

2024

Economic Impact of Visitors in Illinois



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Introduction

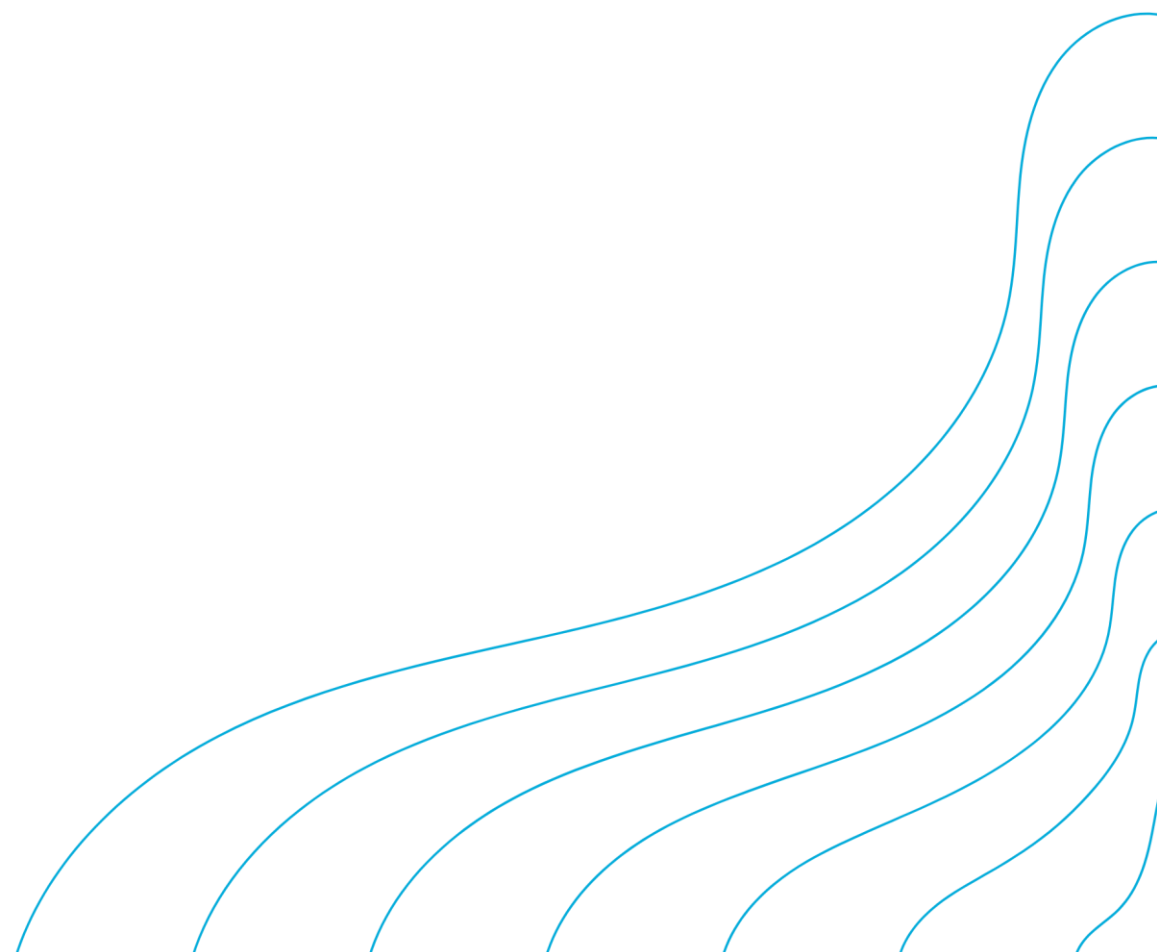
Visitors are integral to Illinois' economy, generating significant financial benefits for residents and local businesses. Visitor activity also produces substantial tax revenue which supports government services.

Credible measurements of the visitor economy are designed to inform policy decisions that foster the sector's development.

To quantify the significance of Illinois' visitor economy, Tourism Economics developed a comprehensive analysis of visitor spending and its total economic impact on businesses, employment, personal income, and taxes. At a high level, our approach includes the following stages:

- Compilation of visitor statistics
- Compilation of industry data
- Compilation of government data
- Analysis of visitor spending by category
- Economic impact modeling

KEY FINDINGS



Key Findings

The Visitor Economy Drives Economic Impact

In 2024, Illinois saw its visitor economy expand with 0.4% more visitors, spending 2.9% more than the prior year and reaching \$48.5 billion.



112.9M

Visitors to
Illinois



\$48.5B

Visitor
Spending

Total Economic Impacts of Visitors in Illinois

The visitor spending impact of \$48.5 billion generated a total economic impact of \$85.1 billion in Illinois in 2024, including indirect and induced impacts. This total economic impact sustained 454,455 jobs and generated nearly \$6.8 billion in state and local tax revenues.



\$85.1B

Total Business
Sales



454,455

Total Jobs
Supported



\$6.8B

State and
Local Taxes



Illinois
welcomed
**112.9 million
visitors** in
2024.

Economic Impact In Context



\$48.5B VISITOR SPENDING

The \$48.5 billion in visitor spending means that **\$133 million** was spent **every day** by visitors in Illinois, on average.



\$27.3B PERSONAL INCOME

The \$27.3 billion in total personal income generated by tourism is the equivalent of over **\$5,400 per household** in Illinois.



454,455 JOBS

The number of jobs sustained by tourism (454,455) supports 7.5% of all jobs in Illinois.

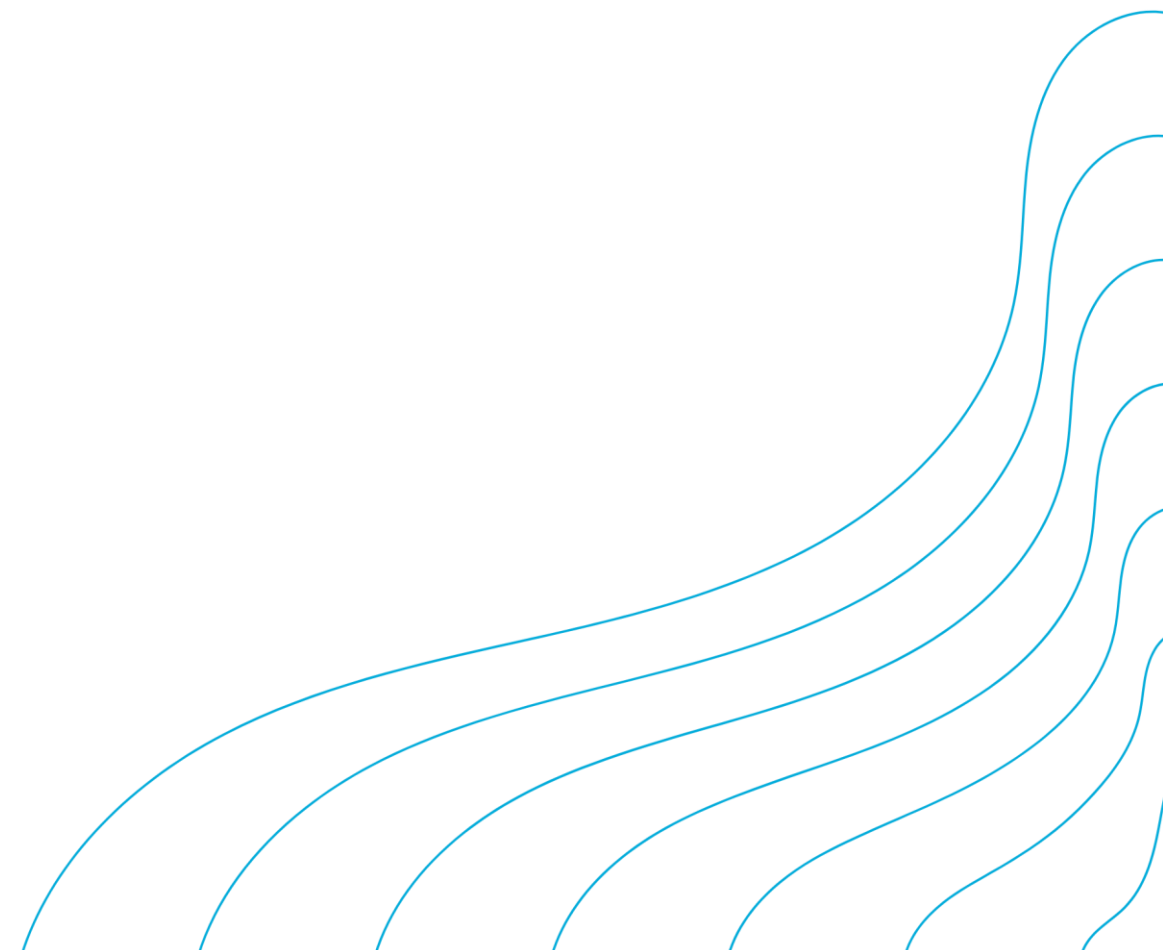


\$6.8B STATE & LOCAL TAXES

Each household in Illinois would need to be taxed an additional **\$1,361** to replace the visitor-generated taxes received by state and local government in 2024.



VISITOR VOLUME & SPENDING



Illinois welcomed **112.9** million visitors who spent **\$48.5 billion** in 2024.

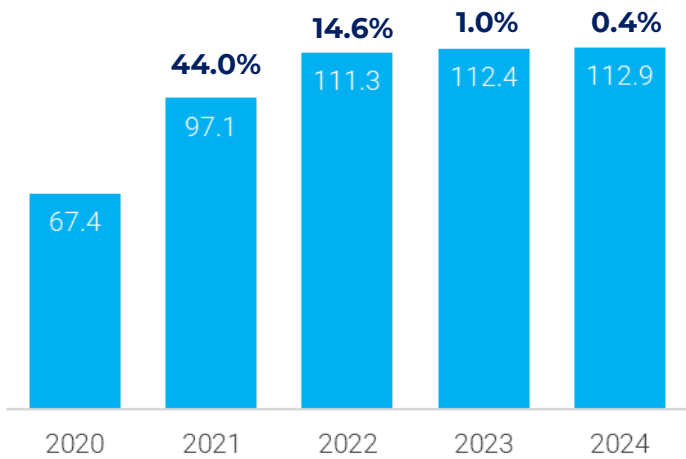


Visitor Volume and Spending

Visitor Volume

Visitor volumes increased by nearly half a million visitors (0.4%) in 2024, reaching 112.9 million. Growth was driven by day and international arrivals.

Illinois Visitor Volume
millions



Source: DK Shifflet/MMGY, Tourism Economics



Source: Tourism Economics

Visitor Spending

Visitors to Illinois spent **\$48.5 billion** across various sectors in 2024.

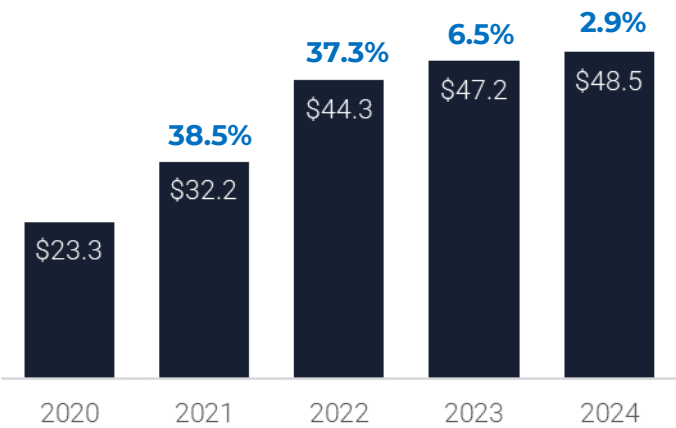
Visitor spending on transportation accounted for \$20.7 billion, 43% of total visitor spending.

Spending on food and beverage tallied \$10.2 billion, 21% of visitor spending.

Lodging spending, including spending on short-term rentals and second homes, reached \$9.6 billion or 20% of visitor spending.

Recreation and retail spending contributed 9% and 7%, respectively, to total visitor spending.

Illinois Visitor Spending
\$ billions



Source: Tourism Economics

Note: Lodging is defined as an industry and includes all services provided by hotel businesses. Lodging al includes dollars spent on second homes and short-term rentals. Transport includes both air and local transportation.

Visitor Volume & Spending Trends

Visitor spending in Illinois grew 2.9% in 2024, aided by slight demand increases and higher prices of goods and services.

Lodging spending led increases, expanding 8.9%. Recreation and food and beverage spending also showed solid growth of 4.8% and 3.6% growth, respectively. Retail spending inched forward 1.0% as visitors continued to prioritize spending on experiences rather than retail purchases. Transportation spending lagged other categories with a 0.1% decline, mainly attributable to declines in gas prices.

Illinois Visitor Spending
\$ billions

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 Growth
Total visitor spending	\$23.3	\$32.2	\$44.3	\$47.2	\$48.5	2.9%
Transportation**	\$10.1	\$13.7	\$19.5	\$20.7	\$20.7	-0.1%
Food and Beverage	\$5.6	\$7.5	\$9.3	\$9.9	\$10.2	3.6%
Lodging*	\$3.5	\$5.3	\$8.1	\$8.8	\$9.6	8.9%
Recreation	\$1.9	\$2.8	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.5	4.8%
Retail	\$2.1	\$2.9	\$3.5	\$3.6	\$3.6	1.0%

Source: Tourism Economics

* Lodging includes second homes and short-term rentals
** Transportation includes both ground and air transportation

Total visitors to Illinois tallied 112.9 million, a 0.4% increase over the prior year.

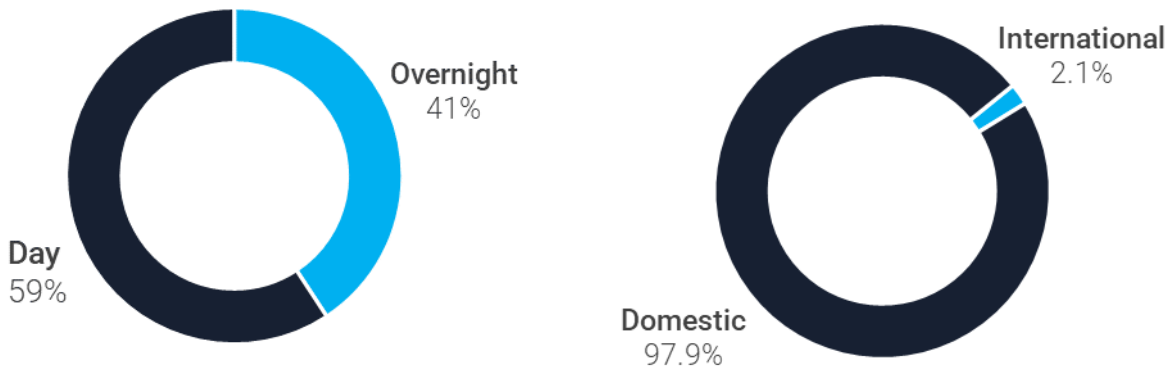
International visitors to Illinois continued to show strong growth in visits and spending with 8.9% and 14.5% increases, respectively. International visitors made up 2.1% of all visitors to Illinois in 2024.

Illinois Visitor Volumes and Spending, by Segment
millions of visitors, \$ billions

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 Growth
Total visitors	67.4	97.1	111.3	112.4	112.9	0.4%
Domestic	66.9	96.5	109.7	110.2	110.5	0.3%
International	0.5	0.5	1.6	2.2	2.3	8.9%
Total visitor spending	\$23.3	\$32.2	\$44.3	\$47.2	\$48.5	2.9%
Domestic	\$22.6	\$31.5	\$42.3	\$44.3	\$45.2	2.1%
International	\$0.7	\$0.8	\$2.0	\$2.9	\$3.3	14.5%

Source: DK Shifflet/MMGY, Tourism Economics

Illinois Visitor Volume Share, by Segment (2024)



Source: DK Shifflet/MMGY, Tourism Economics

ECONOMIC IMPACT METHODOLOGY



Economic Impact Methodology

The development of visitor economy impact modeling begins with a comprehensive demand side analysis. Visitor survey data provides estimates on the volume of visitors by type and their spending in specific industries (e.g. lodging, restaurants, retail, recreation and entertainment, transportation). These estimates are strengthened through an analysis of industry-specific data sets on the lodging industry, aviation, and sectoral-level business sales. Government data, including taxes by type, as well as employment and personal income by industry, are used to supplement and confirm demand-side visitor spending calculations.

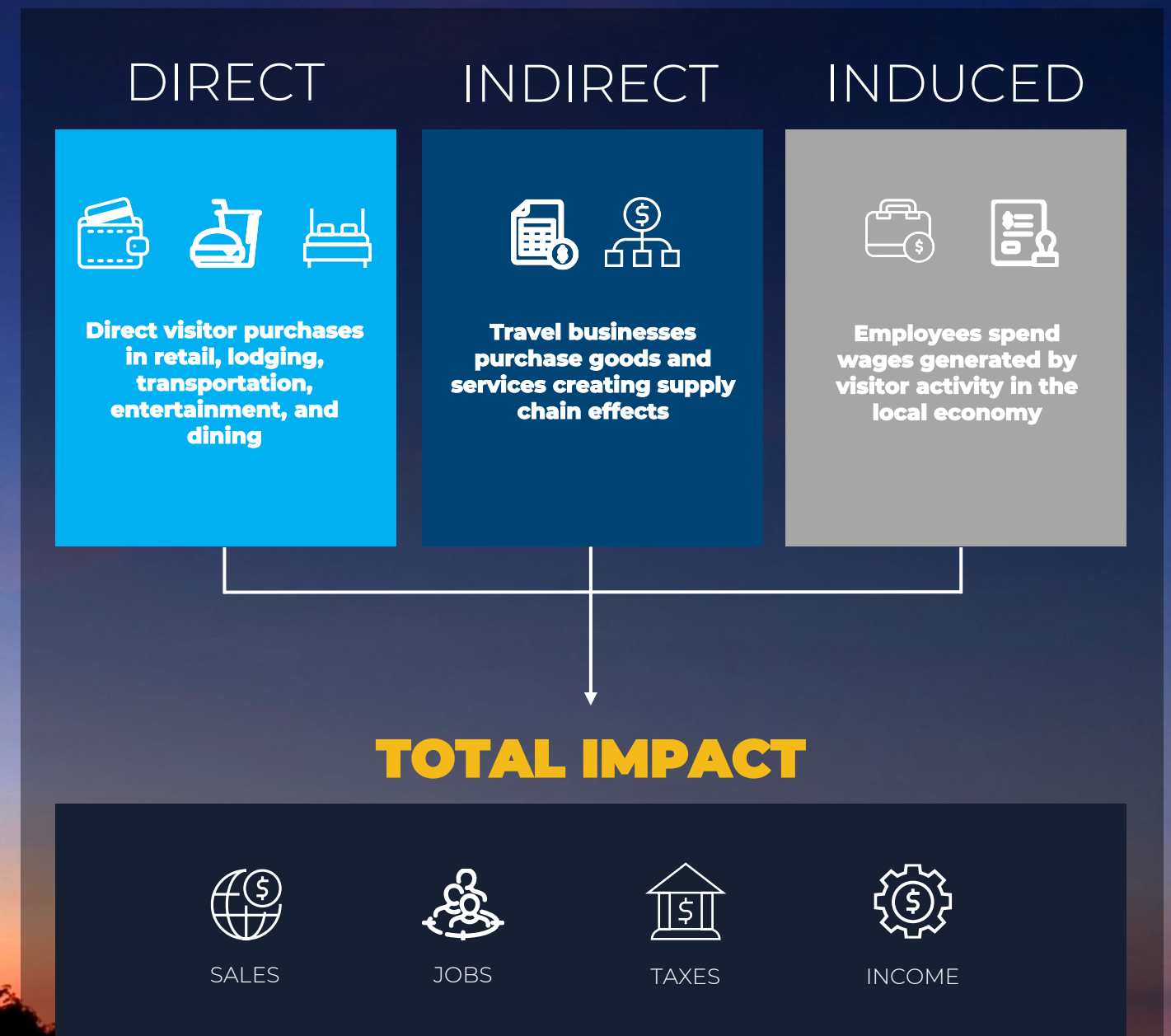
This provides a detailed profile of visitor spending by industry, which is then connected to a local input-output (I-O) economic impact model constructed within the IMPLAN platform. This uses government (Bureau of Economic Analysis and Census) data to trace the flow of visitor through the local economy and its effects on businesses, households, and government. The model quantifies three levels of impact:

- 1. Direct impacts:** Visitor spending creates direct economic value within a defined set of sectors. This supports a proportion of spending, jobs, wages, and taxes within each sector.
- 2. Indirect impacts:** Businesses providing direct services to visitors purchase goods and services, generating additional impacts called indirect impacts or supply-chain effects.
- 3. Induced impacts:** Additional business activity is generated as employees spend incomes locally that are earned due to visitor activity. This is called the induced impact or income effect.

The model calculates these three levels of impact—direct, indirect and induced—for the following metrics:

- Spending
- Wages
- Employment
- Federal Taxes
- State Taxes
- Local Taxes

Economic Impact Model

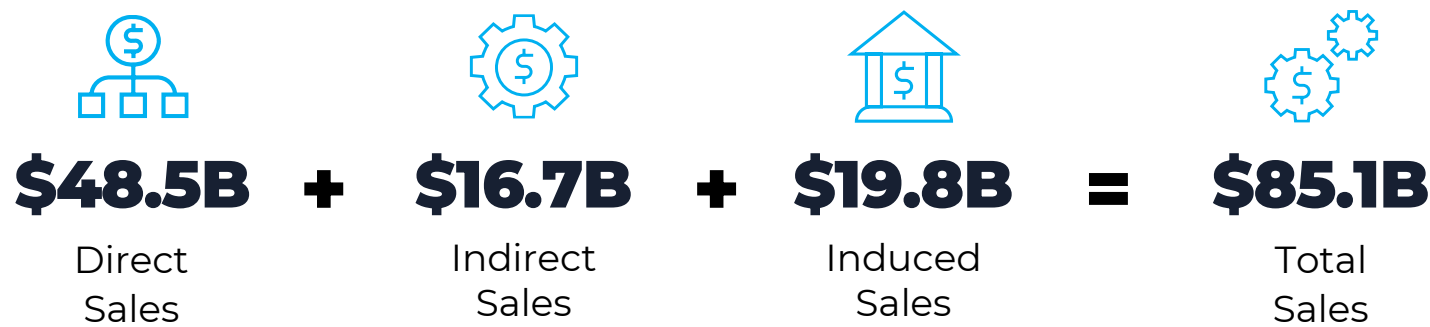


ECONOMIC IMPACT



Business Sales Impacts

The visitor economy contributed a direct impact of \$48.5 billion in 2024. This direct impact generated \$36.5 billion in indirect and induced impacts, resulting in a total economic impact of \$85.1 billion in Illinois' economy. The total economic impact shows the benefits to the broader economy across industries at the indirect and induced levels.



Business Sales Impacts by Industry (2024)

\$ millions

	Direct Business Sales	Indirect Business Sales	Induced Business Sales	Total Business Sales
Total, all industries	\$48,525	\$16,718	\$19,818	\$85,061
Food & Beverage	\$10,234	\$824	\$1,399	\$12,456
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	\$2,063	\$4,179	\$5,952	\$12,193
Lodging	\$9,555	\$5	\$17	\$9,577
Air Transport	\$9,204	\$87	\$235	\$9,525
Other Transport	\$4,612	\$1,680	\$535	\$6,827
Business Services		\$3,978	\$1,987	\$5,965
Retail Trade	\$3,597	\$158	\$1,307	\$5,062
Gasoline Stations	\$4,792	\$23	\$69	\$4,884
Recreation and Entertainment	\$4,068	\$303	\$361	\$4,731
Education and Health Care		\$37	\$3,445	\$3,483
Communications		\$1,282	\$1,063	\$2,345
Manufacturing		\$1,434	\$672	\$2,106
Personal Services	\$402	\$452	\$1,098	\$1,952
Wholesale Trade		\$877	\$945	\$1,823
Construction and Utilities		\$1,118	\$583	\$1,701
Government		\$183	\$101	\$284
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		\$98	\$50	\$148

Source: Tourism Economics

The total economic impact of **\$85.1 billion** accrued to industries across the economy.

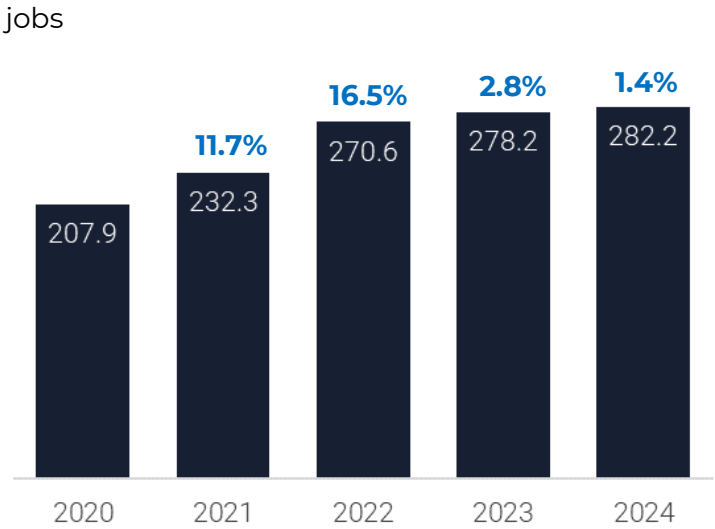
Direct Employment

Employment directly supported by visitor activity increased 1.4% in 2024 as both the visitor and broader labor market maintained steady growth.

Visitor activity supported a significant portion of direct employment in several key industries in Illinois. Visitors sustained the vast majority of employment in the lodging sector, 30% of recreation employment, and 26% of food services employment.

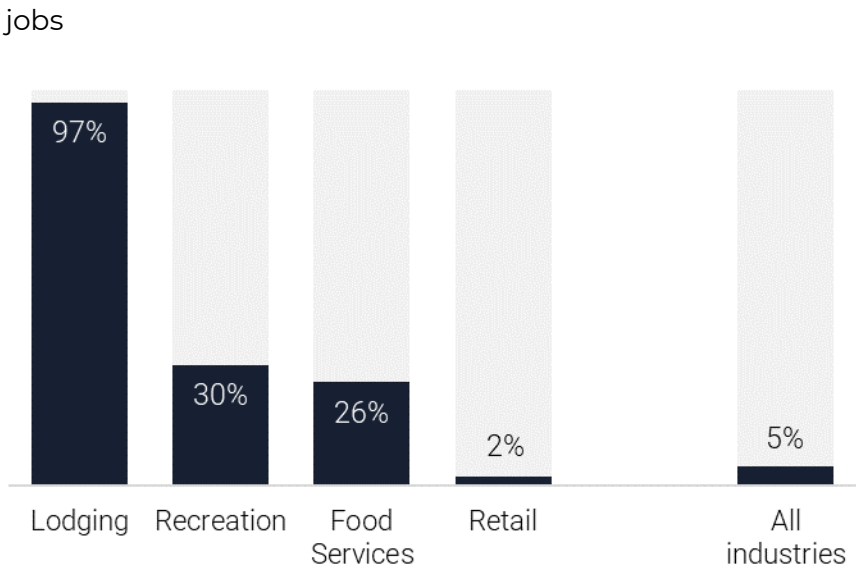
Overall, direct visitor-supported employment accounted for approximately 5% of all jobs in Illinois in 2024.

Visitor Supported Employment in Illinois



Source: Tourism Economics

Direct Visitor Employment Intensity

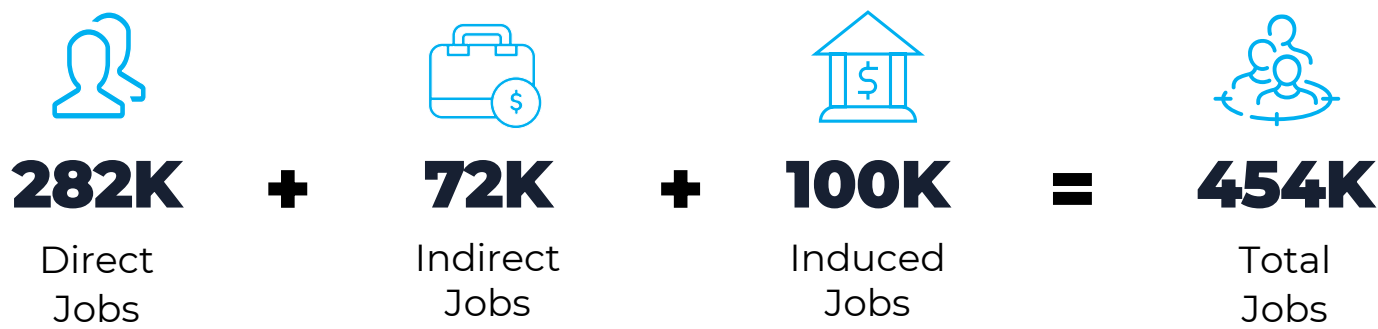


Source: Tourism Economics

The tourism industry in **Illinois** directly supported over **282,000 local jobs.**

Employment Impacts

Visitor activity sustained 282,165 direct jobs in 2024, with an additional 172,289 jobs supported from the indirect and induced impacts of visitor activity. The total jobs impact increased to 454,455 in 2024, one-in-13 jobs in Illinois (7.5%).



Employment Impacts by Industry (2024)

jobs

	Direct Jobs	Indirect Jobs	Induced Jobs	Total Jobs
Total, all industries	282,165	72,192	100,097	454,455
Food & Beverage	119,589	9,313	14,738	143,640
Other Transport	35,771	11,740	4,669	52,179
Lodging	40,978	32	107	41,117
Recreation and Entertainment	29,250	2,969	3,277	35,497
Business Services		21,199	11,143	32,342
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	4,872	12,931	11,865	29,669
Education and Health Care		328	25,196	25,523
Personal Services	9,797	3,743	11,065	24,605
Retail Trade	11,979	1,197	10,311	23,487
Air Transport	22,138	155	412	22,705
Gasoline Stations	7,791	177	563	8,531
Wholesale Trade		2,060	2,155	4,215
Communications		1,858	1,781	3,640
Manufacturing		1,442	1,006	2,448
Construction and Utilities		1,458	914	2,371
Government		1,245	642	1,886
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		346	253	599

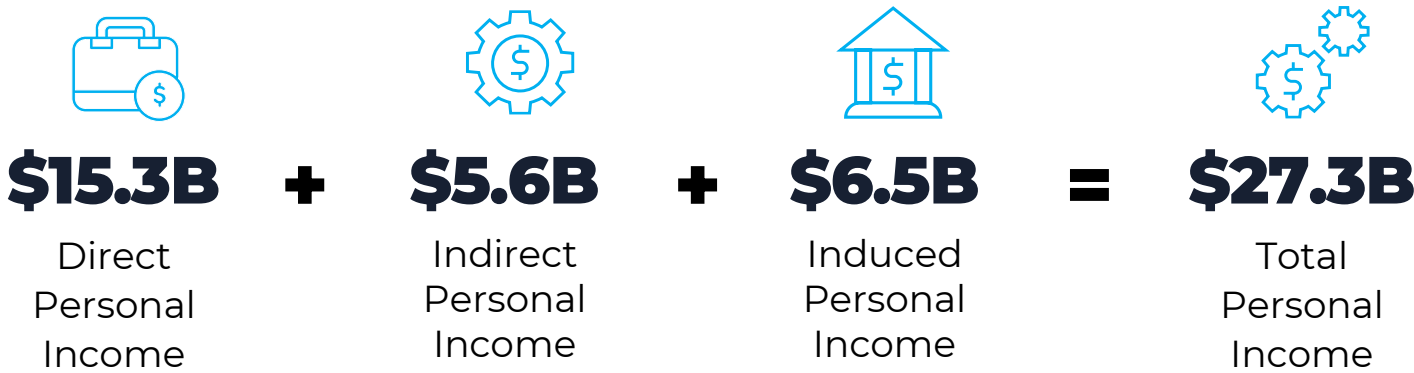
Source: Tourism Economics

Visitor spending supports **1-in-13 of all jobs** in Illinois, including nearly **144,000 jobs** in the food and beverage industry.



Personal Income Impacts

Visitor activity generated \$15.3 billion in direct personal income and a total of \$27.3 billion including indirect and induced impacts.



Personal Income Impacts by Industry (2024)
\$ millions

	Direct Personal Income	Indirect Personal Income	Induced Personal Income	Total Personal Income
Total, all industries	\$15,261	\$5,560	\$6,473	\$27,294
Food & Beverage	\$3,768	\$362	\$499	\$4,629
Lodging	\$3,310	\$2	\$7	\$3,320
Business Services		\$1,990	\$1,024	\$3,013
Air Transport	\$2,810	\$23	\$61	\$2,894
Other Transport	\$1,625	\$787	\$216	\$2,628
Recreation and Entertainment	\$1,995	\$139	\$146	\$2,279
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	\$390	\$892	\$895	\$2,178
Education and Health Care		\$18	\$1,807	\$1,826
Personal Services	\$348	\$249	\$567	\$1,164
Retail Trade	\$642	\$51	\$437	\$1,130
Wholesale Trade		\$257	\$273	\$529
Communications		\$262	\$221	\$484
Gasoline Stations	\$372	\$6	\$20	\$399
Construction and Utilities		\$213	\$120	\$332
Manufacturing		\$156	\$95	\$251
Government		\$137	\$72	\$209
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		\$17	\$13	\$30

Source: Tourism Economics



Visitor spending drives income across industries, including **10 industries with \$1 billion or more** in total income.

Tax Impacts

Visitor spending, visitor supported jobs, and business sales generated \$11.8 billion in government revenues in 2024.

State and local taxes alone tallied \$6.8 billion.

Each household in Illinois would need to be taxed an additional **\$1,361** to replace the visitor-generated taxes received by state and local government in 2024.

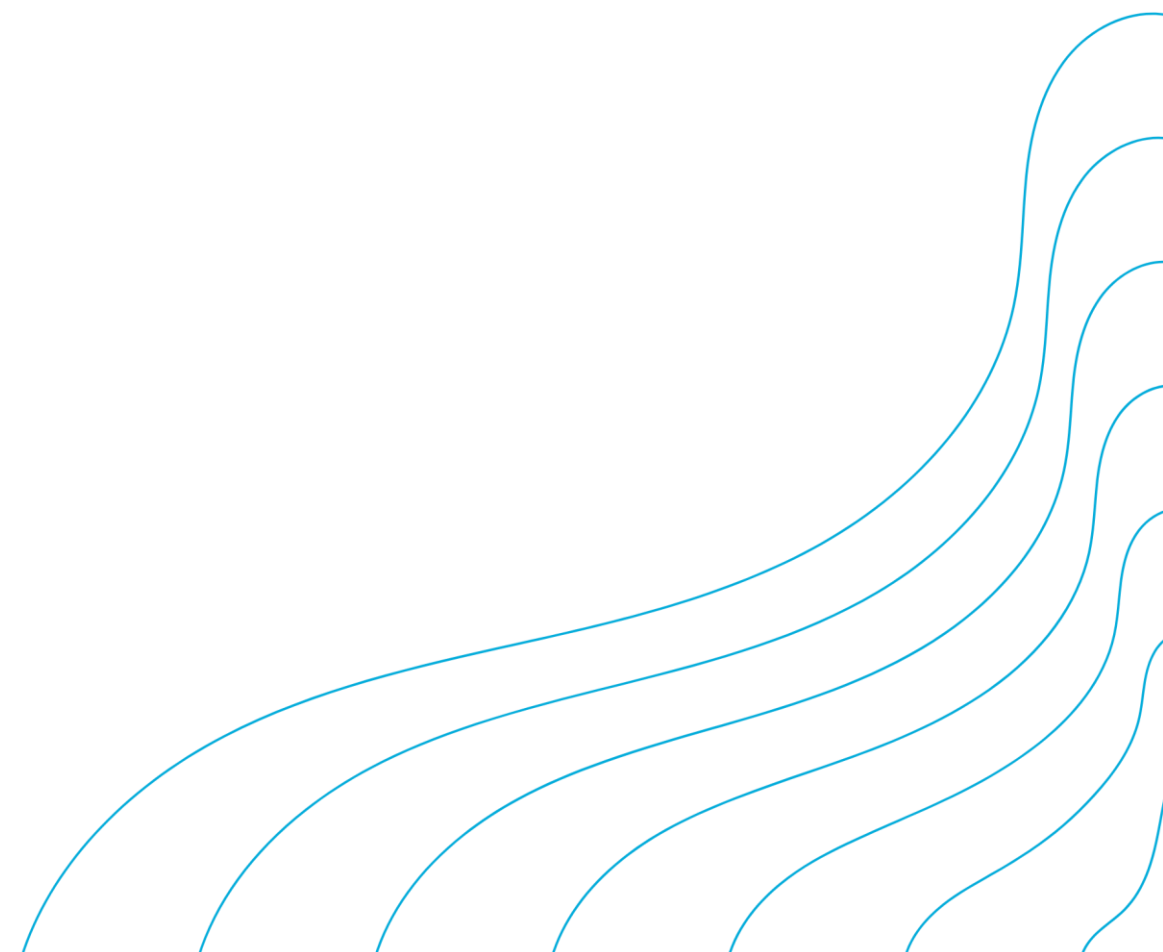
Tax Impacts (2024)
\$ millions

	Direct	Total
Total Tax Revenues	\$8,741	\$11,831
Federal Taxes	\$3,995	\$5,023
Personal Income	\$1,483	\$1,865
Corporate	\$293	\$366
Indirect Business	\$274	\$347
Social Insurance	\$1,945	\$2,445
State and Local Taxes	\$4,746	\$6,808
Sales	\$2,346	\$3,163
Lodging	\$326	\$326
Personal Income	\$556	\$837
Corporate	\$132	\$208
Social Insurance	\$3	\$5
Excise and Fees	\$216	\$291
Property	\$1,167	\$1,977

Source: Tourism Economics



APPENDIX



Appendix

Methodology Overview

Measuring the visitor economy begins with a comprehensive demand side analysis. A visitor is defined as someone who stayed overnight or traveled more than 50 miles to the destination.

The study area is defined as the state of Illinois.

Visitor survey data provide estimates on the volume of visitors by type and their spending in specific categories (e.g. lodging, restaurants, retail, recreation and entertainment, transportation). These estimates are strengthened through an analysis of industry-specific data sets on the lodging industry, aviation, and sectoral-level business sales. Government data, including taxes by type as well as employment and personal income by industry are used to supplement and confirm demand-side visitor spending calculations.

The primary source of the employment and wage data is the Regional Economic Information System (REIS), maintained by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). This is more comprehensive than Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS QCEW) data because sole-proprietors do not require unemployment insurance and are not counted in the QCEW data.

The complete set of data inputs is provided below.

Data Sources

- **DK Shifflet / MMGY:** survey data, including spending and visitor profile characteristics for visitors to Illinois
- **Longwoods International:** survey data, including spending and visitor profile characteristics for visitors to Illinois
- **Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics:** Employment and wage data, by industry
- **STR & AirDNA:** Lodging data, including room demand, room rates, occupancy, and room revenue for hotels and short-term rentals
- **Illinois Department of Revenue:** Hotel Operators’ Occupation Tax data, and sales tax data by category for Illinois
- **U.S. Census Bureau:** Economic Census data, as well as data on population, households, second homes, and real estate taxes
- **U.S. Energy Information Administration:** Gasoline prices for the Chicago area
- **U.S. Department of Transportation:** Air passenger data for airports in Illinois
- **Tourism Economics:** International travel data for overseas, Canadian, and Mexican travel to Illinois based on aviation, survey, and credit card information

Glossary

SPENDING DEFINITIONS	LODGING	All accommodation businesses, including hotels, B&Bs, campgrounds, and short-term rentals. This includes food, entertainment, and other services provided by these establishments.
	FOOD & BEVERAGE	Includes all visitor spending on food & beverages, including at restaurants, bars, grocery stores and other food providers.
	RECREATION	Includes visitors spending within the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.
	RETAIL	Includes visitor spending in all retail sub-sectors within the local economy, excluding grocery stores.
	LOCAL TRANSPORT	Ride share, taxis, limos, trains, rental cars, buses, and gasoline purchases.
	AIR TRANSPORT	Where applicable, the local share of air transportation spending.
ECONOMIC IMPACT DEFINITIONS	SECOND HOMES	Where applicable, spending associated with seasonal second homes for recreational use as defined by the Census Bureau.
	DIRECT IMPACT	Impacts (business sales, jobs, income, and taxes) related to businesses where visitors spend dollars (e.g. recreation, transportation, lodging).
	INDIRECT IMPACT	Impacts created from the purchase of goods and services as inputs (e.g. food wholesalers, utilities, business services) into production by the directly affected sectors (i.e. business-to-business purchases).
	INDUCED IMPACT	Impacts created from spending in the local economy by employees whose wages are generated either directly or indirectly by visitor activity.
	EMPLOYMENT	Employment is measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) definition, and captures full-time and part-time jobs, which includes salary and wage employees and proprietors.
	PERSONAL INCOME	Income (wages, salaries, proprietor income and benefits) supported by visitor spending.
	LOCAL TAXES	City and County taxes generated by visitor spending. Includes any local sales, income, bed, usage fees, licenses and other revenue streams to local governmental authorities.
	STATE TAXES	State tax revenues generated by visitor spending. Includes sales, income, corporate, usage fees and other assessments of state governments.

About the Research Team

This study was conducted by the Tourism Economics group within Oxford Economics. Tourism Economics combines an understanding of traveler dynamics with rigorous economics 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 was founded in 1981 as a commercial venture with Oxford University's business college to provide economic forecasting and modeling 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.

Oxford Economics employs more than 600 full-time staff, including 350+ 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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