

Working in America

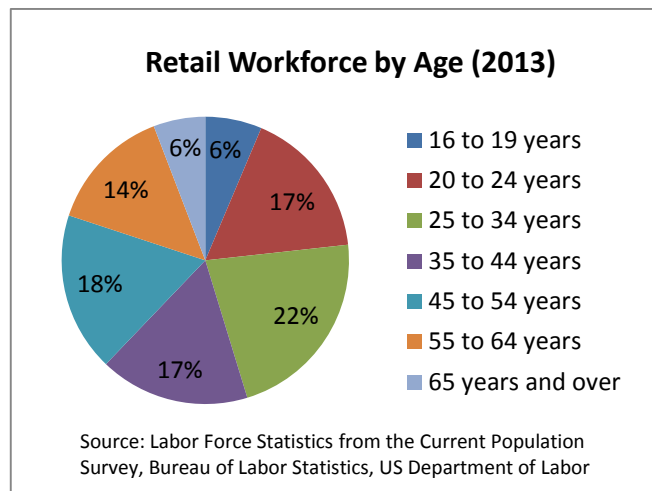
Retail Workforce, Employment and Job Quality

SIZE OF THE WORKFORCE AND PROJECTIONS

- The retail trade industry employed 14,875,000 workers in 2012, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 15,966,000 workers in this industry in 2022.¹
- The retail trade industry has employed approximately 10% of the US workforce in 2002 and 2012, and is projected to employ the same percentage in 2022.²
- More than 60% of retail trade employment in May 2014 was in just four occupations: retail salespersons, cashiers, stock clerks and order fillers, and first-line supervisors of retail sales workers.³
- Retail salespersons and cashiers are the two largest occupations in the United States, making up nearly six percent of total US employment, with employment levels of 4.6 million and 3.4 million, respectively.⁴

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Race:** 81.1% of workers in sales and related occupations in 2014 were white, 10.7% black, 5.3% Asian, and 2.9% other.⁵
- **Gender:** Women and men are nearly equally represented in sales and related occupations, with women making up 49.2% of this occupational group in 2014.⁶



EMPLOYMENT AND JOB QUALITY

- **Wages:** The median hourly wage of workers in sales and related occupations was \$12.19 in May 2014, compared to \$17.09 for all occupations.⁷ Of the two largest occupations, cashiers earned a median of \$9.17 per hour in 2014 and retail salespersons earned a median of \$10.29 per hour.⁸
- **Benefits:** Little information exists about the number of retail workers who receive core employment benefits such as health care coverage, paid leave, or retirement. A 2012 study by the City University of New York Murphy Institute and the Retail Action Project (RAP) found that just 29% of New York City retail workers had health insurance through their employers.⁹
- **Part-time/Full-time:** About one in three retail salespersons worked part time in 2012.¹⁰ Retail workers are about twice as likely as all workers to be employed part time involuntarily, i.e., they would rather work full time, 9% compared to 5%.¹¹
- **Scheduling:** In a national survey of younger workers (26 to 32 years old), half of those in retail reported that they knew their work schedule one week or less in advance.¹² The Murphy Institute/RAP study found

that just 17% of retail workers in New York City reported having a predictable schedule and only 30% reported knowing their work schedule at least one week in advance.

- **Union membership:** 4.4% of workers in the retail trade industry were union members in 2014, compared to 6.6% of all workers in the private sector.¹³
- **Educational requirements:** The entry-level educational requirements for the four largest occupations in the retail trade industry are as follows:
 - Retail salespersons,¹⁴ cashiers,¹⁵ and stock clerks and order fillers¹⁶: less than high school, although many employers require at least a high school diploma.
 - First-line supervisors of retail sales workers: high school diploma or equivalent, although many employers require higher education levels.

SCHEDULING POLICIES¹⁷

- **Federal:** The Schedules that Work Act. Introduced in July 2014 with two sponsors and 27 co-sponsors in the House, plus two Senate sponsors. Re-introduced in July 2015 with three Senate sponsors (Warren (D-MA), Murray (D-WA) and Murphy (D-CT)), two House sponsors (DeLauro (D-CT) and Scott (D-VA)) and 75 co-sponsors in the House and Senate.
- **State:** One state has passed scheduling legislation (VT); legislation has been introduced in 13 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- **Local:** Three cities have passed or proposed scheduling legislation: San Francisco Retail Workers Bill of Rights (enacted in 2015); Minneapolis, MN, and Albuquerque, NM (both proposed).

¹ Economic News Release, Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, Table 3. Employment by major industry sector, 2002, 2012, and projected 2022, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t03.htm>, accessed November 24, 2015.

² Ibid.

³ "Occupational Employment and Wages - May 2014," BLS, US Department of Labor, released March 25, 2015, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ocwage.pdf>, accessed November 24, 2015.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2014*, BLS report 1057, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2015.

⁶ Current Population Survey Household Data Annual Averages, Table 11: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>, accessed November 24, 2015.

⁷ May 2014 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates--United States, Occupational Employment Statistics, BLS, US Department of Labor, http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#41-0000, accessed November 24, 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Stephanie Luce and Naoki Fujita, *Discounted Jobs: How Retailers Sell Workers Short*, The Retail Action Project in collaboration with the City University of New York Murphy Institute, 2012.

¹⁰ Retail Sales Workers, Occupational Outlook Handbook, BLS, US Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/sales/retail-sales-workers.htm#tab-3>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹¹ Claire McKenna, "Data Points: A Look at Involuntary Part-Time Work in Retail," National Employment Law Project, March 4, 2015, <http://www.nelp.org/blog/data-points-a-look-at-involuntary-part-time-work-in-retail/>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹² Susan J. Lambert, Peter J. Fugiel, and Julia R. Henly, *Schedule Unpredictability among Early Career Workers in the US Labor Market: A National Snapshot* (executive summary), University of Chicago, 2014, https://ssascholars.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/einet/files/lambert.fugiel.henly_executive_summary_b_0.pdf, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹³ Economic News Release, Table 3: Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by occupation and industry, BLS, US Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t03.htm>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹⁴ Retail Sales Workers, Occupational Outlook Handbook, BLS, US Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/sales/retail-sales-workers.htm#tab-3>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹⁵ Cashiers, Occupational Outlook Handbook, BLS, US Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/sales/cashiers.htm>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹⁶ Material Recording Clerks, Occupational Outlook Handbook, BLS, US Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/material-recording-clerks.htm>, accessed November 24, 2015.

¹⁷ A National Repository of Resources on Job Scheduling Policy, CLASP, <http://www.clasp.org/issues/work-life-and-job-quality/scheduling-resources>, accessed November 24, 2015.