



Missouri Economy Indicators

Online Microbusiness Trends

VOL. 6, ISSUE 11, 15 SEP 2025

Online microbusinesses represent a growing segment of entrepreneurship. These small businesses can bring new dollars into communities, particularly those with access to high-speed internet. Traditional data sources from the U.S. Census Bureau or the Bureau of Labor Statistics cover a range of business characteristics, but microbusiness activities are more complex to define and track over time. With the help of domain name provider [GoDaddy](#), however, timely data on more than 20 million U.S. online microbusinesses can shed light on where these entrepreneurs are emerging and growing.

A 2025 national survey of online microbusinesses found that most (65%) are run by a sole entrepreneur, whereas 23% employ two to four workers. Besides operating online, one in three also has a physical storefront or office space they rent. The most common industries for these microbusinesses include professional services such as health care or accounting, as well as consulting. Although four in 10 owners wished to stay a solo entrepreneur, nearly half aspired to expand their business with employees and physical locations.

Microbusiness Density Highest in Metro and Recreational Areas of Missouri

Missouri had nearly 275,000 active microbusinesses in early 2025, equating to 5.7 microbusinesses for every 100 adult Missourians, up from a density of 5.5 in 2020. Missouri's metro counties had higher microbusiness concentrations (6.7) than nonmetro areas (2.9). A lack of rural broadband access is a contributing factor to this gap, as is the prevalence of higher-tech firms in larger cities.

Using U.S. Department of Agriculture [economic dependency](#) county classifications, Missouri's recreation-dependent communities showed the highest concentrations of microbusinesses. Mining- and farm-dependent counties had the lowest microbusiness concentration. These business density patterns mirror those of the U.S.

Missouri Microbusiness Density

Businesses per 100 Adults by County Type

By Area	Missouri Q1 2020	Missouri Q1 2025	5-Yr. % Change
Total	5.5	5.7	5%
Metro Counties	6.4	6.7	4%
Nonmetro Counties	2.7	2.9	6%
By County Economic Type			
Recreation-Dependent	6.7	6.9	4%
Diversified	5.9	6.2	5%
Fed./State Gov.-Dependent	5.3	5.4	2%
Manufacturing-Dependent	3.0	3.2	7%
Farm-Dependent	2.0	2.2	13%
Mining-Dependent	1.8	1.6	-8%

Source: MU Extension graphic using GoDaddy Microbusiness county data comparing the first quarters of 2020 and 2025.

Microbusinesses have increased across much of Missouri since early 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving technologies encouraged more online entrepreneurship. Statewide, microbusiness density rose 5% over the past five years, with the fastest gains occurring in nonmetro areas, particularly farm-dependent communities (up 13%) and manufacturing-dependent counties (up 7%). Despite these higher growth rates, most nonmetro areas still lag metro counties in the overall concentration of online microbusinesses.

Microbusiness Density

Missouri's microbusiness density—the number of businesses per 100 adults—was 5.7 in the first quarter of 2025. Although this is an increase from 5.5 microbusinesses per 100 adults in 2020, it is still significantly lower than the U.S. average (8.6) at the beginning of this year.

Microbusiness density was higher in Missouri's metro areas, especially in densely populated counties such as St. Louis (9.9) and St. Charles (7.8). However, the nonmetro county of Taney, home of Branson, had the second-highest microbusiness density in the state (9.3), followed by Camden County (9.0) at Lake of the Ozarks. Both counties have recreation-dependent economies. Farm-dependent counties in northern Missouri had much lower microbusiness levels, as did southeastern Missouri counties, many of which have poor access to high-speed internet services.

As shown in the table on Page 1, recreation-dependent counties are emerging as hotspots for online microbusinesses, a trend evident not only in Missouri but also in similar communities nationwide. However, the trend of increasing entrepreneurial density in tourism-focused economies expands beyond online microbusinesses to the broader self-employed business community (see notes for details). Recreational-dependent communities often benefit from natural amenities, and when paired with access to health care and reliable high-speed internet, they can be attractive year-round destinations for retirees and remote workers.

Additional Notes and Resources

- Microbusinesses are typically run by sole entrepreneurs with no additional employees. Termed “nonemployer businesses,” these critical entrepreneurial ventures are explored in a recent, interactive analysis of U.S. counties, [Nonemployer Businesses and the Geography of Self-Employment](#).
- Missouri [Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) offer free resources and counseling to Missourians interested in scaling online microbusinesses into larger operations.

[All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available online.](#)
[Sign up for the Exceed newsletter.](#)

Author: Alan Spell, Assistant Extension Professor, alan.spell@missouri.edu

Missouri Microbusinesses per 100 Adults, Q1 2025

