

# 2018

## Annual Report



Experience Columbus' vision is to be the leading force in creating and revealing the best of the Columbus experience to the world.



Collaborative

Passionate

Strategic

Integrity

Motivated

# LETTER

## From the President and CEO

Dear Community Partners,

2018 set us up for tremendous success in 2019 and beyond.

This year we celebrated the openings of several new attractions that differentiate us from our competition. The Scott's Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens and LEGOLAND Discovery Center offer wonderful options for families. The National Veterans Memorial and Museum makes Columbus the only place in the country with a single facility that honors all veterans, past and present, from all branches of service and eras of conflict.

Smart Columbus launched self-driving shuttles that provide visitors with an innovative transportation option to get to some of our points of interest along the Scioto Mile. Our new advertising agency, BVK, launched a campaign portraying Columbus as a thriving city in new markets to great success. And kudos to our partners at the Greater Columbus Sports Commission: *SportsTravel* magazine named the 2018 NCAA Women's Final Four in Columbus "Sports Event of the Year," besting such events as the Super Bowl and the Winter Olympics.

The Hilton Columbus Downtown announced an expansion to create the city's first 1,000-room convention hotel and new direct west coast flights from John Glenn International were secured for launch in 2019. We champion both of these initiatives and know they will help us best capitalize on hosting ASAE's 2019 Annual Meeting & Exposition in August.

All these things and more help to raise our profile as a vibrant destination for leisure travel and large conventions. We could not do it without the help of the City of Columbus and Franklin County as well as our many members and corporate partners. I look forward to taking advantage of this momentum together in 2019.

Sincerely,

**Brian Ross, CTA**  
President and CEO

# A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## For Columbus' Economic Growth: 2017-2020

Since 2012, Experience Columbus and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission have worked collaboratively with community partners to implement and update a destination-wide strategic framework to enable the city to compete in attracting new visitors. With cities across the country upping their game to lure billions of dollars in visitor spending, we must create national awareness of all Columbus offers. By capturing a larger share of the tourism market, our entire community will benefit through additional visitor revenue that supports jobs, businesses, the arts, human services and overall quality of life.

The framework is based on two major Strategic Initiatives:

### **Increase the Economic Impact and Local Jobs from Travel and Tourism**

Even with record gains, Columbus remains in the middle to lower tier within our competitive peer set. By engaging more business, convention, sports and leisure visitors, and getting them to stay longer and do more, we increase spending and positive ROI.

### **Showcase Authentic, Creative Columbus to Reveal Our Pulse**

Increasing national awareness that Columbus is a vibrant city with many things to do reduces a significant barrier to the sales process (which impacts everyone who sells the city for education, talent recruitment, business relocations, etc.).

### **Key Focus Areas:**

- 1 Growing sales and new markets
- 2 Continuing strategic development and connectivity
- 3 Telling the Columbus story through collaborative marketing
- 4 Assuring quality visitor experiences
- 5 Increasing partnership and membership

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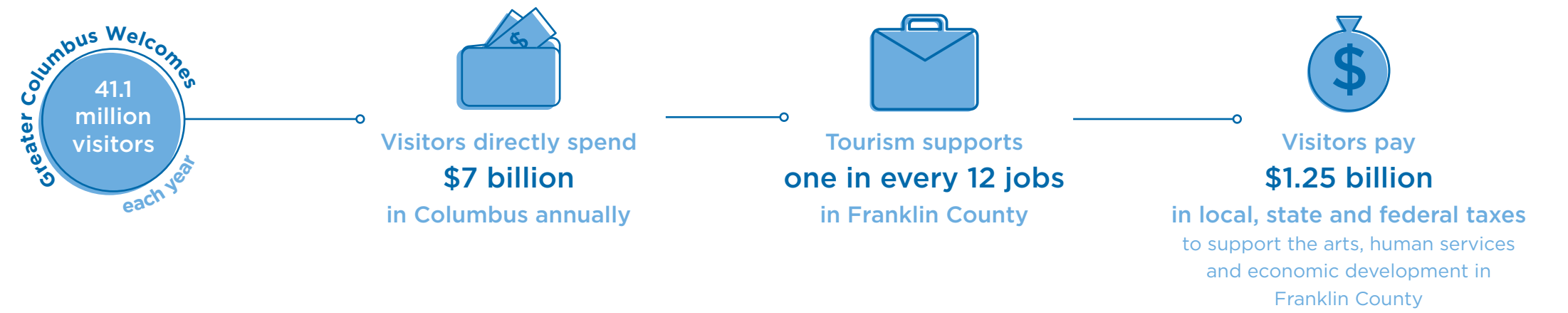


Experience Columbus  
Board of Directors



Experience Columbus Staff

# ANNUAL IMPACT OF THE TRAVEL ECONOMY IN COLUMBUS AND FRANKLIN COUNTY



## ANOTHER RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR BED TAX

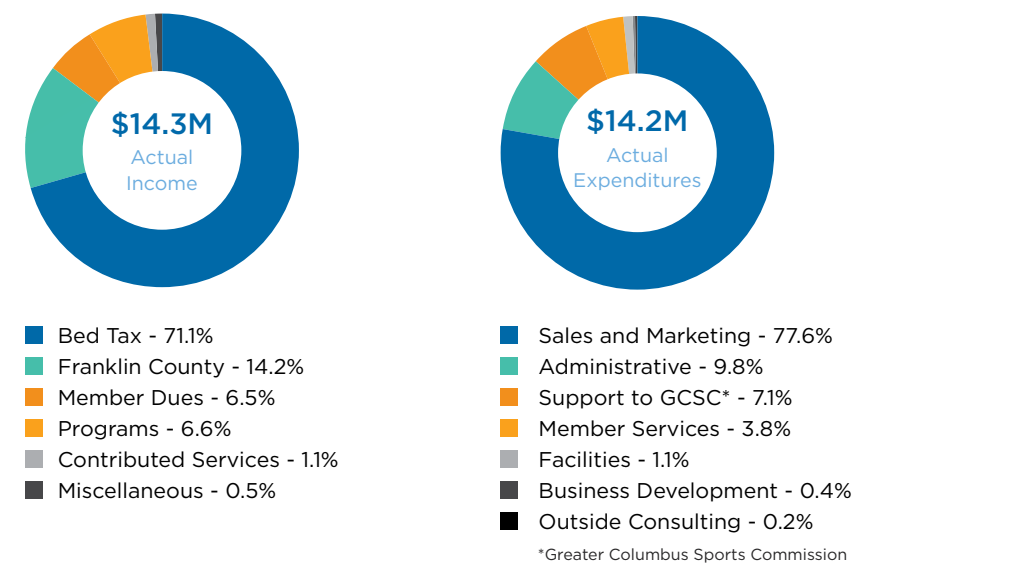
City of Columbus bed tax generated another record amount in 2018.

Bed tax funds support not only Experience Columbus and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission, but also cultural and arts programs, social services, affordable housing programs and the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority.

**\$47.8 million**  
bed tax revenue

**▲ 2.29%**  
from 2017

## EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS 2018 BUDGET OVERVIEW



SOURCE: Tourism Economics an Oxford Economics Company, The Economic Impact of Tourism in Columbus, 2017

# LEAD IT HOME

The visitor industry is big business in Greater Columbus, and it continues to grow. In 2018, Experience Columbus and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission were responsible for booking **551,653 room nights**. Credit for that success must be shared with our partners at local businesses and organizations who worked with us to bring their meetings and conventions to Columbus. Since 2012, the **LEAD It Home** initiative (formerly Make It Columbus) has resulted in bookings that represent more than **474,372 hotel room nights** and an estimated **\$356 million in visitor spending**.



## GREATER COLUMBUS LODGING OVERVIEW

### Citywide      Downtown



**262**

Total Hotels

**16**

Total Hotels



**28,803**

Total Rooms

**4,086**

Total Rooms



**64.7%**

Occupancy

▼ 1.2%

**70.1%**

Occupancy

▲ 1.5%



**\$104.79**

Average Daily  
Rate

▲ 0.9%

**\$149.64**

Average Daily  
Rate

▲ 0.3%

# COLUMBUS

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## PROUD HOST

  
The Center for Association Leadership  
**2019**

## 20%

of association executives attending ASAE's Annual Meeting will book their own meeting in the host city in the next five years, representing

## \$500M

in revenue for the host city.

## 5,300-5,750

total attendees (includes 3,200+ association professionals)



## 79%

are the final decision makers or have significant influence on the location of future meetings



ASAE members plan **376,000 meetings** that reach **200 million attendees**

## \$16M

in visitor spending during the Annual Meeting

Room  
Nights:

## 16,800



## HOSTING ASAE IS A DEFINING MOMENT FOR COLUMBUS

Columbus is emerging as the next big destination for meetings, conventions, sporting events and trade shows. 2019 will be a year like no other as the city hosts the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Annual Meeting & Exposition.

#ASAE19 will draw over **5,000 attendees** to Columbus August 10-13, filling **16,800 hotel rooms** and generating more than **\$16 million** in direct visitor spending. Visitor spending during a meeting or convention like ASAE supports a wide range of local businesses and jobs, while taxes generated support destination marketing, the arts, housing and human services.

Because many attendees have never been to the city, ASAE puts Columbus on the map with key decision makers and influencers planning meetings for their national associations. The ROI represents as much as **\$500 million** in potential future revenue.

It's clear, there has never been a more critical time to get engaged with the tourism economy, be informed about the business side of hospitality and raise the stakes on welcoming visitors. Visit [experiencecolumbus.com/asae-in-cbus](http://experiencecolumbus.com/asae-in-cbus) to learn how you can help demonstrate the city's unmatched spirit of collaboration, innovation and diversity and provide the top-notch visitor experience that will make us a preferred destination.



# BY THE NUMBERS: 2018 PRODUCTION OVERVIEW



**ANNUAL MEETING**  
720 Attended

**THE MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT**  
550 VIP Guests Hosted



**CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADORS:**

Category	Count
New	703
Active	2,018
Trained (to Date)	4,500





## PUBLIC RELATIONS

315

LEISURE  
MEDIA CLIPS

1B

Impressions

59

MEETINGS  
MEDIA CLIPS

970K

Impressions

192

LOCAL  
MEDIA CLIPS

151M

Impressions

66

Writers  
Hosted

5

Media FAM  
Trips

## COLUMBUS TRAILS

35,200  
Redemptions



25,500  
Redemptions



2,682  
Redemptions



## LEISURE CAMPAIGN

55.9M  
Impressions



VISITOR  
SERVICES

64,961

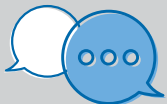
Visitor Center  
Guests

11,402

Volunteers

94

Registered  
Groups/Events  
for Volunteers



## INTERACTIVE



Website

1,347,211  
visits

▲ 11.4%

(experiencecolumbus.com)



Instagram

58,766  
followers

174,864  
interactions

▲ 12%



Facebook

119,127  
followers

184,400  
interactions

▲ 40%



Twitter

105,706  
followers

79,652  
interactions

▲ 14%

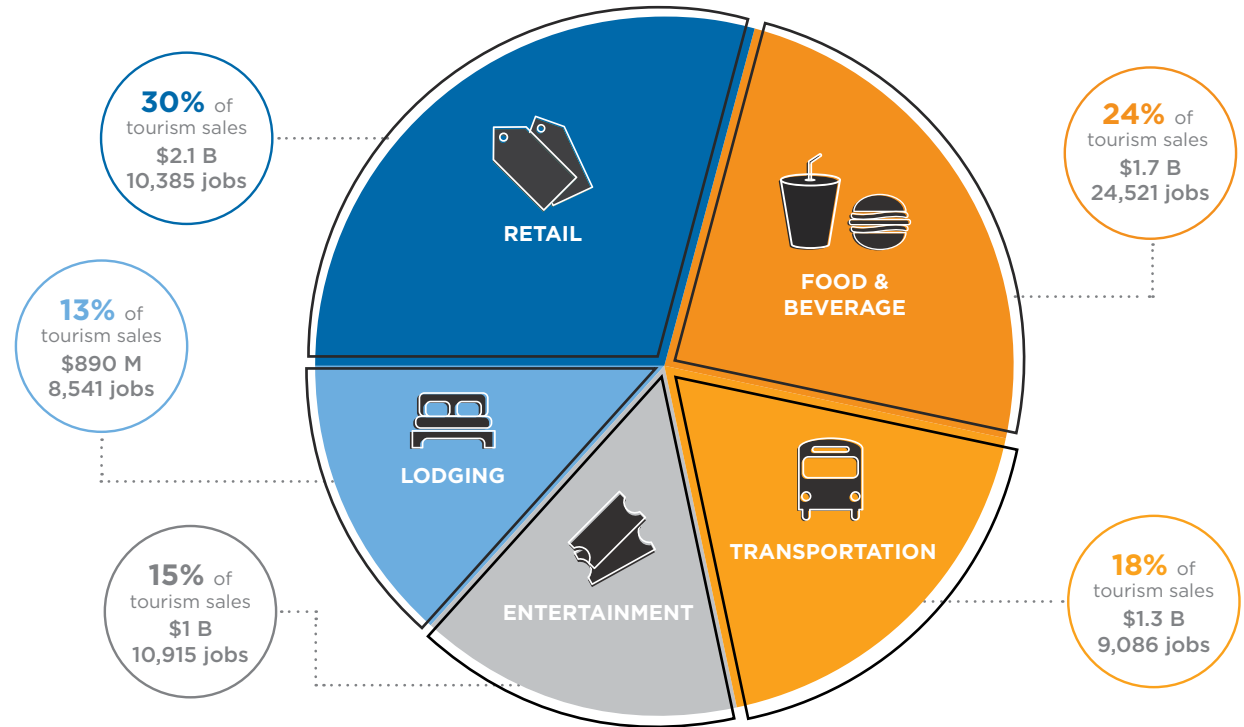


# VISITOR EXPERIENCE PAYS BIG DIVIDENDS

According to the latest Columbus visitor research, visitors directly spent **\$7 billion** in 2016, supporting **\$9.7 billion** in overall economic impact. The tourism sector provides **78,000 jobs** in Columbus and Franklin County. That's **one out of every 12 jobs**. And through state, local and federal tax revenue, tourism generates **\$1.25 billion** to support the arts, human services and economic development in Franklin County. All of this represents a significant return on dollars invested in attracting visitors to our city.

In 2017, Greater Columbus welcomed **41.1 million visitors**, and 23 percent of them stayed at least one night. Visitors who stay overnight generally spend about three times more than someone who visits just for the day. Overnight stays were predominantly for leisure purposes (86 percent), and the remainder for business or a mix of business-leisure.

The top five sectors that benefit from all this visitor spending are:



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City of Columbus, Mayor's Office

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Authority

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Huntington National Bank

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The Columbus Partnership

**Joseph Nardone**  
Columbus Regional Airport Authority

**Guy Worley, CTA**  
Columbus Downtown Development &  
Capitol South Urban Redevelopment

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The Ohio State University

**Sandy Harbrecht**  
Paul Werth Associates

**Douglas F. Kridler**  
The Columbus Foundation

*\* Denotes Executive Committee Member  
as of February 6, 2019*

# EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS STAFF

## **Brian Ross, CTA**

President & CEO

## **Nicole Ayala, CTA**

Senior Executive Assistant

## ADMINISTRATION

## **Jodi Beekman, CPA, CTA**

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Director, Human Resources

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Accounting Administrator

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Vice President, Sales

## **Angela Hammond, CASE, CTA**

Senior Director, Convention Sales

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Director, Washington D.C. Regional Sales

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Director, Chicago Regional Sales

## **Kalee Barnhardt, CTA**

Director, Washington D.C. Regional Sales

## **Arica Billing, CMP, CTA**

National Sales Manager

## **Celia Anderson, CTA**

National Sales Manager

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National Sales Manager

## **Leah Zender, CTA**

National Sales Manager

## **Kerri Pollet, CASE, CTA**

Sales Manager

## **Taylor Savage, CTA**

Sales Manager

## **Maggie Hester, CTA**

Market Analyst

## **Lauren Herring, CTA**

Sales Coordinator

## **Amanda Chiodo, CTA**

Sales Assistant

## **Alison Edwards, CTA**

Sales Assistant

## **Crystal Hurley, CTA**

Sales Assistant

## CONVENTION SERVICES

## **Bill Behrens, CMP, CTA**

Director, Convention Services

## **Sharon Levine, CMP, CTA**

Convention Services Manager

## **Diane Share, CMP, CTA**

Convention Services Manager

## **Renee Scott, CTA**

Housing Coordinator

## **Hannah Henthorne, CTA**

Convention Services Manager

## **Zach Warmouth, CTA**

Convention Services Coordinator

## TOURISM

## **Kari Kauffman, CTA**

Vice President, Tourism

## **Michelle Wilson, CTA**

Director, Visitor Experience

## **Roger Dudley, CTA**

Director, Tourism Sales

## **Alexis Perrone, CTA**

Senior Visitor Services Manager

## **Roxanne Martin, CTA**

Visitor Information Specialist

## **Maureen Emoff, CTA**

Visitor Information Specialist

## **Tony Pellerite, CTA**

Visitor Information Specialist

## **Marie Medford, CTA**

Tourism Coordinator

## MARKETING

## **Amy Tillinghast, CTA**

Vice President, Marketing

## **Amea BellWanzo, CTA**

Director, Marketing

## **Megumi Robinson, CTA**

Director, Public Relations

## **Joe Vargo, CTA**

Director, Interactive Marketing

## **Lexi Sweet, CTA**

Public Relations Manager

## **Jenna Craig, CTA**

Marketing Manager

## **Michelle Ford, CTA**

Marketing Manager

## **Audrey Hall, CTA**

Graphic Designer

## **Shannon Jack, CTA**

Public Relations Coordinator

## **Mariah West, CTA**

Marketing Coordinator

## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

## **Charles Hill, CTA**

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## **Taylor Ray Orsbon, CTA**

Director of Development

## **Carol Allerding, CMP, CTA**

Director, Events/Sponsorship Development

## **Katie Suty, CMP, CTA**

Senior Events Manager

## **Katie Croysdale, CTA**

Events Manager

## **Casey Brown, CTA**

Partnership Services Manager

## **Keiana Mitchell, CTA**

Partnership Manager

## **Samantha Frew, CTA**

Strategic Development Coordinator

# EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS STAFF

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Executive Director

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Executive Assistant

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Director, Corporate Partnerships

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Director, Business Development

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Director, Marketing

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Director, Events

**Lauren McCarty, CTA**  
Business Development Manager

**Michelle Mercer, CTA**  
Business Development Coordinator

**Riley Neuheardt, CTA**  
Marketing Coordinator

**Ariana Tyler, CTA**  
Events Manager

**Erica Cornell, CTA**  
Events Coordinator

**Amy Card, CTA**  
Receptionist/Office Manager

## VISITOR CENTER STAFF

**Ashley Baker, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Aimee Briley, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Dave Cater, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Danielle Hackworth, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Maisie Hanley, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Katie Henry, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Chaney Pavelka, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Lisa Sinclair, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Trish Wirt, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Easton

**Stephen LaVelle, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Arena District

**Susan Pocta, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Arena District

**Lou Tucci, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/Arena District

**Erin Aluise, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/GCCC

**Kiersten Curtis, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/GCCC

**Carolyn Williams, CTA**  
Destination Specialist/GCCC



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Experience Columbus Corporate Partners



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