

# PENNSYLVANIA Airports Economic Impact



## The Pennsylvania Airport System

Pennsylvania's aviation industry continues to provide high quality jobs and spur important local spending by on-airport businesses and agencies. The commonwealth's system of 15 commercial service and 117 general aviation airports connects Pennsylvania businesses and residents to the national and global economy. This system is comprised of a network of airports, airlines, air cargo businesses, corporate flight departments, pri-

vate aircraft owners, and recreational airplane pilots. Manufacturers in the state rely on airports to access markets and to receive supplies. Businesses rely on airports to conduct face-to-face meetings with customers and business associates within the United States and abroad. Leisure travelers use airports to reach recreational and tourist sites and to visit with family and friends.

## Pennsylvania's Total Annual Economic Impacts from Aviation

When all of the impacts of Pennsylvania's system airports are added together, nearly 304,500 total jobs can be traced to the aviation industry. These employees receive more than \$9.2 billion in total payroll, and generate nearly \$23.6 billion in total economic activity. In addition, Pennsylvania's airports provide a number of health, welfare, and safety benefits, the impacts of which are immeasurable. Such services include aerial agricultural spraying, medical transport and evacuation, flight training, law enforcement, wildlife management, military exercises, and search and rescue operations.

### Impact Measures

*Employment* measures the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs related to airport activity, including on-airport

construction. A part-time employee is counted as half a full-time employee.

*Payroll* measures the total annual wages and benefits paid to all workers whose salaries are directly attributable to airport activity.

*Economic Activity (Output)* measures the value of goods and services related to airports in Pennsylvania. The output of on-airport businesses is typically assumed to be the sum of annual gross sales and average annual capital expenditures.

**Total Jobs – 304,464**

**Total Payroll – \$9.2 billion**

**Total Output – \$23.6 billion**

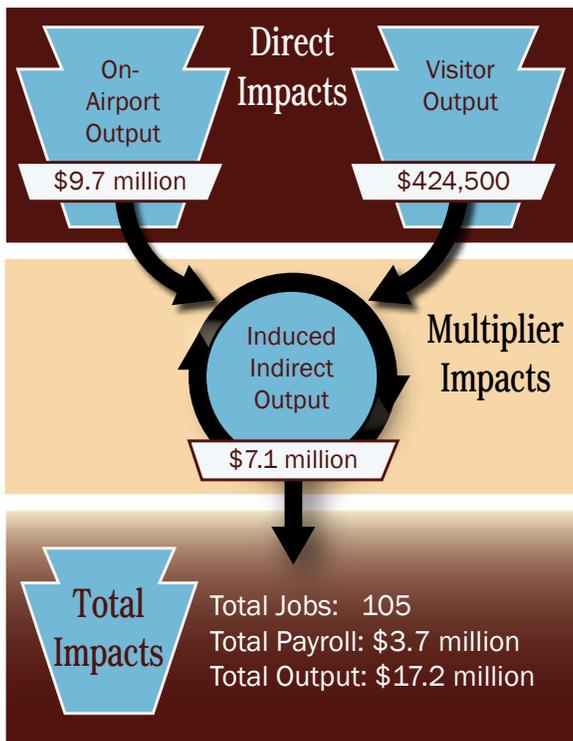
## Study Process

This study, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aviation, analyzes the economic impact of Pennsylvania's aviation industry as a whole, as well as the impacts of its individual airports. The study confirms that many people—beyond the immediate environs of each airport—derive significant economic benefits from the daily operation of the airport system. The study also evaluates some of the less-quantifiable impacts linked with aviation, such as health, safety, recreation, education, and overall community strength.

A detailed modeling effort was undertaken to quantify the economic impacts of on-airport activities (airlines, fixed base operators, flight schools, corporate flight departments, government, and various other business). Also quantified were the impacts derived from the expenditures of visitors who arrive via scheduled service and general aviation aircraft. These on-airport impacts and visitor expenditures support additional economic activity throughout Pennsylvania.

As initial waves of activities associated with the airport system are released into Pennsylvania's economy, successive waves of employment, payroll, and economic benefit occur. These additional benefits are measured using sector-specific employment, payroll, and economic impact multipliers.

## Economic Impact of Wings Field



Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

### Impact Types

*Direct Impacts* include both direct impacts related to on-airport businesses and government agencies, and off-airport impacts, which are usually attributable to visitor spending.

*Multiplier Impacts* are comprised of indirect and induced impacts. These impacts are attributed to employees spending their earnings at local businesses, and the on-airport businesses purchasing goods and services locally. This re-circulation is commonly referred to as the “multiplier effect.”

*Total Impacts* are the combination of all direct, indirect, and induced impacts.



## Qualitative Benefits

Wings Field is located in Blue Bell, in Montgomery County, approximately 15 miles northwest of the center of Philadelphia. The airport is accessible via the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Northeast.

Wings Field is classified as an Intermediate airport by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation. The airport has 100 based aircraft and experiences more than 35,000 annual operations. The airfield’s only runway, Runway 06/24, is 3,700 feet long by 75 feet wide, and is outfitted with medium intensity runway lighting (MIRL). In addition, the runway is served by two non-precision approaches (RNAV RWY 06 and RNAV RWY 24).

Wings Field serves the general aviation needs of the local community and surrounding region, while also serving as a reliever airport for Philadelphia International Airport. The airport is home to approximately 10 on-site business tenants, including fixed base operator Montgomery County Aviation. The FBO offers services such as aviation gas and jet fuel, aircraft parking, hangar leasing, aircraft rental, charter, and aerial tours. In addition, the FBO maintains the general aviation terminal and operates a flight school. Other businesses offer services such as air charter and aircraft maintenance.

The substantial general aviation services make Wings Field an attractive option for corporate flight activity. The following companies utilize the airport regularly:

- Merck
- Unisys
- Teleflex
- Aetna

In addition to corporate flights, daily activities at Wings Field include extensive recreational flying, flight training, and emergency medical flights. The airport is also home to multiple air ambulance and medivac companies such as PennStar, Temple University Medical Center, and Angel Flight East. Angel Flight transports patients to distant medical facilities for treatment and therapies at no charge to the patient. The airport hosts a number of community events throughout the year. The biggest of these is the Wings and Wheels air and car show held each September, which attracts approximately 5,000 visitors to the airport. The airport also hosts the Flying BBQ event, which typically attracts approximately 350 attendees. Other events and programs include tours by school and youth groups, the Able Flight flying program for persons with disabilities, and Young Marines programs.