



# ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

OF THE OCEAN CITY CONVENTION CENTER  
FISCAL YEAR 2020

MARYLAND STADIUM AUTHORITY



December 2020

Mr. David Raith, Chief Financial Officer  
Maryland Stadium Authority  
333 West Camden Street, Suite 500  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Mr. Raith:

Crossroads Consulting Services LLC has completed its economic and fiscal impact analysis for the Maryland Stadium Authority associated with operations of the Ocean City Convention Center in Fiscal Year 2020. The report presented herein includes the summary of our analysis.

The information contained in the report reflects analysis of secondary sources of information including, but not limited to, data obtained from management at the Maryland Stadium Authority and the Ocean City Convention Center. We have utilized sources that are deemed to be reliable but cannot guarantee their accuracy. All information provided to us by others was not audited or verified and was assumed to be correct. We have no obligation, unless subsequently engaged, to update our report or revise the information contained therein to reflect events and transactions occurring after the date of this report.

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter, the accompanying report is restricted to internal use by the Maryland Stadium Authority and may not be relied upon by any third party for any purpose including financing. Notwithstanding these limitations, it is understood that this document may be subject to public information laws and, as such, can be made available to the public upon request.

Although you have authorized reports to be sent electronically for your convenience, only the final hard copy report should be viewed as our work product.

We have enjoyed our ongoing relationship with the Maryland Stadium Authority and look forward to providing you with continued service in the future.

Sincerely,

*Crossroads Consulting Services LLC*

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Established by the State General Assembly in 1986, the original mission of the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) was to build, manage and maintain quality facilities to retain major league baseball, and return NFL football to Maryland. For over 30 years, MSA has completed projects in partnership with local governments, universities and the private sector throughout Maryland. These include convention centers, museums, theaters, parks and campus centers in addition to sports arenas. MSA is committed to enhancing the Maryland experience for those who live, work and visit here. In addition, MSA currently oversees projects such as 21st Century School Buildings Program and Project C.O.R.E (Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise) which orchestrates the demolition of blighted structures throughout Baltimore City. The sports commission for the State, known as Maryland Sports, is a division of MSA and has been since its existence in 2008.

MSA's projects promote historic preservation, adaptive reuse, community redevelopment, cultural arts and civic pride. In planning selected projects, the MSA has the latitude to negotiate with other government jurisdictions and other departments within the State. Its mandate includes creating public-private partnerships for financing and operating facilities. The Ocean City Convention Center (OCCC) is one of the projects with which MSA is involved.

The primary purpose of this study is to estimate the total economic and fiscal impacts associated with OCCC operations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 to local and State economies. Total economic impacts are estimated in terms of output, jobs and earnings which create fiscal impacts and are reflected as changes in tax revenues. In addition, this report compares the State tax revenues generated by OCCC operations to the State's financial investment in the OCCC in FY 2020.

In March 2020, the global outbreak of a "novel coronavirus" known as COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). The pandemic has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on the convention/meeting/event industry as well as the global economy. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, OCCC was closed for business from mid-March to mid-July 2020. As such, utilization and economic and fiscal benefits generated by OCCC operations were significantly less than in previous fiscal years.

In FY 2020, the OCCC hosted 71 events that attracted approximately 316,300 total attendees which represented a 34% decrease in the number of events and a 47% decrease in the number of total attendees from FY 2019. Approximately 40 events and 120 event days were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic representing a loss of approximately \$435,000 in revenues.

Summary of Utilization at the OCCC - FY 2020				
Event Type	Events	Use Days	Total	Average Attendee
			Attendees	Days Per Event
Conventions/Trade Shows	16	64	97,800	6,110
Consumer Shows	18	67	132,400	7,360
Meetings	9	19	3,000	330
Competitions	6	22	67,500	11,250
Other Events	8	19	3,500	440
Concerts/Entertainment	14	31	12,100	860
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>316,300</b>	

Notes: Total attendees are rounded to the nearest hundred.

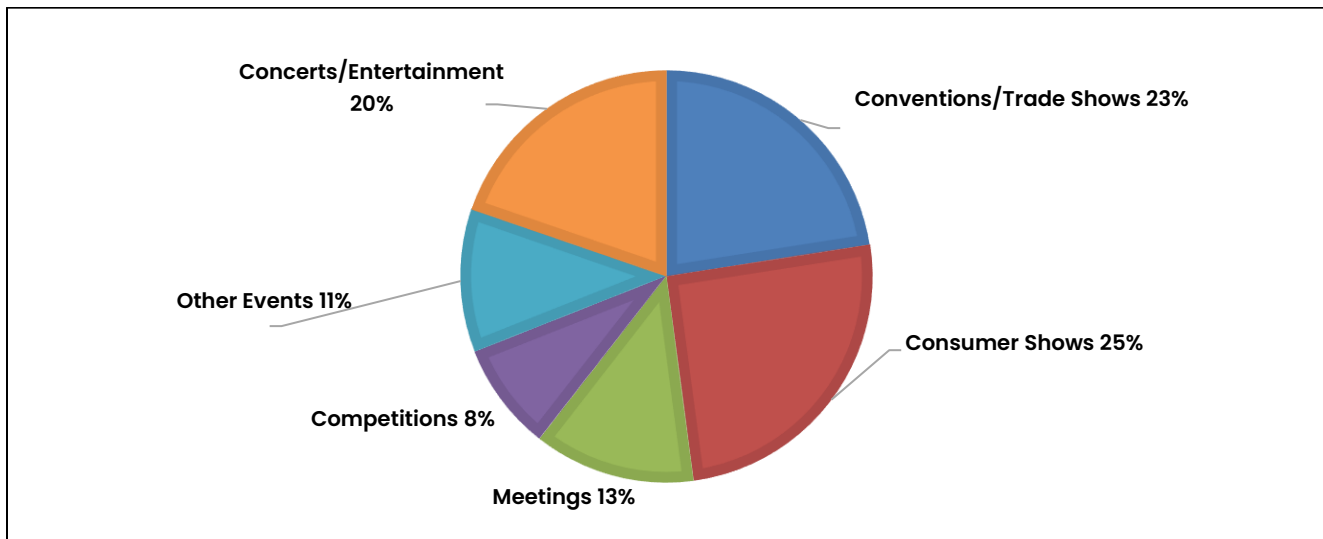
Other events include banquets and community events such as graduations.

Concerts/entertainment events represent stand-alone events held at the Performing Arts Center.

Source: OCCC management.

Conventions/trade shows, which typically generate significant economic impact to the local and State economies, accounted for 23% of total events at the OCCC in FY 2020. Consumer shows comprised 25% of total events at the OCCC in FY 2020 followed by concerts/entertainment (20%). In addition, some events such as conventions, competitions and meetings also utilized the Performing Arts Center in conjunction with other building components of the OCCC.

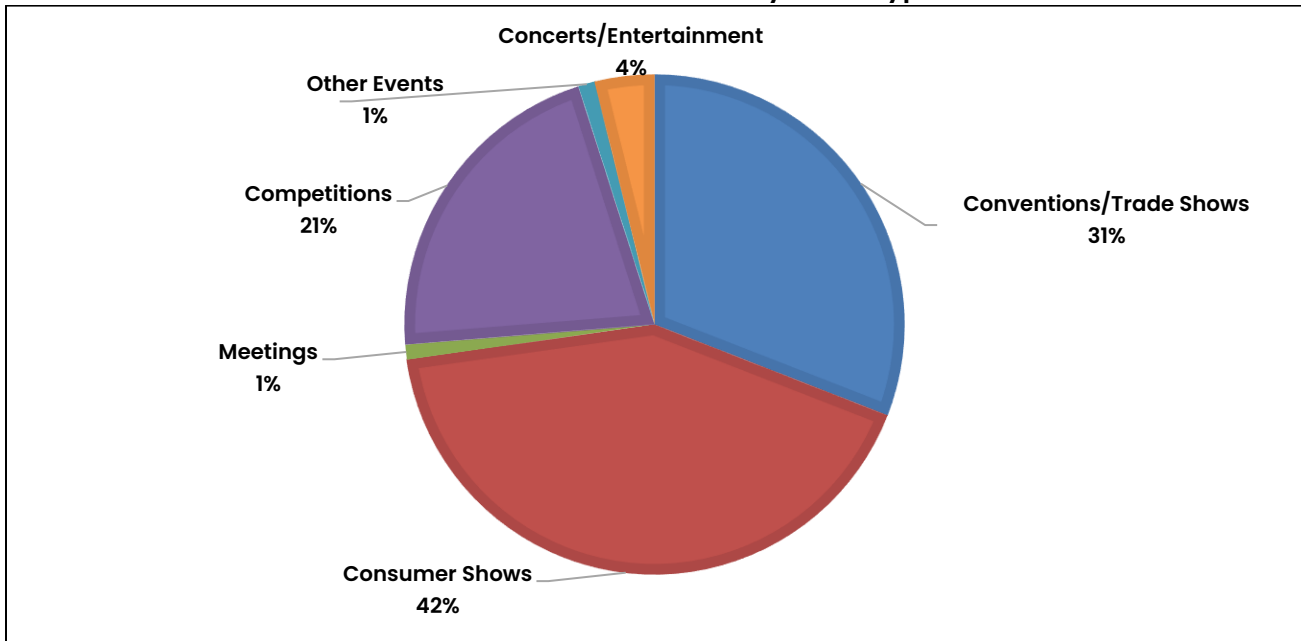
**Distribution of OCCC Events by Type - FY 2020**



Source: OCCC management.

In FY 2020, consumer shows, conventions/trade shows and competitions accounted for 42%, 31% and 21% of total attendees, respectively.

**Distribution of OCCC Total Attendees by Event Type - FY 2020**



Source: OCCC management.

As shown in the table below, event activity at the OCCC was estimated to generate approximately \$122.2 million in total output which supported 1,020 total jobs and \$49.5 million in total earnings at the State level in FY 2020. Total output decreased at both the County and State levels by approximately 49% between FY 2019 and FY 2020.

Estimated Total Economic Impacts Generated from OCCC Operations - FY 2020		
Category	Worcester County	State of Maryland
<b>Output</b>		
Direct Spending	\$62,900,000	\$68,200,000
Indirect & Induced Spending	29,200,000	54,000,000
Total Output	\$92,100,000	\$122,200,000
<b>Total Jobs (Full-Time &amp; Part-Time)</b>	920	1,020
<b>Total Earnings</b>	\$34,500,000	\$49,500,000

Note: Local and State amounts are not additive.

Tax revenues generated from OCCC-related activities were estimated to be approximately \$7.3 million in FY 2020, of which approximately \$5.9 million (or 81%) was estimated to occur at the State level. From FY 2019 to FY 2020, estimated local and State level taxes decreased by approximately 50% and 49%, respectively.

Estimated Tax Revenues Generated from OCCC Operations – FY 2020	
Entity	Amount
Worcester County <sup>1</sup>	\$1,400,000
State of Maryland	\$5,900,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,300,000</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tax revenues shown include Worcester County room taxes that are distributed to the Town of Ocean City.

In FY 2020, the State’s investment in the OCCC was approximately \$1.5 million which included contributions towards debt service, the operating deficit and capital improvements. The estimated tax revenues generated from OCCC operations at the State level resulted in a 3.9 to 1.0 ratio of fiscal benefits to costs for the State, which represents a significant return on investment, particularly given that the facility was closed for business for more than three months in FY 2020.

This analysis estimates the total economic contribution generated from OCCC operations including facility operations as well as spending by attendees on items such as lodging, restaurants, retail, entertainment/recreation, transportation and business services before and after events. Once the amount for direct spending is quantified, a calculated multiplier is applied to generate the indirect and induced effects. The sum of direct, indirect and induced effects equals total economic impact which is expressed in terms of output (spending), employment (jobs) and personal earnings. This analysis also estimates tax revenues generated from OCCC operations. The amount and type of event activity, origin of attendees, facility financial operations, industry trends, economic conditions, spending estimates, distribution of spending, multipliers and specific taxes quantified are variables that influence the economic and fiscal impact estimates.

## **Methodology - Economic Impact Analysis**

Regional input-output models are typically used by economists as a tool to understand the flow of goods and services among regions and measure the complex interactions among them given an initial spending estimate.

### Direct Spending

Estimating direct spending is the first step in calculating economic impact. Direct spending represents the initial change in spending that occurs as a direct result of OCCC operations including capital improvements. Direct spending occurs both inside and outside of the facility by both local and out-of-town attendees. It is reasonable to assume that a portion of spending from attendees originating in the region is displaced or would have occurred somewhere in the regional economy if the event had not been held. On the other hand, attendees from outside the area may not have made purchases in the local economy if the event had not occurred.

No intercept surveys with attendees were conducted as part of this study. Spending estimates are based on data provided by facility management and other secondary industry research from sources that are deemed to be reliable, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

### Multiplier Effect

Additional economic impacts are produced through the re-spending of direct spending. To quantify the inputs needed to produce the total output, economists have developed multiplier models. The estimation of multipliers relies on input-output models, a technique for quantifying interactions between firms, industries and social institutions within a local economy. This analysis uses IMPLAN software and databases which are developed under exclusive rights by the Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. IMPLAN, which stands for Impact Analysis for Planning, is a computer software package that consists of procedures for estimating local input-output models and associated databases. The IMPLAN software package allows the estimation of the multiplier effects of changes in final demand for one industry on all other industries within a defined economic area. Its proprietary methodology includes a matrix of production and distribution data among all counties in the U.S.



Advantages of this model are that it is sensitive to both location and type of spending and can provide indirect and induced spending, employment and earnings information by specific industry category while taking into account the leakages associated with the purchase of certain goods and services outside the economy under consideration.

Once the direct spending amounts are assigned to an appropriate industry category, the IMPLAN model estimates the economic multiplier effects for each type of direct new spending attracted to or retained in the local area and the State resulting from OCCC operations.

### Indirect and Induced Impacts

Indirect impacts reflect the re-spending of the initial or direct expenditures, or the business-to-business transactions required to satisfy the direct effect (e.g. impacts from non-wage expenditures). For example, an attendee's direct expenditures at a restaurant require the restaurant owner to purchase food and items from suppliers. The portion of these restaurant purchases that are spent within the area economy are indirect impacts.

Induced impacts reflect changes in local spending by households on goods and services that result from income changes in the directly and indirectly affected industry sectors (e.g. impacts from wage expenditures). For instance, a waitress at a restaurant could have more personal income due to an attendee's visit to the restaurant. The amount of increased income that the employee spends in the community is an induced impact.

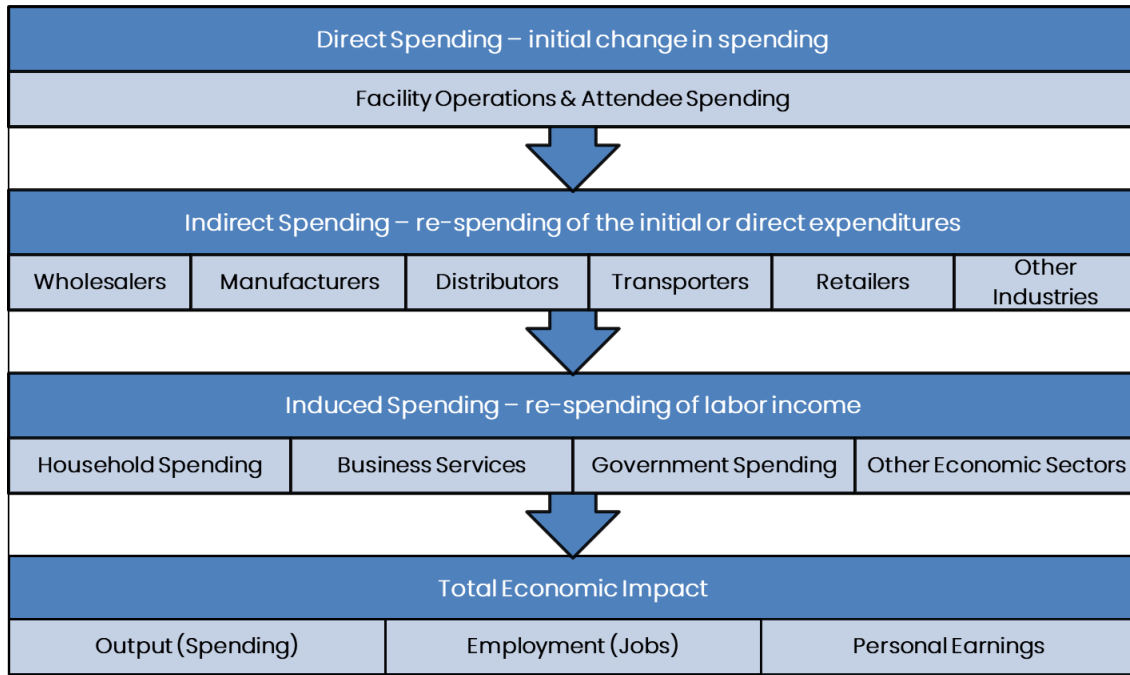
The model generates estimates of these impacts through a series of relationships using average wages, prices and transportation data, considering commute patterns and the relative interdependence of the economy on outside regions for goods and services.

### Total Economic Impact

The calculated multiplier effect is then added to the direct impact to quantify the total economic impact in terms of output, employment and earnings which are defined as follows:

- *Total Output* represents the total direct, indirect and induced spending effects generated by OCCC operations. This calculation measures the total dollar change in spending (output) that occurs in the local economy for each dollar of output delivered to final demand.
- *Employment (Jobs)* represents the number of full-time and part-time jobs supported by OCCC operations. The employment multiplier measures the total change in the number of jobs supported in the local economy for each additional \$1.0 million of output delivered to final demand.
- *Personal Earnings* represent the wages and salaries earned by employees of businesses associated with or impacted by OCCC operations. In other words, the multiplier measures the total dollar change in earnings of households employed by the affected industries for each additional dollar of output delivered to final demand.

The following graphic illustrates the multiplier effects for calculating total economic impact.



**Methodology – Fiscal Impact Analysis**

The estimated spending generated by OCCC operations also produces tax revenues for the Town of Ocean City, Worcester County and State. Experience in other markets suggests that while a significant portion of the direct spending likely occurs near the facility, additional spending occurs in other areas within the State, particularly spending on items such as business services and everyday living expense of residents. Major tax sources impacted by facility operations were identified and taxable amounts to apply to each respective tax rate were estimated. Although other taxes, such as property taxes, may also be positively impacted by OCCC operations, this analysis estimated the revenues generated from admissions and amusement tax, room tax, local personal income tax and food and beverage tax at the local level as well as sales and use tax, income tax and motor vehicle tax at the State level.

In general terms, all State tax proceeds are collected in the State’s General Fund and then allocated to variety of program areas, such as education, transportation, public safety and others. As such, individual revenue sources, such as the sales and use tax, are not designated to fund specific programs. As a result of this process, municipalities and counties may benefit from a variety of State and locally administered programs. For purposes of this analysis, only collections have been quantified, without regard as to how these funds are ultimately spent through the individual State departments/funds.

This section summarizes the estimated total economic and fiscal impacts at the local and State levels generated as a result of OCCC operations in FY 2020. As previously mentioned, OCCC was closed for business from mid-March to mid-July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, utilization and economic and fiscal benefits generated from OCCC operations were significantly less in FY 2020 than in previous fiscal years.

## **General Overview of the OCCC**

Ocean City is in Worcester County, which is one of the most popular, year-round vacation destinations on the East Coast providing a safe, clean and fun environment for visitors. The OCCC serves as the primary venue in the area for conventions, trade shows, public shows, meetings and events/competitions and offers approximately 60,000 SF of exhibit space in three halls; 19,100 SF of ballroom space; 23 fully divisible breakout rooms; and a 1,200-seat Performing Arts Center that opened in January 2015. The OCCC is currently in the process of expanding which will add a 30,000 SF exhibit hall, a 15,000 SF bayfront gathering space and renovated support spaces.

Prior to COVID-19, the OCCC employed approximately 34 full-time and 18 part-time employees. As a result of coronavirus, 15 part-time employees were laid off on March 17th, 2020 and 10 full-time employees were re-assigned to the Town's Public Works Department as of April 27th, 2020.

The County and the State benefit from the facility's operations in several ways, including such tangible and intangible benefits as:

- Enhancing the area's image as a business, meetings and tourist destination
- Receiving increased State and regional exposure through destination marketing and visitation
- Providing a first-class meeting venue for area residents and out-of-town delegates/ attendees
- Serving as a catalyst for further development initiatives in the area
- Generating additional economic activity and enhanced fiscal revenues

Each of these benefits is important in assessing the overall impacts of OCCC operations. While the value of many of these benefits is difficult to measure, the economic activity can be quantified.

## Summary of Event Activity at the OCCC

The following table summarizes the event activity at the OCCC for FY 2020.

Summary of Utilization at the OCCC - FY 2020				
Event Type	Events	Use Days	Total	Average Attendee
			Attendees	Days Per Event
Conventions/Trade Shows	16	64	97,800	6,110
Consumer Shows	18	67	132,400	7,360
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Concerts/Entertainment	14	31	12,100	860
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>316,300</b>	

Notes: Total attendees are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Other events include banquets and community events such as graduations.

Concerts/entertainment events represent stand-alone events held at the Performing Arts Center.

Source: OCCC management.

The number of total attendees is an important component in the methodology used to calculate economic impact. For example, a three-day convention with 600 delegates equates to 1,800 total attendees (or attendee days), which reflects that the same delegates return to the event each of the three days. Based on information provided by facility management, the OCCC generated approximately 316,300 total attendees in FY 2020, which was 47% less than in FY 2019. Approximately 40 events and 120 event days were cancelled or postponed in FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic representing a loss of approximately \$435,000 in revenues.

## Estimated Total Economic Impacts from OCCC Operations

The table below summarizes the estimated total economic activity generated from OCCC operations in FY 2020 in terms of output, jobs and earnings and is followed by a discussion of each component.

Estimated Total Economic Impacts Generated from OCCC Operations - FY 2020		
Category	Worcester County	State of Maryland
<b>Output</b>		
Direct Spending	\$62,900,000	\$68,200,000
Indirect & Induced Spending	29,200,000	54,000,000
Total Output	\$92,100,000	\$122,200,000
<b>Total Jobs (Full-Time &amp; Part-Time)</b>	920	1,020
<b>Total Earnings</b>	\$34,500,000	\$49,500,000

Note: Local and State amounts are not additive.

## Direct Spending

*Delegate/Visitor Spending* – Data provided from OCCC management for the 71 events held at the OCCC from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 was used to calculate attendee spending. Daily spending amounts were assigned to overnight attendees and day tripper attendees, who likely originate from the area or just drive in for the day. Ocean City's destination characteristics including the beach, family-friendly environment, variety of attractions, overall affordability and proximity to a large population base make it attractive for drawing additional travel party members other than just OCCC attendees. In addition, these same demographic characteristics encourage attendees and their travel parties to extend their stay beyond the length of the event held at the OCCC. Based on previously conducted surveys with event promoters by facility management, attendees at conventions/trade shows and competitions were assumed to bring additional travel party members and extend their stay in Ocean City, both of which are accounted for in this analysis.

*Sponsoring Organization/Event Producer & Exhibitor Spending* – Sponsoring organizations/event producers have substantial investments in the events that they host. These organizations purchase goods and services from either the OCCC or from outside sources. In addition, exhibitors often spend money outside of the facility to entertain existing and potential clients.

*OCCC Operations* – This category refers to operating revenues generated by the OCCC from sources such as rental income, food service, event services (e.g. electrical fees/utility commissions, phone commissions, audio/visual fees) and other miscellaneous income as well as capital improvements. The majority of OCCC revenues are included in delegate/visitor spending and sponsorship organization/event producer and exhibitor spending.

*Summary of Direct Spending Inputs* – Based on this information, the direct spending related to attendees, sponsoring organizations/event producers, exhibitors and facility operations at the OCCC was estimated to be \$68.2 million at the State level, of which \$62.9 million was estimated to occur in the County. As one would expect, the direct spending estimates in FY 2020 were significantly less than in FY 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Indirect and Induced Impacts

Based on the IMPLAN model, indirect and induced spending generated from OCCC operations was estimated to be \$54.0 million at the State level, of which \$29.2 million was estimated to occur in the County.

## Total Output

Based on the IMPLAN model, total output (i.e. direct, indirect and induced spending) from OCCC operations in FY 2020 was estimated to be \$122.2 million at the State level, of which \$92.1 million was estimated to occur in the County.

## Total Jobs

Based on the IMPLAN model, the economic activity associated with OCCC operations in FY 2020 was estimated to support 1,020 total jobs at the State level, of which 920 total jobs were estimated to be at the County level. These jobs are created in many sectors of the economy, which both directly and indirectly support the increased level of business activity in the area.

## Total Earnings

Outputs from the IMPLAN model indicate that OCCC operations in FY 2020 were estimated to support \$49.5 million on total earnings at the State level, of which \$34.5 million was estimated to occur in the County.

## **Estimated Tax Revenues from OCCC Operations**

As shown below, total tax revenues related to OCCC operations in FY 2020 were estimated to be \$1.4 million at the County level and \$5.9 million at the State level. Approximately 81% of estimated tax revenues were estimated to occur at the State level which was primarily driven by sales and use tax.

<b>Estimated Tax Revenues Generated from OCCC Operations – FY 2020</b>	
<b>Entity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Worcester County <sup>1</sup>	\$1,400,000
State of Maryland	\$5,900,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,300,000</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tax revenues shown include Worcester County room taxes that are distributed to the Town of Ocean City.

The following provides a description of the taxes estimated in this analysis.

### Worcester County Taxes

*Admissions and Amusement Tax* – The admissions and amusement tax is a local tax collected by the Comptroller’s Office for Maryland’s counties and Baltimore City, incorporated cities and towns and the MSA. The tax is imposed on the gross receipts from admissions, the use or rental of recreational or sports equipment and the sale of merchandise, refreshments or services at a nightclub or similar place where entertainment is provided. The admissions and amusement tax rate varies by locality and by activity and is 3.0% in Ocean City. For purposes of this analysis, this tax rate was applied to the estimated direct spending on entertainment in the County as well as an estimate of admissions revenue generated at the OCCC.

*Food and Beverage Tax* – A 0.5% local sales tax on food and beverages is imposed in Ocean City for the purpose of paying the principal and interest on bonds issued to finance the construction, reconstruction, repair, renovation and equipment of the OCCC. The tax is applicable to most of the food and beverage sales except those for consumption off premises or vending machine sales. For purposes of this analysis, the tax rate was applied to a portion of County-level direct spending at eating/drinking establishments including food and beverage revenue generated at the OCCC.

*Local Personal Income Tax* – Worcester County previously imposed a personal income tax of 1.75%. The rate increased to 2.25% on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and is calculated as a percentage of taxable income. For purposes of this analysis and based on information obtained online from the Comptroller of Maryland's office, an effective tax rate was calculated and applied to a portion of County-level earnings. Because local income tax is based on where a person lives, not where they work, only a portion of the personal income taxes generated by OCCC operations occurs in Worcester County.

*Room Tax* – Worcester County previously imposed a tax on accommodations at a rate of 4.5% which increased to 5.0% in January 2020. Proceeds from this tax are allotted to the Town of Ocean City's general fund of which a portion is dedicated to the Town of Ocean City's tourism advertising efforts. The hotel/motel tax does not include State sales tax.

### State of Maryland Taxes

*Corporate Income Tax* – A corporate income tax of 8.25% of corporate federal taxable income adjusted by State modifications is levied by the State on corporations. For purposes of this analysis and based on information obtained online from the Comptroller of Maryland's office, an effective tax rate was calculated and applied to State-level output.

*Motor Vehicle Rental Tax* – The State imposes an 11.5% tax on short-term passenger car and recreational vehicle rentals.

*Personal Income Tax* – The State imposes a personal income tax assessed against personal income earned in the State. The State income tax is a graduated rate ranging from 2.0% to 5.75% of taxable income. Nonresidents were subject to a special nonresident tax rate of 1.75% in addition to the State income tax rate prior to January 2020 when this rate increased to 2.25%. For purposes of this analysis and based on information obtained online from the Comptroller of Maryland's office, an effective tax rate was calculated and applied to a portion of total earnings at the State level.

*Sales and Use Tax* – The State of Maryland collects 6% sales and use tax from sales and leases of tangible personal property and services throughout the State and a 9% tax on alcoholic beverages. For purposes of this analysis, the 6% tax rate is applied to estimated taxable spending at the State level generated by OCCC operations which represents a conservative estimate relative to the sale of alcoholic beverages.

## Summary

The OCCC is a unique business entity that generates significant economic activity to Ocean City and the State. In FY 2020, the OCCC hosted 71 events that attracted approximately 316,300 total attendees which was estimated to generate direct spending of approximately \$62.9 million in the County and \$68.2 million in the State (including the County). Outputs from the IMPLAN model indicate OCCC operations in FY 2020 generated total output (i.e. direct, indirect and induced impacts) of approximately \$92.1 million in the County and \$122.2 million in the State (including the County). This spending was estimated to support approximately 1,020 total jobs and \$49.5 million in total earnings at the State level. In addition, these transactions were subject to taxes that were estimated to generate approximately \$7.3 million in FY 2020 including \$5.9 million at the State level.

In FY 2020, the State's investment in the OCCC was approximately \$1.5 million which included contributions towards debt service, the operating deficit and capital improvements. The estimated tax revenues generated from OCCC operations at the State level resulted in a 3.9 to 1.0 ratio of fiscal benefits to costs for the State, which represents a significant return on investment, particularly given that the facility was closed for business for more than three months in FY 2020.