



2025 North Dakota
State Aviation System Plan



2025 North Dakota
Aviation Economic Impact Study

Grand Forks International Airport (GFK)

Associated City: Grand Forks



GFK's Airport Economic Impacts

The impacts below present the sum of direct and multiplier impacts of all activity associated with GFK. The table below offers a breakdown of the total impacts by direct, multiplier, total, and source of impact.

Jobs

1,791

Payroll

\$104.72 M

Value Added

\$156.77 M

Output

\$269.86 M

Source of Impact	Jobs		
	Direct	Multiplier	Total
Airport Management	28	19	47
Airport Tenants	770	338	1,108
Capital Expenditures	127	63	189
GA Visitor Spending	125	38	163
CS Visitor Spending	216	67	283
Total Jobs Impacts	1,266	525	1,791

Source of Impact	Payroll		
	Direct	Multiplier	Total
Airport Management	\$1.74 M	\$1.14 M	\$2.87 M
Airport Tenants	\$52.71 M	\$20.70 M	\$73.41 M
Capital Expenditures	\$8.32 M	\$4.16 M	\$12.49 M
GA Visitor Spending	\$3.65 M	\$2.19 M	\$5.84 M
CS Visitor Spending	\$6.32 M	\$3.79 M	\$10.10 M
Total Payroll Impacts	\$72.74 M	\$31.98 M	\$104.72 M

Source of Impact	Value Added		
	Direct	Multiplier	Total
Airport Management	\$3.18 M	\$1.80 M	\$4.99 M
Airport Tenants	\$72.90 M	\$33.20 M	\$106.10 M
Capital Expenditures	\$12.38 M	\$7.20 M	\$19.58 M
GA Visitor Spending	\$6.04 M	\$3.52 M	\$9.56 M
CS Visitor Spending	\$10.44 M	\$6.10 M	\$16.54 M
Total Value Added Impacts	\$104.94 M	\$51.82 M	\$156.77 M

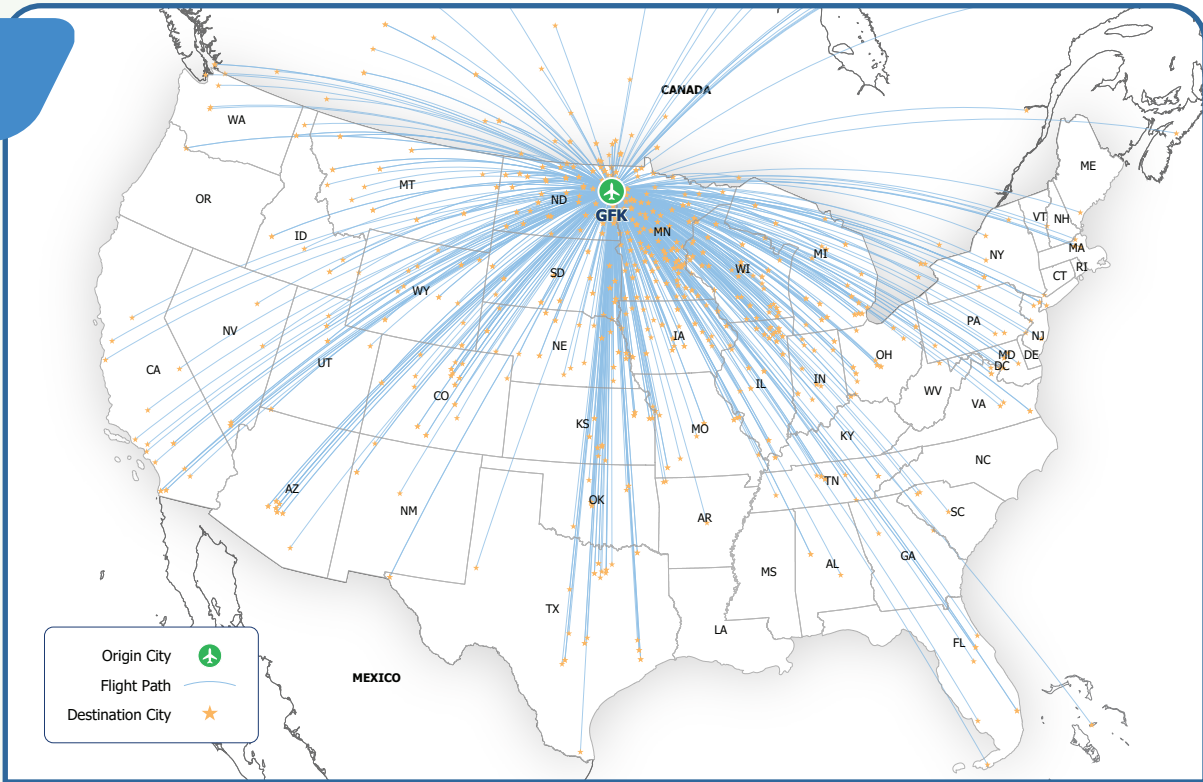
Source of Impact	Output		
	Direct	Multiplier	Total
Airport Management	\$4.29 M	\$3.21 M	\$7.50 M
Airport Tenants	\$112.28 M	\$63.08 M	\$175.36 M
Capital Expenditures	\$23.66 M	\$13.17 M	\$36.83 M
GA Visitor Spending	\$11.54 M	\$6.84 M	\$18.38 M
CS Visitor Spending	\$19.96 M	\$11.84 M	\$31.79 M
Total Output Impacts	\$171.72 M	\$98.14 M	\$269.86 M

Sources: 2025 NDAEIS Airport Manager Survey; IMPLAN, 2025; Kimley-Horn, 2025. Notes: Dollar values rounded to the nearest 1,000. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Airport Flight Map

This Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) map shows annual flight activity data and helps to demonstrate the important role that GFK plays in providing time-saving connections for local and visiting businesses and residents. IFR Flights Completed as Filed between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024.

Source: FlightAware



Airport Facts



The airport and the activities it supports generate more than \$35 million annually in federal, state, and local tax revenues, with approximately \$887,000 benefiting local governments.

An estimated 81,771 out-of-state visitors traveled through GFK in 2024 using commercial and general aviation services.

Visitors using GFK spent approximately \$5.4 million on lodging, \$9.1 million on food and beverage, \$5.7 million on local transportation, \$6.3 million on retail, and \$5.0 million on entertainment, supporting local businesses throughout the region.



GFK is home to 18 aviation-related or aviation-reliant businesses, including a flight training program with the largest civilian training aircraft fleet in the country, which accounts for roughly 530 of the 770 direct airport tenant jobs.

Over the past four years, more than \$94 million has been invested in capital improvements at GFK, averaging approximately \$23.7 million annually from federal, state, local, and private funding sources.

Study Methodology

Comprehensive data collection was essential to producing accurate economic impact estimates for calendar year 2024. Primary data sources, including airport staff, airport business tenants, and visitors, were used to estimate direct economic impacts. These data were gathered through onsite visits and a combination of in-person, telephone, and online surveys. Where needed, additional industry sources were consulted to supplement the primary data. A nationally recognized economic modeling platform, IMPLAN, was used to calculate multiplier effects. Economic impacts were estimated for airport management, airport tenants, capital investment activity, GA visitor spending, and commercial service visitor spending.

Economic Impact Levels

The economic impacts for North Dakota's airports are presented at three distinct levels (direct, multiplier, and total) to describe where in the economic cycle the impact is generated.

Direct Impacts

Airport Administration

Airport Tenants

Capital Investment

GA and Commercial Services Visitor Spending

Multiplier Impacts

Indirect

Portions of direct output used to purchase goods and services from businesses inside the study region

Induced

Income earned by workers from direct and supplier sales transactions that are then spent inside the study region

Total Impacts

There are four measures used to express the economic impact of North Dakota's airports: jobs, payroll, value added, and output.

Jobs

Total number of people employed. This includes both full-time and part-time because of aviation.

Payroll

Total employment compensation, including wages and benefits, of those employed

Value Added

The value of final goods and services produced locally because of economic activity, excluding the value of goods and services used to produce them

Output

Total expenditures associated with airport administration, capital projects, tenant sales of goods and services, as well as visitor spending in North Dakota's hospitality-related sectors

About Grand Forks International Airport

Grand Forks International Airport (GFK) is a vital gateway for eastern North Dakota, blending commercial service, general aviation, and a strong commitment to education. In addition to supporting scheduled airline service and private aviation, GFK plays a pivotal role in advancing aviation careers through its partnership with the renowned University of North Dakota School of Aerospace Sciences, one of the largest collegiate aviation programs in the world. This collaboration positions GFK as a cornerstone for flight training and innovation. Community engagement is central to GFK’s mission. Through school tours of aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) facilities and airport operations, students from elementary to high school gain firsthand exposure to aviation careers and safety practices. These experiences inspire interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields and aviation pathways, fostering the next generation of industry professionals. To further strengthen workforce development, GFK offers a year-round internship program focused on operations, planning, and related disciplines. Reserved primarily for college junior and senior students, these internships provide practical experience and are partially funded through a grant from the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC). This initiative reflects GFK’s commitment to cultivating talent and supporting the state’s aviation ecosystem. Beyond education, GFK continues to invest in infrastructure and customer service, ensuring efficient operations and a welcoming experience for travelers. In fact, GFK is currently undertaking a major multi-year airfield improvement project that includes reconstructing Runway 17R/35L from asphalt to concrete, enhancing the runway’s longevity, load-bearing capacity, and long-term maintenance performance. Its role extends beyond transportation—it is a driver of economic growth, innovation, and community connection. Grand Forks International Airport is more than an airport; it is a hub of learning, opportunity, and regional vitality, shaping the future of aviation while meeting the needs of today.



Airport Activities



Scheduled Airline Service



Flight Instruction



Corporate Activity



Recreational Gateway



Medevac

Runways

The most critical infrastructure of an airport is the runway system. Runway characteristics determine the types of activity the airport can support.

Type	Orientation	Dimensions	Surface	Approach
Primary Runway	17R/35L	7,351 ft x 150 ft	Asphalt	ILS / ILS
Secondary Runway	09L/27R	6,701 ft x 100 ft	Concrete	RNAV (GPS) / RNAV (GPS)
Tertiary Runway	17L/35R	3,901 ft x 75 ft	Concrete	RNAV (GPS) / RNAV (GPS)
Additional Runway	09R/27L	3,300 ft x 60 ft	Concrete	VIS / VIS

Aviation Activity Demand Forecasts

Aviation activity demand forecasts are included in the NDSASP to understand how aviation demand is expected to change over time. These forecasts help inform future infrastructure needs and long-term system planning decisions.

Activity Type	Base Year (2024)	Future Year (2044)	2024-2044 CAGR
Commercial Service Enplanements	91,776	157,920	2.75%
Commercial Service Operations	113,409	120,070	0.29%
General Aviation Operations	172,140	195,580	0.64%
Based Aircraft	143	166	0.75%

Notes: Commercial service operations at GFK include a large percentage of training-related operations associated with the University of North Dakota’s flight school.