



Research

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES

Visit NC evaluates the economic impact of travel and tourism in North Carolina using a Visitor Activity Model for direct visitor spending, related jobs and tax impacts and a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for total impact of tourism.

IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING

To quantify the level of visitor activity in North Carolina, Tourism Economics calibrated the historical TEIM model to align with the official Tourism Satellite Account while maintaining consistency with historical growth rates. The Visitor Activity Model combines a number of data sources that look at tourism from different angles to understand visitor economic contributions in North Carolina. The data provides insights from the visitor, local industry, and government perspectives to pinpoint the scope of the travel sector in terms of direct visitor spending, as well as the direct economic impacts, jobs, and fiscal (tax) impacts in the broader economy.

On an annual basis, Tourism Economics prepares direct economic estimates for North Carolina and each of the 100 counties. This analysis compiles relevant data sets spanning different activities and sectors to provide a holistic view of visitor activity. [View more information](#) about this spending model.

While statewide visitor expenditure data for the prior year is released each spring of the following year, county-level statistics are not released until late summer/early fall. For the most current county-level visitor spending data, please see the files below.

Visit North Carolina



- [2025 Statewide Impact of Visitor Spending by Sector](#)
- [2024 County Level Visitor Expenditures](#)
- [2024 County Level Visitor Expenditures by Percent Change from 2023](#)
- [2024 County Level Visitor Expenditures by Total Expenditures](#)
- [2024 Visitor Expenditures by Prosperity Zone](#)



To use this information in a press release or reference it, the official name of the study is “The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties” and the credit line should read: “This study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics.”

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM

A tourism satellite account (TSA) is a United Nations-approved method for measuring the economic contribution of the travel sector. It is called a “Satellite Account” because it is adjunct to the national accounts of a country and mirrors the measurement system for the national economy.

The TSA deals with the challenge of measuring tourism in two important ways. It defines the travel economy and then provides a methodology for calculating tourism GDP and employment in a way that is consistent with standard industry accounts.

An input-output model is used to represent a profile of the tourism economy in North Carolina by measuring the relationships among industries and consumers and tracking the flow of revenue to wages, profits, capital, taxes and suppliers. The model is unique in that it includes all spending both by and on behalf of travelers, providing a complete picture of the demand and thus the supply related to tourism in the state.

This process calculates the three levels of impact – direct, indirect and induced – for a broad set of indicators. The indicators include the following:

Visit North Carolina



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

The TSA provides several critical benefits to the promotion of the visitor economy:

- Enables comparisons of the importance of travel & tourism to other sectors of the economy
- Allows for benchmarking to other destinations
- Tracks the economic contribution of visitors/travel over time
- Monitors the travel economy's strength by tracking tourism-related capital investment and government support of travel & tourism
- Allows for extension analysis measuring the full economic impact of travel & tourism

2023 TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNT



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