

## Aviation, Aerospace and Defense Support Arizona

Arizona's 15 counties are home to 67 publicly owned, public-use airports that support the economic vitality and quality of life within the Grand Canyon State. These airports host commercial passenger service; world-class general aviation (GA) activities such as flight training, skydiving, and aerial tours; and air cargo while serving as regional job centers and economic engines in their communities. In addition to Arizona's airports, cutting-edge aerospace and defense companies and numerous United States (U.S.) military installations with a significant aviation-related component are in the state.

The 2021 Arizona Aviation Economic Impact Study (AEIS) commissioned by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Aeronautics Group examines the impacts of these three vital aspects of aviation and aerospace in Arizona.

Together airports, aerospace manufacturing, and U.S. military installations contribute over \$121.4 billion to our economy every year—providing a foundation for Arizona's culture of growth, innovation, and economic prosperity.

### STATEWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT **\$121.4 Billion**



## What is Economic Impact?

The 2021 Arizona AEIS measured how economic activity at the state's commercial service and GA airports stimulated the Arizona economy in 2019. Impacts are generated by airport administration and business tenant employees working on airport property, capital improvement spending, and the thousands of out-of-state and international visitors who fly to Arizona and bring new money into our economy. In turn, airport administration and on-airport business tenants purchase goods from suppliers (indirect impacts) and airport workers spend the money they earn (induced impacts), generating successive waves of economic impacts in Arizona.

The economic impacts of aerospace manufacturing and 59 Arizona airports were modeled by IHS Markit using IMPLAN (2019). Eight airports requested that their independently conducted studies be incorporated into the 2021 Arizona AEIS study results (2019). The impacts of military operations were obtained from the *Economic Impacts of Arizona's Principal Military Operations* commissioned by the Military Affairs Commission and prepared by The Maguire Company (2017).

For more details about the 2021 Arizona AEIS, including the full Technical Report, visit [azdot.gov/planning/airport-development/links-and-resources-airport-development](https://azdot.gov/planning/airport-development/links-and-resources-airport-development)

# ADOT

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## ARIZONA AVIATION ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

### Graham County



Sitting at the confluence of the Rocky Mountains, Sierra Madre, and Sonoran Desert, Graham County is a geographically and culturally diverse region. Graham County contains the Safford micropolitan area, the largest population center in the county, while most of the rest of the region is rural. There is one city and two towns in the county, as well as four unincorporated communities and nine U.S. Census-designated places.<sup>1</sup> Parts of the Fort Apache and San Carlos reservations account for approximately 35 percent of the county's total land. Freeport-McMoRan (FCX) is the largest single employer, employing more than 900 workers in 2019.<sup>2</sup> FCX operates the Safford Mine, which is considered one of the most advanced copper mines in the world in terms of environmental sustainability. Naturesweet USA, another prominent employer, operates a large tomato production and distribution facility 15 miles northwest of Willcox. Fort Grant State Prison and Arizona State Prison Complex – Safford are also located in the county.

The historic homeland of the Apache People, Graham County is home to many cultural, natural, and historic points of interest. Mount Graham, the third-highest peak in Arizona, towers over the county and offers areas for hiking, mountain biking, camping, and hunting. The Mount Graham International Observatory operates three highly-advanced research telescopes under the administration of the University of Arizona. Other notable recreational destinations include the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area and the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Area.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau (2021). [2] Graham County Government (2021).

## County Demographics



Population  
**38,800**



Employment  
**7,535**

Source: United States  
Census Bureau (2019)

## Top Business Sectors



Health Care &  
Social Assistance



Retail Trade



Accommodation  
& Food Services

Congressional  
District

**1**

Legislative Districts

**7, 14**

## Did You Know?

Safford Regional Airport (SAD) is home to Ponderosa Aviation, Inc., which offers aerial wildland fire detection, air ambulance, and fixed-base operator services to enhance safety and support economic development across southeastern Arizona.

## STATEWIDE Economic Impacts of Arizona Airports



Jobs  
**386,058**



Earnings  
**\$20.4B**

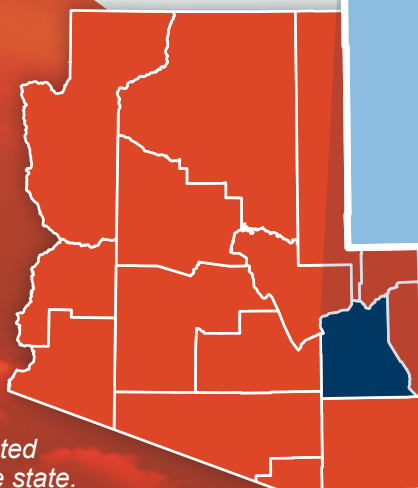


Economic Activity  
**\$59.4B**



Tax Impacts  
**\$3.5B**

Arizona's airports contributed  
**\$33.0B in value added to the state.**



\* County Seat  
✈ GA Airport

## GRAHAM COUNTY Economic Impacts of Airport



Jobs: **106**  
Number of full- and part-time persons employed



Earnings: **\$5.8M**  
Total compensation paid to workers including wages and benefits



Economic Activity (Output): **\$13.7M**  
Value of sales that occur in the Arizona economy that are ultimately attributable to airport activities



Tax Impacts: **\$481,918**  
Airports' direct economic impacts result in local and state tax revenues.