Methodology:
2026 Esri Business Locations and U.S. Business Summary

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A summary of the updates to methodology in this release

The Esri Business Locations point dataset is one part of a comprehensive portfolio of ArcGIS Places data that focuses specifically on businesses. Esri creates the Business Locations product from business data licensed by Data Axle. The data features important business attributes, such as company location, industry classification, employee count, sales volume, brands, shopping center information, and more. This release includes more than 13 million U.S. and approximately 1 million Canadian business location points.

Esri also uses Data Axle's business records to create the Business Summary product for the United States. Business summaries are built from the Business Locations dataset and provide ready-to-use information about business sectors for geographic areas such as ZIP codes or census tracts.

For this release, the Business Locations point dataset and associated Business Summary product are built from Data Axle's August 2026 data. Consult Esri's Data Axle technical documentation page for more information about Business Locations points and Business Summary products.

Note that Data Axle implemented changes in 2025 to their sales volume model that removed sales volumes from corporate headquarters. Business Locations and Business Summary users may observe shifts in sales volume estimates when comparing current data to older vintages.

About Data Axle business data

Data Axle builds its business database from many sources, such as business filings, utility connections, press releases, corporate websites, and annual reports. The data is continuously updated using an extensive phone verification process with more than 24 million verification calls made per year.

NAICS and SIC—Each record includes Data Axle's proprietary eight-digit NAICS-based industry code, which adds two digits to the standard six-digit 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) structure for enhanced granularity. A proprietary six-digit SIC code, extending the standard four-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), is also provided. All businesses receive a primary NAICS-based code reflecting their primary activity. Secondary codes may also be assigned to capture additional business activities; for example, a supermarket could have a primary NAICS-based code indicating a grocery store and a secondary code indicating a health and personal care retailer.

Employee counts—Data Axle provides actual location employee counts when the information is available; when an actual count is not available, Data Axle provides an estimated count for the location. A kiosk location, such as an ATM, does not have an employee count.

Data modeling—Data Axle sales volume attributes are modeled, as verifiable sales volume figures are extremely difficult to obtain from private businesses. The primary source of information for the model is the U.S. Department of Commerce's data for sales per employee for each NAICS code. This data is also used to estimate Canadian sales volumes, along with the exchange rate and current inflation calculation; the final figures are expressed in Canadian dollars. Note that sales volumes are not provided for those lines of business unrelated to commerce, such as government offices; associations, clubs, and organizations; and educational institutions.

Square footage—The August 2026 data from Data Axle incorporates an updated square footage estimation model. This update improves the square footage estimates for both chain and independent locations, including large-format retailers, grocery stores, and businesses located inside another business (such as a pharmacy counter inside a larger store). Due to this update, users may see notable shifts in square footage estimates when comparing current data to older vintages.

Esri Business Locations point data

To create the Esri Business Locations point datasets, Esri uses latitude and longitude coordinate values provided by Data Axle to place business points on the map. Most businesses can be located to rooftop- or street-level accuracy. However, some business locations can only be placed to city or ZIP/postal code centroid-level accuracy. The location type and location confidence attributes provided by Esri can help determine the spatial accuracy of a business record.

Quality filtering—Prior to release, some business records are removed that do not meet quality requirements. Typically, this is due to business records missing attributes such as a street address or spatial issues, such as missing latitude and longitude values or locations outside expected geographic boundaries. Reasonable efforts are made to remove duplicated business records from the Business Locations dataset and data quality issues are reported to Data Axle at regular intervals.

Licensing restrictions—Note that the Esri Business Locations points contain the business attributes from Data Axle that Esri is permitted to provide to customers through Esri software. This does not include all the attributes Data Axle offers through its own platform.

Esri U.S. Business Summary

To create the Business Summary product, various geographic codes are first appended to each business point location. The total number of business points, total sales volumes, and total employee counts are then summarized by each geographic code. This is done for specific business categories and for overall total businesses.

The business categories are generally groupings of two- to four-digit NAICS codes focused on specialized sectors, for instance, Finance & Insurance (NAICS 52) or Health & Personal Care Retailers (NAICS 456). There are 62 ready-to-use business summaries available.

The Business Summary product is available for the following U.S. geography levels:

- American Indian Alaska Native Hawaiian Areas
- American Indian Tribal Subdivisions
- Census Block Groups
- Census Tracts
- Combined Statistical Areas (CSA)
- Congressional Districts
- Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSA)
- Counties
- County Subdivisions
- Designated Market Areas (DMAs)
- H3 Hexagons: Resolutions 2-7
- Incorporated Places

- Neighborhoods
- School Districts–Elementary
- School Districts–Secondary
- School Districts–Unified
- States
- State Legislative Districts – Lower Chamber
- State Legislative Districts – Upper Chamber
- Tribal Block Groups
- Tribal Census Tracts
- USA
- ZIP codes
- ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTA)

Business summaries can be estimated and then generated for user-defined custom polygons, such as rings and drive-time areas.

Removal of kiosks–Note that records flagged as a kiosk from Data Axle's place type attributes are not included in the Business Summary calculations. Kiosk listings typically include locations such as ATMs, electric charging stations, donation drop boxes, mailing kiosks, and video rental kiosks. While these records are omitted from Business Summary calculations, the records remain in the Business Locations dataset.

For more information about Esri Business data, call 1-800-447-9778.

About

Esri, the global market leader in geographic information system (GIS) software, location intelligence, and mapping, helps customers unlock the full potential of data to improve operational and business results. Founded in 1969 in Redlands, California, USA, Esri software is deployed in more than 350,000 organizations globally and in over 200,000 institutions in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, nonprofits, and universities. Esri has regional offices, international distributors, and partners providing local support in over 100 countries on six continents. With its pioneering commitment to geospatial information technology, Esri engineers the most innovative solutions for digital transformation, the Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics. Visit us at esri.com.

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