

BLINK

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wave
Funding Arts. Fueling Community.

ECONOMIC **IMPACT** REPORT



BLINK

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arts wave
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A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How do you bring back a giant public-art spectacle in a world still working through the complex challenges of a pandemic? How do you thrill and delight hundreds of thousands of people a night while keeping them safe? How do you evolve an event and make it feel fresh and new while keeping what is beloved and familiar? How do you nurture a local audience while growing your national reputation and inviting others to see what is special about your city? How do you expand a collaborative circle and allow more voices and visions to shape an artistic project? How do you show the impact that art, light, paint, and imagination can have on a region's economy?

These were some of the big questions the BLINK partners asked ourselves when working to bring BLINK back in 2022. BLINK was always intended to be a biennial event, taking place every other year, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the event's return in 2021 was put on hold. When the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber decided to delay the event and hire its first Executive Director, the goal was to ensure that BLINK was brought back at the quality and scale that the region deserves, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of Cincinnati's biggest "nowhere-else experience."

To achieve this the Chamber once again worked in close partnership with the Haile Foundation, AGAR, and ArtWorks, and welcomed new partners Cincy Nice and ish to the team. Together this dedicated group labored alongside hundreds of hard-working and talented artists, visionaries, musicians, technical experts, and volunteers to deliver something truly special to the over 2 million attendees across the 4-day experience.

This report details the economic impact of BLINK, but it is important to note that the true beauty and impact of BLINK lies in the shared memories and experiences of those attendees. Friends, families, neighbors, and strangers stood side-by-side on street corners gazing up in amazement at the artistic wonder covering familiar buildings and surroundings.

The financial and ephemeral impact is only possible thanks to the generous support of the philanthropic, corporate, and government organizations that see the value of investing in a gigantic free public art event. We thank all those supporters and look forward to delivering more impact as we plan for BLINK 2024.



JUSTIN BROOKHART
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BLINK

BY THE NUMBERS

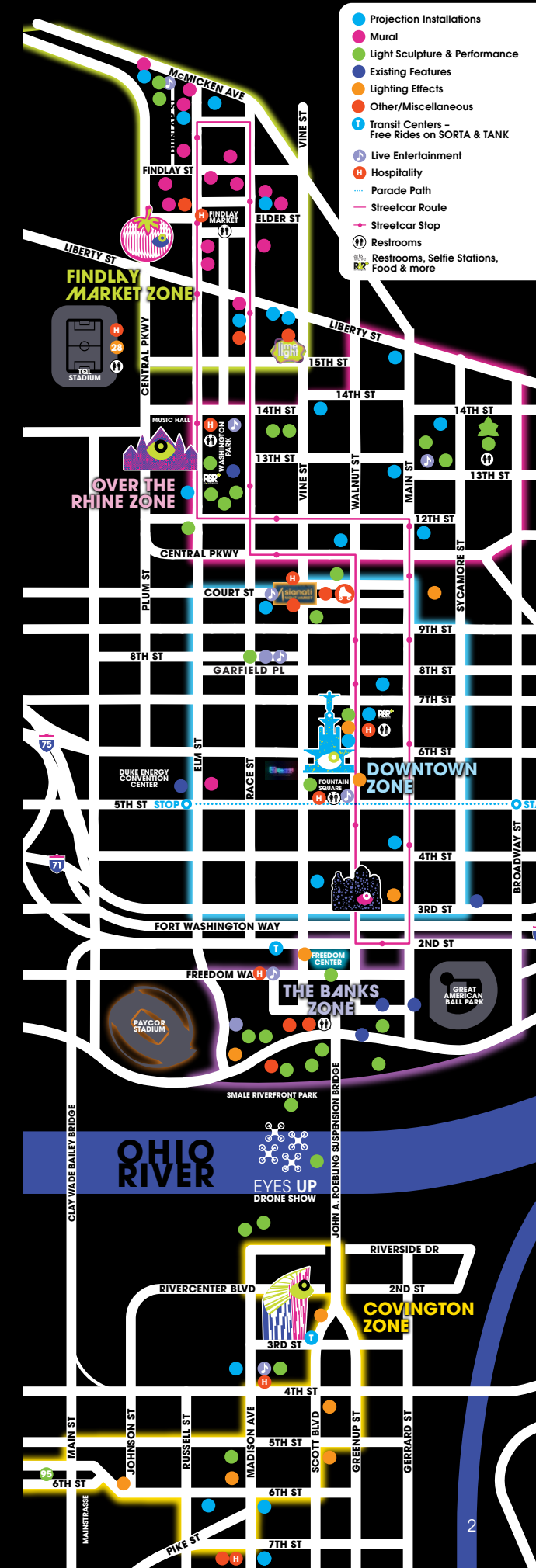
- 4 NIGHTS
- 2 STATES
- 1 RIVER
- 5 ZONES
- 30+ CITY BLOCKS
- 100+ EXPERIENCES
- 2M+ ATTENDEES

\$126M
DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT

BLINK®, illuminated by Artswave, is the nation's largest immersive art experience held bi-annually in the Cincinnati region. The free, four-day event held in October 2022 featured large-scale projection mapping installations, murals, urban artscapes, media light, and interactive art.

First held in 2017, BLINK spanned 20 city blocks, from The Banks to Findlay Market. The event included more than 60 animated light shows, which were projected onto buildings, as well as interactive art sculptures, murals, and other light-based displays. Through an immersive and inclusive experience, BLINK assisted in promoting Cincinnati as a welcoming, innovative, and creative Future City.

The 2022 iteration of BLINK grew to over 30 city blocks and spanned from Findlay Market to downtown Covington, Kentucky across the Ohio River. Additionally, the event held a parade in which more than 85 arts and community groups and over 2,500 participants illuminated themselves and traveled along Fifth Street in Downtown Cincinnati.



EXECUTIVE PARTNERS



28 PROJECTION MAPPING INSTALLATIONS



IN THE MIDDLE | ANTALESS VISUAL DESIGN

17 MURALS
7,432 CANS OF PAINT



HOMAGE TO CINCINNATI MUSIC | TRISTAN EATON

300 DRONES
2 SHOWS EACH NIGHT



BLINK DRONE SHOW | SKY ELEMENTS & DURHAM STUDIO

42 LIGHT & ART
INSTALLATIONS



STRING THEORY FOR DUMMIES | Daniel Shields, Jamebo Corsini and Daniel Hiudt



100+ MUSICAL PERFORMANCES



2,500+ PARADE PARTICIPANTS



TOGETHER | OGE GROUP & ish

SURVEY

A survey was conducted by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber’s Center for Research & Data during and after the event to collect attendee opinions. The survey collected a total of 2,469 responses. About 28% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 34, and 45% were between the ages of 35 and 54. Roughly 86% of the respondents identified as white, while 5% identified as Black or African American.

Respondents visited the Cincinnati area to attend BLINK from 319 unique zip codes from across the nation, up from 168 different zip codes in 2019. Figure 1 and the map below display the home locations of each respondent.

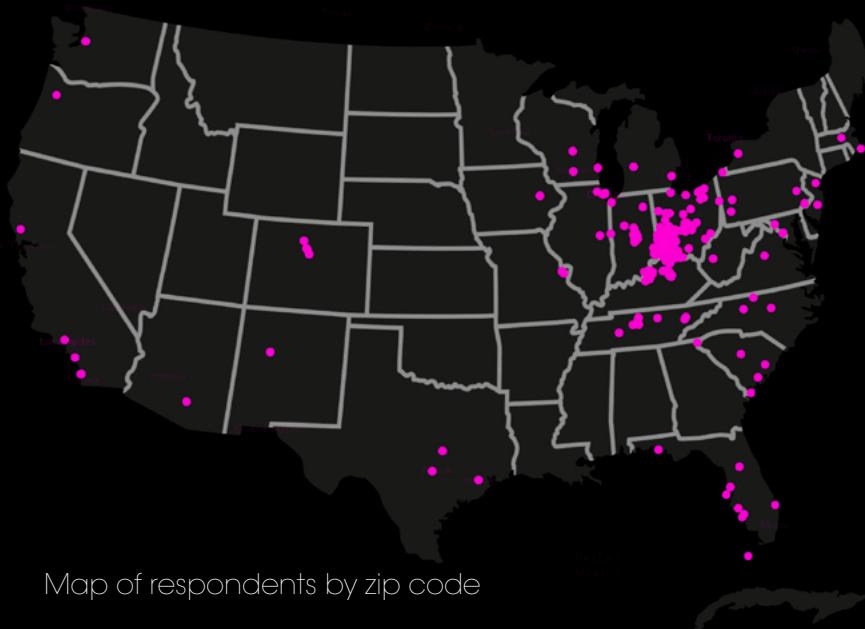
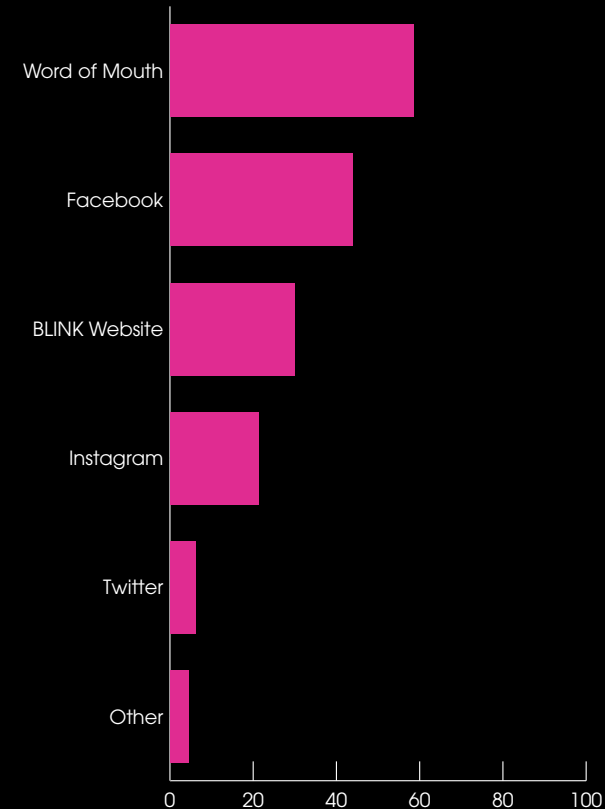


FIGURE 1. RESPONDENT LOCATIONS

LOCATION	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Hamilton County	1,307	52.9%
Northern Kentucky	472	19.1%
Southwest Ohio	423	17.1%
Out-of-Region	242	9.8%
Southeast Indiana	25	1%

Map of respondents by zip code

FIGURE 2. HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BLINK?

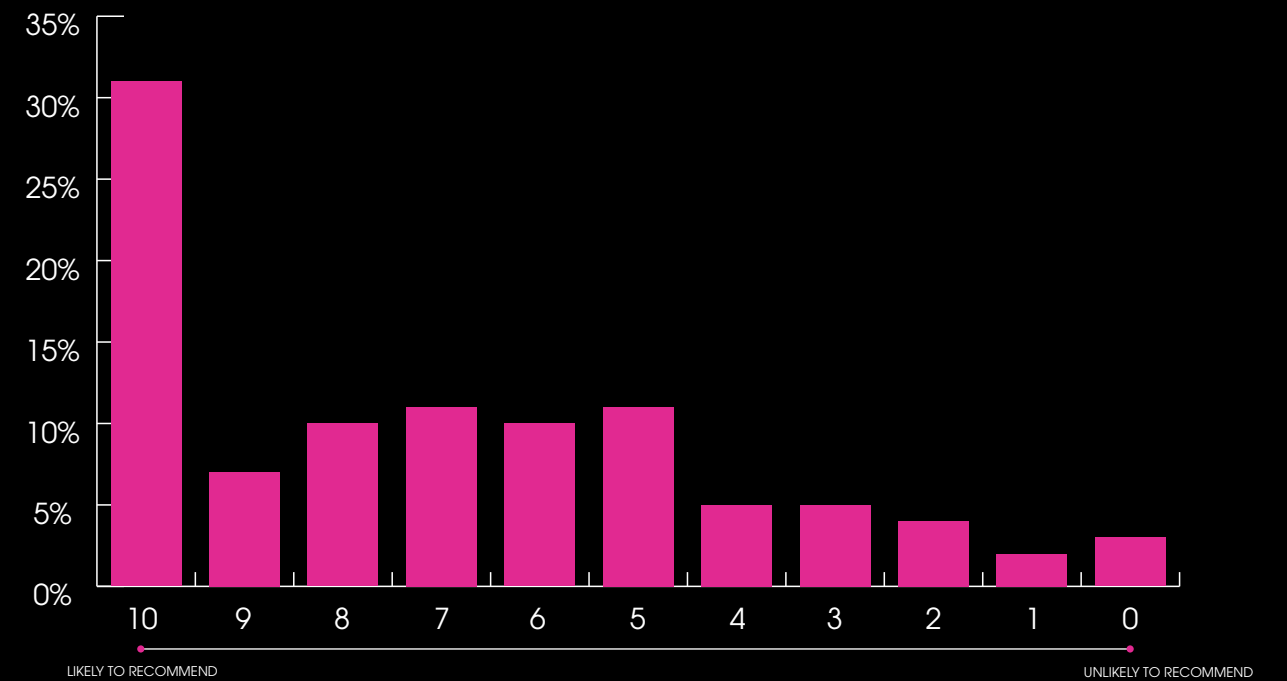


Half (49.8%) of respondents stated they planned to spend one day at BLINK—which was the most common answer. Overall, respondents spent an average of 1.8 days at BLINK. The median number of days spent at BLINK was two. The number of visitors who attended a previous BLINK was much higher for this iteration. Only 22% of respondents said this was their first time attending BLINK, compared to about 61% in 2019. Most respondents said they learned about BLINK through word of mouth (about 59%), while 44% said they heard about BLINK on Facebook, and 30% had visited the BLINK website. Figure 2 displays how respondents learned about BLINK. They were asked to check all that apply.

Most respondents did not stay in a hotel while attending BLINK (93%). Respondents who did stay in a hotel were most likely to stay two nights in a hotel and spend about \$175 per night on their hotel room.

When asked to rate their likelihood of recommending BLINK to family and friends on a scale of 0 to 10, the most common response was 10 (about 31% of respondents). About 70% of respondents said they were more likely than not to recommend BLINK, while only 19% said that it was unlikely that they would recommend BLINK. Figure 3 displays the distribution of how likely respondents were to recommend BLINK.

FIGURE 3. LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING BLINK



BLINK OASIS AT HANNA PARK PLAYGROUND | MULTIPLE ARTISTS

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BLINK

ECONOMIC IMPACT: OPERATIONS

To host BLINK, the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber made approximately \$6.35 million in operations expenditures. These expenditures included promotion and preparation activities, concession expenses, equipment rentals, and entertainment. To account for dollars remaining in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) economy, the amount of dollars that were lost to economic leakage were calculated. These are dollars that leak out of the MSA due to outside vendors or service providers being used either directly or indirectly. The demand met in the Cincinnati region was calculated using modeled data from Lightcast. Post-leakage, the amount of spending that remained in the MSA was about \$4.4 million. Indirect spending was then calculated using economic multipliers for the industries in which the BLINK operations funds were spent. Output multipliers came from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) RIMS II database for the Cincinnati metropolitan area. Earnings and jobs multipliers came from the Lightcast model, which uses BEA data, as well as supplemental information.

FIGURE 4. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BLINK OPERATIONS

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

	OUTPUT	EARNINGS	JOBS
Direct	\$4,381,500	\$1,618,660	32
Indirect	\$3,714,769	\$1,258,914	28
TOTAL	\$8,096,269	\$2,877,574	60

ECONOMIC IMPACT: NON-LOCAL VISITOR SPENDING

About 9.8% of respondents were from outside the Cincinnati region. These visitors brought new dollars into the Cincinnati economy and spent an average of 1.8 days at BLINK. Spending on food and drink amounted to \$55 per day per person and spending on retail items amounted to \$29 per day per person. The average number of nights spent in a hotel was two nights, and typical hotel spending was \$175 per night per room. Assuming 2.5 guests per hotel room, hotel spending was \$140 per person, or \$70 per person per night.

The Center for Research & Data estimate that there were 2.16 million people attending BLINK across the four days of the event. Adjusting for the fact that the average person attended 1.8 days and for attendees under the age of 18, it was calculated that 926,400 unique adults attended BLINK.

Since 9.8% of respondents were non-local, it was calculated that there were 90,787 non-local adults who attended BLINK. Additionally, it was calculated that about 71% of non-local adults stayed in a hotel, meaning that 64,477 non-local adults stayed in a hotel during the event, occupying about 25,790 hotel rooms.

Overall, the average non-local respondent spent about \$55 per day on restaurants and fast food while attending BLINK, and about \$104 on restaurants or fast food overall while attending. The average non-local respondent also spent about \$29 on retail items each day, or about \$52 on retail items over the duration of the festival.

Figure 5 shows the breakdown in non-local spending across the three different categories calculated.

FIGURE 5. NON-LOCAL SPENDING RESULTING FROM BLINK

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

	HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
NON-LOCAL SPENDING	\$9,026,780	\$8,987,913	\$4,739,081	\$22,753,774



It is estimated that there were 2.16 million people attending BLINK across the four days of the event.

MURAL BY INSANE 51
PROJECTION BY GODUTCH STUDIOS

The non-local visitor spending shown in Figure 5 on the previous page was used to calculate the indirect economic impact of these dollars which flowed into the Cincinnati MSA's economy. This spending generated additional indirect output, earnings, and jobs because of BLINK. The Center for Research & Data used BEA and Lightcast multipliers to calculate the economic impact of visitor spending across the three categories of industries, similar to the calculations for BLINK operations.

As shown in Figure 6, the direct output of hotel spending was \$9 million, which generated an additional \$8.1 million of indirect output. Total output from non-local attendee spending on hotels was \$17.2 million. Visitor spending also supported jobs in the hotel, restaurant, and retail industries. Non-local visitor spending at restaurants supported a total of 129 jobs with earnings of approximately \$6 million. For the retail industry, visitor spending supported a total of 54 jobs with direct and indirect earnings of \$3.6 million.

FIGURE 6. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NON-LOCAL SPENDING

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
OUTPUT	Direct	\$9,026,780	\$8,987,913	\$4,739,081	\$22,753,774
	Indirect	\$8,131,072	\$9,402,256	\$4,311,616	\$21,844,944
	TOTAL	\$17,157,852	\$18,390,169	\$9,050,697	\$44,598,718

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
EARNINGS	Direct	\$3,607,944	\$4,023,452	\$2,428,627	\$10,060,023
	Indirect	\$2,141,346	\$2,069,935	\$1,162,631	\$5,373,912
	TOTAL	\$5,749,290	\$6,093,387	\$3,591,258	\$15,433,935

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
JOBS	Direct	93	112	43	248
	Indirect	35	17	11	63
	TOTAL	128	129	54	311



RADIANT ROSE | DIGITAL CASTAWAY, NIMBLE PROTOTYPING

ECONOMIC IMPACT: RESIDENT SPENDING

About 90.2% of respondents were local to the Cincinnati region. Some portion of these residents' spending would have taken place within the region anyway, so there is a substitution effect. However, the total value of resident spending is calculated to get a full picture of the total economic impact of BLINK. Just like non-resident respondents, local respondents spent an average of 1.8 days at BLINK. In the case of local respondents, about 3% reported staying in a hotel.

The Center for Research & Data estimate that there were 2.16 million people attending BLINK across the four days of the event. Adjusting for the fact that the average person attended 1.8 days and for attendees under the age of 18, it was

calculated that 926,400 unique adults attended BLINK. Since 90.2% of respondents were local, it was calculated that there were 835,613 local adults who attended BLINK. Additionally, it was calculated that about 2% of local adults stayed in a hotel, meaning that 16,712 local adults stayed in a hotel during the event, occupying about 6,685 hotel rooms.

Overall, the average local respondent spent about \$42 on outside food and drink per night, or about \$76 over the course of the festival, and about \$22 on retail items per night, or about \$39 over the course of the event. Figure 7 shows the breakdown in local spending across the three different categories calculated.

FIGURE 7. RESIDENT SPENDING RESULTING FROM BLINK

	HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
RESIDENT SPENDING	\$2,339,750	\$63,506,588	\$32,588,907	\$98,435,245



TUNNEL | BIG ART

Across all categories of spending, the total direct and indirect economic output because of non-local attendees to BLINK was \$44.6 million, which supported a total of 311 jobs with earnings of \$15.4 million.

The resident spending shown in Figure 7 above was used to calculate the indirect economic impact of these dollars. This spending generated additional indirect output, earnings, and jobs because of BLINK. As with visitor spending, the Center for Research & Data used BEA and Lightcast multipliers to calculate the economic impact of resident spending across the three categories of industries.

As shown in Figure 8, the direct output of hotel spending was \$2.3 million, which generated an additional \$2.1 million of indirect output because of BLINK. Total output from resident attendee spending on hotels was \$4.5 million. Resident spending also supported jobs in the hotel, restaurant, and retail industries. Resident spending at restaurants supported a total of 913 jobs with earnings of approximately \$43 million. For the retail industry, resident spending supported a total of 378 jobs with earnings of \$24.7 million. Across all categories of spending, the total economic output as a result of local attendees was \$197 million, which supported a total of 1,316 jobs with direct and indirect earnings of \$69 million.

FIGURE 8. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RESIDENT SPENDING

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
OUTPUT	Direct	\$2,339,750	\$63,506,588	\$32,588,907	\$98,435,245
	Indirect	\$2,107,647	\$66,434,346	\$29,649,388	\$98,191,381
	TOTAL	\$4,447,397	\$129,940,934	\$62,238,295	\$196,626,626

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
EARNINGS	Direct	\$935,183	\$28,428,814	\$16,700,771	\$46,064,768
	Indirect	\$555,039	\$14,625,700	\$7,994,986	\$23,175,725
	TOTAL	\$1,490,222	\$43,054,514	\$24,695,757	\$69,240,493

		HOTEL	FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL	TOTAL
JOBS	Direct	21	791	298	1,110
	Indirect	4	122	80	206
	TOTAL	25	913	378	1,316

ECONOMIC IMPACT: TOTAL COMBINED IMPACT OF OPERATIONS AND ATTENDEE SPENDING

This section details the total combined economic impact of the BLINK. To calculate the combined total economic impact, the economic impact of all attendee spending was added to the event’s operational economic impact numbers.

The operations and attendee spending had a direct economic impact on the Cincinnati MSA of \$125.6 million, as shown in Figure 9. These expenditures supported 1,390 direct jobs with earnings totaling \$57.7 million and further supported another 297 jobs and \$29.8 million in wages indirectly. The combined total economic output because of BLINK operations expenditures and attendee spending was \$249.3 million, and supported 1,687 direct and indirect jobs with earnings amounting to \$87.5 million.

FIGURE 9. TOTAL COMBINED ECONOMIC IMPACT

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

	OUTPUT	EARNINGS	JOBS
Direct	\$125,570,519	\$57,743,451	1,390
Indirect	\$123,751,094	\$29,808,551	297
TOTAL	\$249,321,613	\$87,552,002	1,687



**STILL SHINES THROUGH | MURAL BY MAX SANSING
PROJECTION FROM CHASKE HAVERKOS**

The average local respondent spent about \$42 on outside food and drink per night, or about \$76 over the course of the festival, and about \$22 on retail items per night, or about \$39 over the course of the event.

**MR. DYNAMITE | MURAL BY ARTWORKS
PROJECTION BY KYLE ELI EBERSOLE**

FISCAL IMPACT OF ATTENDEE SPENDING AND OPERATIONS

In addition to the economic impact of total attendee spending in the Cincinnati MSA, the Center for Research & Data also calculated the fiscal impacts of BLINK 2022. The Center for Research & Data calculated the sales tax revenue generated for counties and states within the Cincinnati MSA, as a result of attendee expenditures. To calculate sales tax revenue generated for the two categories of hotel and retail spending, blended state and local sales tax rates were calculated for the Cincinnati MSA. For state sales tax 5.8% was used and for local sales tax 1.6% was used. Income tax revenue generated for the Cincinnati MSA was calculated using the total earnings supported by expenditures in operations and total attendee spending. A blended Cincinnati MSA local income tax rate of 1.2 percent and a blended state income tax rate of 2 percent were used in these calculations. Hotel tax revenue generated was calculated using the direct attendee spending for both residents and non-local attendees and a blended hotel tax rate of 4.4 percent was used.

Counties in the Cincinnati MSA received approximately \$682,000 in sales tax revenue, while the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana collected over \$2.8 million in sales tax revenue. State income tax revenue generated from the total combined earnings was approximately \$1.8 million and local income tax revenue

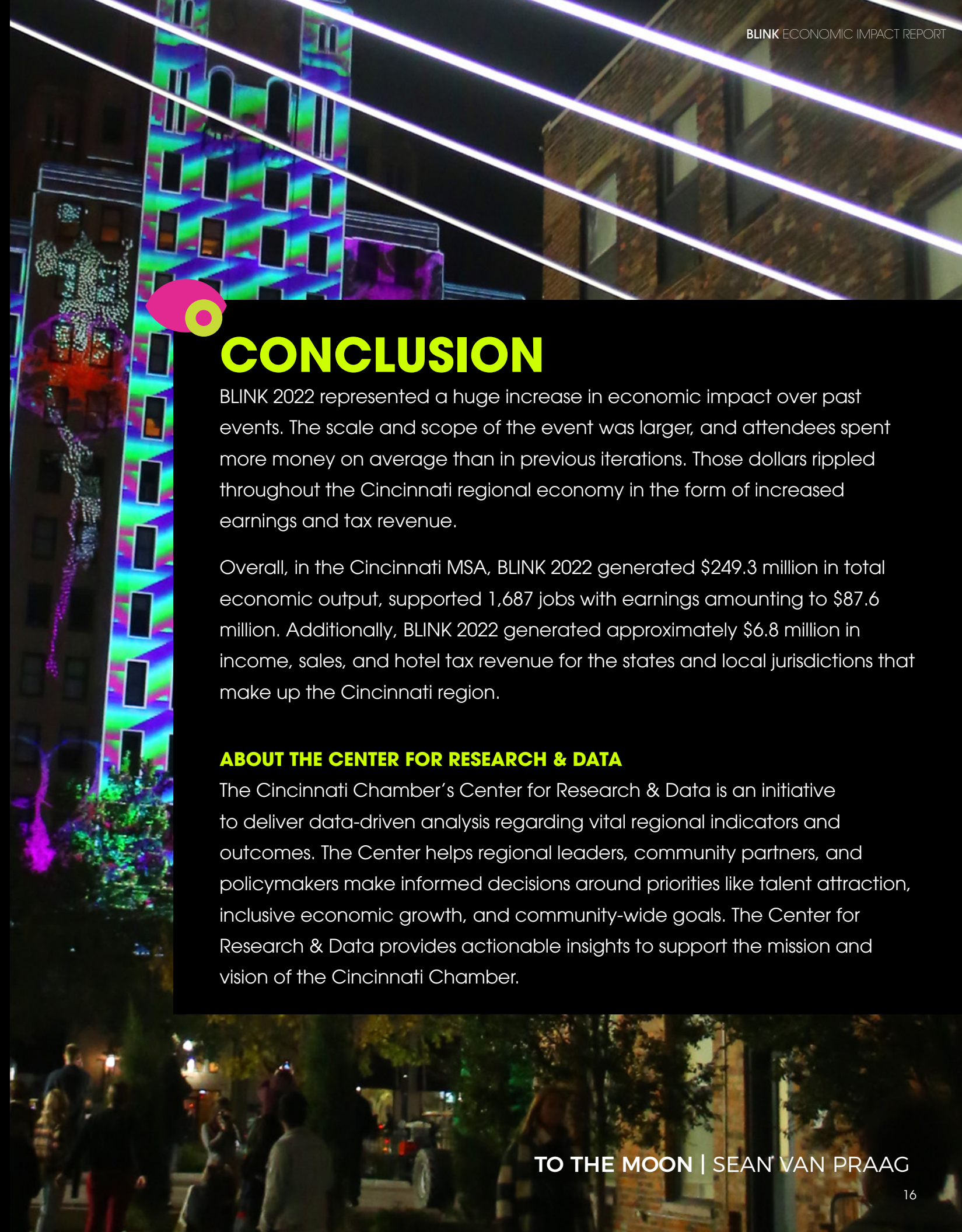
amounted to approximately \$1 million. Counties within the MSA also received hotel tax revenue as a result of attendees staying in a hotel. Hotel tax revenue totaled approximately \$500,000.

Figure 10 shows the sales tax revenue generated for counties in the Cincinnati MSA and the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana as a result of BLINK attendee spending, as well as hotel and income tax revenue generated for local jurisdictions in the MSA. Overall, sales, income, and hotel spending generated approximately \$6.8 million in tax revenue for state and local governments.

FIGURE 10. FISCAL IMPACT OF ATTENDEE SPENDING AND OPERATIONS

Source: Center for Research & Data, Lightcast, Bureau of Economic Analysis

TAX COLLECTED	TAX REVENUE
COUNTY SALES TAX	\$681,723
STATE SALES TAX	\$2,824,282
LOCAL INCOME TAX	\$1,050,624
STATE INCOME TAX	\$1,751,040
HOTEL TAX	\$500,127
TOTAL TAXES COLLECTED	\$6,806,796



CONCLUSION

BLINK 2022 represented a huge increase in economic impact over past events. The scale and scope of the event was larger, and attendees spent more money on average than in previous iterations. Those dollars rippled throughout the Cincinnati regional economy in the form of increased earnings and tax revenue.

Overall, in the Cincinnati MSA, BLINK 2022 generated \$249.3 million in total economic output, supported 1,687 jobs with earnings amounting to \$87.6 million. Additionally, BLINK 2022 generated approximately \$6.8 million in income, sales, and hotel tax revenue for the states and local jurisdictions that make up the Cincinnati region.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH & DATA

The Cincinnati Chamber’s Center for Research & Data is an initiative to deliver data-driven analysis regarding vital regional indicators and outcomes. The Center helps regional leaders, community partners, and policymakers make informed decisions around priorities like talent attraction, inclusive economic growth, and community-wide goals. The Center for Research & Data provides actionable insights to support the mission and vision of the Cincinnati Chamber.

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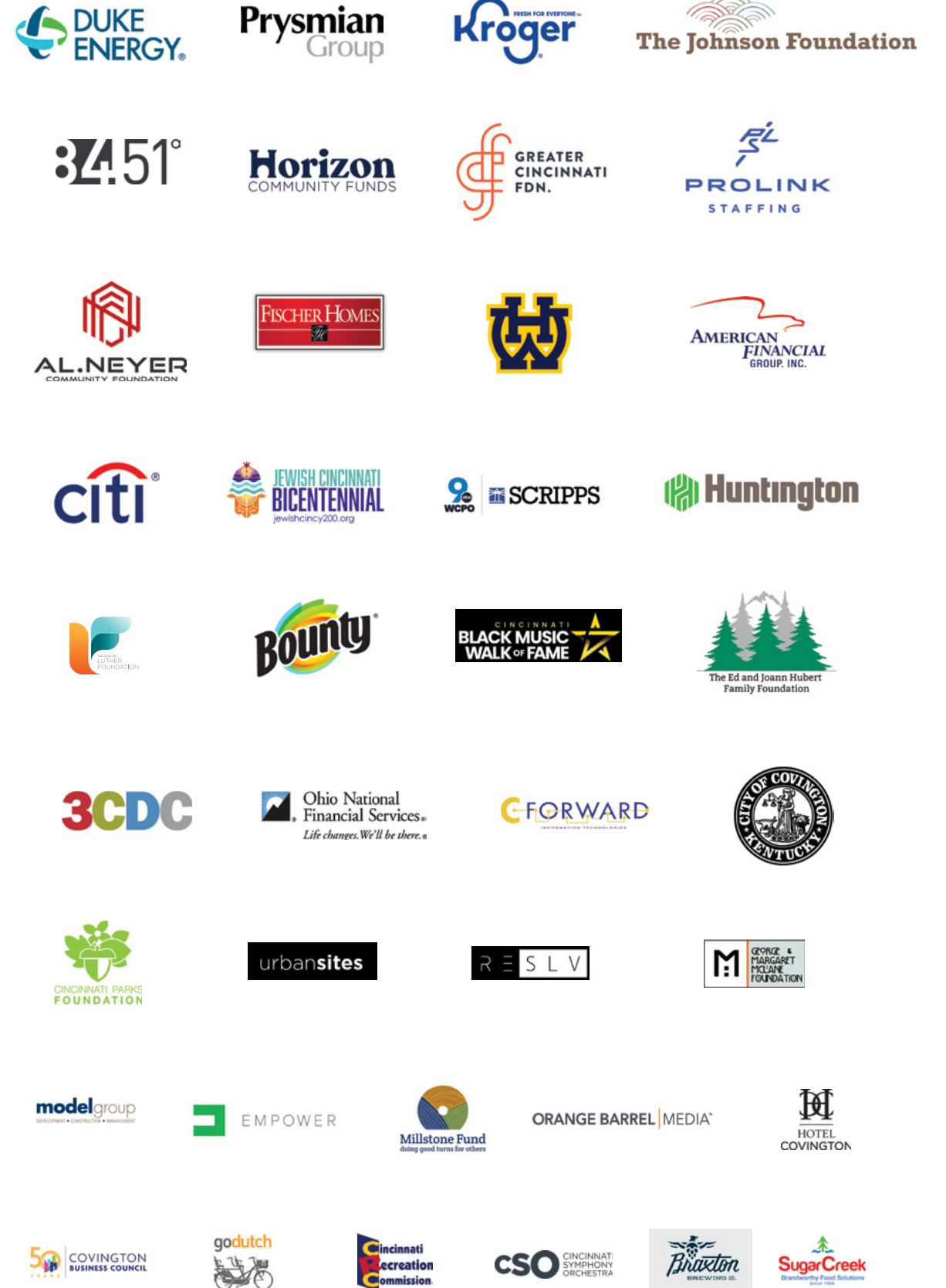
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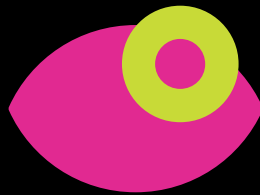


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