

Economic Impact of the High Country Soccer Association on the Local Economy

High Country Soccer Association (HCSA) is a youth soccer club serving 4- to 18-year-old soccer players from Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Wilkes counties and beyond. Each year, HCSA hosts over 100 youth travel team league games and three regional soccer tournaments at its field location in Boone, NC.

Hosting travel team soccer matches attracts families to Boone and provides an injection of out-of-town spending across the local economy. This direct spending in turn kick-starts a chain reaction of further secondary expenditures (in a process called the ‘multiplier effect’) in terms of additional business-to-business and local worker income-induced spending.

In the Spring of 2024, the Center for Economic Research and Policy Analysis (CERPA) at Appalachian State University conducted an economic impact study to measure the economic contribution of HCSA on the local economy. Combining primary data on visitor spending patterns (collected from intercept surveys of 196 visiting parents) with a geographically-specific input-output model, the total economic effect due to the presence of HCSA on the local economy was estimated.

The three tournaments (two hosted in May and one in August), attracted \$1.04 million in local spending by visiting families. Ninety-three percent of participating households were overnight visitors spending \$543,000 on hotels and other accommodations. A further \$246,000 was spent at local restaurants and other food and drinking establishments, and \$130,000 on groceries and shopping. League game attendees also contribute to these direct expenditures across various economic sectors.

Table 1. Total Economic Impact

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	9.48	\$301,325	\$913,261
Indirect	1.99	\$90,080	\$322,873
Induced	2.37	\$103,984	\$358,273
Total	13.83	\$495,389	\$1,594,407

Accounting for the multiplier effects, the total annual economic impact of HCSA on the local economy is \$1.59 million in economic output. This represents a level of annual total sales that would not occur locally absent HCSA. This level of annual economic activity translates into approximately 14 jobs and \$495,000 in labor income.