

# Executive Summary:

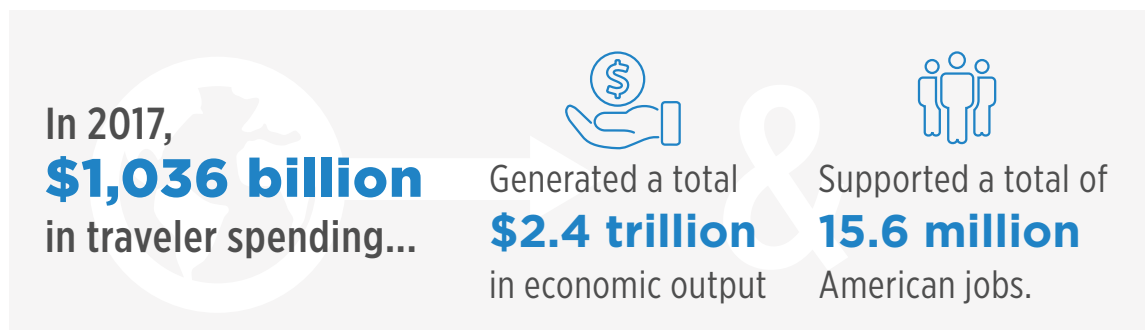
## Travel's Essential Contribution to Economic Development

**Made in America: Travel's Essential Contribution to Economic Development provides an in-depth look at the vital contributions destination marketers provide to both local communities and overall economic development as they conduct activities to attract business and leisure travelers, manage image and create brand affinity in an increasingly competitive space.**

### What are Travel's Essential Roles?

Though sometimes unseen by the community it serves, travel helps create a sense of place and is inextricably linked to economic development. As a job creator, tax revenue generator and destination storyteller, travel has ripple effects that positively impact the lives of millions of people.

### U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY IMPACT



SOURCE: U.S. Travel Association

The destination marketers charged with promoting travel—tourism offices, convention and visitors bureaus and destination marketing organizations—are instrumental in forming impressions and play an essential role in the development and growth of their communities and states.

The most successful places in America bring all stakeholders to the table. Local and state legislators, economic development organizations, and destination marketers all play a critical role in elevating the community. When done right, it leads to a positive and lasting change that is meaningful to residents and visitors alike.

When businesses make decisions about where to establish or relocate, quality of life is one of the most significant influencers. Is there a good restaurant scene? Are there cultural experiences in the area? How walkable is the city? It is the destination marketer who is best positioned to tell the story and illustrate the value proposition of a destination.



**76% of employed Americans indicated that firsthand experience was instrumental in forming impressions of a community when assessing new job opportunities and relocation decisions.**

SOURCE: DCI Q Report, "Talent Wars, What People Look for in Jobs and Locations," Q1 2017

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Another key factor is the ability to attract and retain workforce talent. Is the city a place that top talent wants to work and live? Travel is the first impression for talent. No matter how strong a company's reputation, very few prospective candidates relocate for a new job without visiting and experiencing a place firsthand.

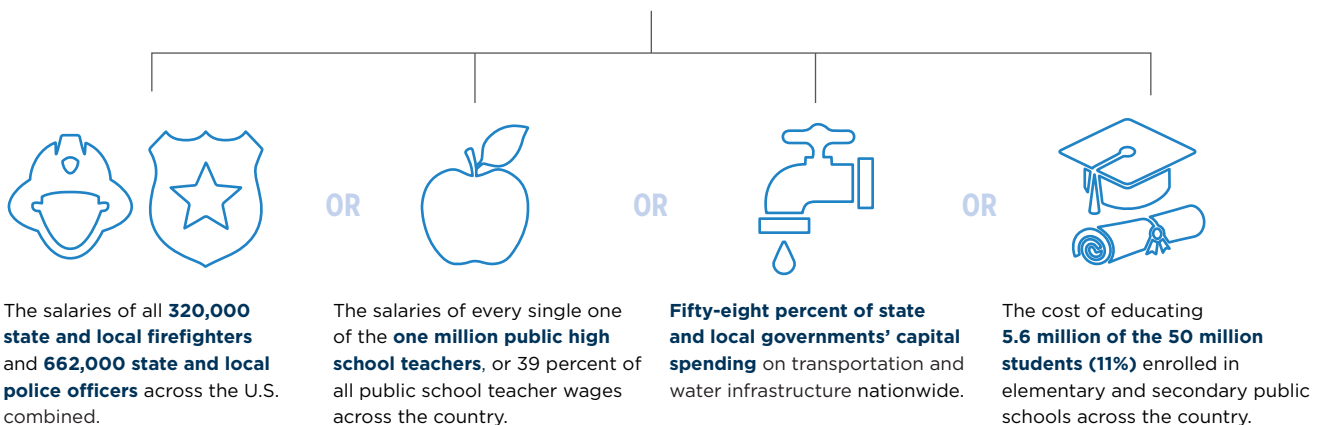
The more support and investment in travel promotion a destination marketer has, the stronger the financial returns. Travel-related tax revenues are pure profit, generated by visitors who do not require essential public services of a destination. Without the tax revenue from travel, local residents would be required to shoulder a higher tax burden to pay for police and firefighters, teachers, infrastructure and more.



Without the **\$165 billion** travel generates annually in total tax revenue, each U.S. household would have to pay **\$1,300 more in taxes** every year to maintain the same level of services.

SOURCE: U.S. Travel Association

The **\$76 billion** generated in state and local tax revenue is enough to pay for a host of resources:



SOURCE: U.S. Travel Association

### Why Does Branding Matter?

Investing in travel promotion is investing in economic development. A strong destination brand does more than build awareness; it engenders affinity that can lead to more visitors, and by attracting businesses and talent, it helps create a thriving community. Cutting a destination's tourism marketing budget—in whole or in part—is a short-sighted decision that undermines a city or state's viability in ways that takes years, if not decades, to overcome.