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2025: CLEVELAND VISITOR ECONOMY CONTINUED STEADY GROWTH

*Cuyahoga County outpaced state and national visitation growth;
destination is working toward next period of accelerated visitation growth*

CLEVELAND (Oct. 20, 2026) – Cleveland’s visitor economy continued its steady, competitive growth in 2025 as Cuyahoga County welcomed 18.9 million visitsⁱ, Destination Cleveland announced today. The 1.7% increase from 2024 visitation is equivalent to about 875 additional visits each day and outpaced both domestic visitation growth (1.5%) and Ohio visitation growth (1.2%). The 2025 results build on a long-term pattern: for 11 of the past 12 years (excluding pandemic-affected 2020), Cuyahoga County’s visitor economy has outperformed either or both domestic and statewide visitation growthⁱⁱ.

Visitation has a significant impact on Cuyahoga County’s economy. Visitors spent a record \$7 billion at local hotels, restaurants, attractions, shops and other businesses in 2025. That spending ultimately generated a total economic impact of \$11.4 billion and supported 1 in 14 local jobs.

“Visitors bring new dollars into our economy that support local businesses, jobs and residents. And the value of a visit to Cleveland doesn’t end when someone goes home,” said David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland. “When visitors leave with a positive impression, they can also become advocates for Cleveland and help us reach new audiences, inspire future visits and strengthen consideration of Cleveland as a place to live, work and invest.”

Visitation supports jobs and delivers benefits to residents

Travel and tourism continues to be an important source of jobs and income in Cuyahoga County. The visitor economy sustained more than 70,400 local jobs in 2025 (7.3% of all Cuyahoga County jobs). Those workers took home \$3.8 billion in personal income. Outside spending also benefits residents: visitor-generated tax revenues provided the equivalent of a \$1,475 tax benefit for each Cuyahoga County household.

Conditions building for next “step change” in visitor growth

With major destination developments underway and on the horizon and continued work to strengthen perceptions of the destination, the conditions for Cleveland’s next period of accelerated visitation growth are being fosteredⁱⁱⁱ. Those conditions include nearly \$5 billion in waterfront investment, new professional sports teams, a domed stadium with the capacity to host a variety of large-attendance events, new hotels and airport modernization. Combined, these investments will expand Cleveland’s visitor experience and create new reasons for travelling to the city.

“While we can’t predict exactly what will produce the next shift, it is likely to result from the compounding effect of significant destination developments coupled with perception change from national or global events and sustained brand marketing,” said Gilbert. “Our role (at Destination Cleveland) is to connect what’s happening across the destination into a larger Cleveland story that strengthens perceptions, builds interest in visiting and helps the region fully capitalize on the ground swell these investments can create.”

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ABOUT DESTINATION CLEVELAND: *Destination Cleveland is Cleveland’s destination marketing and management organization. The private, non-profit organization’s mission is to stimulate economic growth by attracting people and connecting them to experiences that illustrate Cleveland’s diversity, creativity and contagious passion. In 2025, visitation increased for the fifth straight year to 18.9 million visits, with visitor spending infusing a record-high \$7 billion into the local economy. For more information, visit www.thisiscleveland.com.*

ⁱ Metrics sourced from Tourism Economics, a division of Oxford Economics and a world leader in global forecasting and quantitative analysis.

ⁱⁱ Data sourced from Tourism Economics and Longwoods International.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cleveland previously experienced this from 2014 to 2018, when visitation grew by an average of 3.4% annually. In that four-year period, the new Cleveland visitor brand combined with destination developments (including the opening of the Huntington Convention Center and new hotels) and major events such as the 2016 Republican National Convention and Cavaliers championship to showcase the city’s evolution as a destination.