



# Economic Impact Report

*Study and analysis completed by University of Minnesota Department of Community Development  
February 2024*

---



---

# Overview

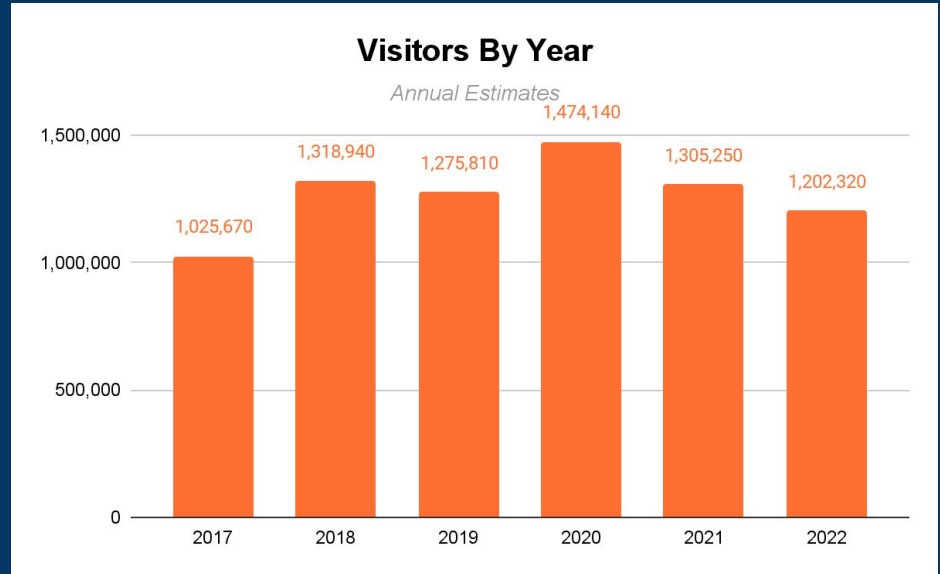
Cook County is a treasured vacation destination in Minnesota, especially for outdoor enthusiasts. Home to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the shores of Lake Superior, four state parks, Lutsen Mountains, and the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino, visitors flock year-round to the region.

To understand the value visitors bring to the county's economy, Visit Cook County asked [University of Minnesota Extension](#) to estimate the economic impact of visitors. This is a summary of the research findings.

*Original report prepared by Brigid Tuck, Ami Choi, and Xinyi Qian; Updated February 2024*

# Visitor Traffic

- On average, **1.2 million visitors** arrive in Cook County, Minnesota each year.
- **Visitation peaked in 2020** as Minnesotans spent more time engaged in outdoor activities and/or visiting cabins and second homes.



Source: University of MN Extension Department of Community Development, Streetlight, and Placer.ai

# Visitor Spending

## Estimated Visitor Spending

Category	Per Person / Per Day	Total
Lodging	\$49.00	\$58,957,390
Restaurants / Bars	\$22.00	\$26,450,960
Transportation	\$19.50	\$23,391,970
Shopping	\$27.20	\$32,703,000
Recreation / Entertainment	\$12.80	\$15,449,690
Groceries	\$6.10	\$7,282,590
Miscellaneous	\$0.40	\$450,240

**Total: \$137.00 \$164,685,840**



**\$164.7 Million**

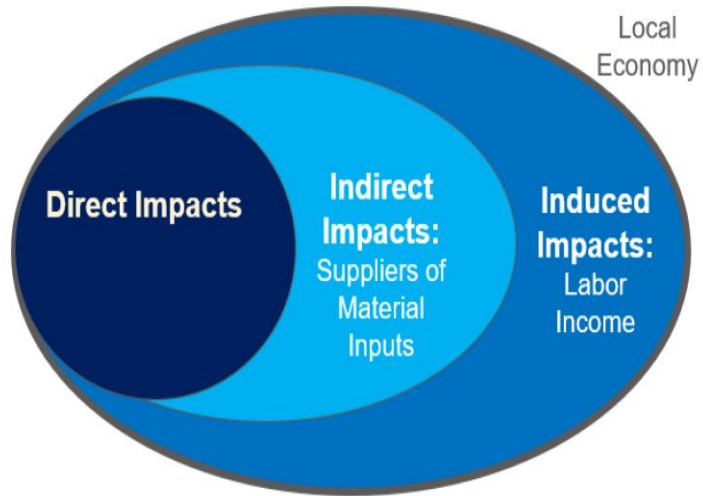
Total spending by Cook County visitors in 2022

**\$137**

Average spend per visitor per day



# Economic Impact Effects



- **Direct effects** are the initial change in the economy. In this analysis, it is the spending by visitors in Cook County.
- **Indirect and induced effects** are the economic activity generated at businesses throughout the county, even if they are not patronized by the visitors. For example, Cook County visitors may not hire a local accountant, but that accountant might have a client whose business caters to visitors.

# Visitor Spending

**\$220 Million**

Of economic activity in 2022 was generated by visitors

**Which resulted in:**

**2,060 jobs**

Being visitors supported

**\$69 Million**

Of labor income generated

	Output	Employment	Labor Income
Direct	\$165,271,600	1,700	\$57,784,360
Indirect	\$32,120,360	210	\$6,334,150
Induced	\$22,747,050	150	\$5,196,380
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$220,139,010</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>\$69,314,890</b>



In total, Cook County visitors generated an estimated \$220 million of economic activity in 2022. This includes \$69 million in labor income, or money into the pockets of Cook County workers.

Visitors supported 2,060 jobs. Of those, 1,700 workers directly serve visitors, and 360 workers are at businesses that support the tourism industry.

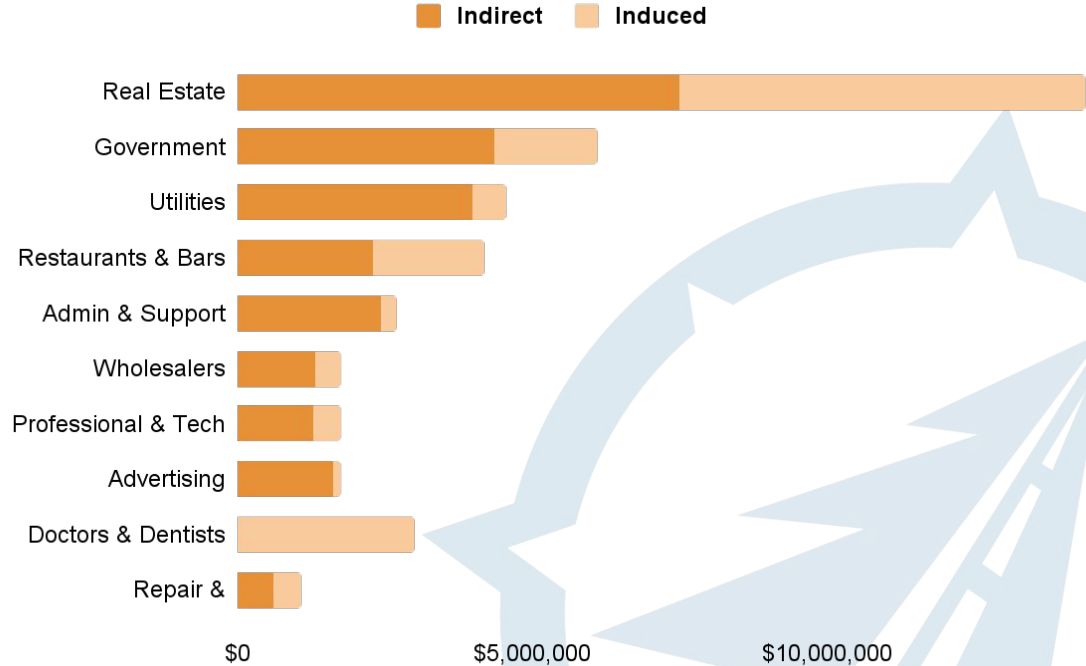
# Visitor Spending



## \$55 Million

Of the \$220 million in economic activity generated by visitors was at businesses that do not directly serve visitors.

The industries beyond direct service that benefited the most from visitors include real estate, government enterprises (including state, local, and tribal operations), and utilities.



Source: University of MN Extension Department of Community Development, IMPLAN

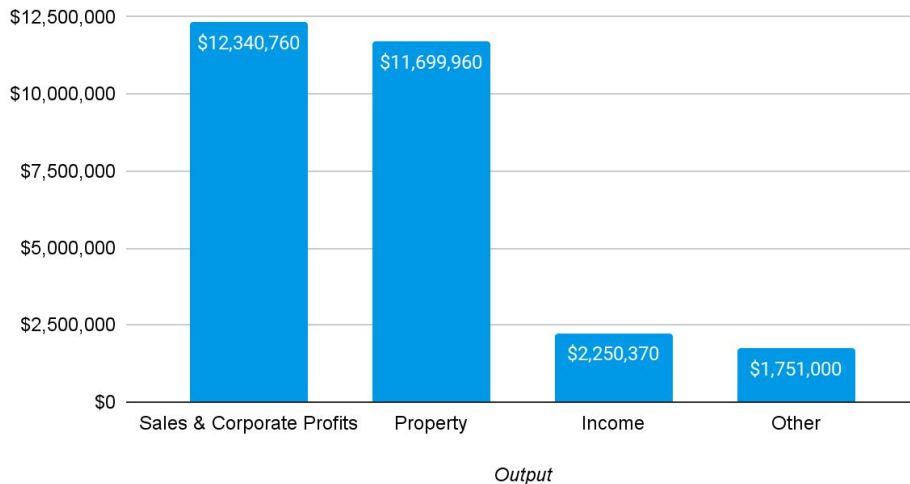
# Visitor Spending



**\$28 Million**

Generated by visitors in State &  
Local tax collections in 2022.

## State & Local Tax Impacts

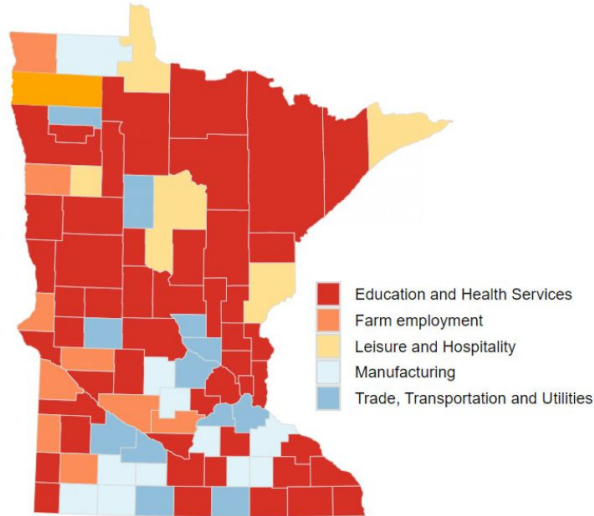


Source: University of MN Extension Department of Community Development, Zartico



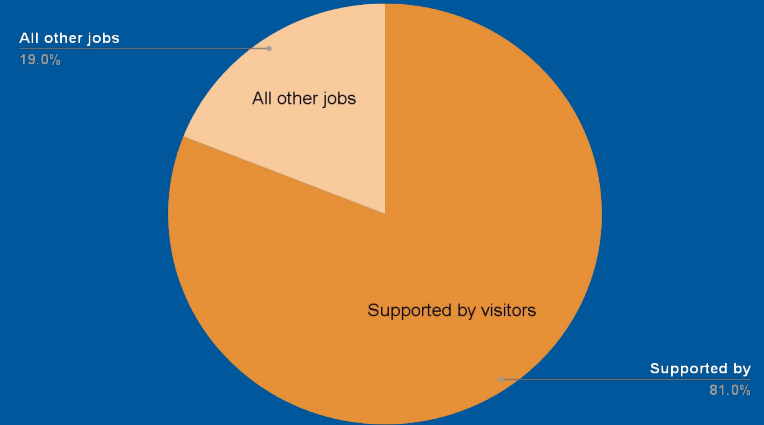
# Employment

## Top Employment Industry By County | 2022



**8 out of 10**

Jobs in Cook County rely on the tourism industry



Cook County is one of a handful of counties in Minnesota where the leisure and hospitality industry accounts for the highest share of jobs. Other counties include Cass, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, and Pine.



# Retail Impact



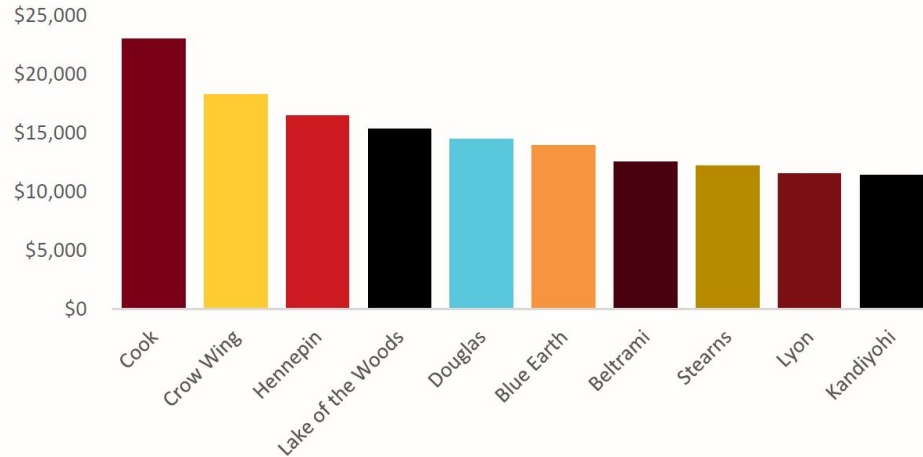
~\$23,000

in retail sales per resident

Cook County has the highest amount of taxable retail and service sales per capita in the state.

Cook County had slightly less than \$23,000 in sales per resident in 2021. This figure is calculated by taking total retail sales and dividing by the population.

## Per Capita Taxable Retail & Service Sales | 2021



Cook County retail and service businesses pull in twice as many sales as expected.

Source: University of MN Extension Department of Community Development, IMPLAN

# Local Impact

## Visitor Supported Retail & Service Spending as a Percent of Gross Sales by Category

Category	% of Taxable Sales
Lodging*	96%
Restaurants/Bars	79%
Transportation	97%
Shopping	98%
Recreation/Entertainment	90%
Groceries	30%
Misc.	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87%</b>



**87%**

**Of all sales are attributed to visitors.**

Tourism is a major contributor to Cook County retail and service sales. Across all categories, visitor spending accounted for 87% of retail and service spending. Visitors accounted for more than 90% of sales in the lodging, transportation, and shopping sectors in Cook County in 2022.

Source: University of MN Extension Department of Community Development, Zartico

# Key Findings

**\$220**

**Million**

Of economic activity in 2022 was generated by visitors

**87%**

Of all sales are attributed to visitors.

**\$137**

Average spend per visitor per day

**#1**

In taxable sales in Minnesota per capita

- On average, **1.2 million visitors** arrive in Cook County, Minnesota each year.
- In 2022, estimated **visitor spending was \$164 Million in sales** across all sectors generating **\$28 Million** in state and local taxes.
- The tourism industry impacts **8 out of 10 jobs** in the community **directly supporting 2,060 jobs**.
- Cook County is **#1 in taxable sales** in Minnesota per capita.

# Graphic Assets



**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

**90%** IN TAXABLE RETAIL SALES PER CAPITA IN MINNESOTA.

VISIT COOK COUNTY MN



VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**VISITORS ACCOUNT FOR 90% OF SALES**

IN LODGING, TRANSPORTATION, AND SHOPPING SECTORS.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**



VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**81% OF JOBS SUPPORTED BY TOURISM.**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**



VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**VISITORS SPEND \$164 MILLION ANNUALLY.**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**



VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**WELCOMING 1.2M VISITORS ANNUALLY.**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**



**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**TOURISM GENERATES \$220M OF ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.**



VISIT COOK COUNTY MN

**TOURISM SUPPORTS 2,060 LOCAL JOBS.**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**



**Download Graphic Assets Here**

# Resources & Partners



This study was paid for and adapted by Visit Cook County.

**Questions can be directed to:**

Linda Jurek

Executive Director, Visit Cook County

E: [linda@visitcookcounty.com](mailto:linda@visitcookcounty.com)

P: (218) 387-2788 ext. 101



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**The complete study was completed by the University of Minnesota Extension Department of Community Development in 2023.**

**Data sources used in this study include:**

- Zartico spending & insights data
- Placer.ai & Streetlight geo-location data
- U.S. Census Data
- DEED Employment Data
- Minnesota Department of Revenue Sales Tax Data
- Center for Rural Development & Policy

[Find the original study here.](#)

