

Market and Industry Statistics (2024–2026)

FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) data confirms continued firearm purchasing activity at historically elevated levels. Total background checks reached approximately 31.6 million in 2022, 29.9 million in 2023, 28.1 million in 2024, and 26.1 million in 2025. While these figures represent moderation from pandemic-era highs, they significantly exceed pre-2020 averages, indicating sustained firearm ownership and service demand.¹

The National Shooting Sports Foundation-adjusted NICS data (individual purchasers vs number of actual firearms purchased) shows retail firearm background checks totaling approximately 15.8 million in 2023 and 15.2 million in 2024, representing more than 60 consecutive months exceeding one million retail checks and indicating long-term durability in the firearms marketplace.²

According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the U.S. firearms and ammunition industry generated an economic impact of approximately \$91.7 billion in 2024 and supported nearly 383,000 full-time equivalent jobs nationwide. Industry growth since 2008 exceeds 375%, indicating sustained economic activity within the sector³

ATF and NSSF manufacturing data show domestic firearm production totaling approximately 13.5 million units in 2022 and 8.5 million units in 2023, reflecting normalization following pandemic-related demand. Despite moderated production, industry estimates indicate more than 500 million firearms are in civilian circulation, increasing long-term demand for professional maintenance, repair, and customization services.⁴

2026 Outlook

Looking ahead to 2026, industry indicators support a stable and sustainable outlook for the gunsmithing profession. While firearm sales have normalized from pandemic-era peaks, NICS and NSSF-adjusted background check data confirm continued historically high activity levels supported by a growing national firearms inventory.

Concurrently, the firearms and ammunition industry continues to contribute more than \$90 billion annually to the U.S. economy and supports approximately 380,000 jobs, reinforcing the sector's continued economic significance. As manufacturing output has normalized, the large installed base of firearms continues to support demand for maintenance, repair, compliance, customization, and resale preparation - functions requiring professional Gunsmith expertise. Continued demand for firearms maintenance, repair, customization and related services support favorable employment opportunities for trained Gunsmiths

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References

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). *National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Firearm Checks: Month/Year Reports, 2022–2025*.

² National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). NSSF-Adjusted FBI NICS® Firearm Background Check Reports, 2023–2024.

³ National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). *Firearm and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact Report, 2024–2025* Editions.

⁴ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). *Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports (AFMER), 2022–2023*; National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). *Firearm Production in the United States, 2025* Edition.