers</th>
<th>Cashiers</th>
<th>Retail salespersons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Margin of error¹ (±)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Margin of error¹ (±)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARITAL STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>81,040,215</td>
<td>223,222</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>3,709,042</td>
<td>31,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>75,742,950</td>
<td>161,816</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>6,127,288</td>
<td>50,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any coverage</td>
<td>140,400,867</td>
<td>223,275</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>8,602,877</td>
<td>57,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer-based</td>
<td>109,838,949</td>
<td>231,551</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>5,890,259</td>
<td>48,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct purchase</td>
<td>17,887,977</td>
<td>100,010</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>1,272,490</td>
<td>23,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>14,180,378</td>
<td>69,908</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>145,637</td>
<td>5,673</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No coverage</td>
<td>16,382,298</td>
<td>114,142</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>1,233,453</td>
<td>21,359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X Not applicable.
¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimates, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.
² People may have more than one type of coverage.
Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.
overrepresented in supervisory retail positions. Sixty-eight percent of first-line supervisors of retail sales workers were non-Hispanic White, compared with 62.2 percent of all retail workers. Conversely, Black and Hispanic workers were underrepresented in supervisory positions. Just under 1 in 10 first-line supervisors were Black, while 14.4 percent were Hispanic.

Black and Hispanic employment in retail occupations has been growing since 2000, as has their overall workforce share (Figures 3a and 3b). In 2018, 18.7 percent of retail workers were Hispanic, up from 10.4 percent in 2000. Around 10 percent of retail workers were Black in 2000, which slightly increased to 12.5 percent in 2018. In contrast, non-Hispanic Whites’ share of retail workers decreased during the same period, from 74.5 percent in 2000 to 59.5 percent in 2018.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Work Status

Retail workers were less likely to work full-time, year-round compared with the total labor force. In 2018, 54.9 percent of retail workers were employed full-time, year-round, compared with 70.9 percent of all workers. Full-time status varied greatly by detailed retail occupations. First-line supervisors of retail sales workers had the highest percentage of full-time, year-round workers (84.8 percent), followed by retail salespersons (51.2 percent). Under one-third (30.5 percent) of cashiers worked full-time, year-round in 2018.

Health Insurance Coverage and Poverty Status

For many working-age adults, health insurance coverage and type of coverage are related to work status. Health insurance coverage is common for most workers, including retail workers. In 2018, among all workers, about 9 out of 10 had some type of public or private health insurance coverage at the time of interview. About 88 percent of all retail workers had some form of health insurance. First-line supervisors were more likely to be covered by health insurance (90.7 percent) than retail salespersons (88.0 percent) or cashiers (83.9 percent).

Similar to the general workforce, the most common type of health insurance among all retail workers was employer-based insurance, covering 59.9 percent of this workforce. First-line supervisors were more likely to have employer-based insurance (70.7 percent) than retail salespersons (60.9 percent) and cashiers (48.7 percent). Compared with other retail workers, cashiers were more likely to receive Medicaid, a government-based health insurance plan for low-income people. In 2018, 25.2 percent of cashiers were covered by Medicaid, compared with 12.6 percent of retail salespersons and 7.8 percent of first-line supervisors of retail workers.

The higher rates of Medicaid coverage among cashiers may be related to several factors. For example, cashiers were more likely to work part-time (Table 1) and were more likely to be in poverty (Figure A-1). These factors may limit their eligibility for employer-provided health insurance or make them less financially able to purchase it. Furthermore, workers with low total income may qualify for government health care plans.

Median Earnings of Retail Workers

With 9.8 million workers, retail occupations are some of the most common occupations in the United States. Yet, these occupations are often low-paying and offer limited opportunities for advancement. Figure 4 shows the median earnings of full-time, year-round workers by detailed retail occupation and selected characteristics.

Women consistently earned less than men across detailed retail sales occupations. In 2018, women who worked full-time, year-round as first-line supervisors of retail sales workers had

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16 Full-time, year-round workers include all people 16 years old and over who usually worked 35 hours or more per week for 50 to 52 weeks in the past 12 months.


18 Health insurance coverage is the coverage at the time of interview. The ACS is conducted throughout the year, and the resulting measure of health insurance coverage reflects an annual average of current health insurance coverage status. People may have more than one type of coverage.


Figure 3a.
Distribution of Total Employment by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000, 2010, and 2018
(In percent. Civilian employed, 16 years and over)

White, not Hispanic

Hispanic

Black, not Hispanic

Asian, not Hispanic

Other race, not Hispanic

Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.

Figure 3b.
Distribution of Retail Workers by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000, 2010, and 2018
(In percent. Civilian employed, 16 years and over)

White, not Hispanic

Hispanic

Black, not Hispanic

Asian, not Hispanic

Other race, not Hispanic

Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.
median earnings of $36,166, compared with men at $50,319. Female cashiers and retail salespersons earned $21,664 and $29,246, respectively, compared with male cashiers and retail salespersons who had median earnings of $24,477 and $40,600, respectively.

Earning differences persist by race and Hispanic-origin. Some of the biggest gaps were among retail salespersons. Hispanic and Black retail salespersons earned about $10,000 less per year compared with White workers in the same occupation. Among full-time, year-round workers, White retail salespersons’ median earnings were $39,665, compared with $28,896 for Hispanics. The earnings gap was narrower among first-line supervisors of retail sales workers. Whites earned the most among this occupation group ($45,453), compared with $37,374 for Hispanics and $37,503 for Black first-line supervisors of retail sales workers.

Even within the same retail occupation, more education could lead to higher median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. For example, first-line supervisors of retail workers with a bachelor’s degree earned over $15,000 more per year than those with a high school degree ($55,011 and $37,375, respectively). Some of this variation may be attributed to age, and some employers may want candidates for supervisory positions to have a college degree. The median earnings of cashiers was around 45 percent less than those of all full-time, year-round workers, ($22,109 and $48,565, respectively). First-line supervisors of retail sales workers were among the highest-earning retail occupations, but only first-line supervisors of retail workers with a college degree and male supervisors earned more than the median for all workers in 2018.

Between 2000 and 2018, the real median earnings for full-time, year-round workers

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**Figure 4.**

**Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Retail Workers by Selected Characteristics: 2018**

(Civilian employed, 16 years and over, with earnings in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All retail workers¹</th>
<th>Cashiers</th>
<th>Retail salespersons</th>
<th>First-line supervisors of retail sales workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22,109</td>
<td>35,301</td>
<td>42,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24,477</td>
<td>40,600</td>
<td>50,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White, not Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>21,664</td>
<td>29,246</td>
<td>36,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black, not Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>22,447</td>
<td>39,665</td>
<td>45,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian, not Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>20,407</td>
<td>30,420</td>
<td>37,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other race, not Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>22,281</td>
<td>31,742</td>
<td>37,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21,955</td>
<td>28,896</td>
<td>37,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less than high school graduate</strong></td>
<td>20,595</td>
<td>26,654</td>
<td>32,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</strong></td>
<td>21,847</td>
<td>31,059</td>
<td>37,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some college (includes associate’s degree)</strong></td>
<td>22,179</td>
<td>34,251</td>
<td>42,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor’s degree or more</strong></td>
<td>26,787</td>
<td>50,793</td>
<td>55,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The median earnings for all full-time, year-round workers in 2018 was $48,565.

Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

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decreased by less than $500, from $49,034 to $48,565, respectively (Figure 5). The median earnings for selected retail occupations also declined during the same period. The median earnings of first-line supervisors of retail sales workers decreased from $46,711 in 2000 to $42,421 in 2018. The median earnings of retail salespersons and cashiers decreased from $40,162 and $25,157 in 2000, respectively, to $35,300 and $22,109 in 2018. 

RETAIL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY
Industry refers to the kind of business conducted by a person’s employing organization. Some occupation groups are related closely to certain industries. Retail workers are primarily employed in two industries. In 2018, over 8 out of every 10 retail workers worked in the retail trade industry (Figure 6). The retail trade sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, primarily through physical retail store locations. Just over 1 million, or 10.8 percent of, retail workers were employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services. These two industries combined accounted for 96.0 percent of retail workers. Retail salespersons (95.3 percent), first-line supervisors of retail workers (94.5 percent), and cashiers (66.4 percent) were well distributed across the retail trade industry. In contrast, 27.8 percent of cashiers were employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services industry, while 1.6 percent of first-line supervisors and 2.5 percent of retail salespersons were employed in this sector.

Given that well over a majority of retail workers are in the retail trade industry, the next section examines how retail workers are distributed across a sector that comprises both retail and nonretail stores. Additionally, this section examines how the numbers of retail workers across this sector has changed over time.

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Figure 7 shows the number of retail workers by selected detailed retail trade industries in 2010 and 2018. Around 1.3 million retail workers worked in grocery stores in 2010, not statistically different from the number of workers in 2018. However, the count of retail workers who worked in general merchandise stores, including warehouse clubs and supercenters, dropped from over 1.1 million to around 865,000, amounting to a loss of over 280,000 retail workers. In contrast, the number of retail workers in department stores increased from around 389,000 retail workers in 2010 to about 535,000 retail workers in 2018.

Research suggests that e-commerce will assume a larger role in the retail sector, particularly the electronic shopping and mail-order houses industry.26, 27 The electronic shopping and mail-order industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in retailing all types of merchandise using nonstore means, such as catalogs, toll-free telephone numbers, or electronic media such as interactive television or the Internet. For more information, see <www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>.


Data from the ACS show that the number of retail workers in electronic shopping increased from 63,000 in 2010 to around 129,000 in 2018. However, retail workers were still more likely to be employed in retail industries most associated with brick-and-mortar retail locations such as book stores and news dealers; gift, novelty, and souvenir shops; and clothing stores.
**SUMMARY**

Although retail workers comprised only three detailed occupations, they accounted for 6.3 percent of the total labor force, or 9.8 million workers. The majority of retail workers had a younger age profile, were less likely to hold a bachelor’s degree, and were less likely to work full-time, year-round when compared with the total labor force.

Of retail workers, women on average earned less than men, and also were less likely to serve in supervisory positions. Black and Hispanic workers were overrepresented in cashier jobs, which were the lowest paying jobs in retail. In contrast, non-Hispanic White retail workers were overrepresented in supervisory retail positions, the highest paying jobs in retail (albeit declining over the past decade). Although health insurance coverage was common for retail workers, cashiers were more likely to receive Medicaid (a government-based health insurance plan for low-income people), which could be attributed to the fact that cashiers were more likely to work part-time and more likely to have incomes below the poverty threshold.

Retail occupations are among the lowest-paying jobs, with limited opportunities for advancement. The continued growth of retail workers over the past decade, coupled with their number, confirms the essential need to understand the nature and quality of these jobs.

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**Figure 7. Retail Workers by Selected Retail Industries: 2010 and 2018**

(In thousands. Civilian employed, 16 years and over)

Note: Industry data from 2010 was converted to the 2017 Census Industry Code list to make them comparable over time.

For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.

SOURCE OF THE ESTIMATES
The ACS is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3.5 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2005, ACS data have been released annually for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES
Data presented in this brief are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2018 and are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the “ACS Accuracy of the Data” document at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html>.

CONTACT
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SUGGESTED CITATION
Appendix Table A-1.
Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Retail Workers by Selected Characteristics: 2018
(Civilian employed, 16 years and over)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Median earnings (dollars)$^1$</th>
<th>Margin of error$^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-line supervisors of retail sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workers</td>
<td>42,421</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>22,109</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail salespersons</td>
<td>35,301</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL ........................................ ........................ ........................ ........................ ........................ ........................

SEX
Male ....................................... 50,319 302 24,477 739 40,600 361
Female .................................... 36,166 340 21,664 191 29,246 571

RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN
White, not Hispanic .......................... 45,453 319 22,447 329 39,665 824
Black, not Hispanic .......................... 37,503 1,753 25,256 780 30,420 738
Asian, not Hispanic .......................... 45,271 2,365 25,256 780 30,420 738
Other race, not Hispanic ..................... 37,239 1,189 22,816 1,176 29,837 1,157
Hispanic .................................... 37,574 994 21,955 994 29,780 1,069

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Less than high school graduate ............... 32,415 1,149 20,595 435 26,654 1,252
High school graduate (includes equivalency) ... 37,375 497 21,847 257 31,059 416
Some college (includes associate degree) ...... 42,141 323 22,179 276 34,251 849
Bachelor's degree or more ................... 55,011 1,229 26,787 653 50,793 612

$^1$ The median earnings for all full-time, year-round workers in 2018 was $48,565 with a margin of error of 125.

$^2$ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimates, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.

Appendix Figure A-1.
Percentage of Workers in Poverty by Selected Retail Occupations: 2018
(Civilian labor force, 16 years and over)

Note: For more information, visit <www.census.gov/acs>.