Aviation Economic Impact Findings

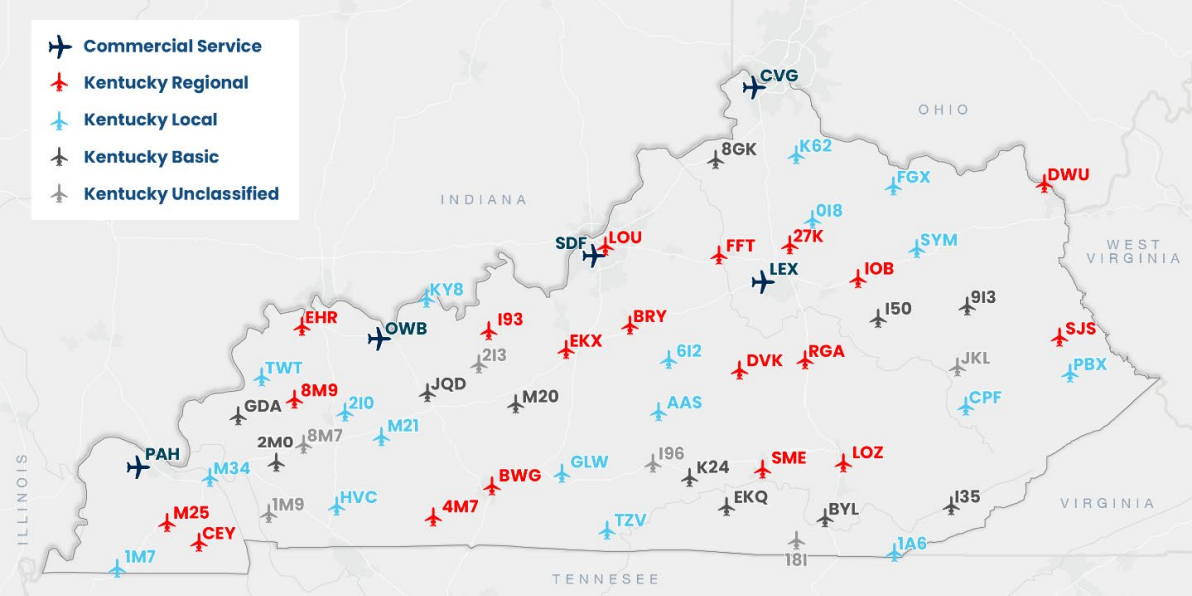
Introduction

The Kentucky Department of Aviation (KDA) developed this Aviation Economic Impact Study (AEIS) to provide a comprehensive assessment of the quantitative and qualitative contributions of public-use airports across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The study examines the economic effects generated by airport operations, on-airport businesses, capital investment, and visitor activity, offering a clear picture of how Kentucky's aviation system supports employment, income, business activity, and overall economic vitality at both the local and statewide levels. The findings underscore the essential role that airports play not only as transportation assets, but also as key drivers of economic development and community sustainability.

The primary purpose of the Aviation Economic Impact Study is to equip KDA, airport sponsors, policymakers, and other stakeholders with reliable and defensible information that illustrates aviation's economic role beyond its traditional transportation function. By documenting the scale and significance of aviation-related economic activity, the study supports informed decision-making related to airport funding, planning, and investment. This information helps ensure that the financial resources necessary to maintain, modernize, and expand Kentucky's airport system are appropriately considered, while also highlighting the substantial economic benefits airports generate for surrounding communities and the Commonwealth as a whole.

The KDA AEIS included all 58 public-use airports in Kentucky: five commercial service airports and 53 general aviation (GA) airports. These airports are shown below in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Kentucky Airports



Source: Kimley-Horn, 2025

This chapter is broken down into the following sections:

- Economic Impact Terms, Measures, and Categories
- Trends in Aviation and the Economy
- Data Collection
- Methodology
- Economic Impact Findings
- Summary

Economic Impact Terms, Measures, and Categories

This section provides an overview of the key terms, measures, and categories used in this AEIS. It defines how economic impacts are measured, explains the relationships among the different economic indicators, and describes the categories of aviation-related activity evaluated in the analysis. Together, these definitions establish a consistent framework for interpreting the economic impact results presented throughout the report. This section is organized as follows:

- Economic Impact Terms
- Economic Impact Measures

- Economic Impact Categories

Economic Impact Terms

To understand the outcome and process of this study, it is critical to understand the way economic impact is measured and how impacts are categorized. The following defines the key terms used in this study and the major categories airport impact will be broken down into.

- **Direct Impacts**: Initial economic activity that occurs both on and off airport, including airport administration and tenant employment, construction activity, and spending by visitors.
- **Indirect Impacts:** Portions of direct revenues used to purchase goods and services from Kentucky businesses. These effects are commonly referred to as supplier or supply-chain impacts.
- **Induced Impacts:** Wages and salaries earned through direct and indirect activities that are subsequently spent within Kentucky, generating additional household-driven economic activity.

When total economic impacts are presented, they represent the combined effects of direct, indirect, and induced impacts throughout the Commonwealth.

Economic Impact Measures

Four key measures are used to describe the economic impacts of aviation-related activity. The direct, indirect, and induced impacts are estimated by each of the following measures:

- **Jobs**: The total number of full-time and part-time positions supported by aviation-related business revenue and payroll.
- **Payroll**: Total employment compensation, including wages, salaries, and benefits such as health insurance and retirement contributions.
- **Value Added**[1]: A measure of economic productivity calculated as business revenue minus the cost of goods and services purchased from other businesses. Value added represents aviation's contribution to Kentucky's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and includes labor compensation, business profits, and taxes paid within the Commonwealth.

[1] Value Added is a separate type of impact that measures the value of goods and services beyond the value of the inputs. If a company sells a product for $100 and the materials used to create that product cost $30, the value added is $70.

- **Business Revenue**: Total sales generated by aviation-related activities, including airport operations and administration, tenant sales of goods and services, public sector agency expenditures, capital investment spending, and visitor spending associated with airport activity. Business revenue is also commonly referred to as business output

Dollar values for business revenue, value added, and payroll cannot be added together, as payroll is a component of value added, which is itself a component of business revenue. Throughout this report, all dollar values have been rounded, and all monetary values are reported in 2024 dollars.

Economic Impact Categories

This study groups aviation impacts into two categories: on-airport and off-airport visitor spending. On-airport impacts and off-airport visitor spending were reported at the airport level and aggregated to report impacts at the statewide level. Details on each category are provided in the following sections.

On-Airport Impacts

On-airport impacts include all activity at an airport that produces economic activity. These include employment for airport administration, airport business tenants, and capital expenditures made for construction projects by both the airport and private parties.

Airport Administration

Airport administration includes the personnel responsible for overseeing day-to-day airport operations. These roles typically include airport managers, operations and grounds staff, maintenance crews, finance and administrative staff, and security personnel. The airport, an overseeing airport authority, or a local government may directly employ these individuals. Smaller airports may not require dedicated on-site staff; in these cases, administrative responsibilities are often managed by a city- or county-appointed official responsible for airport oversight.

On-Airport Business Tenants

On-airport business tenants are entities that operate under a lease, rental agreement, or other formal arrangement with the airport that allows them to conduct business on airport property. These tenants may be located within terminal facilities, such as retail concessions and food service providers, or in other designated areas of the airport, including flight schools, Fixed-Base Operators (FBOs), Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) providers, cargo handling facilities, and rental car operations. This designation is limited to businesses

that maintain an ongoing operational and employment presence directly on airport property, meaning volunteer organizations like the Civil Air Patrol and flight clubs are not included.

Airport Capital Expenditures

This category captures the economic activity associated with construction and capital improvement projects on airport property throughout the Commonwealth. The analysis includes capital expenditures by airport sponsors and airport business tenants, regardless of whether projects were funded by local, state, or federal sources.

Construction data were collected for the four-year period from 2021 through 2024. Because construction spending can vary significantly from year to year, expenditures were averaged across the study period to provide a more stable representation of ongoing capital investment at Kentucky's airports.

Off-Airport Visitor Spending

In 2024, approximately 3.1 million out of state visitors passed through Kentucky's commercial service airports, generating economic activity through spending on lodging, food and beverage, local transportation, entertainment, and retail. Visitor spending impacts reflect expenditures made in the Commonwealth by out-of-state travelers arriving via Kentucky's airport system.

This study estimates average visitor spending during their stay and applies those levels to quantify impacts at both the airport and statewide levels. Spending by Kentucky residents is excluded to focus on new dollars entering the state's economy. Visitor spending impacts are estimated for both commercial service and general aviation airports and are presented at the individual airport level in the sections that follow.

Commercial Service Visitor Spending

A commercial service visitor is an individual traveling for business or leisure who arrives in Kentucky from another state or international location via scheduled commercial airline service at one of the State's commercial service airports. This study includes only travelers whose destination was Kentucky. Passengers who were connecting through a Kentucky airport or traveling on a layover were excluded from the analysis. Travelers commuting from a neighboring state like Indiana or Ohio were excluded. For travelers who visited multiple states on their visits, expenditures that occurred in Kentucky were the only ones counted.

General Aviation Visitor Impacts

A general aviation (GA) visitor is an out-of-state individual traveling for business or leisure who arrives in Kentucky by private, corporate, air taxi, or charter aircraft rather than

scheduled commercial airline service. GA visitor activity is evaluated across all public-use airports in the Commonwealth, including those with commercial service, unlike commercial service visitors whose activity is limited to airports with scheduled airline operations.

Trends in Aviation and the Economy

The results and data of this economic impact study should not be viewed in a vacuum. Trends in both the economy and aviation influence the results of this study and help contextualize the economic impacts of Kentucky's aviation system.

Aviation Trends

At the national level, aviation activity has largely stabilized following the volatility of the early 2020s, as passenger travel and operational demand adjusted to post-pandemic conditions. U.S. passenger travel has returned to near pre-pandemic levels, driven primarily by leisure travel and a gradual normalization of business travel. General aviation activity has remained steady, supported by business aviation, flight training, recreational flying, and specialized missions such as medical and public safety operations.

According to the FAA's Aerospace Forecast, total U.S. general aviation flight hours are projected to grow at less than one percent annually through 2045, reflecting a mature aviation industry with incremental growth rather than rapid expansion. This outlook reflects demographic trends, aircraft utilization patterns, and pilot demand, rather than substantial increases in the GA fleet. Continued fleet modernization, particularly the replacement of aging piston aircraft with newer turbine aircraft, continues to influence airport infrastructure needs, including runway use, hangar demand, fueling facilities, and maintenance requirements.

Economic Trends

Economic conditions during the study period were shaped by elevated inflation and cost pressures, particularly in construction and labor markets. National consumer price data indicate that prices increased sharply from 2020 through 2022, with cumulative inflation exceeding 20 percent before moderating in 2023 and 2024 as inflationary pressures began to taper. Similarly, construction costs rose significantly during this period due to material price volatility and workforce constraints, resulting in higher capital project costs compared to pre-pandemic conditions. While inflation has eased more recently, both labor and construction costs remain structurally higher than historical norms, affecting airport operating budgets and capital investment levels even as broader economic conditions stabilize.

Data Collection

To calculate individual airport and statewide impacts, direct impacts were collected from the individual airports through a combination of in-person site visits and passive surveying efforts. The direct impacts were collected through the following surveys:

- Airport Manager Survey
- Airport Business Tenant Survey
- Commercial Passenger Survey
- General Aviation Pilot and Passenger Survey

In total, all 58 public use airports received an in-person site visit. Site visits were conducted at each system airport to explain the study's purpose, answer questions, and collect and confirm survey data. The data collection portion of the study spanned from May 2025 to September 2025. The following sections summarize how the surveys were deployed through the data collection process.

Airport Manager Survey

Following two informational webinars, the study team contacted airport sponsors across Kentucky to introduce the Aviation Economic Impact Study and schedule site visits. After each call, the team emailed the Airport Manager Survey to the airport's primary contact. Airport sponsors completed the survey in advance of their scheduled site visit, allowing them to compile relevant information and helping streamline on-site discussions. Stuart Powell Field (DVK) hosted a test site visit in May of 2025 to help prepare the survey team for the data collection process. After completing their site visit, airports finalized their data via email before the study team modeled direct impacts.

The Airport Manager Survey formed the foundation of the study's data collection efforts. Airport sponsors provided airport-level data on 2024 economic activity, employment, contracted services, operating expenses, capital improvements, and recent private investment. The survey also gathered information on general aviation activity, including out-of-state operations and visitor characteristics, along with employment estimates and contact information for on-airport tenants.

Airport Business Tenant Survey

The study team distributed airport tenant surveys to collect data from businesses located on airport property during the site visits. Across Kentucky's airport system, these tenants

generate the largest share of airport-related economic activity compared to other airport-dependent businesses, making their participation critical to the analysis.

Airport sponsors identified on-airport tenants through the Airport Manager Survey and provided preliminary information, including tenant contact details and employment estimates. The study team distributed tenant surveys via email following virtual site visits or provided them directly during in-person visits. Data collection occurred between May and September 2025, identifying tenants across the statewide system. When tenants did not submit a fully completed survey, the study team supplemented missing information using Airport Manager Survey responses and Kentucky-calibrated IMPLAN data. For the large commercial service airports, a badge list was used to provide a tenant headcount. After compiling tenant data, the team returned the information to airport sponsors for review and confirmation before beginning economic impact modeling. Tenant survey responses provided business-level data on company type, employment, payroll, capital investment, and other local economic contributions, forming a key input to the AEIS. A total of 487 individual tenants were surveyed supporting 14,223 total employees.

Commercial Passenger Survey

Commercial service airports serve as the primary gateways for visitors traveling to Kentucky for business and leisure. These visitors generate economic activity by spending money in local communities on lodging, food and beverage, transportation, entertainment, and retail. To capture these off-airport economic impacts, the study team conducted commercial service passenger surveys as part of the AEIS. Survey responses were used to develop spending profiles for out-of-state visitors and to quantify the economic impacts associated with visitor spending in the Commonwealth.

The study team administered commercial service passenger surveys at selected commercial service airports (CVG, LEX, SDF) across Kentucky using a combination of online and in-person methods. Airports distributed online surveys through public Wi-Fi networks, prompting passengers to participate before connecting, while study staff conducted in-person surveys in terminal areas prior to security screening or while passengers waited to depart. Passenger surveying occurred in September 2025.

For out-of-state travelers, the surveys gathered data on trip purpose, length of stay, travel party size, and expenditures made in Kentucky, such as lodging, entertainment, and other visitor spending categories. These data formed the basis for estimating visitor spending impacts associated with Kentucky's commercial service airports.

General Aviation Passenger and Pilot Survey

The study team conducted the GA Pilot and Passenger Survey to collect information on travel behavior and spending patterns of out-of-state visitors arriving in Kentucky via general aviation aircraft. Like the commercial service passenger surveys, this effort focused on capturing off-airport economic activity generated by GA pilots and passengers traveling for business or leisure throughout the Commonwealth.

The study team made the GA Pilot and Passenger Survey available online and promoted it through posters and postcards with QR codes that were left at the airport from May through September 2025. Airport managers and fixed-base operators (FBOs) distributed the posters and encouraged participation. The team displayed survey materials in prominent locations at GA terminals and FBO facilities, including pilot lounges, information desks, and lobbies, to maximize visibility and response rates.

Survey responses provided information on the airport where the survey was completed and whether the respondent was an out-of-state visitor. For out-of-state GA pilots and passengers, the survey collected data on place of residence, travel party size, length of stay, trip purpose, and expenditures made in Kentucky, such as lodging, food and beverage, and entertainment. These data supported the estimation of visitor spending impacts associated with general aviation activity across Kentucky's airport system.

Methodology

Data collected through the survey effort are essential to estimating the economic impacts of Kentucky's aviation system and serve as key inputs to the modeling framework used to quantify those impacts. This section documents the primary assumptions and methodologies applied in the economic modeling process. It outlines the analytical approaches used, explains the concept and derivation of the multiplier effect, and concludes with the key assumptions underlying the tax impact analysis.

The IMPLAN Version 25 (2024) economic modeling system was used to estimate each airport's contributions to both the statewide Kentucky economy and individual regional economies. IMPLAN is the most widely used input–output modeling system in the United States and is built on data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The model reflects current economic measures, including employment, payroll, value added, and business revenue, across up to 546 industry classifications, corresponding to two- to five-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

IMPLAN

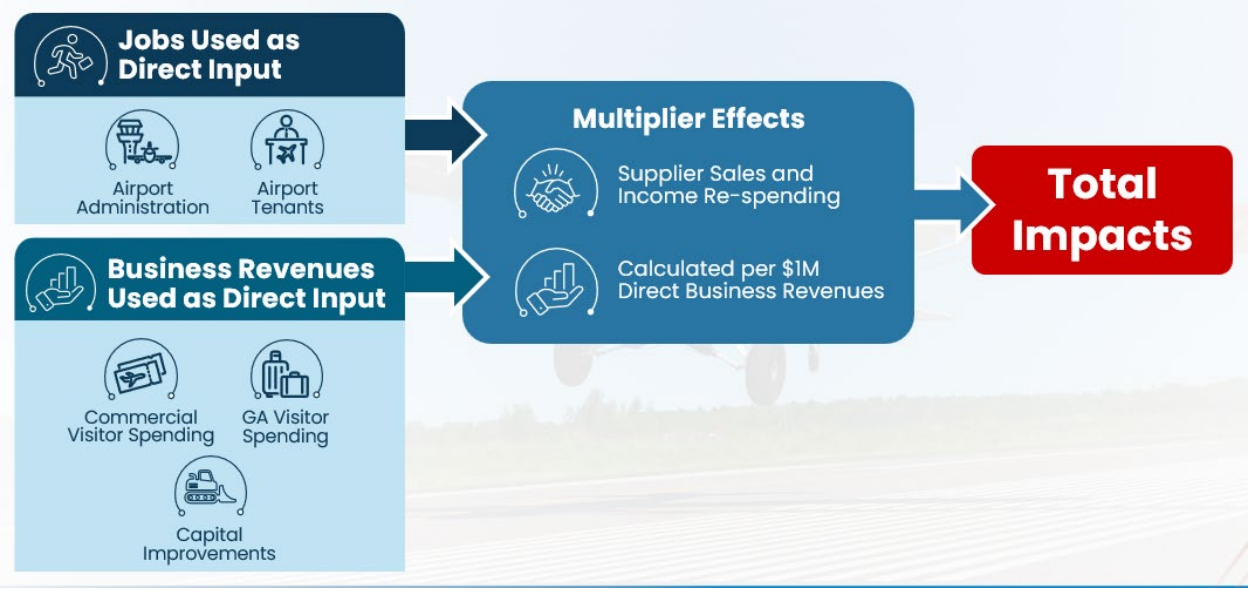
IMPLAN is a nationally recognized economic impact modeling system and is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for use in statewide aviation economic impact studies. The model relies on state- and region-specific economic data to quantify how airport-related employment, operations, and visitor spending contribute to the broader economy. Survey data collected from airports serve as primary inputs to the model and provide the foundation for estimating these economic effects.

IMPLAN is an input–output model that measures the interrelationships among industries within a regional economy. Known economic inputs, such as employment levels, payroll, and operational expenditures, are assigned to appropriate industry sectors and translated into measurable economic outputs, including jobs, payroll, value added, and total business revenues Value added represents the contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and consists of employee compensation, proprietor income, other property income, and indirect business taxes.

The model captures three distinct types of economic effects: direct effects, indirect effects, and induced effects also known as multiplier effects. Direct effects represent the immediate economic activity generated by airport operations, tenants, and aviation-related employment. Indirect effects reflect the economic activity generated as airport-related businesses purchase goods and services from suppliers within the region. Induced effects represent additional economic activity resulting from household spending by employees whose jobs are supported directly or indirectly by airport activity. Together, these effects illustrate how aviation-related expenditures circulate through the economy and support economic activity beyond the airport boundary.

By applying industry-specific multipliers derived from regional economic data, IMPLAN accounts for these inter-industry linkages and estimates the total economic contribution of airports to both the statewide and regional economies. The use of IMPLAN ensures methodological consistency with prior statewide aviation studies and provides results that are comparable across airports, regions, and study years. A graphic displaying how IMPLAN works is provided below in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: IMPLAN Modeling Process



Source: IMPLAN, 2025

Application of IMPLAN for On-Airport Impacts

IMPLAN was used to estimate the economic contributions associated with each on-airport activity category by translating reported inputs into direct, indirect, and induced economic effects.

Airport Administration

For airport administration, reported employment, payroll, and operational expenditures were assigned to appropriate government or airport operations industry sectors within IMPLAN. These inputs generated direct impacts representing on-airport administrative employment and spending. In instances where payroll data were not provided, IMPLAN was used to estimate payroll based on the specified industry code and average wages for that industry within the region. IMPLAN then estimated indirect impacts resulting from purchases of goods and services by airport administrative functions, as well as induced impacts resulting from household spending by airport employees.

Airport Business Tenants

Airport tenant employment and payroll were assigned to industry sectors corresponding to each tenant's primary business activity. This allowed IMPLAN to apply industry-specific production functions and multipliers to estimate direct tenant impacts as well as the associated indirect supplier activity and induced household spending effects. This approach

ensures that the economic contributions of diverse tenant types, such as aviation services, concessions, and cargo operations, are accurately reflected.

Airport Capital Expenditures

Construction expenditures were assigned to construction-related industry sectors within IMPLAN and treated as direct business revenues. IMPLAN then estimated the jobs, payroll, and value added supported by these expenditures, along with the indirect impacts generated through supplier purchases and the induced impacts associated with construction worker household spending.

Application of IMPLAN for Off-Airport Impacts

Direct visitor impacts are generated by out-of-state travelers arriving in Kentucky via commercial airline service or general aviation (GA) aircraft who spend money within the state. Estimating these impacts begins with determining total visitor volumes by airport.

Commercial service visitor estimates were developed using data from Airline Data, Inc., which relies on FAA data compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) to identify out-of-state travelers arriving at Kentucky's commercial service airports in 2024. GA visitor activity was estimated using information provided by airport managers, including aircraft operations, the share of transient operations, and average passengers per operation, with review by KDA staff.

After estimating total visitors, average spending per visitor was calculated and allocated across key spending categories: lodging, food and beverage, local transportation, retail, and entertainment. These allocations were informed by visitor surveys conducted for both commercial service and GA travelers. Direct visitor spending impacts were then modeled using Kentucky-specific IMPLAN multipliers to estimate indirect and induced economic effects. A breakdown of these spending allocations is provided in and the average spending for the commercial service airports and the GA airports is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Visitor Spending Breakdown (GA and CS)

Spending Category	General Aviation Breakdown	Commercial Service Breakdown
Lodging	25%	40%
Food & Beverage	13%	14%
Local Transportation	3%	10%
Retail	50%	11%
Entertainment	9%	25%

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Retail Margining

Retail spending represents the total value of goods sold; however, only the retail margin, the portion retained by local retailers to cover operating costs and profit, generates local economic activity. To account for this, retail margin percentages published by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) for Kentucky were applied to all visitor retail spending. This approach ensures that employment and payroll impacts reflect only the economic activity occurring within retail establishments.

For on-airport retail businesses where employment was reported directly, jobs were treated as direct impacts and no additional margining was applied, as these figures already reflect retail operating activity.

Economic Impact Findings

Aviation is a foundational component of Kentucky's economy, supporting statewide connectivity, economic growth, and competitiveness in industry. This Aviation Economic Impact Study evaluates and quantifies the significant economic contributions generated by aviation activity across the Commonwealth. The following impact categories collectively represent the total economic impact of Kentucky's aviation system:

- **On-Airport Activity:** Kentucky's airports serve as vital centers of economic activity, supporting commercial airline service, general aviation, business aviation, flight training, and a diverse mix of aeronautical and non-aeronautical tenants. Airports also stimulate economic growth through capital investment, including planning, engineering, design, construction, and tenant-driven improvements on airport property. These activities generate direct employment, payroll, and business revenues in communities throughout the Commonwealth.
- **Visitor Spending:** Kentucky's airports function as key gateways for leisure travelers, business visitors, sporting events, conventions, and tourism-related activity. Spending by out-of-state visitors on lodging, dining, retail shopping, entertainment, and ground transportation supports local businesses and strengthens Kentucky's tourism and hospitality sectors.

Together, these impact categories account for the total statewide economic contribution of Kentucky's aviation system. On-airport activity represents approximately 83 percent of the state's total economic impact, driven primarily by employment and business operations associated with airport tenants. Due to the state's central location, Kentucky's commercial service airports host large logistics and cargo facilities operated by national companies such as UPS, DHL, and Amazon, which generate substantial economic impacts through

employment and capital investment. The Commonwealth's GA airports support a diverse mix of aviation-related businesses, including fixed-base operators, maintenance providers, flight schools, and specialized aviation services. As a result, on-airport activity constitutes an overwhelming majority of the state's total economic impact. A detailed breakdown of economic impacts by category and by type is provided in the following sections and summarized in **Table 2.**

Table 2: Summary of Impact by Category

Impact Category	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
On-Airport Activity	103,699	$7,900,401,903	$11,176,114,113	$22,024,584,291
Visitor Spending	34,112	$1,492,942,274	$2,657,572,853	$4,487,175,731
Total	137,858	$9,395,034,805	$13,836,765,560	$26,517,240,647

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

On-Airport Activity

On-airport activity is classified into three primary service categories: airport administration, airport tenants, and capital improvements. **Table 3** presents the total 2024 economic impacts of on-airport activity by measure (jobs, payroll, value added, and business revenue) and is broken out by direct impacts, indirect impacts, and induced impacts.

On-airport activity at Kentucky airports generated nearly $12.8 billion in direct business revenue, which resulted in more than $9.2 billion in additional business revenue statewide through supplier sales and income re-spending. The $22 billion in total business revenue included $7.9 billion in payroll, supporting nearly 103,699 jobs. In addition, Kentucky airports contributed almost $11.2 billion in value added.

Table 3: On-Airport Impacts

Impact Type	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Direct	50,688	$4,589,462,081	$5,947,385,152	$12,813,331,809
Indirect	27,248	$1,869,921,265	$2,604,737,754	$4,818,665,658
Induced	25,764	$1,441,018,558	$2,623,991,207	$4,392,586,824
Total	103,699	$7,900,401,903	$11,176,114,113	$22,024,584,291

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Visitor Spending

For the purposes of this study, visitor spending was broken down into two categories: general aviation (GA) and commercial service. Both types of aviation activity attract different visitors with different spending patterns, resulting in distinct economic impacts.

General Aviation Visitor Impacts

GA visitor spending associated with Kentucky airports generated nearly $128 million in direct business revenue, which resulted in more than $79.5 million in additional business revenue statewide through supplier sales and income re-spending. The nearly $209 million in total business revenue included almost $68 million in payroll, supporting nearly 1,745 jobs. GA visitor spending contributed almost $121 million in value added to Kentucky's economy. These impacts are displayed in detail in **Table 4**.

Table 4: General Aviation Visitor Impacts

Impact Type	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Direct	1,291	$41,671,930	$77,484,306	$128,782,686
Indirect	232	$13,592,126	$21,380,668	$41,936,737
Induced	222	$12,470,469	$22,708,219	$38,014,251
Total	1,745	$67,734,525	$121,573,193	$208,733,675

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Commercial Service Visitor Impacts

Commercial service visitor spending associated with Kentucky airports generated nearly $2.6 billion in direct business revenue, which resulted in an estimated $1.6 billion in additional business revenue statewide through supplier sales and income re-spending. The $4.3 billion in total business revenue included $1.4 billion in payroll, supporting approximately 32,000 jobs. Commercial service visitor spending contributed almost $2.5 billion in value added to Kentucky's economy. These impacts are displayed in detail in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Commercial Service Visitor Impacts

Impact Type	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Direct	22,987	$891,698,430	$1,635,461,736	$2,642,996,102
Indirect	4,986	$287,027,427	$451,713,090	$884,109,775
Induced	4,395	$246,481,892	$448,824,835	$751,336,179
Total	32,368	$1,425,207,749	$2,535,999,661	$4,278,442,057

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Total Visitor Spending Impacts

The combined visitor spending associated with Kentucky airports generated nearly $2.8 billion in direct business revenue, which resulted in more than $1.7 billion in additional business revenue statewide through supplier sales and income re-spending. The $4.5 billion in total business revenue included nearly $1.5 billion in payroll, supporting nearly 34,000 jobs. Total visitor spending contributed almost $2.7 billion in value added to Kentucky's economy. These impacts are displayed in detail in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Total Visitor Spending Impacts

Impact Type	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Direct	24,278	$933,370,361	$1,712,946,042	$2,771,778,789
Indirect	5,217	$300,619,553	$473,093,757	$926,046,513
Induced	4,617	$258,952,361	$471,533,054	$789,350,430
Total	34,112	$1,492,942,274	$2,657,572,853	$4,487,175,731

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Total Economic Impacts

Aviation activity across Kentucky airports generated nearly $15.6 billion in direct business revenue. This activity supported more than $10.9 billion in additional business revenue statewide through supplier purchases and income re-spending, resulting in approximately $26.5 billion in total business revenue. This overall economic impact included $9.4 billion in payroll and supported nearly 138 thousand jobs throughout the Commonwealth. Total aviation activity contributed almost $13.8 billion in value added to Kentucky's economy. These impacts are displayed in detail in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Statewide Total Economic Impacts

Impact Type	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Direct	75,000	$5,523,841,936	$7,662,259,548	$15,588,502,697
Indirect	32,472	$2,170,906,037	$3,078,406,495	$5,745,837,714
Induced	30,386	$1,700,286,832	$3,096,099,516	$5,182,900,236
Total	137,858	$9,395,034,805	$13,836,765,560	$26,517,240,647

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Individual Airport Impacts

At the individual airport level, aviation activity generates significant economic benefits for local communities across Kentucky. Direct business revenues produced by on-airport operations and visitor spending support additional economic activity through supplier purchases and household spending, amplifying each airport's total impact. These combined effects contribute to business revenue, payroll, and job creation while adding measurable value to both local and statewide economies. Together, individual airport impacts illustrate how Kentucky's airport system supports employment, income, and economic productivity throughout the Commonwealth.

Table 8: Individual Airport Impacts

FAA ID	Airport Name	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
Commercial Service Airports					
PAH	Barkley Regional Airport	380	$29,366,208	$41,332,737	$64,538,037
LEX	Blue Grass Airport	5,203	$249,096,095	$430,555,929	$773,246,161
CVG	Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International	59,611	$3,932,733,375	$6,326,205,681	$12,249,990,407
SDF	Louisville Muhammad Ali International	67,619	$4,864,635,006	$6,183,157,173	$12,479,187,984
OWB	Owensboro Regional Airport	411	$26,905,585	$36,816,305	$58,915,253
General Aviation Airports					
EKX	Addington Field	109	$6,275,071	$5,825,888	$18,321,517

FAA ID	Airport Name	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
DWU	Ashland Regional	48	$1,874,839	$59,260,825	$6,169,467
SJS	Big Sandy Regional	52	$2,283,843	$3,575,581	$6,994,783
BWG	Bowling Green-Warren County Regional	161	$7,250,949	$12,053,719	$21,324,148
LOU	Bowman Field	747	$49,160,057	$43,566,568	$148,399,718
I93	Breckinridge County	16	$686,163	$1,254,254	$2,289,312
FFT	Capital City	136	$9,723,179	$8,968,524	$21,239,871
RGA	Central Kentucky Regional	233	$11,573,885	$17,200,306	$29,313,909
I96	Columbia-Adair County	5	$243,138	$412,117	$842,493
0I8	Cynthiana-Harrison County	14	$729,076	$1,268,534	$2,169,360
FGX	Fleming-Mason	26	$1,240,214	$2,208,330	$3,580,688
1M7	Fulton	5	$130,827	$237,528	$396,704
8GK	Gallatin County	105	$8,045,556	$11,565,980	$20,726,725
K62	Gene Snyder	39	$2,306,711	$3,618,054	$6,276,488
27K	Georgetown-Scott County Regional	176	$9,996,710	$16,330,312	$28,630,422
GLW	Glasgow Municipal	80	$8,578,297	$3,750,945	$20,291,140
KY8	Hancock County/Ron Lewis Field	16	$828,076	$1,284,249	$2,517,649
EHR	Henderson City-County	113	$5,953,924	$8,446,863	$12,914,060
HVC	Hopkinsville-Christian County	30	$1,137,552	$2,049,030	$3,588,711
JKL	Julian Carroll	1	$62,994	$130,771	$246,725
M34	Kentucky Dam State Park	10	$359,105	$716,560	$1,213,915
CEY	Kyle-Oakley Field	56	$2,537,091	$4,759,616	$7,644,871

FAA ID	Airport Name	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
1M9	Lake Barkley State Park	2	$117,027	$652,941	$362,215
SME	Lake Cumberland Regional	231	$11,788,197	$17,367,589	$37,110,545
6I2	Lebanon Springfield-George Hoerter Field	39	$1,933,499	$3,557,632	$6,082,774
M20	Leitchfield-Grayson County	2	$75,283	$156,991	$273,099
LOZ	London/Corbin/Magee	361	$20,926,247	$22,702,424	$67,254,396
2I0	Madisonville Regional	69	$3,224,230	$4,759,761	$7,821,704
GDA	Marion County	3	$101,211	$185,442	$331,392
M25	Mayfield Graves County	26	$1,250,214	$2,125,493	$3,886,520
18I	Mc Creary County	3	$92,208	$192,701	$352,611
1A6	Middlesboro Bell County	23	$1,380,055	$1,756,247	$2,503,152
SYM	Morehead-Rowan County Clyde A Thomas Regional	34	$1,672,320	$2,564,109	$4,725,939
IOB	Montgomery County	244	$16,180,082	$17,221,666	$47,894,675
M21	Muhlenberg County	166	$8,415,521	$13,524,968	$27,484,775
JQD	Ohio County	11	$625,303	$1,001,742	$1,693,412
PBX	Hatcher Field	18	$844,158	$1,363,682	$2,275,788
2M0	Princeton-Caldwell County	18	$496,780	$839,638	$1,550,760
2I3	Rough River State Park	2	$69,293	$129,971	$230,447
K24	Russell County	11	$374,225	$626,501	$1,217,983
4M7	Russellville-Logan County	50	$2,805,469	$4,148,443	$6,175,205
BRY	Samuels Field	50	$2,200,720	$3,931,932	$7,054,847

FAA ID	Airport Name	Jobs	Payroll	Value Added	Business Revenue
I50	Stanton	8	$346,145	$556,521	$1,007,190
DVK	Stuart Powell Field	195	$12,084,389	$13,196,159	$42,545,614
TWT	Sturgis Municipal	630	$58,671,521	$79,451,884	$215,185,816
AAS	Taylor County	29	$1,426,432	$1,979,855	$3,666,931
TZV	Monroe County	45	$3,187,764	$4,635,358	$7,309,897
8M7	Tradewater	0	$-	$-	$-
I35	Tucker-Guthrie Memorial	8	$396,571	$688,686	$1,242,455
					$3,342,002
CPF	Wendell H Ford	58	$4,125,445	$2,932,703	$13,192,865
9I3	West Liberty	4	$229,787	$316,316	$541,240
BYL	Williamsburg-Whitley County	97	$5,490,326	$6,946,883	$11,953,879

Source: Kimley-Horn Analysis, 2025

Summary

Kentucky's system of public-use airports generates substantial and far-reaching economic benefits for the Commonwealth. Aviation activity across Kentucky's 58 public-use airports supports almost 138 thousand jobs, generating approximately $9.4 billion in payroll, and produces more than $26.5 billion in total business revenue annually. These impacts reflect the combined effects of on-airport employment and operations, capital investment, and spending by out-of-state visitors traveling through Kentucky's airport system.

The results of this study reflect both current aviation conditions and broader economic trends influencing airport activity nationwide. While aviation demand has stabilized following recent economic volatility, Kentucky's airports continue to serve as essential infrastructure assets that support economic resilience and long-term growth. At the same time, rising labor and construction costs have increased the scale of investment required to maintain and improve airport facilities, underscoring the importance of strategic planning and informed decision-making.

Taken together, the findings reinforce the value of continued investment in Kentucky's airport system. By supporting aviation infrastructure, the Commonwealth can sustain economic activity, enhance connectivity, and ensure that its airport system remains responsive to future transportation and economic needs. This study provides KDA, airport sponsors, and

policymakers with a consistent, data-driven foundation to guide planning, funding, and policy decisions that support the long-term vitality of Kentucky's aviation system.