



Small Business Statistics 2026: Canada and US Counts

Get a business phone number with a simple auto attendant menu from Auto Attendant. A caller picks who they need and the call rings that person's own mobile, so nobody on your team has to publish a personal number.

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About these figures

Figures as of October 2026. This is an educational summary of official statistics, not legal, tax or financial advice.

Small business numbers get quoted constantly, often without a date or a definition. This page pulls the newest official counts for Canada and the United States, states the reference date for each one, and explains why the two countries' headline numbers can't be lined up side by side.

We used only government sources: Statistics Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the US Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy (SBA Advocacy), the US Census Bureau and, for phone lines, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Where we did the arithmetic ourselves, we say so.

The short answer

Figure	Number	Reference date	Source
Canada, employer business locations	1,366,418 (about 1.37 million)	June 2026	Statistics Canada
Canada, non-employer business locations (revenue over \$30,000 or incorporated)	3,782,386 (about 3.78 million)	June 2026	Statistics Canada
Canada, small employer businesses (1-99 employees, enterprise level)	1,079,188 (98.2% of employer businesses)	December 2024	ISED
US, small businesses (under 500 employees, includes no-employee firms)	36,207,130 (99.9% of firms)	2022 data, published February 2026	SBA Advocacy
US, nonemployer businesses	31,985,874	2024	Census Bureau

Sources for each row are linked in the sections below.

Who counts as "small" in each country

Canada (ISED). A business is counted at the enterprise level and classified by paid employees. Small means 1 to 99 paid employees, medium means 100 to 499, large means 500 or more. Micro-enterprises are those with 1 to 4 employees. Enterprises without paid employees "are not generally included" in ISED's publication ([ISED, Key Small Business Statistics 2025](#)).

Canada (Statistics Canada). The semi-annual Canadian Business Counts list locations, not companies. A retail chain with 10 stores and a head office is counted 11 times ([Statistics Canada, table 33-10-1174-01](#)). Employer status means the business filed payroll remittances with the Canada Revenue Agency at some point in the previous 12 months ([The Daily, 14 August 2026](#)).

United States (SBA Advocacy). For research, a small business is "an independent business having fewer than 500 employees." That definition includes businesses with no employees ([SBA Advocacy FAQ, February 2026](#)). The SBA's industry size standards for contracting and loan programs are a separate thing and vary by industry.

Canada by the numbers

Newest headline: June 2026

Statistics Canada's June 2026 release, published 14 August 2026, counted 1.37 million employer businesses and 3.78 million non-employer businesses with annual revenues above \$30,000 ([The Daily](#)). The underlying table notes that the non-employer count also takes in incorporated businesses below that revenue line ([table 33-10-1175-01](#)).

The detailed table breaks employer locations down by employee count ([table 33-10-1174-01](#)). The percentages are our calculation:

Employees	Employer locations, June 2026	Share (our calculation)
1-4	773,013	56.6%
5-9	246,534	18.0%
10-19	167,179	12.2%
20-49	113,321	8.3%
50-99	38,945	2.9%
100-499	23,937	1.8%
500+	3,489	0.3%
Total	1,366,418	100%

Locations with 1 to 99 employees add up to 1,338,992, or 98.0% of employer locations. Statistics Canada adds two warnings. Don't use these size ranges to estimate total employees, and don't read the counts as a time series, because changes in method can move the numbers ([table 33-10-1174-01](#)). So the gap between December 2025's 3.67 million non-employers ([The Daily, 13 February 2026](#)) and June 2026's 3.78 million shouldn't be reported as growth.

By province, June 2026

Business locations by province, from the two June 2026 tables ([with employees](#); [without employees](#)):

Province or territory	Employer locations	Non-employer locations
Ontario	511,212	1,568,908
Quebec	279,405	760,473
British Columbia	218,192	622,918
Alberta	180,659	456,486
Manitoba	44,135	102,764
Saskatchewan	43,184	117,088
Nova Scotia	33,100	65,656
New Brunswick	26,601	40,314
Newfoundland and Labrador	18,736	27,507
Prince Edward Island	6,865	13,297
Yukon	1,979	4,129
Northwest Territories	1,599	2,160
Nunavut	751	686
Canada	1,366,418	3,782,386

Enterprise view: ISED, December 2024

To count companies instead of locations, use ISED's Key Small Business Statistics 2025. It is still the newest edition; the page was last modified 23 April 2026. As of December 2024 it counted 1,099,521 employer businesses ([ISED](#)):

- 1,079,188 small (98.2%)
- 16,953 medium (1.5%)
- 3,380 large (0.3%)
- 649,780 micro-enterprises with 1-4 employees (59.1%). Add the 5-9 group and the share reaches 77.3%, so "more than three out of four Canadian businesses have 1-9 employees."

Ontario (410,154) and Quebec (228,622) hold more than half of Canada's small employer businesses. British Columbia had 170,512 ([ISED](#)).

The US by the numbers

SBA Advocacy's *Frequently Asked Questions About Small Business*, published 3 February 2026, is the standard source ([SBA Advocacy](#)). Its figures ([PDF](#)):

- 36,207,130 small businesses, 99.9% of all firms
- 29,811,495 (82.3%) have no employees (nonemployer firms)
- 6,395,635 (17.7%) have paid employees (employer firms)
- 21,041 large businesses
- Nonemployer firms nearly doubled, from 15.4 million in 1997 to 29.8 million in 2022

The FAQ draws on the Census Bureau's Statistics of U.S. Businesses (SUSB) and Nonemployer Statistics (NES), both for 2022. SUSB's latest data year is still 2022 ([Census SUSB](#)).

NES has moved on. On 29 September 2026 the Census Bureau published 2024 data ([Census NES](#)). The 2024 national table counts 31,985,874 nonemployer establishments with total receipts of about \$1.86 trillion ([Census, NES 2024 table](#)). Of these, 27,644,187 are individual proprietorships. NES covers businesses with no paid employees that are subject to federal income tax and have receipts of \$1,000 or more (\$1 or more in construction) ([Census, About NES](#)).

Don't add the 2024 NES count to the 2022 employer count to get a "2024 total." The years differ and SBA hasn't published a combined update. Until it does, 36.2 million (2022 data) is the citable US total.

Why the two countries' counts don't compare

Question	Canada (ISED)	Canada (StatCan counts)	US (SBA Advocacy)
Unit counted	Enterprise	Location	Firm
No-employee businesses	Generally excluded	Separate count, revenue over \$30,000 or incorporated	Included (82.3% of the total)
"Small" ceiling	99 employees	Not defined; size bands only	Under 500 employees
Newest reference date	December 2024	June 2026	2022 data

The headline "36.2 million US vs 1.1 million Canada" mostly reflects what is being counted. A useful example: the US NES table has 12,681,205 nonemployers with receipts of \$25,000 or more (our sum of its receipt-size rows). That is still not comparable to Canada's 3.78 million non-employers, because the thresholds, currencies and counting units all differ ([Census, NES 2024 table](#); [Statistics Canada](#)). In the US table, 7,176,486 nonemployers (22.4%, our calculation) reported receipts under \$5,000.

To compare employer businesses only, use ISED's 1.10 million (December 2024) against SBA's 6.4 million small employer firms (2022). Give both reference years, and note that ISED's "small" stops at 99 employees while SBA's goes to 499.

Employment and economic weight

United States. Small businesses employ 62.3 million people, or 45.9% of private-sector workers. They account for 43.5% of GDP and pay 38.7% of private-sector payroll ([SBA Advocacy](#)). From January 1995 to December 2024 they created 20.7 million net new jobs, 61% of the total ([SBA FAQ PDF](#)).

Canada. In 2024, small businesses employed 5.8 million people, 46.6% of the private-sector workforce. SMEs as a whole employed 63.6% (8.0 million). In 2022, small businesses produced 33.2% of private-sector GDP and medium-sized businesses 14.0%. Those GDP shares leave out public administration, real estate and rental and leasing, and management of companies ([ISED](#)).

When you quote these figures, include the year. Canada's employment share is for 2024 and its GDP share for 2022. The US figures come from different underlying years.

The micro-business majority

Both countries are dominated by very small operations:

- In Canada, 56.6% of employer locations have 1-4 employees (June 2026, our calculation), and 59.1% of employer enterprises are micro-enterprises (December 2024, ISED).
- In the US, 82.3% of small businesses have no employees at all (SBA, 2022 data).

Editorial inference, not from the sources: a business with one to four people usually doesn't have anyone whose job is answering the phone. The owner or a staff member takes calls between other work, or lets them go to a mobile or voicemail. That is why practical phone questions for these firms are about routing and coverage, not call-centre features. For a sizing walkthrough, see [how many phone lines a small business needs](#), and for the cost side, the [missed-call cost calculator](#). None of the statistics above measure how small businesses use the phone.

What official data says (and doesn't) about business phone use

We found no government source in either country that reports phone reliance by business size. Here is what we checked.

FCC, United States. The FCC's *Voice Telephone Services: Status as of June 30, 2025*, published May 2026, counts phone connections, not businesses ([FCC](#)):

- 78 million wireline retail voice connections in June 2025. 53 million (67%) were business connections, which the FCC's tables label "Business & Government-grade."
- Of those 53 million, 81.5% were non-ILEC interconnected VoIP subscriptions, meaning internet-based phone service from providers other than the traditional local phone company.

- From June 2024 to June 2025, business-grade wireline connections were roughly flat (52,775,000 to 52,584,000). Consumer-grade connections fell from 30,110,000 to 25,819,000 (our percentage: about -14%).
- Mobile subscriptions (395 million) aren't split between business and personal use.

Editorial inference: Businesses and governments still hold two-thirds of US wireline phone connections, and that base held steady while household landlines shrank. This shows business demand for phone lines, not how much any particular small business depends on calls.

Statistics Canada. The 2023 Survey of Digital Technology and Internet Use reports technology use by enterprise size. Its list of technologies covers software, cloud, AI and others but has no telephone or VoIP item (table 22-10-0117-01).

CRTC, Canada. The CRTC's *Canadian Telecommunications Market Report 2026* (2024 data) does not split phone lines or voice revenue between business and household customers (CRTC). Its closest figures:

- Wireline "local and access" revenue, which covers local calling and access to the public telephone network for homes and businesses together, was \$4.9 billion in 2024, down 4.8% from 2023 (report page 4). Its share of telecom revenue fell from 11.0% in 2020 to 8.3% in 2024 (page 5).
- Data and private line services, which the CRTC defines as services sold to business customers, brought in \$2.7 billion (down 8.3%) and \$0.8 billion (down 8.6%) in 2024 (page 4; definitions, pages 53-54). These are network links between locations, not phone lines.

Neither figure says how many Canadian businesses rely on a phone line.

How to cite and refresh this page

Dataset	Newest edition (as of 28 October 2026)	Usual cadence
StatCan Canadian Business Counts	June 2026, released 14 August 2026	June and December counts, released in August and February (The Daily)
ISED Key Small Business Statistics	2025 edition (December 2024 counts)	Annual; next date not announced
SBA Advocacy FAQ	3 February 2026 (2022 data)	Annual
Census NES	2024 data, released 29 September 2026	Annual
Census SUSB	2022 data	Annual
FCC Voice Telephone Services	June 2025 data, published May 2026	Periodic
CRTC Canadian Telecommunications Market Report	2026 edition (2024 data)	Annual

Citation checklist:

1. Name the publisher, not a blog that quoted it.
2. Give the reference date (for example "June 2026") as well as the publication date.
3. Say whether the figure counts locations, enterprises or firms.
4. Say whether no-employee businesses are included.
5. Label your own sums and percentages as calculations.

The next Statistics Canada counts (December 2026 reference) should follow the February pattern in early 2027.

FAQ

How many small businesses are there in Canada? ISED counted 1,079,188 small employer businesses (1-99 employees) in December 2024, 98.2% of all employer businesses. Statistics Canada's newer location-based count shows 1.37 million employer locations and 3.78 million non-employer locations in June 2026.

How many small businesses are there in the US? 36,207,130, according to SBA Advocacy's February 2026 FAQ (2022 data). 29.8 million of them have no employees. Census's 2024 data counts 31,985,874 nonemployer businesses, but there's no official combined total for 2024 yet.

What counts as a small business? In Canada (ISED), 1 to 99 paid employees. In US research (SBA Advocacy), an independent business with fewer than 500 employees, including those with none.

Are most small businesses one-person operations? In the US, yes: 82.3% of small businesses have no employees. Canada's main small-business figures exclude no-employee businesses. Among employers, about 59% have 1-4 employees.

Auto Attendant provides a business number with a simple caller menu for Canadian and US small businesses; see the [Canada page](#).

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/key-small-business-statistics/key-small-business-statistics-2025>
2. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310117401>
3. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260814/dq260814d-eng.htm>
4. https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/FINAL_FAQsAboutSmallBusiness_2026_012826.pdf
5. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310117501>
6. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260213/dq260213c-eng.htm>
7. <https://advocacy.sba.gov/2026/02/03/frequently-asked-questions-about-small-business-2026>
8. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/susb.html>
9. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nonemployer-statistics.html>
10. <https://data.census.gov/table/NONEMP2024.NS00NONEMP>
11. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nonemployer-statistics/about.html>

12. <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-421558A1.pdf>
13. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2210011701>
14. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2026/crtc/BC9-43-2026-eng.pdf

THE PUBLISHER

About Auto Attendant

Auto Attendant gives a small business one phone number and a recorded menu that sends each caller to the right person. The call rings the mobile that person already carries, using their normal dialler and their normal mobile plan. Pricing is a single flat monthly fee for the whole company rather than a charge for each user, and there is no app, desk phone or hardware to install.

One number, one menu, the phones you already own

A caller dials the business number, hears a short greeting and chooses an option. Each option can ring one mobile, ring several at once so whoever is free answers first, or try people one after another in a set order. There is no limit on how many people sit on the receiving end, because nobody is billed per seat. Setup is done by the owner in a few minutes: pick a number, write the greeting, and point each option at a mobile.

What it deliberately is not

An auto attendant routes a call; it does not answer one. Nobody at Auto Attendant speaks to callers, and no AI stands in for a receptionist. A business that wants its calls handled, messages taken and appointments booked wants an answering service, which is a different product at a different price. A business that needs call recording, queues, agent dashboards or CRM integration wants a contact centre platform. Auto Attendant is for the case where the call should simply reach the right pocket.

Keeping personal numbers off the internet

The business number is the only number a caller ever sees. Personal mobile numbers are never displayed and never given out, which is what lets an owner put a number on a website, an invoice, a van or a Google Business Profile without handing a personal line to everyone who finds it. An existing advertised number can be ported across and kept, and the old line keeps working while the port is in progress.

Work with Auto Attendant

Visit [Auto Attendant](#) to see [how it works](#), [how it compares](#) to a personal mobile, Google Voice and a full phone platform, and the current [pricing](#).

Telephone number portability, emergency calling and caller-ID rules differ by country and change over time. Articles published here describe general practice and cite primary regulator and carrier sources; they are not a guarantee of any timeline, and they are not legal or regulatory advice for a specific business.

Website: <https://autoattendant.io>

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