

# **PROFILE AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF VISITORS TO NORFOLK, VIRGINIA**



**Center for Tourism Research and Development  
Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management  
University of Florida  
PO Box 118208  
Gainesville, FL 32611-8208  
(352) 392-3992 (phone)  
(352) 392-7588 (fax)**

## **Executive Summary**

**Submitted to:**

**NCVB Training and Research Foundation, Inc.  
232 East Main Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510**

**August 2006**

## **Profile of Visitors to Norfolk, Virginia**

### *Executive Summary*

This executive summary is based on responses from 1563 surveys completed between May 2, 2005 and May 13, 2006.

1. Data were collected at 31 sites which represented Accommodations (24.3%), Festivals and Special Events (27.1%), Attractions and Museums (31.0%), Cruise/Harbor Terminal (10.8%), and International Airport (6.8%). Proportionately, the majority of surveys were conducted at the Waterside Mall (12.3%), followed by the Nauticus (9.1%) the Azalea Festival (8.6%), and the Marriott hotel (5.9%).
2. The most common type of information source used to plan their trip to Norfolk was the Internet (32.8%), followed closely by friends/relatives (32.18%). Previous visits (24.6%) and road signs/map/atlas (11.2%) were also popular information sources. The least used information sources were the Norfolk CVB website (1.2%) and the VA State Welcome Center (1.3%).
3. Only 7.3% indicated that they had made their decision on the same day as their visit to Norfolk, while 27.8% noted that they had decided 2-4 weeks ahead of their visit. Similarly, 23.8% indicated that they had made their decision more than 12 weeks before their actual visit.
4. The majority of the visitors (71.2%) indicated that Norfolk was their primary destination and 28.8% reported that Norfolk was not their primary destination. Of those visitors who did not report Norfolk as their primary destination they overwhelmingly noted other destinations within the State of Virginia (70%), with a sizeable majority indicating Virginia Beach.
5. Leisure/vacation/holiday was reported as the most popular primary purpose of their trip among visitors (42.0%); 24.9% of visitors indicated visiting friends and relatives; 20.5% of visitors noted business, while 12.7% indicated that meeting/convention was their primary trip purpose.
6. Most visitors (63.2%) reported that they were repeat visitors whereby 21.2% had visited Norfolk once, while 15.3% noted that they had visited more than five times during the past twelve months.
7. The majority of visitors (71.4%) reported they were overnight visitors, while 28.6% were day visitors. Among overnight visitors, 29.8% indicated that they have or had planned to stay for two nights, while 30.2% noted stays of over 4 nights. Among day visitors, 49.0% indicated that they have or had planned to stay between 4-6 hours, while 17.7% noted between stays of 1-3 hours.
8. The majority of visitors (75.6%) stayed at a hotel/motel while 23.6% of visitors reported staying at a friend or relative's home. In addition, 64.3% of visitors indicated that Norfolk was their primary accommodation city followed by Virginia Beach (21.0%).
9. Most visitors (50.3%) used their personal vehicle for their trip followed by commercial airlines (29.8%), and commercial transportation (11.9%).
10. The most popular travel group composition was family (39.1%) followed by visitors who had traveled alone (26.1%). Tour group consisted of 14.7%.
11. Visitors in groups of 2 people represented 27.0% of those surveyed, followed closely by groups of 5 and more (25.7%) and then visitors traveling alone (25.1%).

12. The most popular activities participated in by visitors were general sightseeing (37.9%) followed by shopping (36.1%), visiting museums (32.0%), visiting historical sites (27.7%), visiting the beach (19.2%); and attending a festival/special event (19.1%). Based on these activities, visitors indicated that visiting friend's and relatives' (21.3%) was the primary reason to visit Norfolk.
13. Based on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree), the average mean was higher than 4 for the following characteristics of Norfolk: Attractive waterfront, a wide variety of restaurant and bars; accessibility to military/heritage attractions; many places of interest to visit; opportunities to attend festival and events; interesting cultural and historical sites; a wide variety of accommodations, and good climate/weather.
14. The majority of visitors (95.5%) rated their trip to Norfolk above average with a mean of 8.16 on a 10-point scale. Almost 19% rated their trip as a perfect experience.
15. Over half of the visitors (57.3%) noted that it was very likely that they would return to Norfolk for a vacation, followed by 25.5% who indicated they were somewhat likely to return.
16. Visitors were asked to report what they *liked most* and *liked least* about their visit to Norfolk. Of those who responded, the people, waterfront and weather were liked the most by visitors to Norfolk. Similarly, traffic/congestion and roads were least liked by visitors. However, weather was selected among both the most liked and the least liked.
17. The mean total amount of money actually spent by visitors was \$137.41 per visitor, while the mean *plan* to spend total was \$84.92 per visitor. The mean spending total by visitors was \$222.33 per trip
18. Slightly more visitors were female (52.7%), while 47.3% were male.
19. The average age of the visitors was 48.9 years, with 32.2% between 40-60 years of age, followed by those between 31-45 years (26.2%).
20. The most common income bracket reported by respondents was \$50,001-\$75,000 (19.2%), followed by \$35,001-\$50,000 (18.8%). Only 7.4% of visitors reported incomes over \$150,000,
21. Just over one third of visitors had college degrees (35.6%), while 22.9% reported they held advanced degrees. High school graduates represented 13.3%, while only 1.2% indicated that they had less than a high school education.
22. The majority of visitors were Caucasian/White (77%), while 15.7% were Black/African American. Only 2.8% reported that they were Hispanic/Latino, while 2.4% indicated they were Asian.
23. Almost 96% of the visitors were from the United States. Domestic visitors represented 49 out of the 50 States with 21.4% indicating that their permanent residence was in Virginia, followed by North Carolina (10.2%) and Maryland (6.9%).
24. Less than 4% of the visitors were from other countries, primarily from Canada (42.4%), followed by England (11.5%).

## **Economic Impacts of Tourism in Norfolk, Virginia**

### *Executive Summary*

1. Norfolk was home to 227,845 full- and part-time jobs in 2004; almost as many as it's resident population of 234,403 that year. Since 2000, the population and number of jobs in Norfolk grew by 1.26 and 1.56 percent respectively. At the same time personal income in Norfolk grew by more than 23 percent to nearly \$6.8 billion in 2004.
2. Over 42 percent (96,975) of all jobs in Norfolk were in the government sector in 2004. Nearly two-thirds, or 62,271, of these were military in nature. By comparison, the next five largest sectors or industries in the City accounted for a little less than 29 percent of total employment in 2004. These next largest employment sectors include healthcare and social assistance (20,463), retail trade (14,624), accommodations and food services (11,163), manufacturing (9,764), and transportation (9,770).
3. A review of Census Bureau commuting patterns for the year 2000 revealed that almost 60 percent of people who held jobs in Norfolk did not reside there. As a result, economic impacts of visitor expenditures were modeled for the City of Norfolk, and for the region consisting of the cities of Norfolk Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.
4. With respect to the seven city study area, Norfolk accounted for 17 percent of the area's population, over 26 percent of the jobs, and 15.5 percent of the personal income (by place of residence) in 2004.
5. Total estimated per-visitor expenditures across all classifications of visitors ranged from \$278.73 for those attending meetings or conventions, to \$124.16 for day trip visitors, and averaged \$222.33.
6. The top five types of expenditures in descending order were Hotels (\$79.36); Restaurants (\$54.75), Gas, Oil and Repairs (\$17.56), Clothing (\$18.35), and Bars & Lounges (\$9.11). Overall, average Hotel spending was reduced to \$56.84 when it was restricted to expenditures within the city of Norfolk.
7. For every one million travelers coming to the Norfolk in 2005, visitor related expenditures are estimated to equal \$222.3 million.
8. The economic impacts from visitor expenditures per million visitors in 2005 are estimated to total \$404.1 and \$267.3 million in output for the Norfolk region and City of Norfolk respectively. In terms of jobs, the numbers resulting from visitor expenditures per million visitors are estimated at 6,100 and 4,424 respectively for the Region and the City.
9. Accommodation and Food Service industries experience the largest impacts from visitor spending in Norfolk for 2005, estimated from the regional model at \$163 million in output, \$93.4 million in value-added and 3,236 jobs for the year 2005 for every million visitors to the City. Other significantly impacted industry sectors include Retail Trade, Real Estate and Rental, Health and Social Services, and Government.
10. Primary visitors to Norfolk are responsible for about three times more economic impact on the region than visitors to Norfolk as a secondary destination, i.e., 4,561 jobs versus 1,556 jobs (regional model)

11. Overnight visitors are responsible for generating over five times as much economic impact to the region as day-trip visitors.
12. Largely because of their greater numbers, visitors to Norfolk for leisure purposes generated an estimated \$159 million in economic output impacts for the Norfolk region for every million visitors of all types to the City. This compares to \$90.4 million in estimated output impacts from visitors here for business purposes, \$85.6 million for travelers here to visit friends and family, and \$72.0 million for visitors to Norfolk to attend meetings and conventions.
13. Visitors to Norfolk are an important source of economic activity for the city and region. Based on the findings of this analysis, every million visitors to city of Norfolk are responsible for generating 4,424 jobs, or 1.94 percent of all jobs in the City of Norfolk, and likewise, 6,100 jobs, or 0.70 percent, of all jobs in the region.