

Visitor Survey and Economic Impact Assessment for the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships in Gainesville, Florida

Final Report Prepared for *Visit Gainesville, Alachua County*

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Executive Summary

1. A survey of attendees at the event was conducted to gather information on attitudes, demographics, travel patterns, and spending. Seven hundred and twenty-eight respondents (n=728) completed the survey. Most respondents were competitors (69.4%), followed by accompanying persons (15.4%). The majority of respondents (89.2%) were non-residents of Alachua County, comprising 53.7% domestic (n=319) and 46.3% international visitors (n=275).
2. The majority of respondents (97.8%) reported that attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships was the primary purpose of their trip to Gainesville.
3. The average travel party size was 3.5 adults and children. While some travel parties included children, this was not the norm.
4. A total of 5,132 participants were registered for the event, including 3,495 competitors, 847 accompanying persons, 149 team personnel, 149 officials, 445 management personnel (WMA and Local Organizing Committee representatives), and 47 media representatives.
5. Total attendance at the event was estimated at 17,433, including unaffiliated spectators, based on average group sizes by participant type reported in the visitor survey. A total of 16,190 attendees were visitors from outside Alachua County. Nonlocal visitors accounted for 109,024 visitor-days in the County, estimated from the average length of stay for each participant group.
6. Visitor spending in Alachua County by nonlocal event attendees averaged \$2,134 per group or \$658 per person, and total visitor spending in the local area was estimated at \$10.66 million.
7. Additional spending reported in Florida before or after the event averaged \$1,062 per group, or \$328 per person, and total spending in the rest of the State was estimated at \$5.03 million.
8. Event hosting operational expenditures totaled \$1.58 million, including \$1.11 in Alachua County, plus \$255,976 in the State (outside of the County), and \$218,437 outside of the State. Capital expenditures of \$1.59 million for the County Sports Center (\$405,918) and site improvements at the West End throwing events facility (\$1.18 million) were not included in the economic analysis because the amount attributable to the WMAC event is not clear.
9. Economic impacts of visitor and other spending associated with the event in Alachua County were estimated at employment of 135 full-time and part-time jobs, \$15.14 million in output or business revenues, \$9.41 million in value added or Gross Domestic Product, \$4.61 million

in employee compensation, \$2.74 million in other property income, \$681,349 in local taxes, and \$765,158 in state taxes, including direct, indirect, and induced multiplier effects in the regional economic model.

10. Economic impacts of additional visitor and operational spending in Florida were 68 jobs, \$9.14 million in output, \$5.49 million in value added, \$2.92 million in employee compensation, \$302,000 in local taxes, and \$307,000 in state taxes.
11. Combined economic impacts in Alachua County and the rest of Florida (i.e., total economic impacts) included \$24.28 million in industry output, \$14.90 million in total value added, \$8.39 million in labor income comprised of employee compensation (\$7.52 million) and proprietor or business owner income (\$870,000), \$2.12 million in taxes on production and imports, less subsidies, and 204 full-time and part-time jobs. The breakdown of direct, indirect, and induced value added impacts was \$9.57 million, \$2.39 million and \$2.93 million, respectively.
12. The social return on investment or net benefit ratio for Alachua County to host the WMAC event was calculated as 6.24 based on the value added impact of local visitor spending and the operational costs in the County. This means the net benefits were 6.24 times as large as the costs.
13. The primary reasons for attending the WMACi25 included competition (28.8%), trying something new (24.8%), and socializing (12.8%) for Alachua County residents; competition (47.7%), socializing (23.8%), and visiting Florida (7.5%) for domestic visitors; and competition (46.1%), socializing (19.0%), and visiting Florida (16.5%) for international visitors.
14. When planning their trip to Gainesville, the most commonly used resource by both domestic (17.6%) and international visitors (15.6%) was the WMA event-specific website. Domestic visitors also relied on travel websites (11.4%) and hotel websites or concierge services (11.2%), while international visitors utilized travel websites (15.2%) and the Visit Gainesville website (13.5%).
15. In terms of booking accommodation, domestic visitors primarily booked directly with hotels (42.7%), while international visitors preferred online travel websites (34.0%). HBC Event Services, the contracted third-party lodging partner, was the second most common method for both groups (24.3% and 27.7%, respectively).

16. Regarding types of accommodation, the majority of domestic (66.2%) and international visitors (60.4%) stayed in hotels or motels, followed by short-term rentals (26.8% and 34.0%, respectively). The average length of stay was 6.6 nights for non-local visitors.
17. The majority of international visitors (85.4%) and over half of domestic visitors (59.9%) arrived in Florida by air, with Orlando International Airport (MCO) being the most commonly used airport by both groups (32.0% of domestic and 58.6% of international visitors). For international visitors, Gainesville (GNV) was the second most popular choice for airports (22.1%) whereas domestic visitors flew into Jacksonville (JAX) (29.8%) and Gainesville ranked third (28.7%). Cost was cited as an important reason for choice of airport, and for international visitors, the available routes from home was a top consideration.
18. Rental cars were the primary mode of transportation to Gainesville for domestic (44.4%) and international visitors (58.1%). Domestic visitors also used personal vehicles (40.3%) and flights into Gainesville (12.7%), while international visitors relied more on buses/shuttles (20.2%) and flights into Gainesville (14.0%).
19. Dining was the most popular non-event activity among Alachua County residents (17.7%), domestic visitors (31.0%), and international visitors (24.4%), followed by visiting downtown Gainesville (13.9%, 21.0%, and 21.0%, respectively), and visiting the University of Florida campus (12.2%, 13.2%, and 14.6%, respectively).
20. Regarding the overall image of the Gainesville area, the majority of domestic (95.9%) and international visitors (95.2%) had positive images. In terms of the image of Gainesville as a sport event destination, a large percentage of the domestic (92.5%) and international visitors (93%) held positive images.
21. Overall event-related satisfaction levels were high across all groups and for all categories. Alachua County residents were most satisfied with the event location (96.0%) and overall event experience (94.6%). Domestic visitors reported the highest satisfaction with the level of competition (98.4%) and event staff and volunteers (97.3%), while international visitors also rated event staff and volunteers (97.2%) and the level of competition (95.2%) highly. While still high, satisfaction ratings for the quality of food/dining and accommodations were slightly lower than other categories.
22. Almost half of the domestic visitors (42.6%) and over half of the international visitors (55.3%) traveled in Florida before and after the WMACi25 staying an average of 5.15 nights (domestic)

and 6.65 nights (international). The most popular destination for both international and domestic visitors was Orlando. Miami, Daytona Beach, and St. Augustine were popular among international visitors and Jacksonville and Tampa/St. Petersburg were popular among domestic visitors.

23. About half of all respondents were female (53.8%), and the average age was 59.0 years old. Domestic visitors represented a broad geographic distribution across the United States, with the largest numbers coming from Florida (16.1%), Texas (6.1%), and Pennsylvania (5.7%). Among international visitors, the largest numbers came from Great Britain and Northern Ireland (14.6%), Canada (12.4%), and Germany (7.7%). They averaged 12.24 years as master's athletes and had competed in an average of 3.84 previous WMA events.

Introduction

The 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships (WMACi25) was hosted by Alachua County at the Alachua County Sports and Event Center in Gainesville, Florida, from March 23 to March 30, 2025. This marked the first time the WMA Indoor Championships were held in the United States, and it was also first international track and field event held in Gainesville, Alachua County. The mission of World Masters Athletics is to “promote premier athletic competitions for athletes aged 35 and older, of all abilities, and foster a passion for active, healthy competition, global camaraderie, and a celebratory spirit”¹ (World Masters Athletics, n.d.). Competitors and their friends and family **from 98 countries** travelled to Gainesville for the competition. A total of **5,132 people** officially registered for the event (including athletes, accompanying persons, etc.), and it is estimated that **17,433 visitors** attended during the competition period.

This study examined participants’ event-related travel experiences, event perception, event satisfaction, and the economic impacts of hosting WMACi25 for Alachua County and the state of Florida.

Objectives

- To provide Alachua County and other relevant stakeholders with an assessment of the comprehensive economic impact associated with hosting the WMACi25
- To provide Alachua County and other relevant stakeholders with information about:
 - Estimated expenditures in eight main categories: lodging, meals, souvenirs (event and other), other tourist activities, retail shopping, transportation and miscellaneous costs per travel party.
 - Quantify the direct and indirect economic impact of spending by nonlocal event attendees, including employment (jobs), business revenues, income, and taxes generated in Alachua County and the State of Florida.
 - A comprehensive profile of event participants (athletes, spectators, event officials, and other attendees) in terms of socio-demographics, geographic origin, length of stay, information sources, and travel arrangements (travel party size, type of accommodation, transportation choices, etc.).
 - Information about flow-on tourism behaviors in Alachua County including location of activities, types of activities, expenditure patterns etc.

¹ World Masters Athletics. (n.d.). *About WMA*. World Masters Athletics. <https://world-masters-athletics.org/world-masters-athletics/>

- Information about flow-on tourism outside of Alachua County in the State of Florida, including location of activities, length of stay, and expenditure patterns.
- Event based evaluation includes information about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with aspects of the event.
- Perceptions of Gainesville overall and as a sport tourism destination.
- Motivations to participate in the WMACi25, including event-related, tourism/destination related, and personal e.g., opportunity to visit Florida, family vacation etc.

Methods

Data Collection

The participants of this study comprise individuals who competed, officiated, watched or engaged in business (e.g., sales) associated with the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships held in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida. Data were collected from event participants using a self-administered survey distributed through two primary methods: an in-person Qualtrics survey conducted on-site and an online Qualtrics survey. Both distribution methods used the same questionnaire, containing 37 fixed choice questions. The questionnaire was available in 17 languages to facilitate data collection among international participants whose first language was not English. The questionnaire (Appendix A) covered topics such as event-related travel behaviors and expenditures, event evaluation, Florida travel behaviors, track and field sport participation, and demographics.

The in-person Qualtrics survey was conducted over an eight-day period from March 23 to March 30, 2025. Surveyors worked between two to four hours over the course of each competition day (8am/9am – 7.30pm) intercepting participants and using a tablet computer to complete the survey. Four trained undergraduate student surveyors from the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management at the University of Florida approached and assisted survey participants at the Alachua County Sports and Event Center and nearby areas of Celebration Pointe to complete the questionnaire. For two mornings, in-person surveys were conducted at the separate West End venue during field-based (throwing) competitions.

The online Qualtrics survey was conducted from March 23 to April 8, 2025. Participants who had registered for the event (competitors/athletes, accompanying persons, event officials) were sent the Qualtrics link to the questionnaire via email with a short request to participate. The same message and link were posted in the WMA daily e-newsletter. The survey was also distributed by posting flyers with a QR code linked to the Qualtrics questionnaire throughout the event venue and by on-site surveyors who carried copies of the QR code. In addition, team managers received an email requesting their help with distributing the survey by posting a direct link to the questionnaire through their team's group messaging apps. The latter method was most effective at reaching athletes and team personnel, and participants continued to complete the survey in the week following the WMACi25. The survey was officially closed on April 8th, 2025.

The same QR code was used throughout the data collection process and so it is not possible to distinguish between those responses collected in-person and those respondents who chose to complete the survey on their own device and/or not in the presence of an in-person surveyor. It is possible, however, to distinguish the number of surveys collected through the different distribution methods: 386 respondents completed the survey on a tablet in the presence of a surveyor; 346 respondents used the QR code to access the survey; and 26 respondents accessed the survey through an online link likely through email or a text message.

Response Rate and Sample

Table 1.0 presents the response rates for the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships survey. A total of 758 participants completed the survey. However, seven individuals declined to participate in the survey when approached on-site, and 23 questionnaires were found to be incomplete. As a result, **the final analysis was based on 728 completed surveys comprising a response rate of 96.0%.**

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Python (JupyterLab) software, with the Pandas package used for frequency and crosstab analyses, enabling efficient handling of structured data such as tabulation and summary statistics. During the data cleaning process, missing responses in the survey data were replaced with zeroes.

Table 1.0. Response rates for the WMACi 25 survey

| | | Frequency | Response Rate |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Offline / Online Qualtrics | Overall surveys | 758 | |
| | Refused surveys | 7 | |
| | Unqualified | 23 | |
| | Usable surveys for the analysis | 728 | 96.0% |

Results

The results for the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships (WMACi25) survey are organized in the following sections:

- Section 1 Participants' Profile
- Section 2 Event Attendance and Travel Behavior
- Section 3 Perceptions of Gainesville Area
- Section 4 Satisfaction with WMACi25
- Section 5 Sport Background and Master's Event Participation
- Section 6 Flow-on Tourism Behaviors in Florida
- Section 7 Demographics
- Section 8 Economic Impacts of Expenditures in Alachua County and the State of Florida

Section 1. Participants' Profile

Table 1.1 presents the residency status of respondents at the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. When asked whether they were residents of Alachua County, Florida, most (89.2%) identified as non-county residents, while only 10.8% of respondents reported residing in Alachua County.

Table 1.1. Alachua County and non-Alachua County respondents

| Residence | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Alachua County Residents | 78 | 10.8 |
| Non-Alachua County Residents | 644 | 89.2 |
| Total | <u>722</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Table 1.2 shows the distribution of respondents by residency type, distinguishing among Alachua County residents, domestic visitors, and international visitors. The largest group of respondents were domestic visitors² (47.5%), followed by international visitors (40.9%) and Alachua County residents (11.6%).

When compared with the event registration data (Appendix B), the proportion of international to domestic participants differs slightly from the survey sample in that international registrants

² Visitors are defined using the State of Florida definition of a tourist as persons who participate in trade or recreation activities outside their county of permanent residence or who rent or lease transient accommodations for less than six months (Florida Statute 125.0104).

comprised 53.4%, followed by domestic registrants comprising 33.3%, and Alachua County registrants comprising 8.4% of the total number of WMA registered participants.

Table 1.2. Survey Respondents by residency (County, domestic and international)

| Types | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Alachua County Resident | 78 | 11.6 |
| Domestic Visitors* | 319 | 47.5 |
| International Visitors | 275 | 40.9 |
| Total | <u>672</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Not all respondents who indicated they were non-Alachua County residents answered the follow-up question about whether they reside in the U.S. or abroad, so the totals in this table differ from those reported in Table 1.1.

Table 1.3 shows the types of event-related participants at the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. When asked to select the category that best described them, the majority of respondents (69.4%) identified as competitors, followed by those who identified as accompanying person (15.4%), and spectators (8.4%). A few respondents reported themselves as vendors/sponsors (2.2%), team personnel (1.8%), and event officials (1.3%). In response to the other category, 1.5% included a variety of responses such as volunteer, worker, and non-competing athlete.

The representation of different types of event participants in the survey sample is largely consistent with the event registration data (Appendix B), which shows a similar distribution of participant categories. For example, competitors accounted for 67.7% of all registered participants and 69.4% of the survey respondents. Similarly, accompanying persons comprised 16.7% of the registration data and 15.4% of the survey data.

Table 1.3. Respondents by event participation category

| Event Participation Category | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Competitor (athlete) | 11 (14.1) | 231 (72.4) | 223 (81.7) | 465 (69.4) |
| Accompanying Person | 6 (7.7) | 59 (18.5) | 38 (13.9) | 103 (15.4) |
| Team Personnel | 2 (2.6) | 3 (0.9) | 7 (2.6) | 12 (1.8) |
| Spectator | 38 (48.7) | 15 (4.7) | 3 (1.1) | 56 (8.4) |
| Event Official | 5 (6.4) | 4 (1.3) | 0 (0.0) | 9 (1.3) |
| Vendor/Sponsor | 10 (12.8) | 4 (1.3) | 1 (0.4) | 15 (2.2) |
| Other | 6 (7.7) | 3 (0.9) | 1 (0.4) | 10 (1.5) |
| Total | <u>78 (100.0)</u> | <u>319 (100.0)</u> | <u>273 (100.0)</u> | <u>670 (100.0)</u> |

Note. The “Other” category includes responses such as volunteer, worker, and non-competing athlete.

Section 2. Event Attendance and Travel Behavior

Motivations for Attending the WMACi25

Table 2.1 shows whether the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships was the primary purpose of respondents' trip to Gainesville. A dominant share of domestic visitors (98.4%) and international visitors (97.1%) indicated that attending WMACi25 was the main purpose of their visit to Gainesville.

Table 2.1. Is attending the WMACi25 the primary purpose of trip to Gainesville?

| Purpose | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors | Total |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 311 (98.4) | 267 (97.1) | 578 (97.8) |
| No | 5 (1.6) | 8 (2.9) | 13 (2.2) |
| Total | <u>316 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> | <u>591 (100.0)</u> |

Table 2.2 presents the reasons for attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. Among **Alachua County residents**, the most frequently cited reason was to participate in the competition (28.8%), followed by a desire to do something new or seek novelty (24.8%). Additionally, 12.8% of residents reported attending to socialize with others, and another 12.8% selected other reasons. Visiting friends and family (11.2%) and relaxation (9.6%) were less frequently reported.

Among **domestic visitors**, the majority reported attending WMACi25 for the competition (47.7%), followed by socializing with others (23.8%), visiting friends and family (7.8%), and visiting Florida (7.5%). A few domestic visitors indicated novelty (6.9%), relaxation (4.3%), and other reasons (2.1%). For **international visitors**, the most frequently cited reason was also to participate in the competition (46.1%). Other reasons included socializing with others (19.0%), visiting Florida (16.5%), and novelty (7.7%). A few international visitors reported attending for relaxation (5.9%), visiting friends and family (3.5%), or for other reasons (1.4%).

Table 2.2. Reasons for attending the WMACi25 by residence category (County, domestic and international)

| Reasons | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| For the competition | 36 (28.8) | 299 (47.7) | 265 (46.1) |
| To socialize with others | 16 (12.8) | 149 (23.8) | 109 (19.0) |
| To do something new (novelty) | 31 (24.8) | 43 (6.9) | 44 (7.7) |
| For relaxation | 12 (9.6) | 27 (4.3) | 34 (5.9) |
| To visit Florida | 0 (0.0) | 47 (7.5) | 95 (16.5) |
| To visit friends and family | 14 (11.2) | 49 (7.8) | 20 (3.5) |
| Other | 16 (12.8) | 13 (2.1) | 8 (1.4) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple reasons, so percentages do not sum to 100%. The “To visit Florida” item was not shown to residents.

Table 2.3 shows the reasons for attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships among competitors (athletes). Most competitors (47.7%) attended WMACi25 for the competition. Socializing with others was the second most common reason (23.6%), followed by visiting Florida (11.5%) and seeking novelty or doing something new (7.2%). A few competitors reported attending for relaxation (5.0%), visiting friends and family (4.2%), or for other reasons (0.8%).

Table 2.3. Competitors' reasons for attending the WMACi25

| Reasons | Competitor (athlete) | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| For the competition | 472 | 47.7 |
| To socialize with others | 233 | 23.6 |
| To visit Florida | 114 | 11.5 |
| To do something new (novelty) | 71 | 7.2 |
| For relaxation | 49 | 5.0 |
| To visit friends and family | 42 | 4.2 |
| Other | 8 | 0.8 |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple reasons, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

Travel Party Composition in Gainesville

Table 2.4 illustrates the number of adults in the travel party by residency type among the survey respondents³. Among **Alachua County residents**, the average number of adults per party was 2.34 ($SD=2.39$). The most common group size was one adult (35.1%), followed by two adults (32.5%), six or more adults (14.3%), three adults (13.0%), four adults (3.9%), and five adults (1.3%).

Among **domestic visitors**, the average number of adults per party was 2.49 ($SD=4.23$). Two-adult travel parties were the most common (42.9%), followed by one adult (34.5%). Less frequently reported were travel parties of three adults (8.8%), six or more adults (5.3%), four adults (5.0%), and five adults (3.4%). Among **international visitors**, the average number of adults per party was 4.06 ($SD=10.86$). The most common group size was two adults (36.7%), followed by one adult (28.7%), six or more adults (14.2%), three adults (8.7%), five adults (6.5%), and four adults (5.1%).

Table 2.4. Number of adults in travel parties

| Number of Adults | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| 1 adult | 27 (35.1) | 110 (34.5) | 79 (28.7) |
| 2 | 25 (32.5) | 137 (42.9) | 101 (36.7) |
| 3 | 10 (13.0) | 28 (8.8) | 24 (8.7) |
| 4 | 3 (3.9) | 16 (5.0) | 14 (5.1) |
| 5 | 1 (1.3) | 11 (3.4) | 18 (6.5) |
| 6 adults or more | 11 (14.3) | 17 (5.3) | 39 (14.2) |
| Total | <u>77 (100.0)</u> | <u>319 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> |
| Mean (SD) | 2.34 (2.39) | 2.49 (4.23) | 4.06 (10.86) |

Table 2.5 illustrates the number of children in the travel party by residency type. Among **Alachua County residents**, the average number of children per party was 0.38 ($SD=0.79$). The majority (76.9%) reported attending the WMACi25 without children, while 11.5% attended with one child, 7.7% with two children, and 3.8% with three or more children.

Among **domestic visitors**, the average number of children per party was 0.19 ($SD=0.73$). Most travel parties (90.6%) did not include children. The remaining groups reported traveling with two children (5.0%), one child (2.8%), or three or more children (1.6%). Among **international visitors**, the average number of children was 0.07 ($SD=0.41$). Nearly all respondents (95.6%) reported no

³ Travel party statistics here (e.g., mean travel party size) are calculated for **the survey respondents** and differ slightly from those reported in the economic impact analysis which are calculated on estimates of the total number of event participants

children in their travel party. A small number reported traveling with one child (2.5%), two children (1.5%), or three or more children (0.4%).

Table 2.5. Number of children in travel parties

| Number of Adults | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| No children | 60 (76.9) | 289 (90.6) | 263 (95.6) |
| 1 | 9 (11.5) | 9 (2.8) | 7 (2.5) |
| 2 | 6 (7.7) | 16 (5.0) | 4 (1.5) |
| 3 children or more | 3 (3.8) | 5 (1.6) | 1 (0.4) |
| Total | <u>78 (100.0)</u> | <u>319 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> |
| Mean (SD) | 0.38 (0.79) | 0.19 (0.73) | 0.07 (0.41) |

Note. Children are defined as individuals below the age of 18.

Travel Planning and Booking Methods

Table 2.6 illustrates the travel information resources used by domestic and international visitors when planning their trip to the Gainesville area. Among **domestic visitors**, the most frequently used resource was the WMA event-specific website (17.6%), followed by travel websites such as Expedia and Booking.com (11.4%), hotel websites or concierge services (11.2%), airline websites (10.2%), and mobile apps (10.2%). Other resources included the Visit Gainesville website (9.1%), car rental company websites (8.0%), social media (6.4%), recommendations from friends or family (5.9%), and local brochures or visitor guides (5.1%). Fewer respondents reported using other sources (3.8%) or travel agencies/tour operators (1.1%).

For **international visitors**, the most frequently used resource was also the WMA event-specific website (15.6%), followed by travel websites (15.2%), the Visit Gainesville website (13.5%), mobile apps (12.7%), and Airline websites (11.0%). Other resources included social media (7.1%), hotel websites or concierge services (5.2%), and local brochures or visitor guides (5.1%). Fewer international visitors obtained travel information from recommendations from friends or family (4.6%), car rental company websites (4.3%), travel agencies/tour operators (3.2%), or other sources (2.5%).

Table 2.6. Travel information source used by participants to plan their trip

| Travel Information Source | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| WMA Event-specific website | 145 (17.6) | 108 (15.6) |
| Travel website | 94 (11.4) | 105 (15.2) |
| Mobile apps | 84 (10.2) | 88 (12.7) |
| Visit Gainesville website | 75 (9.1) | 93 (13.5) |
| Airline website | 84 (10.2) | 76 (11.0) |
| Hotel website or concierge | 92 (11.2) | 36 (5.2) |
| Social media | 53 (6.4) | 49 (7.1) |
| Car rental company website | 66 (8.0) | 30 (4.3) |
| Friends or family recommendations | 49 (5.9) | 32 (4.6) |
| Local brochures, maps, or visitor guides | 42 (5.1) | 35 (5.1) |
| Travel agency or tour operator | 9 (1.1) | 22 (3.2) |
| Other | 31 (3.8) | 17 (2.5) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple resources, so percentages do not sum to 100%. Reported examples of travel websites include Expedia, Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Amex Travel, Google Travel, Kayak, Airbnb, Trip.com, and Hotels.com.

Table 2.7 presents the accommodation booking methods used by domestic and international visitors when planning their trip to Gainesville. Among **domestic visitors**, the most common booking method was making a reservation directly with the hotel via website or phone (42.7%), followed by booking through HBC Event Services the contracted third-party lodging partner (24.3%), and online travel websites such as Expedia (20.2%). A smaller number used other booking methods (13.0%).

Among **international visitors**, the most frequently used method to book accommodation was online travel websites (34.0%), followed by booking through HBC Event Services (27.7%) and directly with the hotel (23.4%). Other methods were used by 14.9% of international visitors.

Table 2.7. Accommodation booking methods by residency type (Domestic and international)

| Accommodation booking method | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Through HBC Event Services | 45 (24.3) | 39 (27.7) |
| Booked with hotel directly (website/phone) | 79 (42.7) | 33 (23.4) |
| Online travel website (e.g., Expedia) | 37 (20.2) | 48 (34.0) |
| Other | 24 (13.0) | 21 (14.9) |
| Total | <u>185 (100.0)</u> | <u>141 (100.0)</u> |

Note. HBC refers to the accommodation booking portal provided on the WMACi25 website.

Accommodation Types and Length of Stay in Gainesville

Table 2.8 demonstrates the types of accommodation used by domestic and international visitors. Most **domestic visitors** (66.2%) and **international visitors** (60.4%) reported staying in a hotel or

motel, followed by short-term rentals, responded by 26.8% of domestic visitors and 34.0% of international visitors. A small number of domestic visitors reported staying in the homes of friends or relatives (3.2%), RV/camping (1.4%), in a bed and breakfast (1.1%), or in a residence they own or other types of accommodation (0.7%). Among international visitors, a few reported bed and breakfast (2.6%), camping/RV and other options (each 1.3%), and staying in the homes of friends or relatives (0.4%).

These findings show some consistency with the Registered Participant Survey data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC, Appendix D). Although the data provided did not include a breakdown by residency type, the majority of respondents stayed in hotels or motels (68.0%), followed by short-term rentals (21.0%) and bed and breakfasts (4.9%).

Table 2.8. Types of accommodation used by participants while in Gainesville (Domestic and international)

| Accommodation type | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Hotel/motel | 188 (66.2) | 142 (60.4) | 330 (63.6) |
| Short-term rental (e.g., Airbnb/VRBO) | 76 (26.8) | 80 (34.0) | 156 (30.1) |
| Bed and Breakfast | 3 (1.1) | 6 (2.6) | 9 (1.7) |
| Camping / RV | 4 (1.4) | 3 (1.3) | 7 (1.3) |
| Staying with friends and family | 9 (3.2) | 1 (0.4) | 10 (1.9) |
| Residence I own | 2 (0.7) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (0.4) |
| Other | 2 (0.7) | 3 (1.3) | 5 (1.0) |
| Total | <u>284 (100.0)</u> | <u>235 (100.0)</u> | <u>519 (100.0)</u> |

Table 2.9 displays the hotels selected by participants during their stay in Gainesville for the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. The most frequently reported hotels among the survey respondents were the DoubleTree by Hilton Gainesville and Red Roof Inn Plus+ Gainesville (each 10.3%). Other commonly reported hotels included Hotel Indigo at Celebration Pointe (6.1%), Hom Hotel + Suites (5.5%), Hilton Garden Inn Gainesville (4.8%), and Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Gainesville I-75 (4.2%). The next frequently reported hotels were Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Courtyard by Marriott Gainesville, Drury Inn & Suites, and SpringHill Suites by Marriott (each 3.6%).

Table 2.9. Hotels used by respondents in Gainesville

| Hotels | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Doubletree by Hilton Gainesville | 17 | 10.3 |
| Red Roof Inn Plus+ Gainesville | 17 | 10.3 |
| Hotel Indigo Gainesville-Celebration Pointe, An IHG Hotel | 10 | 6.1 |
| Hom Hotel + Suites, Trademark Collection by Wyndham | 9 | 5.5 |
| Hilton Garden Inn Gainesville | 8 | 4.8 |
| Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Gainesville I-75 | 7 | 4.2 |
| Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Gainesville, Fl | 6 | 3.6 |
| Courtyard by Marriott Gainesville Fl | 6 | 3.6 |
| Drury Inn & Suites Gainesville | 6 | 3.6 |
| Springhill Suites by Marriott Gainesville | 6 | 3.6 |
| Homewood Suites by Hilton Gainesville | 5 | 3.0 |
| Best Western Gateway Grand | 3 | 1.8 |
| Comfort Inn University | 3 | 1.8 |
| Comfort Suites Gainesville Near University | 3 | 1.8 |
| Hampton Inn Gainesville | 3 | 1.8 |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Gainesville I-75 By IHG | 3 | 1.8 |
| TownePlace Suites By Marriott Gainesville Northwest | 3 | 1.8 |
| Hilton University of Florida Conference Center Gainesville | 2 | 1.2 |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Alachua - Gainesville Area | 2 | 1.2 |
| AC Hotel by Marriott Gainesville Downtown | 1 | 0.6 |
| Aloft Gainesville University Area | 1 | 0.6 |
| Hampton Inn & Suites Alachua I-75 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Hampton Inn & Suites Gainesville-Downtown | 1 | 0.6 |
| Home2 Suites by Hilton Gainesville Medical Center | 1 | 0.6 |
| Hyatt Place Gainesville Downtown | 1 | 0.6 |
| Other | 40 | 24.2 |
| Total | <u>165</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Some respondents failed to use the dropdown menu containing hotel names.

The results from our visitor survey show some consistency with the hotel reservation data provided by HBC Event Services (Appendix C) and the LOC Registered Participant Survey data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (Appendix D). Several of the most frequently mentioned hotels in the survey responses, such as DoubleTree by Hilton, Red Roof Inn Plus+ Gainesville, Hotel Indigo, and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, also ranked among the top hotels in the data provided by HBC Event Services and the LOC Registered Participant Survey. As a note, the Best Western and Hotel Indigo were heavily used by officials and WMA housing.

Table 2.10. Number of nights stayed in Gainesville by residency type (Domestic and international)

| Number of Nights | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| 0 nights (daytrip) | 78 (100.0) | 15 (4.7) | 7 (2.5) |
| 1 | - | 10 (3.1) | 7 (2.5) |
| 2 | - | 27 (8.5) | 8 (2.9) |
| 3 | - | 29 (9.1) | 12 (4.4) |
| 4 | - | 39 (12.2) | 12 (4.4) |
| 5 | - | 34 (10.7) | 13 (4.7) |
| 6 | - | 23 (7.2) | 27 (9.8) |
| 7 nights and over | - | 142 (44.5) | 189 (68.7) |
| Total | <u>78 (100.0)</u> | <u>319 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> |
| Mean (SD) | - | 6.04 (4.83) | 7.56 (3.23) |

Table 2.10 presents the number of nights survey respondents stayed in Gainesville, categorized by residency type⁴. Among **domestic visitors**, the average length of stay was 6.04 nights ($SD=4.83$). The most common duration was seven nights or more (44.5%), followed by four nights (12.2%), five nights (10.7%), three nights (9.1%), two nights (8.5%), six nights (7.2%), and one night (3.1%). A small number (4.7%) visited Gainesville as a day trip without an overnight stay.

Among **international visitors**, the average length of stay was 7.56 nights ($SD=3.23$). The majority (68.7%) stayed seven nights or more, followed by six nights (9.8%), five nights (4.7%), four nights (4.4%), three nights (4.4%), two nights (2.9%), and one night (2.5%). A small number (2.5%) reported no overnight stay in Gainesville.

This shows some consistency with the hotel reservation data provided by HBC Event Services (Appendix C), though some differences were observed. According to the hotel reservation data, both international and domestic visitors most frequently stayed seven nights or more. International visitors also showed a strong tendency toward extended stays, with 59.2% staying seven nights or more and an average stay of 6.90 nights ($SD = 2.73$). For domestic visitors, 27.5% stayed seven or more nights, with an average of 4.69 nights ($SD = 2.71$). The higher averages in the survey data, compared to the hotel reservation data, are likely due to the inclusion of alternative accommodation types that may encourage longer stays, such as Airbnb, family or friend housing, or other non-hotel options.

⁴ The results reported here are for the survey respondents and may differ slightly from those reported in the economic impact analysis which are calculated on estimates of total event attendance.

These findings also exhibit some consistency with the LOC Registered Participant Survey data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (Appendix D). Although the data did not include a breakdown by residency type, the majority of respondents stayed seven nights or more (70.1%), followed by five nights (7.5%), four nights (7.1%), and three nights (5.1%). Consistent with other data sources, one-night stays were reported least frequently.

Modes of Transportation to Florida and Gainesville

Table 2.11 shows the domestic and international visitors who arrived in Florida by air. The majority of **international visitors** (85.4%) reported flying into Florida, while just over half of **domestic visitors** (59.9%) indicated the same. In contrast, a relatively smaller number of domestic visitors (40.1%) and international visitors (14.6%) reported arriving in Florida by other modes of transportation. See Table 2.14 for primary modes of transportation used to reach Gainesville.

Table 2.11. Participants who arrived in Florida by air (Domestic and international)

| Fly into Florida | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 178 (59.9) | 222 (85.4) |
| No | 119 (40.1) | 38 (14.6) |
| Total | <u>297 (100.0)</u> | <u>260 (100.0)</u> |

Table 2.12 demonstrates the airports used by domestic and international visitors who traveled to Florida by air. Among **domestic visitors**, airport use was relatively evenly distributed. The most commonly used airports were Orlando International Airport (32.0%), Jacksonville International Airport (29.8%), and Gainesville Regional Airport (28.7%). These were followed by Tampa International Airport (5.6%) and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (0.6%). A small number of domestic visitors (3.4%) used other airports.

Among **international visitors**, the most frequently used airport was Orlando (58.6%), followed by Gainesville (22.1%), and Miami (11.7%). A smaller number of international visitors flew into Jacksonville (3.6%), Tampa (2.7%), or other airports (1.4%).

Table 2.12. Airports used for air travel to Florida (Domestic and international)

| Airports | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Gainesville (GNV) | 51 (28.7) | 49 (22.1) |
| Orlando (MCO) | 57 (32.0) | 130 (58.6) |
| Tampa (TPA) | 10 (5.6) | 6 (2.7) |
| Jacksonville (JAX) | 53 (29.8) | 8 (3.6) |
| Miami (MIA) | 0 (0.0) | 26 (11.7) |
| Fort Lauderdale (FLL) | 1 (0.6) | 0 (0.0) |
| Other | 6 (3.4) | 3 (1.4) |
| Total | <u>178 (100.0)</u> | <u>222 (100.0)</u> |

Note. "Others" category includes Palm Beach, Naples, and Atlanta.

Table 2.13 presents the most important factors influencing airport choice among domestic and international visitors traveling to Florida. Among **domestic visitors**, cost (31.2%) was the most frequently reported factor, followed by availability of flight connections from home (20.5%) and convenience of flying into Gainesville (18.2%). Other considerations included flight schedule/timing (12.5%), proximity to other Florida travel (6.8%), airline loyalty (5.1%), and other factors (5.7%).

Among **international visitors**, availability of flight connections from home (32.6%) was the most important factor, followed by cost (23.9%), flight schedule/timing (17.0%), and convenience of flying into Gainesville (15.1%). Other considerations included proximity to other Florida travel (6.0%), airline loyalty (2.8%), and other factors (2.8%).

Table 2.13. Important factors for airport choice for travel to Florida (Domestic and international)

| Important factors | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Availability of flight connections from home | 36 (20.5) | 71 (32.6) |
| Cost | 55 (31.2) | 52 (23.9) |
| Proximity to other Florida travel | 12 (6.8) | 13 (6.0) |
| Flight schedule/timing | 22 (12.5) | 37 (17.0) |
| Convenience of flying into Gainesville | 32 (18.2) | 33 (15.1) |
| Airline loyalty (e.g., status, points) | 9 (5.1) | 6 (2.8) |
| Other | 10 (5.7) | 6 (2.8) |
| Total | <u>176 (100.0)</u> | <u>218 (100.0)</u> |

Note. "Other" responses regarding the most important factors influencing airport choice included: visiting Orlando parks, lack of awareness of Gainesville Airport, airport quality, family living in Jacksonville or Orlando, transporting vaulting poles via Southwest Cargo (Jacksonville Airport), family employment with Southwest Airlines, ease of navigation and direct flights, private plane usage, and preference for direct flights.

Table 2.14 displays the primary mode of transportation used by domestic and international visitors to reach Gainesville. Among **domestic visitors**, rental cars (44.4%) were the most commonly used mode of transportation, followed by personal vehicles (40.3%), and flights into Gainesville (12.7%). Only a small number of domestic visitors used buses or shuttles (2.6%). Among **international visitors**, rental cars were also the primary mode of transportation (58.1%), followed by buses or shuttles (20.2%), flights into Gainesville (14.0%), and personal vehicles (7.7%).

Table 2.14. Primary mode of transportation to Gainesville (Domestic and international)

| Mode of transportation | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Personal vehicle | 127 (40.3) | 21 (7.7) |
| Rental car | 140 (44.4) | 158 (58.1) |
| Bus/Shuttle | 8 (2.6) | 55 (20.2) |
| Airplane into Gainesville | 40 (12.7) | 38 (14.0) |
| Total | <u>315 (100.0)</u> | <u>272 (100.0)</u> |

Non-Event Activities

Table 2.15 displays the non-event activities that participants engaged in while visiting Gainesville in addition to attending the WMACi25. Among **Alachua County residents**, the most frequently cited non-event activity was dining (17.7%), followed by visiting downtown Gainesville (13.9%), the University of Florida (UF) campus (12.2%), and attending cultural events or attractions (11.2%). Other reported activities included attending UF sporting events (8.8%), visiting springs or engaging in recreational water activities (8.2%), exploring small towns outside Gainesville (7.8%), other activities (7.1%), visiting parks or participating in outdoor activities (4.8%), and shopping (0.7%). A small number of Alachua County residents (7.5%) reported not participating in any non-WMACi25 activities.

Table 2.15. Participation in non-WMACi25 activities while in Gainesville

| Non-WMACi25 Activities | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Dining | 52 (17.7) | 282 (31.0) | 220 (24.4) |
| Shopping | 2 (0.7) | 18 (2.0) | 15 (1.7) |
| Parks / Outdoors activities | 14 (4.8) | 18 (2.0) | 14 (1.6) |
| Cultural events and attractions | 33 (11.2) | 66 (7.2) | 95 (10.5) |
| Downtown Gainesville | 41 (13.9) | 191 (21.0) | 189 (21.0) |
| Visit UF campus | 36 (12.2) | 120 (13.2) | 132 (14.6) |
| Attend UF sporting event | 26 (8.8) | 68 (7.5) | 72 (8.0) |
| Springs / water activities | 24 (8.2) | 74 (8.1) | 60 (6.7) |
| Explore small towns outside Gainesville | 23 (7.8) | 7 (0.8) | 16 (1.8) |
| Other | 21 (7.1) | 20 (2.2) | 35 (3.9) |
| No non-event activities planned | 22 (7.5) | 47 (5.2) | 54 (6.0) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple activities, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

Among **domestic visitors**, dining was the most frequently reported activity (31.0%), followed by visiting downtown Gainesville (21.0%), the UF campus (13.2%), and visiting the springs or water-based recreation (8.1%). Other activities included attending UF sporting events (7.5%), attending cultural events and attractions (7.2%), other activities (2.2%), visiting parks or engaging in outdoor activities (2.0%), shopping (2.0%), and exploring small towns outside Gainesville (0.8%). A few domestic visitors (5.2%) reported not participating in any non-WMACi25 activities.

For **international visitors**, dining (24.4%) and visiting downtown Gainesville (21.0%) were the most frequently cited activities, followed by visiting the UF campus (14.6%), attending cultural events and attractions (10.5%), and attending UF sporting events (8.0%). Other reported activities included visiting springs or participating in water activities (6.7%), other activities (3.9%), exploring small towns outside Gainesville (1.8%), shopping (1.7%), and visiting parks or engaging in outdoor activities (1.6%). A small number of international visitors (6.0%) reported not participating in any non-WMACi25 activities.

Section 3. Perceptions of Gainesville Area

Previous Experience with Gainesville and Its Events

Table 3.1 presents participants' awareness of Gainesville by domestic and international visitors before its designation as the host city for the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. Among **domestic visitors**, the majority (83.1%) reported that they had heard of Gainesville prior

to the event, while 16.9% had not. In contrast, only 24.0% of **international visitors** were aware of Gainesville before the event, and a majority (76.0%) reported no prior awareness.

Table 3.1. Awareness of Gainesville by residency type prior to designation as the WMACi25 host (Domestic and international)

| Heard of Gainesville | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 265 (83.1) | 66 (24.0) |
| No | 54 (16.9) | 209 (76.0) |
| Total | <u>319 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> |

Table 3.2 shows previous visits to Gainesville by domestic and international visitors. Among **domestic visitors**, more than half (56.0%) had visited Gainesville before the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships, while 44.0% had not. In comparison, only 10.8% of **international visitors** had previously visited Gainesville, with the majority (89.2%) indicating this was their first visit.

Table 3.2. Previous visitation to Gainesville by residency type (Domestic and international)

| Previous visit Gainesville | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 145 (56.0) | 7 (10.8) |
| No | 114 (44.0) | 58 (89.2) |
| Total | <u>259 (100.0)</u> | <u>65 (100.0)</u> |

Table 3.3 illustrates attendance at other track and field events in Gainesville during 2025 by residency type. Among Alachua County residents, over one-third (37.7%) reported attending additional events, while 62.3% did not. For **domestic visitors**, over half (53.3%) indicated they had attended other track and field events in Gainesville that year, whereas 46.7% had not. In contrast, a smaller number of **international visitors** (15.2%) reported attending such events, with the majority (84.8%) indicating they had not.

Table 3.3. Attendance at other track and field events in Gainesville during 2025 by residency type (County, domestic and international)

| Previous track & field events in Gainesville | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 29 (37.7) | 168 (53.3) | 40 (15.2) |
| No | 48 (62.3) | 147 (46.7) | 223 (84.8) |
| Total | <u>77 (100.0)</u> | <u>315 (100.0)</u> | <u>263 (100.0)</u> |

Table 3.4 presents the specific track and field events attended in Gainesville during 2025 by residency type among those reporting participation in these 2025 Gainesville-hosted track and field events. Among **Alachua County residents**, the most commonly attended events were the Jimmy Carnes Indoor Track and Field Invitational (40.6%), followed by USATF Masters Indoor Championships (34.4%), and other events (25.0%). Among **domestic visitors**, the majority (81.0%) reported attending the USATF Masters Indoor Championships, while 10.1% attended Jimmy Carnes Invitational and 8.9% attended other events. For **international visitors**, 42.1% indicated attending the USATF Masters Indoor Championships, 42.1% attended other events, and 15.8% attended the Jimmy Carnes Invitational.

Table 3.4. Specific track and field events attended in Gainesville in 2025 by residency type (County, domestic and international) for those reporting participation in other 2025 Gainesville-based track and field competitions.

| Specific Events | Alachua County Residents | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Jimmy Carnes Indoor Track and Field Invitational | 13 (40.6) | 17 (10.1) | 6 (15.8) |
| USATF Masters Indoor Championships | 11 (34.4) | 136 (81.0) | 16 (42.1) |
| Other | 8 (25.0) | 15 (8.9) | 16 (42.1) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple events.

Overall Perception of Gainesville

Table 3.5 presents respondents' overall perceptions of the Gainesville area and its image as a sport event destination. Respondents were asked to rate each item using a five-point scale (1 = Very negative, 2 = Negative, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Positive, 5 = Very positive). With respect to the overall image of the Gainesville area, participants had a somewhat to extremely positive perception ($M=4.55$, $SD=0.64$). Similarly, Gainesville's image as a sport event destination was also rated positively ($M=4.55$, $SD=0.70$).

Table 3.5. Overall perception of Gainesville and Gainesville as a sport event destination

| Overall perception | N | Mean | SD |
|--|-----|------|------|
| Overall image of the Gainesville area | 602 | 4.55 | 0.64 |
| Gainesville as a sport event destination | 571 | 4.55 | 0.70 |

Note: Scale anchors: 1 = Very negative, 2 = Negative, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Positive, 5 = Very positive

Table 3.6 shows the overall perceptions of Gainesville and Gainesville as a sport event destination by residency type. Among **domestic visitors**, the majority (95.9%) held a positive to very positive impression of Gainesville ($M=4.60$, $SD=0.63$). Similarly, 92.5% of respondents reported that their perceptions of Gainesville as a sport event destination were positive to very positive ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.69$). Among **international visitors**, most respondents (95.2%) rated Gainesville's overall image as positive to very positive ($M=4.49$, $SD=0.66$). Likewise, 93.0% of respondents expressed positive to very positive perceptions of Gainesville as a sport event destination ($M=4.50$, $SD=0.71$).

Table 3.6. Overall perceptions of Gainesville and Gainesville as a sport event destination by residency type (Domestic and international)

| | N | Image (%) | | | | | Mean | SD |
|--|-----|---------------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|------|------|
| | | Very negative | Negative | Neutral | Positive | Very positive | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Domestic Visitors | | | | | | | | |
| Overall image of the Gainesville area | 318 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 2.8 | 30.5 | 65.4 | 4.60 | 0.63 |
| Gainesville as a sport event destination | 305 | 0.3 | 1.3 | 5.9 | 24.6 | 67.9 | 4.58 | 0.69 |
| International Visitors | | | | | | | | |
| Overall image of the Gainesville area | 274 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 3.6 | 39.4 | 55.8 | 4.49 | 0.66 |
| Gainesville as a sport event destination | 258 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 5.4 | 33.3 | 59.7 | 4.50 | 0.71 |

Note: Scale anchors: 1 = Very negative, 2 = Negative, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Positive, 5 = Very positive

Section 4. Event Satisfaction

Table 4.1 presents participants' overall satisfaction with various aspects of the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. Responses were measured on a five-point scale (1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied). Overall satisfaction was high across all categories. The highest-rated item was event staff and volunteers ($M=4.83$, $SD=0.57$), followed by level of competition ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.59$), and overall event experience ($M=4.73$, $SD=0.64$). Satisfaction was also strong for event organization ($M=4.73$, $SD=0.68$), sports facilities ($M=4.71$, $SD=0.68$), and event location ($M=4.67$, $SD=0.72$). Participants gave favorable ratings for the local organizing committee ($M=4.62$, $SD=0.81$). While still positive, slightly lower satisfaction was reported for the quality of accommodations ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.91$) and food and dining experiences ($M=4.43$, $SD=0.83$), compared to other categories.

Table 4.1. Overall satisfaction with WMACi25

| Satisfaction | N | Mean | SD |
|--|-----|------|------|
| Event staff and volunteers | 633 | 4.83 | 0.57 |
| Level of competition | 678 | 4.79 | 0.59 |
| Overall event experience | 638 | 4.73 | 0.64 |
| Overall event organization | 629 | 4.73 | 0.68 |
| Quality of the sports facilities | 639 | 4.71 | 0.68 |
| Location of the event | 644 | 4.67 | 0.72 |
| Local Organizing Committee (LOC)* | 278 | 4.62 | 0.81 |
| Quality of food and dining experiences | 629 | 4.43 | 0.83 |
| Quality of your accommodation | 628 | 4.42 | 0.91 |

Note: Scale anchors: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied

*Fewer responses were recorded, as the item was added after data collection began in response to competitor feedback.

Table 4.2 presents satisfaction levels with the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships by residency type. Respondents rated each item on a five-point scale (1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied).

Alachua County residents reported high levels of satisfaction across all areas. The highest proportions of very satisfied responses were for the event location (85.3%), sports facilities (81.9%), level of competition (81.6%), and event staff and volunteers (80.8%). These were followed by overall event experience (75.7%), quality of accommodation (75.0%), event

organization (73.5%), local organizing committee (67.9%), and quality of food and dining experiences (65.7%).

Domestic visitors also reported high levels of satisfaction across all aspects of the event. The highest proportions of very satisfied responses were for event staff and volunteers (91.3%), and the level of competition (90.9%), followed by overall event organization (85.2%), overall event experience (84.1%), and sports facilities (84.0%). Additional areas receiving strong satisfaction ratings included the event location (82.2%), local organizing committee (77.6%), and quality of food and dining experiences (70.8%). While still positive overall, satisfaction with the quality of accommodation was slightly lower, with 68.7% of respondents selecting very satisfied and 20.9% selecting satisfied.

International visitors reported generally high levels of satisfaction across most areas of the event. The highest proportion of very satisfied responses was for event staff and volunteers (89.2%), followed by level of competition (79.0%), event organization (78.6%), and the local organizing committee (78.1%). Additional areas with strong ratings included overall event experience (77.0%) and sports facilities (73.7%). Satisfaction with the location of the event was also relatively high, with 68.8% of respondents selecting very satisfied and 22.1% selecting satisfied. In contrast, satisfaction was more moderate for quality of accommodation, with 53.6% selecting very satisfied and 28.2% selecting satisfied. Similarly, for food and dining experiences, 44.0% were very satisfied and 39.3% were satisfied.

Table 4.2. Satisfaction with WMACi25 by residency type (County, domestic and international)

| | N | Satisfaction (%) | | | | | Mean | SD |
|--|----|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------|------|
| | | Very dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Very satisfied | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Alachua County Residents | | | | | | | | |
| Level of competition | 76 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.9 | 10.5 | 81.6 | 4.74 | 0.60 |
| Overall event experience | 74 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 4.1 | 18.9 | 75.7 | 4.69 | 0.62 |
| Location of the event | 75 | 0.0 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 10.7 | 85.3 | 4.80 | 0.55 |
| Event staff and volunteers | 73 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 4.1 | 13.7 | 80.8 | 4.74 | 0.60 |
| Quality of the sports facilities | 72 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 12.5 | 81.9 | 4.76 | 0.54 |
| Quality of your accommodation | 68 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 14.7 | 10.3 | 75.0 | 4.60 | 0.74 |
| Quality of food and dining experiences | 67 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 11.9 | 17.9 | 65.7 | 4.42 | 0.97 |
| Overall event organization | 68 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 8.8 | 16.2 | 73.5 | 4.62 | 0.71 |
| Local Organizing Committee (LOC) | 28 | 0.0 | 3.6 | 17.9 | 10.7 | 67.9 | 4.43 | 0.92 |

| | N | Satisfaction (%) | | | | | Mean | SD |
|--|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------|------|
| | | Very dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Very satisfied | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Domestic Visitors | | | | | | | | |
| Level of competition | 318 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 7.5 | 90.9 | 4.88 | 0.46 |
| Overall event experience | 296 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 2.4 | 12.2 | 84.1 | 4.78 | 0.58 |
| Location of the event | 304 | 0.3 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 12.5 | 82.2 | 4.74 | 0.66 |
| Event staff and volunteers | 298 | 0.3 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 6.0 | 91.3 | 4.87 | 0.49 |
| Quality of the sports facilities | 300 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 2.3 | 11.3 | 84.0 | 4.76 | 0.66 |
| Quality of your accommodation | 297 | 0.3 | 3.4 | 26.7 | 20.9 | 68.7 | 4.54 | 0.79 |
| Quality of food and dining experiences | 298 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 23.2 | 70.8 | 4.63 | 0.66 |
| Overall event organization | 297 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 11.4 | 85.2 | 4.79 | 0.59 |
| Local Organizing Committee (LOC) | 116 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 8.6 | 12.9 | 77.6 | 4.66 | 0.71 |
| International Visitors | | | | | | | | |
| Level of competition | 271 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 2.6 | 16.2 | 79.0 | 4.70 | 0.69 |
| Overall event experience | 256 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 18.0 | 77.0 | 4.68 | 0.71 |
| Location of the event | 253 | 2.0 | 1.2 | 5.9 | 22.1 | 68.8 | 4.55 | 0.82 |
| Event staff and volunteers | 250 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 8.0 | 89.2 | 4.82 | 0.63 |
| Quality of the sports facilities | 255 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 2.0 | 21.2 | 73.7 | 4.64 | 0.74 |
| Quality of your accommodation | 252 | 2.8 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 28.2 | 53.6 | 4.22 | 1.06 |
| Quality of food and dining experiences | 252 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 10.7 | 39.3 | 44.0 | 4.19 | 0.92 |
| Overall event organization | 252 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 16.3 | 78.6 | 4.68 | 0.77 |
| Local Organizing Committee (LOC) | 128 | 3.1 | 0.8 | 6.2 | 11.7 | 78.1 | 4.61 | 0.89 |

Note: Scale anchors: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied

Section 5. Sport Background and Event Participation

Table 5.1 presents the sport and event background of athletes (competitors) participating in the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. On average, athletes reported 26.33 years of participation in competitive sport. Their experience in master's sport averaged 12.24 years. Regarding prior international competition experience, athletes had participated in an average of 3.84 World Masters Athletics events, excluding the WMACi25.

Table 5.1. Sport and masters event background of athletes (Competitors)

| Sport Participation | N | Mean (years) | SD | Min | Max |
|--|-----|--------------|-------|-----|-----|
| Number of years participated in competitive sport | 435 | 26.33 | 17.18 | 0 | 70 |
| Number of years participated in Master's sport | 435 | 12.24 | 10.65 | 1 | 51 |
| Number of Previous WMA Events (Excluding WMACi 25) | 435 | 3.84 | 6.07 | 0 | 50 |

Table 5.2 shows the types of individual athletic events in which athletes participated by residency type. Among **Alachua County residents**, the highest level of participation was in the 10km run (13.6%). An equal proportion (9.1%) reported participating in the 3000m walk, cross country, long jump, and shot put.

Table 5.2. Individual athletic event participation by residency type (County, domestic and international)

| Athletic Event | Alachua County Residents Frequency (%) | Domestic Visitors Frequency (%) | International Visitors Frequency (%) | Total Frequency (%) |
|----------------|---|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 60m | 0 (0.0) | 75 (10.2) | 63 (8.0) | 138 (8.9) |
| 200m | 1 (4.5) | 84 (11.4) | 70 (8.8) | 155 (10.0) |
| 400m | 1 (4.5) | 52 (7.0) | 53 (6.7) | 106 (6.8) |
| 800m | 1 (4.5) | 41 (5.6) | 40 (5.1) | 82 (5.3) |
| 1500m | 1 (4.5) | 29 (3.9) | 33 (4.2) | 63 (4.1) |
| 3000m | 1 (4.5) | 32 (4.3) | 26 (3.3) | 59 (3.8) |
| 60m Hurdles | 0 (0.0) | 26 (3.5) | 26 (3.3) | 52 (3.4) |
| 3000m Walk | 2 (9.1) | 13 (1.8) | 24 (3.0) | 39 (2.5) |
| CrossCountry | 2 (9.1) | 22 (3.0) | 21 (2.7) | 45 (2.9) |
| 10km Walk Road | 1 (4.5) | 10 (1.4) | 19 (2.4) | 30 (1.9) |
| 10km Run Road | 3 (13.6) | 22 (3.0) | 25 (3.2) | 50 (3.2) |
| 4x200m | 0 (0.0) | 45 (6.1) | 56 (7.1) | 101 (6.5) |
| 4x200m Mixed | 0 (0.0) | 13 (1.8) | 43 (5.4) | 56 (3.6) |
| Pentathlon | 0 (0.0) | 27 (3.7) | 21 (2.7) | 48 (3.1) |
| Long Jump | 2 (9.1) | 35 (4.7) | 33 (4.2) | 70 (4.5) |
| Triple Jump | 0 (0.0) | 17 (2.3) | 25 (3.2) | 42 (2.7) |
| High Jump | 0 (0.0) | 22 (3.0) | 18 (2.3) | 40 (2.6) |
| Pole Vault | 0 (0.0) | 19 (2.6) | 14 (1.8) | 33 (2.1) |
| Shot Put | 2 (9.1) | 31 (4.2) | 40 (5.1) | 73 (4.7) |
| Weight Throw | 1 (4.5) | 28 (3.8) | 30 (3.8) | 59 (3.8) |
| Javelin | 1 (4.5) | 34 (4.6) | 26 (3.3) | 61 (3.9) |
| Discus | 1 (4.5) | 27 (3.7) | 34 (4.3) | 62 (4.0) |
| Hammer | 0 (0.0) | 28 (3.8) | 38 (4.8) | 66 (4.3) |
| Other | 2 (9.1) | 6 (0.8) | 13 (1.6) | 21 (1.4) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple events, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

Domestic visitors showed broader event participation. The most frequently entered events were the 200m (11.4%), 60m (10.2%), 400m (7.0%), and the 4x200m relay (6.1%). Among field events, participation was notable in the long jump (4.7%), javelin (4.6%), and shot put (4.2%).

Among **international visitors**, participation was similarly diverse, with the most frequent participation reported in the 200m (8.8%), 60m (8.0%), and the 4x200m relay (7.1%). Notable field events included the shot put (5.1%), hammer throw (4.8%), and discus (4.3%).

Overall, the most frequently participated athletic event was the 200m (10.0%), followed by the 60m (8.9%), 400m (6.8%), and 4x200m (6.5%).

Section 6. Flow-on Tourism Behavior in Florida

Table 6.1 presents whether participants had additional travel plans within Florida before or after attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships by domestic and international visitors. Among **domestic visitors**, slightly less than half (42.6%) reported having additional travel plans beyond attending the event, while the remaining 57.4% did not. In contrast, over half of **international visitors** (55.3%) indicated plans to travel elsewhere in Florida, whereas 44.7% reported no additional travel.

Table 6.1. Florida travel plans before or after attending WMACi25 by domestic and international participants

| Florida Travel | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Yes | 135 (42.6) | 152 (55.3) |
| No | 182 (57.4) | 123 (44.7) |
| Total | <u>317 (100.0)</u> | <u>275 (100.0)</u> |

Table 6.2 details the specific Florida destinations visited by participants before and after attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships by domestic and international visitors. Among **domestic visitors**, the most visited destinations before the event were Orlando (21.3%), followed by Jacksonville (13.5%), Tampa / St. Petersburg (11.7%), other destinations (11.7%), and St. Augustine (10.0%). Additional locations included Daytona Beach (9.1%), Miami (8.7%), and Fort. Lauderdale (6.5%), while Panama City (4.3%) and Tallahassee (3.0%) were the least visited. Among **international visitors**, Orlando (33.5%) was also the most visited destination prior to the event, followed by Miami (13.6%), other destinations (12.7%), Daytona Beach (10.0%), and St. Augustine (10.0%). Lower visitation was reported for Tampa / St. Petersburg (8.6%) Jacksonville (5.0%), Fort. Lauderdale (3.6%), Tallahassee (2.3%), and Panama City (0.9%).

After the event, Orlando remained the most planned travel destination, with 22.3% of domestic visitors and 39.8% of international visitors indicating plans to visit. For **domestic visitors**, other frequently planned destinations after the event included Jacksonville (14.6%) and St. Augustine (14.6%), followed by Tampa / St. Petersburg, other destinations (each 11.5%), Daytona Beach (9.6%), Miami (5.7%), Fort. Lauderdale (4.5%), Panama City (3.2%), and Tallahassee (2.5%).

For **international visitors**, planned post-event travel included Miami (14.7%), other destinations (11.5%), St. Augustine (9.4%), Daytona Beach (8.4%) and Tampa / St. Petersburg (7.9%). Less frequently planned destinations were Jacksonville (4.2%), Fort. Lauderdale (3.7%), and Panama City (0.5%). Tallahassee was not selected by any respondents.

Table 6.2. Florida travel before and after attending WMACi25 by domestic and international participants

| Destination | Before | | After | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| Daytona Beach | 21 (9.1) | 22 (10.0) | 15 (9.6) | 16 (8.4) |
| Fort. Lauderdale | 15 (6.5) | 8 (3.6) | 7 (4.5) | 7 (3.7) |
| Jacksonville | 31 (13.5) | 11 (5.0) | 23 (14.6) | 8 (4.2) |
| Miami | 20 (8.7) | 30 (13.6) | 9 (5.7) | 28 (14.7) |
| Orlando | 49 (21.3) | 74 (33.5) | 35 (22.3) | 76 (39.8) |
| Panama City | 10 (4.3) | 2 (0.9) | 5 (3.2) | 1 (0.5) |
| St. Augustine | 23 (10.0) | 22 (10.0) | 23 (14.6) | 18 (9.4) |
| Tallahassee | 7 (3.0) | 5 (2.3) | 4 (2.5) | 0 (0.0) |
| Tampa / St. Petersburg | 27 (11.7) | 19 (8.6) | 18 (11.5) | 15 (7.9) |
| Other | 27 (11.7) | 28 (12.7) | 18 (11.5) | 22 (11.5) |

Note. Respondents were allowed to select multiple cities. “Other” responses for destinations visited in Florida before the WMACi25 included Sarasota, Cedar Key, Cape Coral, West Palm, Naples, Bonita Springs, Dade City, Crystal Springs, Micanopy, Hernando, Fort Myers, Silver Springs, Key West, Port St. Lucie, Polk City, Palatka, High Springs. “Other” responses for destinations visited in Florida after the WMACi25 included Port Canaveral, Delray Beach, Key West, Cocoa Beach, Atlantic Beach, Micanopy, Cedar Key, Hernando, Clearwater, Sarasota, Palm Beach, Melbourne, Bradenton, Ponte Vedra, and Crystal River. Some respondents also reported visiting destinations outside Florida, including Savannah (Georgia), Texas (for MotoGP), and Washington, D.C.

Table 6.3 presents the number of nights spent in Florida by domestic and international visitors before or after attending the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. Among **domestic visitors**, a total of 42.2% reported day trips in Florida beyond attending the event, while 15.6% stayed for seven nights or more. Other reported stays included one night (12.6%), three nights (8.1%), four nights (7.4%), two nights (5.2%), and five or six nights (each 4.4%). The average number of nights spent in Florida by domestic visitors before and after WMACi25 was 5.15 ($SD=4.80$).

Among **international visitors**, only 17.8% reported taking a day trip with no overnight stay, while 37.5% stayed for seven nights or more. Other durations included one night (17.1%), three nights (9.9%), four nights (5.9%), six nights (4.6%), five nights (3.9%), and two nights (3.3%). The average number of nights spent in Florida among international visitors before and after WMACi25 was 6.85 ($SD=7.23$).

Table 6.3. Number of nights spent in Florida by residency type before and after attending the WMACi25 (Domestic and international)

| Number of Nights in FL | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| 0 nights | 57 (42.2) | 27 (17.8) |
| 1 | 17 (12.6) | 26 (17.1) |
| 2 | 7 (5.2) | 5 (3.3) |
| 3 | 11 (8.1) | 15 (9.9) |
| 4 | 10 (7.4) | 9 (5.9) |
| 5 | 6 (4.4) | 6 (3.9) |
| 6 | 6 (4.4) | 7 (4.6) |
| 7 nights and over | 21 (15.6) | 57 (37.5) |
| Total | <u>135 (100.0)</u> | <u>152 (100.0)</u> |
| Mean Nights (SD) | 5.15 (4.8) | 6.85 (7.23) |

Section 7. Demographics

Table 7.1 presents the country of residence of 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships visitors. More than half of the respondents (53.7%) reported residing in the United States, including both the mainland and Puerto Rico, while 46.3% indicated residence outside of the United States.

Table 7.1. Respondents' country of residence

| Residence | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------|--------------|
| United States (Mainland and Puerto Rico) | 319 | 53.7 |
| Outside of the United States | 275 | 46.3 |
| Total | <u>594</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Table 7.2 presents the distribution of **domestic visitors** by U.S. state and Puerto Rico. The largest number of respondents came from Florida (16.1%), followed by Texas (6.1%), Pennsylvania (5.7%), Georgia, North Carolina, and New York (each 5.4%). A few domestic visitors reported coming from Massachusetts (5.0%), Ohio and Virginia (each 4.6%), California (4.2%), and Illinois, Michigan, and Puerto Rico (each 3.1%).

Table 7.2. State of residence of domestic visitors

| US States and Puerto Rico | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Florida | 42 | 16.1 |
| Texas | 16 | 6.1 |
| Pennsylvania | 15 | 5.7 |
| Georgia | 14 | 5.4 |
| North Carolina | 14 | 5.4 |
| New York | 14 | 5.4 |
| Massachusetts | 13 | 5.0 |
| Ohio | 12 | 4.6 |
| Virginia | 12 | 4.6 |
| California | 11 | 4.2 |
| Illinois | 8 | 3.1 |
| Michigan | 8 | 3.1 |
| Puerto Rico | 8 | 3.1 |
| Arizona | 7 | 2.7 |
| Maryland | 6 | 2.3 |
| Washington | 6 | 2.3 |
| Indiana | 5 | 1.9 |
| New jersey | 5 | 1.9 |
| Minnesota | 4 | 1.5 |
| Kentucky | 3 | 1.1 |
| Missouri | 3 | 1.1 |
| New Hampshire | 3 | 1.1 |
| Oregon | 3 | 1.1 |
| Utah | 3 | 1.1 |
| Wisconsin | 3 | 1.1 |
| Arkansas | 2 | 0.8 |
| Colorado | 2 | 0.8 |
| Connecticut | 2 | 0.8 |
| Delaware | 2 | 0.8 |
| Idaho | 2 | 0.8 |
| Nebraska | 2 | 0.8 |
| Nevada | 2 | 0.8 |
| South Carolina | 2 | 0.8 |
| Tennessee | 2 | 0.8 |
| Alabama | 1 | 0.4 |
| Kansas | 1 | 0.4 |
| Louisiana | 1 | 0.4 |
| Mississippi | 1 | 0.4 |
| South Dakota | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | <u>274</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Table 7.3 shows the cities of residence reported by Florida residents who participated in the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. The most frequently reported cities were Miami

and Naples (each 7.1%), followed by Delray Beach, Orlando, Sarasota, Tallahassee, and The Villages (each 4.8%).

Table 7.3. Cities of residence of Florida-based domestic visitors (Excluding Alachua County residents)

| Cities of Residence in Florida | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Miami | 3 | 7.1 |
| Naples | 3 | 7.1 |
| Delray Beach | 2 | 4.8 |
| Orlando | 2 | 4.8 |
| Sarasota | 2 | 4.8 |
| Tallahassee | 2 | 4.8 |
| The Villages | 2 | 4.8 |
| Boca Raton | 1 | 2.4 |
| Clearwater | 1 | 2.4 |
| Clermont | 1 | 2.4 |
| Debary | 1 | 2.4 |
| Deerfield Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| Fort Walton Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| Gibsonton | 1 | 2.4 |
| Hollywood | 1 | 2.4 |
| Jupiter | 1 | 2.4 |
| Lakeland | 1 | 2.4 |
| Lehigh Acres | 1 | 2.4 |
| Mims | 1 | 2.4 |
| Mossy Head | 1 | 2.4 |
| Neptune Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| New Smyrna Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| North Port | 1 | 2.4 |
| Ocala | 1 | 2.4 |
| Pompano Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| Ponte Vedra | 1 | 2.4 |
| Port Orange | 1 | 2.4 |
| Rockledge | 1 | 2.4 |
| Saint Petersburg | 1 | 2.4 |
| Santa Rosa Beach | 1 | 2.4 |
| Tampa | 1 | 2.4 |
| Wesley Chapel | 1 | 2.4 |
| Wimauma | 1 | 2.4 |
| Total | <u>42</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Table 7.4 displays the country of origin **for international visitors** who did not reside in the United States. The most commonly represented countries were Great Britain and Northern Ireland (14.6%) and Canada (12.4%), followed by Germany (7.7%), France (6.6%), and Australia and Mexico

(each 5.5%). Other countries with notable representation included Finland (4.0%), Italy and Chile (each 2.6%), and Spain and Ireland (each 2.2%). A few respondents reported countries such as Colombia (1.8%), Poland and Guatemala (each 1.5%), and Sweden (1.1%). The other category (28.5%) included a wide range of countries not listed individually, such as Brazil, Netherlands, South Africa, Kenya, Belgium, and New Zealand.

Table 7.4. Country of origin of international visitors

| Country | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 40 | 14.6 |
| Canada | 34 | 12.4 |
| Germany | 21 | 7.7 |
| France | 18 | 6.6 |
| Mexico | 15 | 5.5 |
| Australia | 15 | 5.5 |
| Finland | 11 | 4.0 |
| Chile | 7 | 2.6 |
| Italy | 7 | 2.6 |
| Spain | 6 | 2.2 |
| Ireland | 6 | 2.2 |
| Colombia | 5 | 1.8 |
| Poland | 4 | 1.5 |
| Guatemala | 4 | 1.5 |
| Sweden | 3 | 1.1 |
| Other | 78 | 28.5 |
| Total | <u>274</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Other countries entered in text responses include: Algeria, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Curaçao, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Japan, Kenya, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uruguay.

Table 7.5 demonstrates the gender of respondents at the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 53.8% female and 45.7% male. A few respondents (0.5%) reported as other.

Table 7.5. Gender of WMACi25 survey respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|------------|--------------|
| Male | 303 | 45.7 |
| Female | 356 | 53.8 |
| Other | 3 | 0.5 |
| Total | <u>662</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Table 7.6 illustrates the age groups of respondents at the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships. The largest age groups were 50–59 years (22.7%) and 60–69 years (21.7%), followed by 40–49 years (16.2%), 90 and over (11.4%), and 70–79 years (9.8%). The remaining age groups included 30–39 years (8.7%), 20–29 years (3.9%), 80–89 years (3.2%), and under 20 (2.4%).

Table 7.6. Age of WMACi25 survey respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Less than 20 | 17 | 2.4 |
| 20–29 | 28 | 3.9 |
| 30–39 | 63 | 8.7 |
| 40–49 | 117 | 16.2 |
| 50–59 | 164 | 22.7 |
| 60–69 | 157 | 21.7 |
| 70–79 | 71 | 9.8 |
| 80–89 | 23 | 3.2 |
| 90 and over | 82 | 11.4 |
| Total | <u>722</u> | <u>100.0</u> |
| Average Age (SD) | 59.0 (20.1) | |

Note. This was asked as an open-ended question.

Section 8. Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the World Masters Athletics Championships (WMAC) held in Gainesville, Florida, March 23-30, 2025, were evaluated using event registration information, survey data, event hosting expenses, and IMPLAN 2023 regional economic models for Alachua County, and the State of Florida (IMPLAN Group, LLC, 2024).

Registered Participants

A total of 5,132 individuals registered as participants for the event as competitors, accompanying persons, team personnel, officials, management, or media, including 4,699 (91.6%) non-local participants, i.e., residing outside of Alachua County, Florida, and 4,448 (86.7%) of those participants residing outside of the State of Florida (Table 8.1). In travel/tourism economic studies only nonlocal residents are considered for economic impact analysis because spending by local residents does not represent new final demand to the region, and is assumed to have occurred regardless of the event⁵.

Table 8.1. Number of registered participants for the WMAC event, 2025

| Participant type | International | Domestic Out of State | Domestic In-State Non-local | Domestic Alachua County | Total | Subtotal Non-local | Subtotal Non-Florida |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Athletes | 1,993 | 1,246 | 216 | 40 | 3,495 | 3,455 | 3,239 |
| Accompanying Person | 513 | 307 | 27 | 0 | 847 | 847 | 820 |
| Officials | 22 | 125 | 2 | 0 | 149 | 149 | 147 |
| WMA Management | 47 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 51 | 51 | 50 |
| LOC Management | 2 | 8 | 2 | 382 | 394 | 12 | 10 |
| Media | 21 | 12 | 3 | 11 | 47 | 36 | 33 |
| Team Personnel | 143 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 149 | 149 | 149 |
| Total | <u>2,741</u> | <u>1,707</u> | <u>251</u> | <u>433</u> | <u>5,132</u> | <u>4,699</u> | <u>4,448</u> |
| Percent of total | 53.4% | 33.3% | 4.9% | 8.4% | 100% | 91.6% | 86.7% |

Does not include unaffiliated spectators.

Source: RADDSports, Stephen Rodriguez

Survey Results

A survey of participants and spectators was conducted during and after the event. See the description of survey methods earlier in this report. A total of 722 valid survey responses were collected, including responses from 644 non-local respondents, who reported a total of 2,389 adults and 122 children attending the event (average group size of 3.5 adults and children), representing

⁵ Clouse, Candi. "Tourism Spending." *IMPLAN Support Site*, IMPLAN Group, LLC, 12 July 2019, [Support.IMPLAN.com/Tourism-Spending](https://support.implan.com/Tourism-Spending).

a total of 4,740 visitor group-days and 4,229 visitor group-nights, or an average of 6.6 days per group spent in the area (Table 8.2). The average days per group was higher for event officials (10.2 days) and team personnel (8.7 days), and average group size was larger for team personnel (16.7).

Table 8.2. Survey results for number of respondents, number of adults/children, days/nights stayed, and group size by participant type

| Participant Type | Total Respondents | Non-local Respondents | Number Adults | Number Children | Number Days in Gainesville area | Number Nights in Gainesville area | Average Days per Group | Average Group Size (adults, children) |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Competitor (athlete) | 498 | 487 | 1,568 | 62 | 3,759 | 3,341 | 7.5 | 3.3 |
| Accompanying Person | 110 | 104 | 381 | 28 | 618 | 547 | 5.6 | 3.7 |
| Team Personnel | 12 | 10 | 199 | 1 | 104 | 100 | 8.7 | 16.7 |
| Spectator | 54 | 18 | 134 | 26 | 93 | 82 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| Event Official | 9 | 4 | 21 | 0 | 92 | 90 | 10.2 | 2.3 |
| Vendor/sponsor | 14 | 5 | 24 | 3 | 21 | 17 | 1.5 | 1.9 |
| Other | 16 | 7 | 23 | 2 | 38 | 37 | 2.4 | 1.6 |
| Unknown | 9 | 9 | 39 | 0 | 15 | 15 | 1.7 | 4.3 |
| Total / Average | <u>722</u> | <u>644</u> | <u>2,389</u> | <u>122</u> | <u>4,740</u> | <u>4,229</u> | <u>6.6</u> | <u>3.5</u> |

Visitors and Visitor-Days

The total number of visitors attending the event and number of visitor-days was estimated based on the number of registered participants (Table 8.1) and survey information on average group size and length of stay (Table 8.2). An estimated 17,433 persons attended the event, staying in the Gainesville area a total of 112,054 visitor-days (Table 8.3). The estimate includes unaffiliated spectators based on their share of the survey sample (7.48%). Survey participants identified as team personnel were not included in the visitor estimates to avoid double-counting across other visitor categories. Non-local visitors (from outside Alachua County) were estimated at 16,190 persons and 109,024 visitor-days, including 15,335 visitors from outside Florida, who stayed for 101,107 visitor-days.

Table 8.3. Estimated visitors and visitor-days, by participant type

| Participant Type | Visitors | Visitor-days | Non-local Visitors | Non-local Visitor-days | Non-Florida Visitors | Non-Florida Visitor-days |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Athletes | 11,439 | 86,347 | 11,309 | 85,359 | 10,602 | 80,023 |
| Accompanying Person | 3,149 | 17,693 | 3,149 | 17,693 | 3,049 | 17,129 |
| Officials | 348 | 3,554 | 348 | 3,554 | 117 | 1,193 |
| WMA Management | 133 | 246 | 133 | 246 | 26 | 48 |
| Local Management | 1,028 | 1,898 | 31 | 58 | 86 | 159 |
| Media | 123 | 226 | 94 | 173 | 389 | 718 |
| Spectators* | 1,399 | 2,409 | 1,312 | 2,260 | 1,250 | 2,153 |
| Total | <u>17,433</u> | <u>112,054</u> | <u>16,190</u> | <u>109,024</u> | <u>15,335</u> | <u>101,107</u> |

Team personnel not included in visitor estimates to avoid double-counting. *Number of spectators estimated from their share of survey sample (7.48%).

Non-resident Visitor and Event Hosting Expenditures

Non-resident visitors to the event reported spending an average of \$2,134 per group or \$658 per person in the local Alachua County area, and in addition, spent \$1,062 per group or \$328 per person in the State of Florida (outside of Alachua County) before or after the event (Table 8.4). The largest expenditure items per group in the County were accommodations (\$1,077), food service (i.e., restaurants) (\$381), local transportation (\$149), groceries (\$143), and gas (\$100), while expenses averaged less than \$100 per group for retail stores, souvenirs, entertainment, and miscellaneous other. The largest average expenditures per group in the State were for food (\$600) and accommodations (\$272), with smaller amounts for retail stores, other tourism, gas, local transportation, souvenirs, and miscellaneous other.

Table 8.4. Survey results for average non-resident visitor spending by expense category in Alachua County and State of Florida

| Region, Expense Category | Average per Group | Average per Person (adults+ children) |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Alachua County</u> | | |
| Accommodations | \$1,076.76 | \$332.26 |
| Food service | \$380.84 | \$117.52 |
| Groceries | \$143.22 | \$44.20 |
| Sporting goods | \$110.15 | \$33.99 |
| Retail stores | \$90.92 | \$28.06 |
| Entertainment | \$23.77 | \$7.34 |
| Gasoline | \$100.09 | \$30.89 |
| Local transportation | \$149.28 | \$46.06 |
| Souvenirs | \$45.98 | \$14.19 |
| Miscellaneous other | \$12.66 | \$3.91 |
| Total | <u>\$2,133.66</u> | <u>\$658.40</u> |
| <u>Florida (outside Alachua County)</u> | | |
| Accommodations | \$271.53 | \$83.79 |
| Food | \$599.71 | \$185.06 |
| Retail stores | \$57.86 | \$17.86 |
| Other tourism | \$43.68 | \$13.48 |
| Gas | \$24.62 | \$7.60 |
| Local transportation | \$32.68 | \$10.08 |
| Souvenirs | \$20.86 | \$6.44 |
| Miscellaneous other | \$11.35 | \$3.50 |
| Total | <u>\$1,062.29</u> | <u>\$327.80</u> |

Aggregate non-resident visitor spending related to the WMAC event in Alachua County and Florida was estimated from the average spending per visitor by type (Table 8.4) multiplied by the estimated number of non-local or non-Florida visitors, respectively (Table 8.3). Total spending

calculated from survey expenditures was \$10.66 million in the County, and \$5.03 million in Florida (Table 8.5). The largest visitor expenditures in the County were for hotels (\$5.38 million), restaurants (\$1.90 million), local transportation (\$745,780), and groceries (\$715,541), while the largest items in Florida were restaurants (\$2.84 million), and hotels (\$1.28 million). In addition, event hosting expenses reported by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) were \$1.10 million in the County and \$255,976 in the State (Stephen Rodriguez, RADD Sports). Total applicable expenditures related to the event were \$11.77 million in the County and \$5.28 million in the State. Note that capital expenditures of \$1.59 million (\$405,918 for the County Sports Center, and \$1.18 million for site improvements at the West End throwing events facility), were not included in the economic analysis because the amount attributable to the WMAC event is not clear.

Table 8.5. Estimated expenditures related to the WMAC event in Alachua County and State of Florida, with IMPLAN industry sectors for economic impact analysis

| Region | Expense Category | Amount | IMPLAN Industry Sector |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|--|
| Alachua County | Accommodations | \$5,379,464 | 489-Hotels and motels |
| | Food service | \$1,902,642 | 491-Full service restaurants |
| | Groceries | \$715,541 | 389-Retail food and beverage stores |
| | Sporting goods | \$550,294 | 393-Retail sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book stores |
| | Retail stores | \$454,238 | 394-Retail general merchandise stores |
| | Entertainment | \$118,763 | 486-Other amusement and recreation industries |
| | Gasoline | \$500,062 | 391-Retail gasoline stores |
| | Local transportation | \$745,780 | 400-Transit and ground passenger transportation |
| | Souvenirs | \$229,690 | 395-Retail miscellaneous stores |
| | Other | \$63,225 | 394-Retail general merchandise stores |
| | Subtotal nonresident visitor expenditures | <u>\$10,659,700</u> | |
| | Event hosting expenses | \$1,106,677 | 479-Commercial sports, except racing |
| | Total local expenditures | <u>\$11,766,377</u> | |
| State of Florida | Accommodations | \$1,284,878 | 489-Hotels and motels |
| | Food | \$2,837,829 | 491-Full service restaurants |
| | Retail stores | \$273,811 | 394-Retail general merchandise stores |
| | Other tourism | \$206,681 | 486-Other amusement and recreation industries |
| | Gasoline | \$116,515 | 391-Retail gasoline stores |
| | Local transportation | \$154,643 | 400-Transit and ground passenger transportation |
| | Souvenirs | \$98,719 | 395-Retail miscellaneous store retailers |
| | Other | \$53,728 | 394-Retail general merchandise stores |
| | Subtotal non-state visitor expenditures | <u>\$5,026,805</u> | |
| | Event hosting expenses | \$255,976 | 479-Commercial sports, except racing |
| | Total state expenditures | <u>\$5,282,780</u> | |
| Total Local and State | | <u>\$15,686,505</u> | |

Each expenditure category was assigned to the appropriate industry sector in the IMPLAN regional economic model for economic analysis (right column Table 8.5). For example, expenses for accommodations correspond to the hotels sector, food service is in the restaurants sector, etc. Expenses made at retail food stores, sporting goods stores, general merchandise stores, gasoline stations, and other retailers are subject to 18-45 percent retail margins to net out cost of goods sold.

Economic Impacts in Alachua County

Economic impact results for Alachua County are summarized in Tables 8.6-8.9. The IMPLAN regional economic model estimates economic contributions arising from direct, indirect, and induced multiplier effects (bottom Table 8.6). Direct effects represent the direct spending by nonresident visitors and direct spending for event production, while indirect effects represent industry supply chain activity arising from the direct spending, and induced effects represent spending of household income by industry employees in affected industries. Total economic contributions are the sum of direct, indirect, and induced effects.

Total economic impacts in Alachua County include \$15.14 million in industry output or business revenues, \$9.41 million in total value added, equivalent to Gross Domestic Product, \$5.17 million in labor income comprised of employee compensation (\$4.61 million) and proprietor or business owner income (\$566,652), and 135 full-time and part-time jobs. Total value added is comprised of labor income plus other property income (\$2.74 million) such as interest, dividends, rents, royalties, etc., and business taxes on production and imports, less subsidies (\$1.50 million). Note that these values are independent economic measures and should not be added together. Total economic contributions represent direct, indirect, and induced multiplier effects as described in the methodology.

Among industry groups in Alachua County, employment and value added impacts were largest for Accommodation/Food Services (58 jobs, \$5.16 million), Transportation/Warehousing (21 jobs, \$250,000), Arts/Entertainment/Recreation (24 jobs, \$1.03 million), and Retail Trade (13 jobs, \$786,000), as shown in Table 8.7.

Total tax impacts generated by event related spending in Alachua County were estimated at \$2.70 million, including \$681,000 for local Alachua County taxes, \$765,000 for state taxes, and \$1.25 million for federal government taxes (Table 8.8). The largest individual tax items in the local area were business and personal property taxes (\$474,000) and sales tax (\$130,000), while the largest state tax item was sales tax (\$663,298), and the largest federal tax items were personal income tax

(\$508,000), and social insurance payroll taxes, also known as “Social Security”, for employees (\$305,000) and employers (\$251,000), as shown in Table 8.9.

Table 8.6. Summary of total economic impacts of expenditures related to the WMAC event in Alachua County by activity and multiplier effect

| Activity, Multiplier Effect | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) | Employee Compensation (\$) | Proprietor Income (\$) | Other Property Income (\$) | Taxes on Production and Imports (\$) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Accommodations | 46 | 7,421,999 | 5,088,775 | 2,224,677 | 2,112,963 | 111,714 | 1,866,933 | 997,166 |
| Entertainment | 3 | 191,956 | 90,730 | 58,730 | 57,742 | 988 | 22,310 | 9,690 |
| Food Service | 25 | 2,810,115 | 1,512,140 | 872,046 | 840,873 | 31,173 | 467,182 | 172,912 |
| Gasoline | 1 | 139,681 | 89,404 | 43,371 | 36,551 | 6,820 | 29,262 | 16,771 |
| Groceries | 3 | 305,527 | 201,515 | 104,598 | 101,366 | 3,232 | 66,853 | 30,063 |
| Local transportation | 23 | 1,418,618 | 519,487 | 309,493 | 280,511 | 28,983 | 177,604 | 32,389 |
| Retail Stores | 2 | 184,051 | 118,449 | 66,962 | 65,253 | 1,709 | 25,773 | 25,713 |
| Souvenirs | 3 | 209,274 | 111,368 | 72,857 | 65,659 | 7,198 | 19,961 | 18,550 |
| Sporting Goods | 4 | 358,816 | 259,125 | 132,508 | 122,993 | 9,515 | 87,418 | 39,199 |
| Other | 0 | 25,618 | 16,487 | 9,320 | 9,083 | 238 | 3,587 | 3,579 |
| Event hosting | 25 | 2,075,655 | 1,402,427 | 1,278,356 | 913,275 | 365,081 | -28,085 | 152,156 |
| Total | 135 | 15,141,311 | 9,409,907 | 5,172,919 | 4,606,267 | 566,652 | 2,738,799 | 1,498,189 |
| Direct | 104 | 10,064,270 | 6,491,844 | 3,555,544 | 3,131,675 | 423,869 | 1,700,441 | 1,235,858 |
| Indirect | 17 | 2,614,561 | 1,377,021 | 894,023 | 802,382 | 91,641 | 376,916 | 106,082 |
| Induced | 14 | 2,462,479 | 1,541,042 | 723,352 | 672,210 | 51,142 | 661,441 | 156,249 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars; employment represents full-time and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number).

Table 8.7. Total economic impacts by NAICS industry group in Alachua County

| NAICS Industry | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | <1 | 13,362 | 10,129 | 3,214 |
| 21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | <1 | 741 | 336 | 80 |
| 22 Utilities | <1 | 132,247 | 67,105 | 12,819 |
| 23 Construction | 1 | 113,421 | 54,342 | 29,396 |
| 31-33 Manufacturing | <1 | 41,481 | 12,128 | 7,349 |
| 42 Wholesale Trade | 1 | 240,070 | 142,781 | 77,630 |
| 44-45 Retail Trade | 13 | 1,124,631 | 786,168 | 410,779 |
| 48-49 Transportation and Warehousing | 21 | 901,153 | 250,004 | 159,240 |
| 51 Information | 1 | 316,418 | 121,769 | 59,088 |
| 52 Finance and Insurance | 3 | 604,347 | 246,918 | 174,111 |
| 53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 2 | 881,553 | 597,014 | 33,526 |
| 54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 2 | 347,037 | 223,538 | 151,682 |
| 55 Management of Companies and Enterprises | 1 | 121,480 | 64,210 | 52,716 |
| 56 Administrative, Support and Waste Services | 4 | 379,428 | 193,173 | 148,800 |
| 61 Educational Services | <1 | 30,324 | 18,503 | 18,383 |
| 62 Health Care and Social Assistance | 3 | 475,113 | 291,328 | 248,318 |
| 71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 24 | 1,502,777 | 1,029,945 | 1,118,287 |
| 72 Accommodation and Food Services | 58 | 7,702,407 | 5,159,671 | 2,352,387 |
| 81 Other Services (except Public Administration) | 2 | 150,719 | 91,578 | 70,362 |
| 9A Government Enterprises | 0 | 62,603 | 49,266 | 44,752 |
| Total | 135 | 15,141,311 | 9,409,907 | 5,172,919 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars; employment represents full-time and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number). Industries classified according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Table 8.8. Tax impacts in Alachua County by activity and multiplier effect

| Activity, Multiplier Effect | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Accommodations | 449,868 | 505,318 | 580,572 | 1,535,758 |
| Entertainment | 4,468 | 5,073 | 13,661 | 23,202 |
| Food Service | 79,253 | 90,687 | 208,988 | 378,928 |
| Gasoline | 7,811 | 8,751 | 11,120 | 27,682 |
| Groceries | 14,036 | 15,888 | 26,396 | 56,321 |
| Local transportation | 14,885 | 18,035 | 73,344 | 106,264 |
| Retail Stores | 12,151 | 13,404 | 16,560 | 42,115 |
| Souvenirs | 8,632 | 9,544 | 16,939 | 35,116 |
| Sporting Goods | 18,256 | 20,666 | 33,493 | 72,415 |
| Other | 1,691 | 1,866 | 2,305 | 5,862 |
| Event production | 70,297 | 75,926 | 268,455 | 414,678 |
| Total | 681,349 | 765,158 | 1,251,833 | 2,698,340 |
| Direct | 560,798 | 623,685 | 858,275 | 2,042,757 |
| Indirect | 49,015 | 57,174 | 207,170 | 313,360 |
| Induced | 71,536 | 84,299 | 186,388 | 342,223 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars.

Table 8.9. Detailed tax impacts in Alachua County by government level

| Tax Type | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| OPI: Corporate Profits Tax | 0 | 28,558 | 122,874 | 151,432 |
| Personal Tax: Income Tax | 0 | | 507,971 | 507,971 |
| Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License | 0 | 1,939 | | 1,939 |
| Personal Tax: Other Tax (Fish/Hunt) | 0 | 267 | | 267 |
| Personal Tax: Property Taxes | 646 | | | 646 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employee Contribution | | 0 | 142 | 304,539 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employer Contribution | | 0 | 167 | 251,441 |
| TOPI: Custom Duty | 0 | | 30,457 | 30,457 |
| TOPI: Excise Taxes | 0 | | 34,551 | 34,551 |
| TOPI: Motor Vehicle License | 0 | 7,996 | | 7,996 |
| TOPI: Other Taxes | 28,651 | 62,651 | | 91,302 |
| TOPI: Property Tax | 472,908 | | | 472,908 |
| TOPI: Sales Tax | 130,019 | 663,108 | | 793,127 |
| TOPI: Severance Tax | 0 | 331 | | 331 |
| TOPI: Special Assessments | 49,125 | 0 | | 49,125 |
| Total | <u>681,349</u> | <u>765,158</u> | <u>1,251,833</u> | <u>2,698,340</u> |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars. OPI = Other Property Income. TOPI=Tax on Production and Imports.

Economic Impacts in Florida

Economic impact results in the State of Florida, in addition to Alachua County, are summarized in Tables 8.10-8.13. Total economic impacts in the state include \$9.14 million in industry output, \$5.49 million in total value added or gross state product, \$3.22 million in labor income comprised of employee compensation (\$2.92 million) and proprietor or business owner income (\$304,000), \$622,000 in taxes on production and imports, less subsidies, and 68 full-time and part-time jobs. The breakdown of direct, indirect, and induced multiplier effects for value added contributions to the State were \$3.08 million, \$1.01 million, and \$1.39 million, respectively (Table 8.10).

Employment and value added impacts for industry groups in the State were largest for Accommodation/Food Services (36 jobs, \$2.73 million), Arts/Entertainment/Recreation (8 jobs, \$392,000), Transportation/Warehousing (5 jobs, \$147,000), and Retail Trade (4 jobs, \$286,000) (Table 8.11).

Table 8.10. Summary of total economic impacts of expenditures related to the WMAC event in the State of Florida by activity and multiplier effect

| Activity, Multiplier Effect | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) | Employee Compensation (\$) | Proprietor Income (\$) | Other Property Income (\$) | Taxes on Production and Imports (\$) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Accommodations | 12 | 2,098,930 | 1,420,913 | 664,626 | 608,279 | 56,347 | 516,166 | 240,121 |
| Food | 39 | 5,347,925 | 3,061,710 | 1,813,294 | 1,674,703 | 138,590 | 963,686 | 284,731 |
| Gasoline | 0 | 39,517 | 25,469 | 13,282 | 10,399 | 2,883 | 8,328 | 3,858 |
| Local Transportation | 5 | 360,798 | 160,750 | 101,346 | 80,132 | 21,214 | 49,629 | 9,775 |
| Other Tourism | 4 | 418,258 | 254,189 | 174,925 | 168,092 | 6,833 | 62,601 | 16,663 |
| Retail Stores | 1 | 137,776 | 87,776 | 50,510 | 47,901 | 2,609 | 21,231 | 16,035 |
| Souvenirs | 1 | 112,846 | 65,263 | 43,734 | 38,842 | 4,892 | 13,691 | 7,839 |
| Other | 0 | 27,035 | 17,224 | 9,911 | 9,399 | 512 | 4,166 | 3,146 |
| Event hosting | 6 | 597,734 | 392,815 | 347,683 | 277,765 | 69,918 | 5,371 | 39,761 |
| Total | 68 | 9,140,818 | 5,486,108 | 3,219,312 | 2,915,514 | 303,798 | 1,644,868 | 621,928 |
| Direct | 46 | 4,902,471 | 3,078,919 | 1,878,592 | 1,715,289 | 163,304 | 779,320 | 421,006 |
| Indirect | 10 | 1,930,621 | 1,014,190 | 623,311 | 554,190 | 69,121 | 321,293 | 69,586 |
| Induced | 12 | 2,307,726 | 1,393,000 | 717,409 | 646,035 | 71,373 | 544,255 | 131,336 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars; employment represents full-time and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number).

Table 8.11. Total economic impacts by NAICS industry groups in the State of Florida

| NAICS Industry | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) |
|---|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | <1 | 19,540 | 12,915 | 4,723 |
| 21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | <1 | 5,859 | 475 | 303 |
| 22 Utilities | <1 | 127,358 | 73,530 | 22,774 |
| 23 Construction | <1 | 56,738 | 29,689 | 17,909 |
| 31-33 Manufacturing | <1 | 142,824 | 40,521 | 23,592 |
| 42 Wholesale Trade | 1 | 280,502 | 164,726 | 75,577 |
| 44-45 Retail Trade | 4 | 403,559 | 286,482 | 161,838 |
| 48-49 Transportation and Warehousing | 5 | 336,223 | 146,591 | 101,354 |
| 51 Information | 1 | 251,805 | 112,457 | 55,772 |
| 52 Finance and Insurance | 2 | 499,418 | 201,507 | 151,501 |
| 53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 2 | 787,427 | 490,488 | 42,122 |
| 54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 1 | 269,615 | 185,672 | 136,312 |
| 55 Management of Companies and Enterprises | 1 | 231,312 | 141,569 | 116,908 |
| 56 Administrative, Support and Waste Services | 2 | 270,258 | 145,585 | 116,596 |
| 61 Educational Services | <1 | 25,200 | 17,014 | 16,052 |
| 62 Health Care and Social Assistance | 2 | 311,147 | 194,732 | 166,792 |
| 71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 8 | 572,819 | 391,979 | 391,615 |
| 72 Accommodation and Food Services | 36 | 4,345,106 | 2,727,520 | 1,517,425 |
| 81 Other Services (except Public Administration) | 2 | 138,094 | 84,194 | 67,203 |
| 9A Government Enterprises | 0 | 66,013 | 38,460 | 32,944 |
| Total | 68 | 9,140,818 | 5,486,108 | 3,219,312 |

Values in 2025 dollars; employment represents full-time and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number).

Industries classified according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

Total tax impacts in the State were \$1.43 million, including local taxes (\$302,000), state taxes (\$307,000), and federal taxes (\$824,000) (Table 12). The largest individual tax items for local taxes were business and personal property taxes (\$213,000) and sales tax (\$47,000), whereas the largest state tax item was sales tax (\$262,000), and the largest federal tax items were personal income tax (\$361,000), and social insurance payroll taxes for employees (\$204,000) and employers (\$172,000) (Table 8.13).

Table 8.12. Tax impacts in the State of Florida by activity and multiplier Effect

| Activity, Multiplier Effect | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Accommodations | 115,368 | 115,932 | 179,672 | 410,971 |
| Food | 138,970 | 143,192 | 464,650 | 746,812 |
| Gasoline | 1,909 | 1,919 | 3,476 | 7,305 |
| Local Transportation | 4,782 | 5,090 | 24,923 | 34,795 |
| Other Tourism | 8,172 | 8,505 | 43,728 | 60,405 |
| Retail Stores | 8,043 | 7,961 | 13,388 | 29,393 |
| Souvenirs | 3,873 | 3,871 | 10,927 | 18,672 |
| Other | 1,578 | 1,562 | 2,627 | 5,768 |
| Event hosting | 19,537 | 19,019 | 80,272 | 118,828 |
| Total | 302,233 | 307,053 | 823,663 | 1,432,949 |
| Direct | 203,966 | 204,162 | 475,300 | 883,428 |
| Indirect | 34,198 | 36,079 | 158,165 | 228,441 |
| Induced | 64,069 | 66,812 | 190,199 | 321,080 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars.

Table 8.13. Detailed tax impacts in the State of Florida by government level

| Tax Type | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| OPI: Corporate Profits Tax | 0 | 14,411 | 62,006 | 76,417 |
| Personal Tax: Income Tax | 0 | | 360,770 | 360,770 |
| Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License | | 0 | 1,670 | |
| Personal Tax: Other Tax (Fish/Hunt) | | 0 | 203 | |
| Personal Tax: Property Taxes | 588 | | | 588 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employee Contribution | | 0 | 90 | 204,488 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employer Contribution | | 0 | 106 | 171,911 |
| TOPI: Custom Duty | 0 | | 11,473 | 11,473 |
| TOPI: Excise Taxes | 0 | | 13,015 | 13,015 |
| TOPI: Motor Vehicle License | 0 | 3,243 | | 3,243 |
| TOPI: Other Taxes | 15,778 | 25,552 | | 41,329 |
| TOPI: Property Tax | 211,963 | | | 211,963 |
| TOPI: Sales Tax | 46,989 | 261,645 | | 308,634 |
| TOPI: Severance Tax | 0 | 134 | | 134 |
| TOPI: Special Assessments | 26,915 | 0 | | 26,915 |
| Total | 302,233 | 307,053 | 823,663 | 1,432,949 |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars. OPI = Other Property Income. TOPI=Tax on Production and Imports.

Economic Impact Results in Alachua County and Florida Combined

Economic impacts results for Alachua County and the rest of Florida combined are summarized in Tables 8.14-8.17. Total economic impacts included \$24.28 million in industry output, \$14.90 million in total value added, \$8.39 million in labor income comprised of employee compensation (\$7.52 million) and proprietor or business owner income (\$870,000), \$2.12 million in taxes on production and imports, less subsidies, and 204 full-time and part-time jobs. The breakdown of direct, indirect, and induced value added impacts was \$9.57 million, \$2.39 million and \$2.93 million, respectively (Table 8.14).

Employment and value added impacts for industry groups were largest for accommodation/food services (95 jobs, \$7.87 million), Arts/Entertainment/Recreation (32 jobs, \$1.42 million), Transportation/Warehousing (26 jobs, \$397,000), and Retail Trade (17 jobs, \$1.07 million) (Table 8.15).

Tax impacts for the County and State combined totaled \$4.13 million, including local taxes throughout the state (\$984,000), state taxes (\$1.07 million), and federal taxes (\$2.08 million) (Table 8.16). The largest individual tax items for local taxes were business property taxes (\$686,000) and sales tax (\$177,000), the largest state tax item was sales tax (\$925,000), and the largest federal tax items were personal income tax (\$869,000), and social insurance payroll taxes for employees (\$509,000) and employers (\$423,000) (Table 8.17).

Table 8.14. Summary of total economic impacts of non-resident visitor spending and event production expenses in Alachua County and Florida combined by multiplier effect

| Multiplier Effect | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) | Employee Compensation (\$) | Proprietor Income (\$) | Other Property Income (\$) | Taxes on Production and Imports (\$) |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Direct | 150 | 14,966,742 | 9,570,763 | 5,434,136 | 4,846,963 | 587,173 | 2,479,762 | 1,656,864 |
| Indirect | 27 | 4,545,182 | 2,391,211 | 1,517,334 | 1,356,572 | 160,762 | 698,209 | 175,668 |
| Induced | 27 | 4,770,205 | 2,934,041 | 1,440,761 | 1,318,246 | 122,515 | 1,205,696 | 287,585 |
| Total | <u>204</u> | <u>24,282,129</u> | <u>14,896,015</u> | <u>8,392,231</u> | <u>7,521,781</u> | <u>870,450</u> | <u>4,383,667</u> | <u>2,120,117</u> |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars; employment represents fulltime and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number).

Table 8.15. Total economic impacts by major industry group in Alachua County and Florida combined

| NAICS | Employment (Jobs) | Output (\$) | Value Added (\$) | Labor Income (\$) |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | <1 | 32,903 | 23,043 | 7,937 |
| 21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | <1 | 6,600 | 811 | 383 |
| 22 Utilities | <1 | 259,606 | 140,636 | 35,593 |
| 23 Construction | 1 | 170,159 | 84,032 | 47,305 |
| 31-33 Manufacturing | <1 | 184,305 | 52,649 | 30,941 |
| 42 Wholesale Trade | 1 | 520,573 | 307,507 | 153,207 |
| 44-45 Retail Trade | 17 | 1,528,189 | 1,072,651 | 572,617 |
| 48-49 Transportation and Warehousing | 26 | 1,237,375 | 396,595 | 260,594 |
| 51 Information | 1 | 568,222 | 234,226 | 114,860 |
| 52 Finance and Insurance | 5 | 1,103,765 | 448,425 | 325,612 |
| 53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 4 | 1,668,980 | 1,087,503 | 75,648 |
| 54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 3 | 616,652 | 409,210 | 287,994 |
| 55 Management of Companies and Enterprises | 2 | 352,792 | 205,779 | 169,623 |
| 56 Administrative, Support and Waste Services | 6 | 649,686 | 338,758 | 265,396 |
| 61 Educational Services | 1 | 55,525 | 35,518 | 34,435 |
| 62 Health Care and Social Assistance | 6 | 786,260 | 486,060 | 415,110 |
| 71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 32 | 2,075,596 | 1,421,924 | 1,509,902 |
| 72 Accommodation and Food Services | 95 | 12,047,513 | 7,887,191 | 3,869,811 |
| 81 Other Services (except Public Administration) | 3 | 288,813 | 175,772 | 137,566 |
| 9A Government Enterprises | 1 | 128,616 | 87,727 | 77,696 |
| Total | <u>204</u> | <u>24,282,129</u> | <u>14,896,015</u> | <u>8,392,231</u> |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars; employment represents fulltime and part-time jobs (rounded to nearest whole number). Industries classified according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

Table 8.16. Tax impacts in Alachua County and Florida combined by multiplier effect

| Multiplier Effect | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Direct | 764,764 | 827,847 | 1,333,575 | 2,926,185 |
| Indirect | 83,213 | 93,253 | 365,335 | 541,800 |
| Induced | 135,605 | 151,112 | 376,587 | 663,303 |
| Total | <u>983,581</u> | <u>1,072,211</u> | <u>2,075,496</u> | <u>4,131,288</u> |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars.

Table 8.17. Detailed total tax impacts in Alachua County and Florida combined by government level

| Tax Type | Local (\$) | State (\$) | Federal (\$) | Total (\$) |
|---|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| OPI: Corporate Profits Tax | 0 | 42,969 | 184,880 | 227,849 |
| Personal Tax: Income Tax | 0 | | 868,740 | 868,740 |
| Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License | | 0 | 3,608 | |
| Personal Tax: Other Tax (Fish/Hunt) | | 0 | 470 | |
| Personal Tax: Property Taxes | 1,234 | | | 1,234 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employee Contribution | | 0 | 232 | 509,027 |
| Social Insurance Tax- Employer Contribution | | 0 | 272 | 423,352 |
| TOPI: Custom Duty | 0 | | 41,930 | 41,930 |
| TOPI: Excise Taxes | 0 | | 47,566 | 47,566 |
| TOPI: Motor Vehicle License | 0 | 11,239 | | 11,239 |
| TOPI: Other Taxes | 44,429 | 88,202 | | 132,631 |
| TOPI: Property Tax | 684,870 | | | 684,870 |
| TOPI: Sales Tax | 177,009 | 924,753 | | 1,101,762 |
| TOPI: Severance Tax | 0 | 465 | | 465 |
| TOPI: Special Assessments | 76,040 | 0 | | 76,040 |
| Total | <u>983,581</u> | <u>1,072,211</u> | <u>2,075,496</u> | <u>4,131,288</u> |

Values in 2025 U.S. dollars. OPI = Other Property Income. TOPI=Tax on Production and Imports.

Return on Investment to Alachua County

The social return on investment to Alachua County for hosting the WMAC event was estimated using the value added impact of visitor expenditures (\$8.01 million) as a measure of benefits, and total event hosting operational expenses made in the County (\$1.11 million) as the cost (Table 8.18). The net benefit-cost ratio, defined as benefits minus costs, divided by costs, was calculated as 6.24, meaning that net benefits were 6.24 times as large as costs. For Alachua County government, the benefit was considered the local tax impact of visitor spending in the County (\$611,000), and the cost to the County was payments made to the Local Organizing Committee for event hosting operational expenses (\$437,000), giving a net benefit-cost ratio of 0.40.

Table 8.18. Return on investment to Alachua County for hosting the WMAC event

| <u>Social Return on Investment</u> | |
|---|-------------|
| <u>Benefits:</u> Value added impact of visitor expenditures in Alachua County | \$8,007,480 |
| <u>Costs:</u> Event hosting operational expenses in Alachua County | \$1,106,677 |
| Net Benefit-Cost Ratio (Benefit-Cost)/Cost | 6.24 |
| <u>Local Government Return on Investment</u> | |
| <u>Benefits:</u> Local tax impact of visitor expenditures in Alachua County | \$611,052 |
| <u>Costs:</u> County payment to Local Organizing Committee for event hosting operational expenses | \$436,702 |
| Net Benefit-Cost Ratio (Benefit-Cost)/Cost | 0.40 |

Recommendations

- Both domestic and international visitors reported highly positive perceptions of the city, both generally and as a sport event destination. Given their high satisfaction with the event experience and the quality of sport facilities, Gainesville could be strategically promoted as a sport event destination by emphasizing the Alachua County Sports and Event Center as a high-quality facility with strong event infrastructure to attract future high profile events.
- Competition was the primary reason for attending the event, with socializing identified as the second most common motivation. This suggests that, beyond participating in the competitions themselves, event participants place significant value on opportunities for connection and community. These findings are consistent with research on sport-event tourism where the desire to compete in sport is the driving force behind a decision to attend an event, but the chance to reconnect with friends in the sports community and to make new friends is very important for competitors. Incorporating sub-events such as social evenings could address this need, strengthen social ties among attendees, and enhance the overall visitor experience (please see the idea above about using local attractions to host event attendees). These efforts may, in turn, increase event satisfaction and the likelihood of return visits for future sport events.
- Both domestic and international visitors reported high overall satisfaction with the event. However, satisfaction with accommodation quality was slightly lower across both groups. This may be due to factors such as language barriers (particularly for international visitors), differing service expectations, or unfamiliarity with local lodging options. While hotels were the most commonly used accommodation type, many respondents also stayed in short-term rentals like Airbnb. The variation in service standards across these accommodation types may have contributed to inconsistent guest experiences. Although event organizers have limited control over lodging providers, they can support improvements by encouraging properties to enhance service quality and provide event-related information tailored to visitor needs during the event period. In the lead up to the event, Visit Gainesville and the event organizers conducted several meetings with local businesses educating them about what to expect and how to become involved in the WMA. Visit Gainesville also provided formal hospitality training in the leadup to WMA. Over 100 individuals completed the Certified Guest Service Professional Program (CGSP) a certification provided by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Initiative (AHLEI). Through this program local hospitality employees were trained to deliver a high-level of service tailored to meet the expectations of international visitors. .

- Dining and visiting downtown Gainesville were the most commonly reported non-event activities. However, satisfaction with the quality of food and dining experiences was relatively lower, and particularly low among international visitors, indicating a need for improvement. To address this, event organizers could collaborate with local restaurants to improve food quality and enhance the overall dining experience. Initiatives such as special discounts, event-themed dining nights, and multilingual menus during the event period could also help attract visitors, enhance the dining experience, and add to the vitality of the downtown area. For international visitors, there is often confusion over tipping expectations in the US in the service industries. Some of the restaurants in Celebration Pointe included a mandatory service fee during the event which may have caused further concern among international visitors. Perhaps, a role for the event organizers and Visit Gainesville might be to educate event attendees about tipping, what the expectations are, and the reasons for tips i.e., service-employee wages are relatively low with the expectation that tips will supplement their earnings.
- Given that some international visitors used the Visit Gainesville website to plan their trip, expanding multilingual content and resources could improve accessibility and enhance both the trip-planning process and the overall event-related tourism experience for future international visitors. In addition, forming partnerships with local attractions and venues with specific outreach to WMA or sport-event attendees may also help drive traffic to the Visit Gainesville website particularly if the site is promoted as a source for WMA specific information by the event organizers.
- Transportation, both to Gainesville and while in Gainesville deserves some discussion. Orlando International Airport (MCO) was the most used airport for flights into Florida, followed by Gainesville (GNV). The most reported reason for this was cost for domestic visitors and for international visitors cost was ranked second in importance. Flights into the major airports may offer cheaper fares, but perhaps messaging from the event organizers and Visit Gainesville might convey that Gainesville (GNV) does often offer competitive prices for flights particularly when travelers factor in the additional costs of travelling to Gainesville from the major airports. For international visitors, the most important reason for choosing Orlando International Airport was the availability of connecting flights from home. Still, it was notable that 22.1% of event attendees did fly into Gainesville, and the convenience of flying directly into Gainesville indicates the potential is there for leveraging this in the future with potentially offering discounted fare codes with American Airlines and Delta Airlines or partnering with the Gainesville Airport Authority to promote the use of GNV as a viable option.

- Transportation while in Gainesville also deserves attention. International visitors reported more use of the shuttle to Gainesville. In conversations with event attendees during the onsite survey, international visitors also reported using the local bus/shuttle provided by WMA to get around town. Rental cars were a popular mode of transportation for both domestic and international visitors. While the survey did not directly ask about use of transportation modes during the WMA, transportation was a topic of conversation as we were surveying and interacting with the event attendees. Most event attendees stayed in hotels closer to the Alachua County Sports and Event Center. Many walked back and forth each day to the events center. They were able to shop and to locate food with relative ease with these hotel locations. However, when wishing to visit other parts of Gainesville or some of our tourist attractions, they either relied on the RTS bus routes or Uber/Lyft etc. (which they found expensive). Some reported they wished they had access to a car to get around. Perhaps with future events of this scale, the shuttles to the hotels could expand their routes particularly during the evenings so that event attendees can visit other parts of Gainesville. Certainly, if special events are organized for the evenings or partnerships formed with other local attractions, then sponsorship of these transportation routes might be explored to off-set costs.
- Some of the intangible effects that were not captured by this survey but were voiced to us during the on-site surveys should be noted. Our visitors were impressed by the friendliness of the people they met, and they rated highly all of the volunteers. They enjoyed the sense of community and social bonding that developed during the week of the event. The latter is called *communitas* – an intense sense of community and breaking down of social barriers which encourages social bonding. This sense of community will be an important part of the memories for the event attendees and will also reinforce the sense of identity and connection to WMA which can be leveraged for continual participation in future WMA events.

Study Limitations

At the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships, researchers targeted all individuals who attended the event, including both registered participants and unregistered spectators. The study prioritized surveying visitors from outside Alachua County to gain insights into their travel behavior, experiences related to the event, and economic impacts. To obtain a representative sample across different participant categories, researchers employed multiple survey methods throughout the event with onsite intercept as the primary method supplemented with online surveys accessed through a QR code and survey links sent out through official event communications and team manager's group chats. The data collection plan was evaluated and adjusted daily based on respondent feedback, event scheduling, and observed attendance patterns to ensure efficient use of resources. Multilingual versions of the questionnaire were provided to increase accessibility and capture a diverse range of respondents. As a result of these efforts, the final sample closely reflects the proportions of event-related person categories found in the official registration data and exhibited a relatively even distribution of domestic and international respondents, as well as balanced gender and age representation. Thus, in terms of representativeness, the survey sample is reflective of the wider participant base of the WMACi25 population on demographic and event-related characteristics. As a result, the generalizability of our findings to the wider WMA event is high and is likely applicable to hosting similar international and national sporting events in the future.

Despite efforts to collect comprehensive and high-quality data, several limitations were identified. First, due to the length of the questionnaire and the inclusion of open-ended questions, particularly those related to category-specific expenditures, some respondents either did not complete the survey or required additional time to do so. A recommendation for the future would be to better leverage the option for registered participants to access the questionnaire through an online-link and to complete the survey in their own time. A second recommendation would be for on-site data collectors to employ multiple tablets to make better use of their time while waiting for participants to finish or return to hard copies of the questionnaire on clipboards. This relates to the second limitation below, whereby some of the oldest athletes/event attendees would have preferred to complete a paper version of the questionnaire.

Second, given the international nature of the event, some older international participants appeared more hesitant to engage with the survey, even when surveyors offered assistance. Their reluctance may have been influenced by factors such as language barriers. While the survey was available in

17 languages as Qualtrics provides a translation option, it was not feasible to accommodate all languages spoken by attendees, which made it challenging to collect responses from participants representing all countries. Perhaps in the future, messaging about the survey could be provided in advance in multiple languages and the importance of the survey responses could be conveyed to the event participants.

Enlisting the help of the team managers at the end of the week proved invaluable. Not only are they a trusted source for the event participants, but they were also frequently communicating with their team-members through messaging Apps. Event participants told us they were not regularly checking their email during the week, but they did engage regularly in team-related communications on their phones.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the participants who devoted their time to completing the questionnaires and responding to various prompts for responses throughout their stay in Gainesville. A big thank you to Melayna Morrison, Trevor Kane, Kylee Johnson, and Macey Cook UF undergraduate students studying Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management (THEM) who collected data on site each day. Thanks to UF THEM graduate students Bailee Lawrence, Brianna Blassneck and YingChen (Anny) Chen answering the call for help when we needed it. Finally, a big thanks to Dahye Jung PhD student in UF THEM, our Project Coordinator who has worked tirelessly with all aspects of this project.

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Title: *WMA 25 Visitor Experience & Impact Survey*

Date: 03/23-30/2025

Welcome to Gainesville!

Thank you for your interest in our study. The purpose of this research is to:

1. Assess the economic impact of hosting the 2025 World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships (WMACi25) on Gainesville and the State of Florida, and
2. Gain insights about your tourism activities, event satisfaction, and perceptions of Gainesville as a tourist and sport event destination.

You will be asked about your event participation, travel plans, satisfaction, and demographics. This survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses are anonymous and voluntary. You may skip any question or stop at any time.

For questions about this study, contact Dr. Heather Gibson (hgibson@hhp.ufl.edu, 352-294-1649). If you have concerns about your rights as a participant, contact the UF Institutional Review Board at irb2@ufl.edu.

Section 1: Screening

Q1. Are you a resident of Alachua County, Florida?

- Yes
- No

[If Yes → Skip to Section 5]

Section 2: Trip Purpose & Travel Characteristics

Q2. Is the WMACi25 the primary reason for your visit to Gainesville?

- Yes
- No

Q3. Which best describes you? (Select one)

- Competitor (athlete)
- Accompanying Person
- Team Personnel
- Spectator
- Event Official

- Vendor/Sponsor
- Other: _____

Q4. How many people, including yourself, are in your travel party?

- Adults (18+): ____
- Children (17 and under): ____

Q5. How many days and nights are you staying in Gainesville (including event and other days)?

- Days: ____
 - Nights: ____
-

Section 3: Accommodations

Q6. What type of accommodation are you using in Gainesville? (Select all that apply)

- Residence I own
- Hotel/motel
- Short-term rental (e.g., Airbnb)
- Bed & Breakfast
- Camping / RV
- Staying with friends or family
- Other: _____

[If Hotel selected:]

Q6-1. Which hotel are you staying at? [Dropdown]

Q6-2. How did you book your stay?

- Through HBC
 - Direct booking
 - Online travel site
 - Other: _____
-

Section 4: Planning & Activities

Q7-1. What tools/resources did you use to plan your trip? (Check all that apply)

- Visit Gainesville website
- Travel websites (TripAdvisor, Expedia, etc.)
- Travel agency/tour operator
- Airline or hotel websites

- Car rental company
- WMACi2025 website
- Social media
- Friends/family
- Brochures/guides
- Mobile apps
- Other: _____

Q7-2. Besides WMACi25, what other activities have you participated in or plan to do in Gainesville?

(Check all that apply)

- Dining
- Shopping
- Parks/outdoor activities
- Cultural events
- Downtown Gainesville
- Visit UF campus
- Attend UF sports
- Springs/water activities
- Explore nearby towns
- Other: _____
- No additional activities planned

Section 5: Spending

Q8. Estimated spending by your travel party in Gainesville:

- Accommodation: \$____
- Restaurants/bars: \$____
- Groceries: \$____
- Sporting goods: \$____
- Retail shopping: \$____
- Entertainment/events: \$____
- Fuel: \$____
- Transportation: \$____

- Souvenirs: \$ ____
 - Other: \$ ____
-

Section 6: Transportation

Q9-1. Did you fly into Florida?

- Yes
- No

[If Yes:]

Q9-2. Which airport?

- Gainesville (GNV), Orlando (MCO), Tampa (TPA), etc.

Q9-3. What was the most important factor in your choice of airport?

- Flight connections
- Cost
- Proximity to travel plans
- Flight schedule
- Convenience
- Airline loyalty
- Other: _____

Q9-4. What was your primary mode of transportation to Gainesville?

- Personal vehicle
 - Rental car
 - Bus/shuttle
 - Flight into Gainesville
-

Section 7: Event Motivation & Satisfaction

Q10. Why are you attending WMACi25? (Check all that apply)

- Competition
- Socializing
- Novelty
- Relaxation
- Visit Florida
- Visit friends/family

- Other: _____

Q11. Rate your satisfaction with the following:

(1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)

- Level of competition
- Overall event experience
- Location
- Staff & volunteers
- Sports facilities
- Accommodation quality
- Food/dining
- Event organization
- Local organizing committee

Section 8: Perceptions

Q12. Had you heard of Gainesville before it was announced as WMACi25 host?

- Yes → Have you visited before? Yes / No
- No

Q12-2. Did you attend any other 2025 track & field events in Gainesville?

- Yes / No → [If Yes:]

Q12-3. Which ones? (Jimmy Carnes, USATF Masters, Other)

Q13. How do you perceive Gainesville overall and as a sport destination?

(1 = Very Negative, 5 = Very Positive)

Section 9: Athlete Experience (For Competitors)

Q14. [If Competitor:]

- Years in competitive sports: ____
- Years in Masters sports: ____
- Number of previous WMA events: ____
- Which events are you competing in? (Check all that apply)
(List of 24 events: 60m, 400m, Cross Country, Shot Put, etc.)

Section 10: Broader Travel in Florida

Q15. Are you visiting other places in Florida?

- Yes / No

[If Yes:]

Q16-1. Places visited before WMACi25

Q16-2. Places visited after

Q16-3. Total days/nights outside Gainesville: Days ____ / Nights ____

Q16-4. Estimated spending outside Gainesville:

- Accommodation, Food, Shopping, Activities, Fuel, Transport, Souvenirs, Other
-

Section 11: Demographics

Q16. Do you live in the US mainland or Puerto Rico?

- Yes → ZIP code: ____
- No → Country: ____

Q17. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q18. Age: ____

Appendix B: Event Registration Summary

Table B1. Event registration participants by residency type (County, domestic and international)

| Types | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alachua County Resident | 433 | 8.4 |
| Domestic Visitors | 1,959 | 38.2 |
| International Visitors | 2,740 | 53.4 |
| Total | <u>5,132</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

Table B2. Event registration numbers by participant category and residency type

| Event Registration Category | Alachua County Resident | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) | |
| Athletes | 40 (9.2) | 1,463 (74.7) | 1,992 (72.7) | 3,495 (67.1) |
| Accompanying Person | 0 (0.0) | 334 (17.0) | 513 (18.7) | 847 (16.5) |
| Officials | 0 (0.0) | 127 (6.5) | 22 (0.8) | 149 (2.9) |
| WMA Management | 0 (0.0) | 4 (0.2) | 47 (1.7) | 51 (1.0) |
| LOC Management | 382 (88.2) | 10 (0.5) | 2 (0.1) | 394 (7.7) |
| Media | 11(2.5) | 15 (0.8) | 21 (0.8) | 47 (0.9) |
| Team Personnel | 0 (0.0) | 6 (0.3) | 143 (5.2) | 149 (2.9) |
| Spectators | - | - | - | - |
| Total | <u>433 (100.0)</u> | <u>1,959 (100.0)</u> | <u>2,740 (100.0)</u> | <u>5,132 (100.0)</u> |

Note. Data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). Accompanying persons refer to individuals for whom athletes purchased credentials, such as family members, personal trainers, coaches, guides, or others. Since not all athletes purchased accompanying person credentials, this table does not represent the total number of spectators or travelers. In addition, spectator access did not require ticketing, and as such, these individuals were excluded from the official registration records.

Appendix C: Descriptive Summary of WMACi25 Room Block Reservations

Table C1. Hotel reservations from the WMACi25 room block

| Hotels | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Doubletree by Hilton Gainesville | 98 | 15.5 |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Gainesville I-75 By IHG | 60 | 9.5 |
| Hotel Indigo Gainesville-Celebration Pointe By IHG* | 57 | 9.0 |
| Hampton Inn Gainesville | 52 | 8.2 |
| Hilton Garden Inn Gainesville | 49 | 7.7 |
| Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Gainesville, FL | 48 | 7.6 |
| SpringHill Suites by Marriott Gainesville | 38 | 6.0 |
| Homewood Suites by Hilton Gainesville | 35 | 5.5 |
| Red Roof Inn PLUS+ Gainesville | 33 | 5.2 |
| Courtyard by Marriott Gainesville Fl | 32 | 5.1 |
| Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Gainesville I-75 | 26 | 4.1 |
| Hyatt Place Gainesville Downtown | 19 | 3.0 |
| Best Western Gateway Grand* | 14 | 2.2 |
| Comfort Inn University | 13 | 2.1 |
| Aloft Gainesville University Area | 12 | 1.9 |
| Drury Inn & Suites Gainesville | 11 | 1.7 |
| Hom hotel + suites, Trademark Collection by Wyndham | 8 | 1.3 |
| La Quinta by Wyndham Gainesville | 8 | 1.3 |
| TownePlace Suites by Marriott Gainesville Northwest | 7 | 1.1 |
| Hotel Eleo at The University of Florida | 4 | 0.6 |
| AC Hotel by Marriott Gainesville Downtown | 3 | 0.5 |
| Sleep Inn & Suites University/Shands | 2 | 0.3 |
| Comfort Suites Gainesville near University | 2 | 0.3 |
| Home2 Suites by Hilton Gainesville Medical Center | 1 | 0.2 |
| Hampton Inn & Suites Gainesville-Downtown | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | <u>633</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. This table presents hotel reservations made within the designated room block, based on WMACi25 data provided by HBC Event Services. Asterisks indicate hotels that were heavily used for officials and WMA housing.

Table C2. Number of hotel room nights in Gainesville by residency type

| Number of Nights | Domestic Visitors | International Visitors |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Frequency (%) | Frequency (%) |
| 1 night | 33 (9.2) | 6 (2.3) |
| 2 | 51 (14.3) | 8 (3.1) |
| 3 | 64 (17.9) | 18 (6.9) |
| 4 | 57 (16.0) | 37 (14.1) |
| 5 | 39 (10.9) | 16 (6.1) |
| 6 | 15 (4.2) | 22 (8.4) |
| 7 nights and over | 98 (27.5) | 155 (59.2) |
| Total | <u>357 (100)</u> | <u>262 (100)</u> |
| Mean (SD) | 4.69 (2.71) | 6.90 (2.73) |

Note. The number of room nights was derived from the WMACi25 room block data provided by HBC Event Services.

Appendix D: Descriptive Summary of LOC Registered Participant Survey

Table D1. Types of accommodation from the LOC registered participant survey

| Types of Accommodation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Hotel/motel | 723 | 68.0 |
| Short-term rental (e.g., Airbnb/VRBO) | 223 | 21.0 |
| Bed and Breakfast | 52 | 4.9 |
| Residence I own | 30 | 2.8 |
| Staying with friends and family | 24 | 2.3 |
| Camping / RV | 7 | 0.7 |
| Other | 3 | 0.3 |
| Total | <u>1,062</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

Table D2. Number of nights spent in Gainesville from the LOC registered participant survey

| Number of Nights | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 night | 35 | 3.3 |
| 2 | 28 | 2.7 |
| 3 | 54 | 5.1 |
| 4 | 75 | 7.1 |
| 5 | 79 | 7.5 |
| 6 | 44 | 4.2 |
| 7 nights and over | 738 | 70.1 |
| Total | <u>1,053</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The number of nights stayed includes all types of accommodation. Stays of 13 nights or more were grouped as '13+', making it impossible to calculate the mean and standard deviation.

Table D3. Hotel reservations from the LOC registered participant survey

| Hotels | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Red Roof Inn Plus+ Gainesville | 59 | 8.3 |
| Hotel Indigo Gainesville-Celebration Pointe, An IHG Hotel | 58 | 8.9 |
| Doubletree By Hilton Gainesville | 43 | 6.6 |
| Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Gainesville, FL | 39 | 6.0 |
| Residence Inn by Marriot Gainesville I-75 | 26 | 4.0 |
| Hampton Inn Gainesville | 26 | 4.0 |
| Quality Inn Gainesville | 26 | 4.0 |
| Drury Inn & Suites Gainesville | 25 | 3.8 |
| Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Gainesville I-75 | 23 | 3.5 |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Gainesville I-75 by IHG | 23 | 3.5 |
| Hilton Garden Inn Gainesville | 21 | 3.2 |
| Springhill Suites By Marriott Gainesville | 20 | 3.1 |
| Hom Hotel + Suites, Trademark Collection by Wyndham | 20 | 3.1 |
| Homewood Suites By Hilton Gainesville | 18 | 2.7 |
| super 8 by Wyndham Gainesville I-75 Hospital/University Area | 18 | 2.7 |

| Hotels | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Days Inn by Wyndham Gainesville University I-75 | 17 | 2.6 |
| Comfort Inn University | 15 | 2.3 |
| Best Western Gateway Grand | 15 | 2.3 |
| Extended Stay America Gainesville I-75 | 14 | 2.1 |
| Hampton Inn & Suites Alachua I-75 | 13 | 2.0 |
| Courtyard by Marriott Gainesville Fl | 12 | 1.8 |
| Hampton Inn & Suites Gainesville-Downtown | 11 | 1.7 |
| Hyatt Place Gainesville Downtown | 10 | 1.5 |
| Sleep Inn & Suites University/Shands | 10 | 1.5 |
| WoodSpring Suites Gainesville I-75 | 9 | 1.4 |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Alachua - Gainesville Area | 7 | 1.1 |
| Ac Hotel by Marriott Gainesville Downtown | 7 | 1.1 |
| Home2 Suites by Hilton Gainesville Medical Center | 6 | 0.9 |
| Hilton University of Florida Conference Center Gainesville | 6 | 0.9 |
| Towneplace Suites by Marriott Gainesville Northwest | 6 | 0.9 |
| Comfort Suites Gainesville Near University | 5 | 0.8 |
| Motel 6 Gainesville | 5 | 0.8 |
| Gator Town Inn | 4 | 0.6 |
| La Quinta by Wyndham Gainesville | 4 | 0.6 |
| Aloft Gainesville University Area | 3 | 0.5 |
| Studio 6 Gainesville | 3 | 0.5 |
| Hotel Eleo at the University of Florida | 2 | 0.3 |
| Regency Inn Gainesville | 1 | 0.2 |
| Traveler's Inn | 1 | 0.2 |
| Americas Best Value Inn Gainesville | 1 | 0.2 |
| Holiday Inn Express Starke, an IHG Hotel | 1 | 0.2 |
| Baymont by Wyndham Gainesville I-75 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Palms Garden Inn | 1 | 0.2 |
| Blue Gem Motel | 1 | 0.2 |
| Holiday Inn Gainesville - University Center by IHG | 1 | 0.2 |
| Gainesville Lodge | 1 | 0.2 |
| Value Lodge | 1 | 0.2 |
| Other | 16 | 2.4 |
| Total | <u>655</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Note. Data provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). “Others” included responses that mentioned unspecified hotel names, such as Holiday Inn (4), Marriott (3), and Wyndham (1), as well as hotels located in other cities.