



Small Businesses in the Ship and Boat Building Industry

December 2025

At a Glance

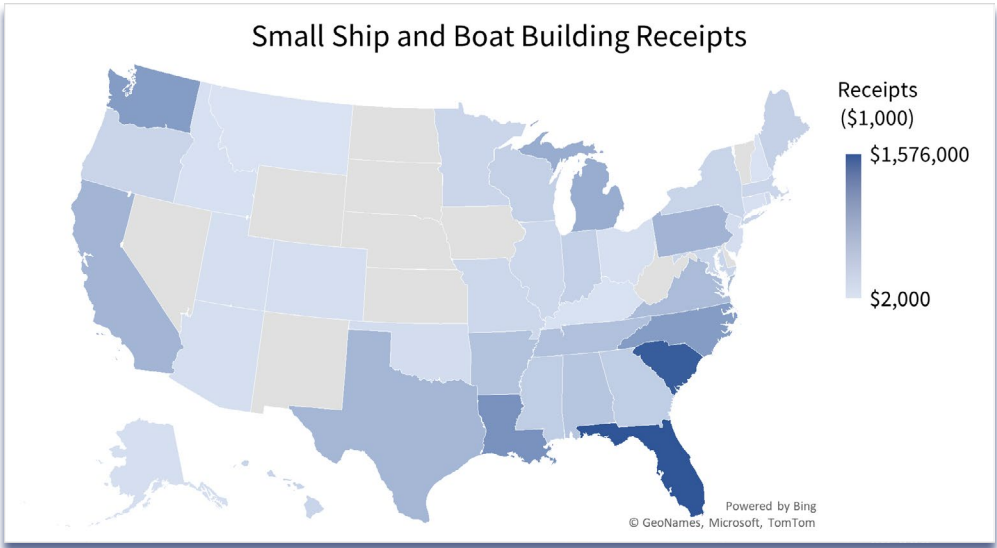
There are 1,213 small ship and boat builders in the U.S., employing about 50,000 workers, generating \$14.7 billion in revenue, and paying nearly \$3 billion in payroll. Small businesses represent over 96 percent of firms in the ship and boat building and employ over a third of industry employees.

	Total Firms	Small Firms	Small Firm Shares
Firms	1,255	1,213	96.7%
Employment	146,282	49,937	34.1%
Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	\$10,212,074	\$2,968,601	29.1%
Receipts (\$1,000)	\$47,517,737	\$14,717,630	31.0%

Note: Census Bureau SUSB 2022, NAICS 33661, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/econ/susb/2022-susb-annual.html>

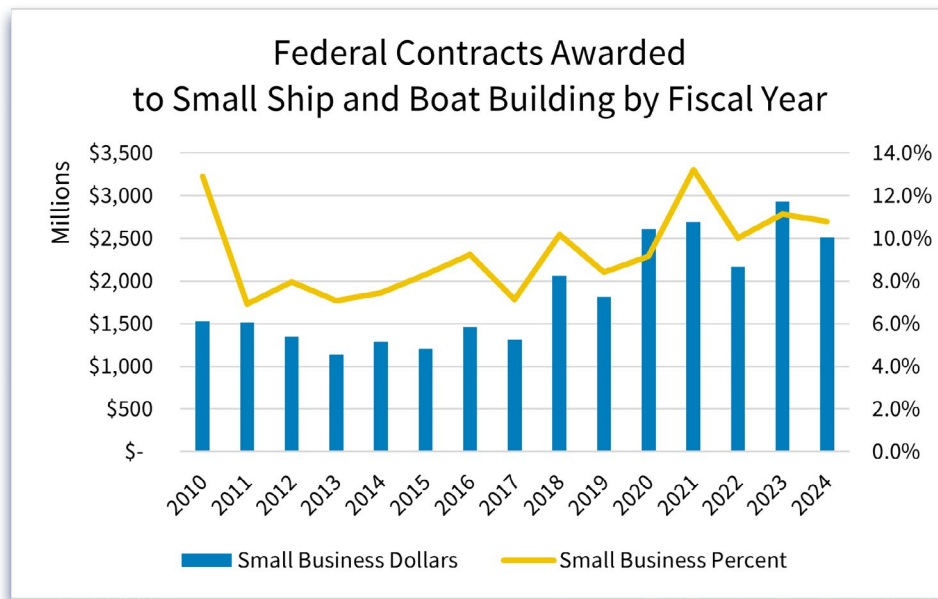
Geographic Distribution

Small ship and boat manufacturing are most prevalent in coastal states, particularly in the Southeast. Small ship and boat builders operate in 39 states, and their revenues are concentrated in Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana.



Federal Contracting Trends

Small ship and boat builders are important suppliers to the federal government, receiving over \$2.5 billion in federal contracts in FY24, which has grown by 8.8% since 2016. While small businesses account for 31% of industry receipts, they only receive about 11% of federal contract dollars.



Note: Federal contract data within the combined 33661 NAICS via [Small Business Data HUB](#).

Regulatory Impacts

Small ship and boat builders face regulatory burdens from regulations governing vessel speed and classification, port operations, national security, manufacturing, trade, workplace safety, environmental protection, and more.

The Office of Advocacy works on behalf of all small businesses to cut federal government red tape so they can grow their business.

Success Story

In 2022, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) proposed a costly new rule that would have expanded vessel speed restrictions in parts of the Atlantic Ocean, directly affecting boat operators and indirectly affecting small boat manufacturers and other small entities.¹ In 2025, after Advocacy submitted a public comment letter representing small business views², NOAA withdrew the proposed rule, **saving affected small businesses \$187.1 million** in avoided compliance costs over 10 years.

Get Involved

In 2025, Advocacy set up a Red Tape Hotline to rapidly respond to small businesses' regulatory pain points.

If you are facing a regulatory issue, please email Advocacy today at RedTape@sba.gov or call the hotline at 800-827-5722 and select option 3.

¹ Amendments to the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule, 87 Fed. Reg. 46921, (August 1, 2022).

² U.S. Small Bus. Admin., Off. of Advoc., Comments on Amendments to the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule (Oct. 31, 2022), <https://advocacy.sba.gov/2022/11/01/advocacy-submits-comment-to-nmfs-on-amendments-to-the-north-atlantic-right-whale-vessel-strike-reduction-rule/>.