

Sports ETA

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

REPORT

Spectator Sports Tourism

2024



TOURISM
ECONOMICS

AN OXFORD ECONOMICS COMPANY

Northstar 
MEETINGS GROUP



Letter from Sports ETA President and CEO John David

Dear Sports Events and Tourism Industry Colleagues,

I am honored to introduce the *2024 Sports ETA State of the Industry Report: Spectator Sports Tourism*. This report represents another critical milestone in our continued efforts to provide meaningful insights and support to you—our valued members and partners shaping the future of sports tourism.

This year's study marks an important evolution in our reporting, as it focuses exclusively on the economic power of spectator sports tourism—a segment that plays a vital role in tourism growth, economic impact, and community vibrancy. I am deeply grateful to our research partners at Tourism Economics and to Northstar Meetings Group, whose continued support and sponsorship have been instrumental in delivering this year's analysis.

The 2024 report reveals staggering results: \$47.1 billion in direct spending by spectators attending sporting events across the country, generating a total economic impact of \$114.4 billion and supporting nearly 665,000 jobs. The reach of this impact extends to state and local tax revenues totaling \$8.5 billion, as well as 109.7 million non-local attendees, 63.5 million of whom stayed overnight to experience the games and communities they love.

As the United States prepares to host a historic lineup of global sporting events—including the FIFA Club World Cup in 2025, the FIFA World Cup in 2026, and the Summer Olympics in 2028—this report sets a new benchmark for understanding and optimizing the value of fans traveling to see their favorite teams and athletes in action.

With this expanded research, we aim not only to quantify the profound economic impact of spectator sports tourism but also to equip you with the data and insights needed to advocate, plan, and thrive in the years ahead. From transportation and lodging to retail and recreation, the ripple effects of sports fandom are real—and your role in hosting these experiences is more important than ever.

Thank you for your continued commitment to elevating our the sports events and tourism industry. It is your passion, dedication, and leadership that is the heart beat of our association.

Yours in Sport,

John David
President and CEO
Sports Events & Tourism Association

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INTRODUCTION

Spectator sports* are an important part of local communities. Not only do they provide intangible benefits such as creating a community brand, enhancing the resident quality of life, and providing community giving programs, but they also generate economic benefits as attendees travel to watch spectator sports in-person.

While in the local community, spectator sports travelers spend money at the sports venue and also at businesses and establishments in the local community, including hotels, restaurants, retailers, and entertainment/recreation venues.

To quantify the economic significance of spectator sports tourism, Tourism Economics prepared a comprehensive model using multiple primary and secondary data sources.

Impact modeling was based on an IMPLAN Input-Output (I-O) model for the U.S. economy. The results of the study show the scope of spectator sports tourism in terms of direct spectator sports traveler spending, as well as total economic impacts, including employment, household income, and fiscal (tax) impacts.

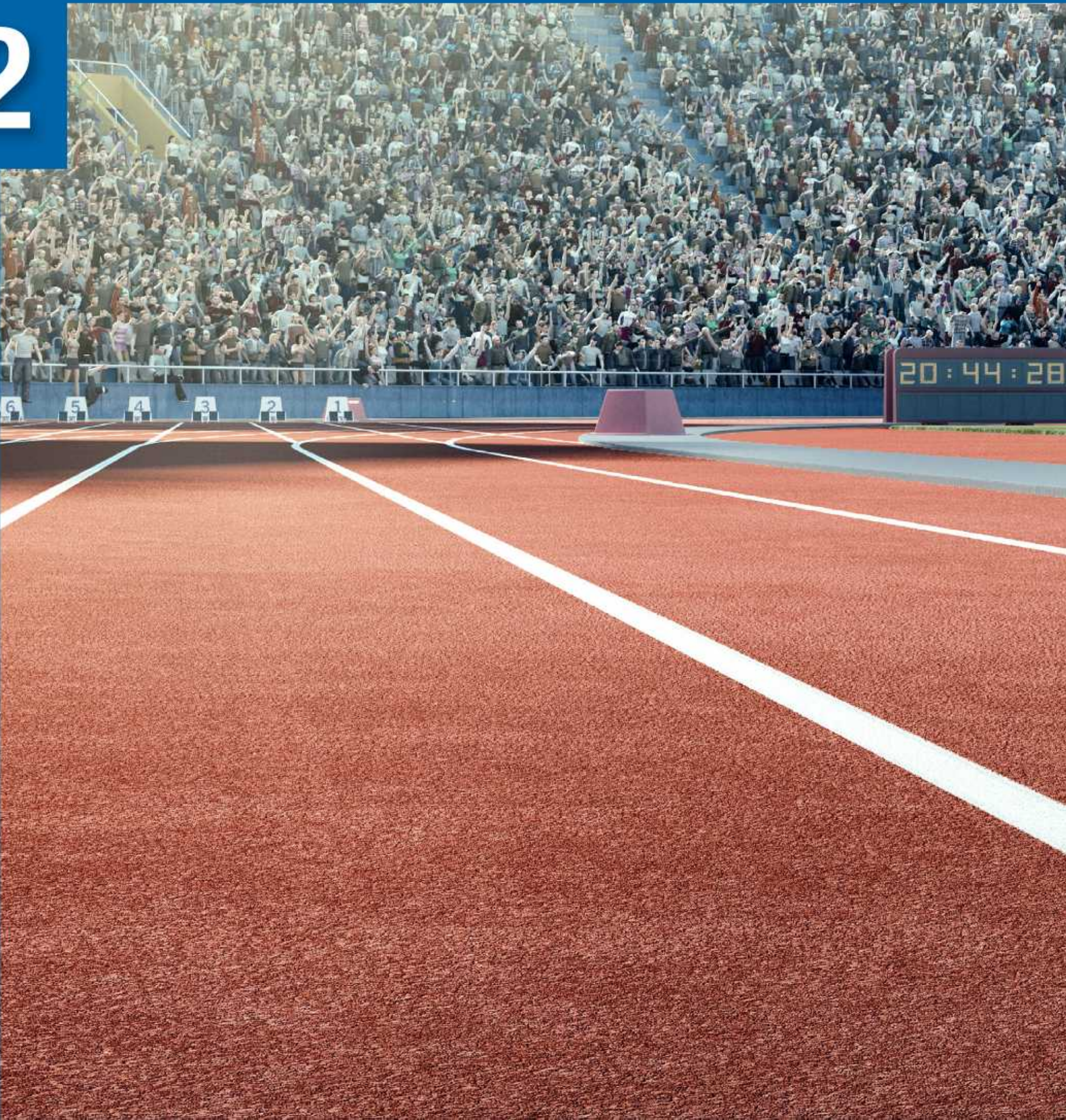
**For purposes of this report, "spectator sports" includes minor league sports, professional sports, and collegiate regular season games. Adult and youth amateur events and collegiate tournaments are excluded from the analysis.*

INCLUDES

- ▶ Minor League Sports
- ▶ Professional Sports
- ▶ Collegiate Regular Season Games

EXCLUDES

- ❌ Adult and Youth Amateur Events
- ❌ Collegiate Tournaments



An estimated 58% of all spectator sports travelers spent the night in the event destination, which generated **42.7 million** room nights in 2024.

KEY FINDINGS

Direct Impacts

Spectator sports tourism generated significant economic impacts in the U.S. as spectator sports travelers spent money while attending a collegiate regular season game, minor league game, or professional game in-person.

The spectator sports travelers spent money at the sports venues on food and beverage, merchandise, parking, and tickets, as well as at off-site establishments during their stay, including at local restaurants, hotels, retailers, and recreation/entertainment venues.

In 2024, 109.7 million spectator sports travelers – including 1.8 million that originated from international locations – spent \$47.1 billion on spectator sports tourism.



109.7M

Spectator Sports Traveler Volume



\$47.1B

Spectator Sports Traveler Spending



Total direct spending associated with spectator sports tourism amounted to **\$47.1 billion** in 2024.



Spectator sports tourism generated a total economic impact of **\$114.4 billion** and supported **665,000 total jobs** in 2024.

Total Economic Impacts

Spectator sports tourism's direct spending impact of \$47.1 billion generated a total economic impact of \$114.4 billion in the national economy, which supported 664,860 total jobs and \$8.5 billion in state and local tax revenues.



\$114.4 BILLION

Total Economic Impact of Spectator Sports Tourism

Summary Economic Impacts of Spectator Sports Tourism in 2024



\$47.1B

Direct
Spending
Impact



\$114.4B

Total
Economic
Impact



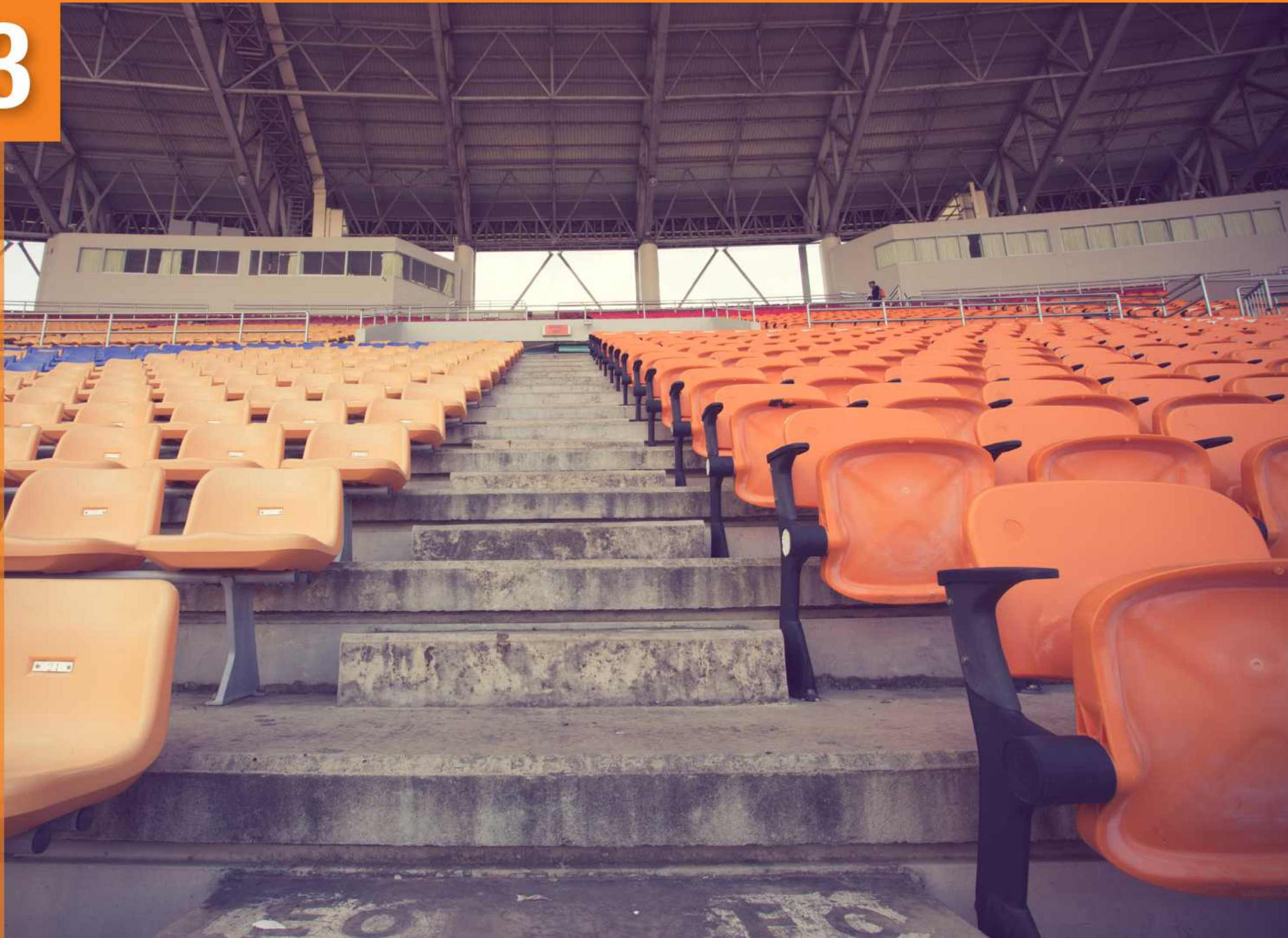
664,860

Total
Jobs
Generated



\$8.5B

Total
Tax
Revenues



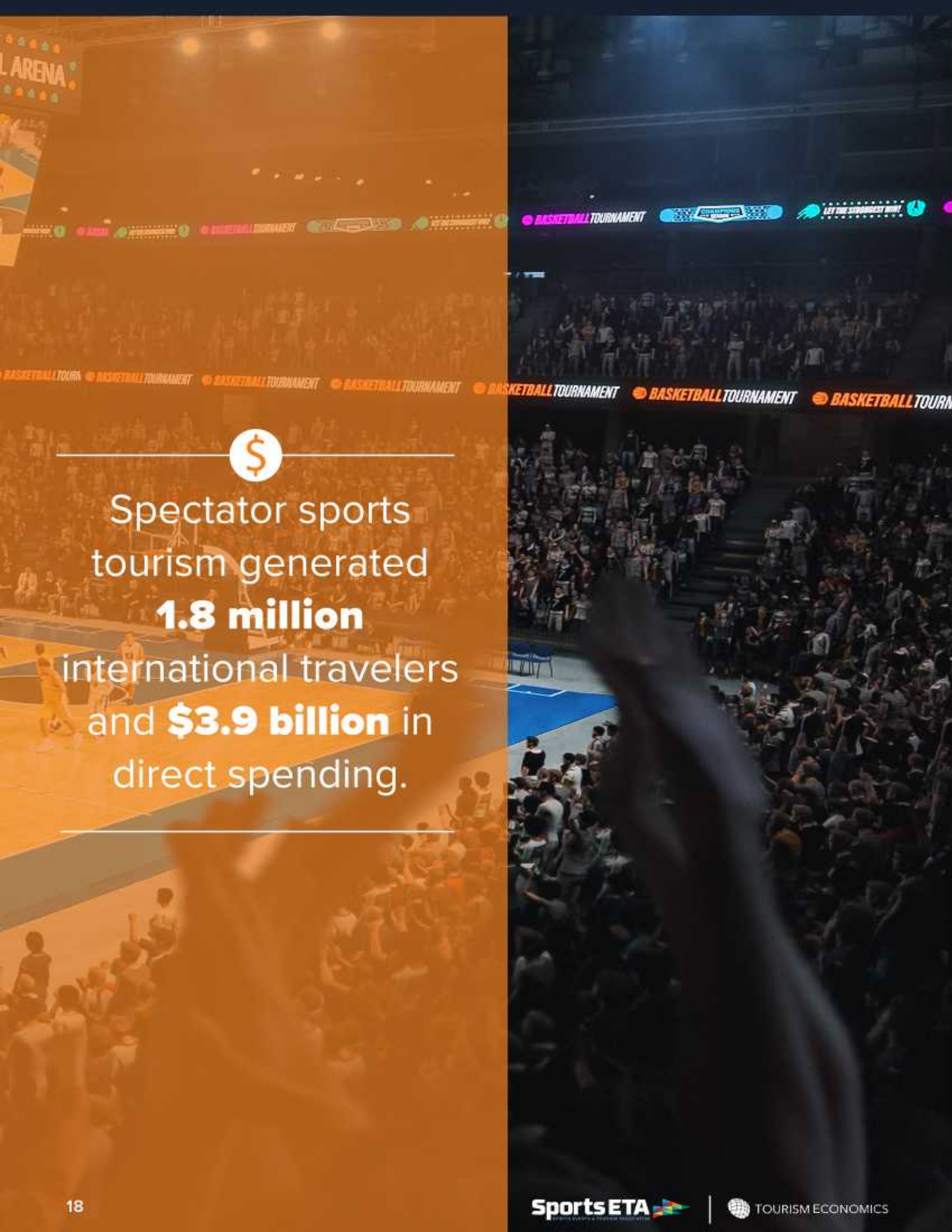
DIRECT IMPACTS

Spectator sports tourism generated \$47.1 billion in direct spending in the national economy in 2024 as 109.7 million attendees traveled to watch a professional, minor league, or collegiate sporting event in-person.

This section outlines spectator sports tourism's direct impacts, which ultimately serve as inputs for the economic impact model. The direct impacts were based on numerous data sources including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Sports attendance data:** publicly available attendance data from sports leagues, sports teams, the NCAA, and other organizations
- **Longwoods International:** traveler survey data, including spending and visitor profile characteristics for sports tourism nationwide
- **Mobile geolocation data:** anonymized mobile data for visitors attending events at stadiums, arenas, ballparks, and other sports venues
- **Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics:** employment and wage data, by industry
- **Bureau of Transportation Statistics:** U.S. domestic average itinerary fares
- **U.S. Travel Association:** domestic travel data
- **STR:** lodging data





Spectator sports
tourism generated
1.8 million
international travelers
and **\$3.9 billion** in
direct spending.

Sports Traveler Volume

Professional, minor league, and collegiate sports welcomed 109.7 million non-local attendees, which included 46.2 million day-trippers and 63.5 million visitors that spent the night in the host destination, including 1.8 million visitors that originated from international destinations.



Spectator sports attendees who lived within 50 miles of the respective sports venues were excluded from the analysis since spending by these local attendees would have occurred elsewhere in the local economy if they had not attended the sporting event. Therefore, the analysis only includes on-site and off-site spending by non-local attendees who traveled from more than 50 miles to attend the sporting event.

Non-local day trip attendees spent \$4.9 billion and non-local overnight attendees spent \$42.2 billion during their trip to watch the sporting event, resulting in a total of \$47.1 billion in spending by non-local spectator sports travelers in 2024.

The 1.8 million international spectator sports travelers spent \$3.9 billion of the \$47.1 billion total direct spending by non-local spectator sports travelers in 2024.

The \$47.1 billion includes spending at the venue – such as food and beverage, merchandise, parking, and tickets – as well as spending at businesses and establishments in the local economies of the sports venues, including local restaurants, hotels, retailers, and recreation / entertainment venues.





ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Tourism Economics calculated the economic impacts of spectator sports tourism's direct spending using regional Input-Output (I-O) model based on a customized IMPLAN (www.implan.com) model for the U.S. economy. IMPLAN is recognized as an industry standard in local-level I-O models.

An I-O model represents a profile of an economy by measuring the relationships among industries and consumers to track the flow of industry revenue to wages, profits, capital, taxes and suppliers. The supply chain is traced as dollars flow through the economy, representing indirect impacts. The model also calculates the induced impacts of spending. Induced impacts represent benefits to the economy as incomes earned as a result of direct spending are spent in the local economy, generating additional sales, jobs, taxes, and income.

The modeling process begins with aligning the direct expenditure measurements with the related sectors in the model (e.g. hotels, restaurants, retail, and recreation). The model is then run to trace the flow of these expenditures through the economy. In this process, the inter-relationships between consumers and industries generate each level of impact.

IMPLAN is particularly effective because it calculates these three levels of impact – direct, indirect, and induced – for a broad set of indicators. These include the following:

- Business sales (also called gross output)
- Household income (including wages and benefits)
- Employment
- Federal taxes
- State and local taxes

Economic Impact Framework

DIRECT IMPACTS



Spectator sports tourism contribution measured by non-local attendee spending on retail, lodging, transportation, dining, recreation and entertainment etc.

INDIRECT IMPACTS



Spectator sports tourism-related businesses purchase goods and services from other providers creating supply chain effects and engaging B2B goods and services

INDUCED IMPACTS



Employees of spectator sports tourism-related businesses spend wages throughout the wider economy, generating GDP, jobs and tax revenue

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT



SALES



GDP



JOBS



INCOME



TAXES

Direct, indirect, and induced impacts combine to equal the total economic impact

Economic Impacts - Business Sales

Spectator sports tourism generated a total economic impact of \$114.4 billion in 2024.

The \$47.1 billion in non-local spectator sports attendee spending generated \$30.6 billion in indirect expenditures (purchases of inputs from suppliers) and \$36.6 billion in induced expenditures (new consumption generated by household income impacts), resulting in a total economic impact of \$114.4 billion across the United States.

Summary Business Sales Impacts



The economic impact of spectator sports tourism amounted to **\$114.4 billion** in 2024.

Spectator Sports Tourism - Business Sales Impacts in 2024, by Industry (\$ millions)

	Direct Business Sales	Indirect Business Sales	Induced Business Sales	Total Business Sales
Total, all industries	\$47,139	\$30,638	\$36,602	\$114,380
By industry				
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	\$686	\$6,066	\$9,094	\$15,846
Recreation and Entertainment	\$10,813	\$1,499	\$505	\$12,817
Food & Beverage	\$9,050	\$973	\$2,116	\$12,140
Retail Trade	\$8,618	\$243	\$2,235	\$11,095
Business Services	\$0	\$6,899	\$3,702	\$10,602
Manufacturing	\$0	\$4,238	\$4,463	\$8,701
Lodging	\$6,950	\$109	\$347	\$7,406
Air Transport	\$6,515	\$101	\$280	\$6,896
Communications	\$0	\$2,838	\$2,287	\$5,124
Education and Health Care	\$0	\$193	\$4,360	\$4,554
Other Transport	\$1,035	\$2,268	\$1,116	\$4,419
Gasoline Stations	\$3,474	\$26	\$183	\$3,683
Wholesale Trade	\$0	\$1,431	\$2,044	\$3,475
Construction and Utilities	\$0	\$1,703	\$1,106	\$2,809
Personal Services	\$0	\$570	\$1,497	\$2,067
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining	\$0	\$897	\$758	\$1,655
Government	\$0	\$581	\$509	\$1,090

Source: Tourism Economics
Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.



Spectator sports tourism supported **664,860 total jobs** in the national economy.

Economic Impacts - Employment

Spectator sports tourism supported 664,860 part-time and full-time jobs in the local economy.

Non-local spectator sports attendee spending directly supported 357,039 full-time and part-time jobs. Indirect and induced impacts supported 134,087 indirect jobs and 173,733 induced jobs, resulting in a total employment impact of 664,860 total jobs.

The recreation and entertainment sector was the most-impacted industry with 122,439 total jobs, including 105,210 direct jobs and 17,229 indirect and induced jobs. The food and beverage industry followed with 121,991 total jobs.

Economic Impacts Attributable to Spectator Sports Tourism Employment Impacts in 2024, by Industry (part time & full-time jobs)

	Direct Emolvment	Indirect Emolvment	Induced Emolvment	Total Emolvment
Total, all industries	357,039	134,087	173,733	664,860
By industry				
Recreation and Entertainment	105,210	12,216	5,013	122,439
Food & Beverage	89,498	10,834	21,658	121,991
Retail Trade	62,055	1,715	17,186	80,956
Business Services	0	38,143	21,061	59,204
Lodging	53,506	786	2,696	56,988
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	1,868	22,734	21,651	46,253
Other Transport	13,936	20,078	8,774	42,787
Education and Health Care	0	1,863	36,011	37,875
Personal Services	0	5,043	16,197	21,240
Gasoline Stations	18,811	143	989	19,943
Manufacturing	0	6,352	7,326	13,678
Air Transport	12,155	189	522	12,867
Wholesale Trade	0	3,590	4,809	8,399
Communications	0	3,212	3,163	6,375
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining	0	2,445	3,125	5,569
Government	0	2,550	1,810	4,360
Construction and Utilities	0	2,194	1,742	3,937

Source: Tourism Economics

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Economic Impacts - Labor Income

Spectator sports tourism generated a total labor income impact of \$36.3 billion.

Non-local spectator sports attendee spending directly generated \$15.4 billion in direct labor income. Indirect and induced impacts generated \$9.6 billion in indirect labor income and \$11.4 billion in induced labor income, resulting in \$36.3 billion in total labor income.

The business services industry was the most-impacted industry with \$5.1 billion in total labor income, followed by the recreation and entertainment industry with \$5.0 billion in total labor income.

Economic Impacts Attributable to Spectator Sports Tourism Labor Income Impacts in 2024, by Industry (\$ millions)

	Direct Labor Income	Indirect Labor Income	Induced Labor Income	Total Labor Income
Total, all industries	\$15,360	\$9,598	\$11,350	\$36,308
By industry				
Business Services	\$0	\$3,345	\$1,801	\$5,146
Recreation and Entertainment	\$4,289	\$550	\$202	\$5,041
Food & Beverage	\$3,054	\$406	\$757	\$4,216
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	\$167	\$1,327	\$1,565	\$3,059
Retail Trade	\$2,195	\$76	\$726	\$2,997
Lodging	\$2,750	\$39	\$139	\$2,929
Education and Health Care	\$0	\$98	\$2,568	\$2,667
Other Transport	\$392	\$1,165	\$456	\$2,013
Air Transport	\$1,592	\$25	\$68	\$1,686
Manufacturing	\$0	\$543	\$628	\$1,171
Communications	\$0	\$608	\$527	\$1,136
Personal Services	\$0	\$311	\$799	\$1,110
Gasoline Stations	\$921	\$7	\$48	\$976
Wholesale Trade	\$0	\$394	\$533	\$927
Construction and Utilities	\$0	\$284	\$199	\$483
Government	\$0	\$269	\$189	\$458
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining	\$0	\$149	\$144	\$293

Source: Tourism Economics
Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.



Spectator sports
tourism generated
\$36.3 billion
in total
labor income.



Fiscal (Tax) Impacts

Spectator sports tourism generated a total tax impact of \$17.6 billion, including \$8.5 billion in state and local tax revenues.

Non-local spectator sports attendee spending generated a total fiscal (tax) impact of \$17.6 billion. The state governments collected \$4.5 billion and the local governments collected \$4.1 billion as a result of spectator sports tourism.

Fiscal (Tax) Impacts Attributable to Spectator Sports Tourism State and Local Tax Revenue in 2024 (\$ millions)

	State Taxes	Local Taxes	Total State & Local Taxes
Total taxes	\$4,455	\$4,078	\$8,533
Sales	\$2,678	\$622	\$3,299
Bed Tax	\$0	\$556	\$556
Personal Income	\$839	\$74	\$913
Corporate	\$355	\$25	\$380
Social Insurance	\$52	\$0	\$52
Excise and Fees	\$432	\$200	\$632
Property	\$99	\$2,600	\$2,700

Spectator Sports Tourism - Fiscal Impacts in 2024 Total Tax Revenues (\$ millions)

	Direct Taxes	Indirect & Induced Taxes	Total Taxes
Total Tax Revenues	\$8,990	\$8,587	\$17,577
Federal	\$3,844	\$5,199	\$9,044
Personal Income	\$1,677	\$2,279	\$3,956
Corporate	\$347	\$538	\$885
Indirect Business	\$167	\$107	\$274
Social Insurance	\$1,653	\$2,276	\$3,929
State and Local	\$5,145	\$3,388	\$8,533
Sales	\$2,011	\$1,288	\$3,299
Bed Tax	\$556	\$0	\$556
Personal Income	\$387	\$526	\$913
Corporate	\$149	\$231	\$380
Social Insurance	\$22	\$30	\$52
Excise and Fees	\$377	\$255	\$632
Property	\$1,643	\$1,057	\$2,700

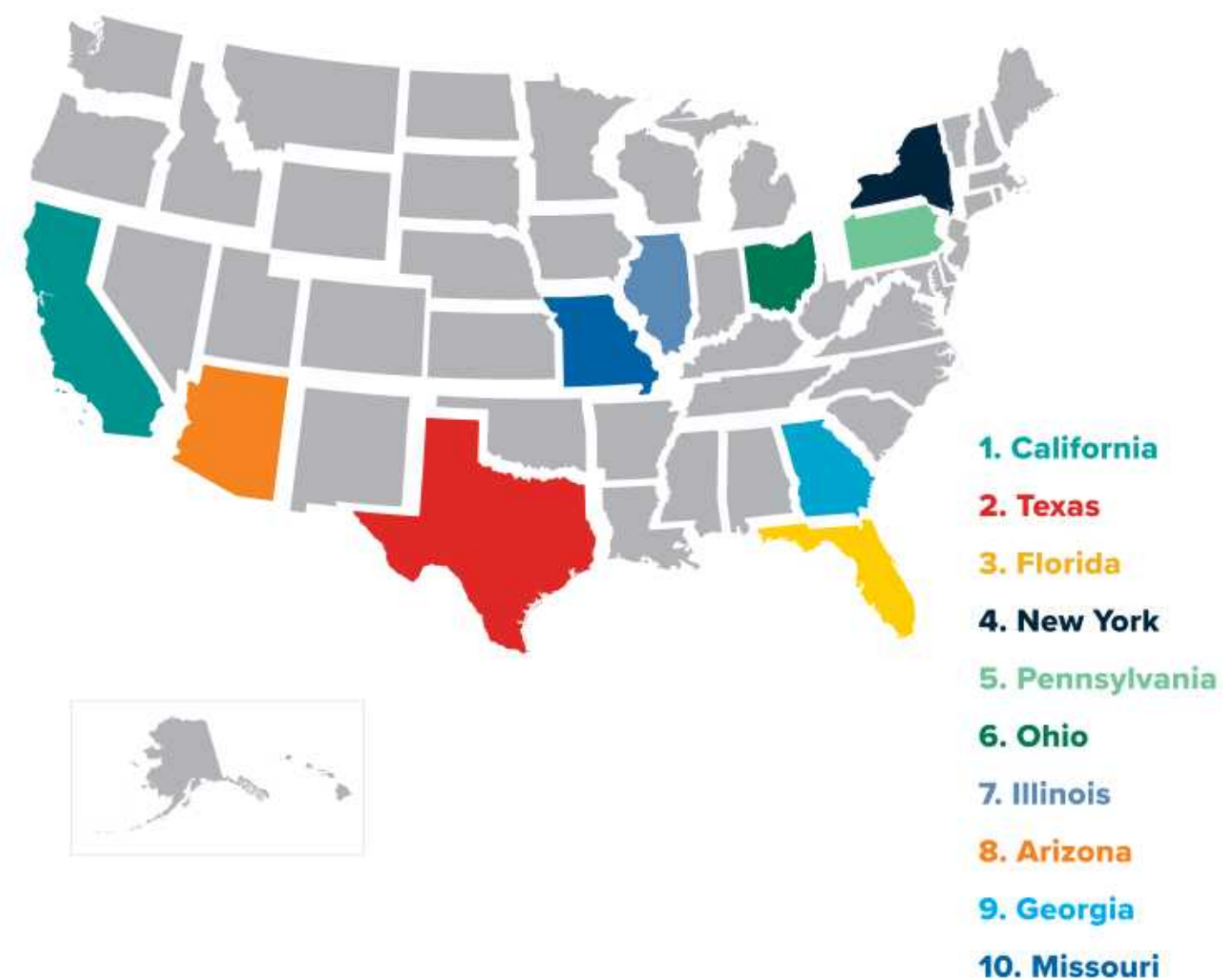
Source: Tourism Economics
Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.



California was the leading state in economic impact generated by spectator sports tourism in 2024.

Top 10 States Generating Spectator Sports Tourism Impact

Each state played a vital role generating spectator sports tourism in 2024. Bigger states with a larger number of major metros naturally generated a larger share of the impact given that population, number of businesses, and demographics are drivers of where professional and minor league sports teams are located. However, other factors also influenced how states performed. Below is a list of the top 10 states in terms of the economic impact generated by spectator sports tourism in 2024.



ABOUT SPORTS ETA



As the only trade association for the sports events & tourism industry, Sports ETA is the most trusted resource for sports commissions, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), and sports event owners. Sports ETA is committed to the success of more than 850 member organizations and 2,400 sports event professionals. Our promise is to deliver quality education, ample networking opportunities and exceptional event management and marketing know-how to our members, and to protect the integrity of the sports events & tourism industry. For more information, visit sportseta.org.

ABOUT NORTHSTAR



Northstar Meetings Group is the leading B-to-B information and marketing solutions company serving all segments of the sports, business meetings, events and incentives market. The company's audience includes full- and part-time event organizers, as well as sports, corporate, association and not-for-profit decision-makers, and incentive professionals, facilitating their professional development and achievement of business goals. The company's influential brands – SportsTravel, Meetings & Conventions, Successful Meetings, Associations Meetings International, Meetings & Incentive Travel, Meeting News, Incentive and M&C Asia – currently serve nearly 500,000 active meeting planners, event organizers and incentive professionals across an integrated suite of data, digital, events and print products. In addition to publishing SportsTravel, the Sports Division organizes several industry-leading conferences, including the TEAMS Conference, TEAMS Europe and the EsportsTravel Summit. For more information, please visit NorthstarMeetingsGroup.com.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM



Oxford Economics was founded in 1981 as a commercial venture with Oxford University's business college to provide economic forecasting and modelling to UK companies and financial institutions expanding abroad. Since then, we have become one of the world's foremost independent global advisory firms, providing reports, forecasts and analytical tools on 200 countries, 100 industrial sectors and over 3,000 cities. Our best-of-class global economic and industry models and analytical tools give us an unparalleled ability to forecast external market trends and assess their economic, social and business impact.

Oxford Economics is an adviser to corporate, financial and government decision-makers and thought leaders. Our worldwide client base comprises over 2,000 international organizations, including leading multinational companies and financial institutions; key government bodies and trade associations; and top universities, consultancies, and think tanks.

This study was conducted by the Tourism Economics group within Oxford Economics. Tourism Economics combines an understanding of traveler dynamics with rigorous economics in order to answer the most important questions facing destinations, investors, and strategic planners. By combining quantitative methods with industry knowledge, Tourism Economics designs custom market strategies, destination recovery plans, forecasting models, policy analysis, and economic impact studies.

Oxford Economics employs 600 full-time staff, including 300 professional economists and analysts. Headquartered in Oxford, England, with regional centers in London, New York, and Singapore, Oxford Economics has offices across the globe in Belfast, Chicago, Dubai, Miami, Milan, Paris, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington DC.





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