

Together



Georgia World  
Congress Center  
Authority

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome to Georgia World Congress Center Authority's fiscal year 2025 annual report covering July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. As I reflect on my first year as chief executive officer, it was a year filled with celebration, recognition, and encouragement. I am humbled by the opportunity to lead such a remarkable organization with a legacy of excellence and an enduring reputation for delivering unforgettable experiences.

During the fiscal year, we marked many important milestones together—from celebrating Frank Poe's retirement and honoring Dan Graveline's remarkable legacy, to launching kickoff activities for GWCC's upcoming 50th anniversary, and welcoming new leadership in both Atlanta and Savannah, positioning the Authority for a strong and vibrant future.

This year was also one of recognition—recognition of the extraordinary individuals and teams whose commitment drives our success. Whether hosting site visits, executing events of every scale, or even overcoming the challenges of weather, our people consistently rose to the occasion. They truly are the best in the business, and I'm honored to work alongside each of them.

And perhaps most importantly, this first year has been one of encouragement for me personally. From advancing transformative projects like the Savannah hotel development, entering year two of Signia by Hilton Atlanta, exploring opportunities for International Plaza, and key infrastructure improvements, including the iconic Ring Fountain renovation in Centennial Olympic Park, to reconnecting with community partners, I have been inspired by the opportunities that lie ahead. Likewise, the opportunity to work alongside the Governor's office and Georgia General Assembly to ensure our campus and facilities remain competitive has been both motivating and affirming, reinforcing the vital role GWCCA plays as a driver of economic impact, community engagement, and global visibility for our state.

This year, we also discovered the true power of being **together**—not just in shared spaces, but in shared purpose. In moments of challenge and celebration, we stood side by side. Collaborating across teams, connecting with our community, and strengthening partnerships, we moved forward—together.

Here in Atlanta, our campus continues to fulfill the very purpose for which it was built—hosting the biggest and best events in the world of conventions, meetings, sports, and entertainment for the benefit of the citizens of Georgia. With global gatherings such as FIFA World Cup 2026™ and other major live events on the horizon, our ability to deliver at the highest level has never been more important. This report highlights how we are preparing for that future by focusing on four key areas of performance:

- **Team:** Building a strong, collaborative organizational culture where we attract, retain, and develop top talent. A high-performing, customer-focused team is the foundation for everything else we achieve.
- **Customer:** Growing demand by listening to the needs of our customers while enhancing satisfaction. Every interaction with organizers, attendees, and partners drives reputation and repeat business.
- **Facilities:** Maintaining safe, reliable, and flexible venues. From reinvestments in infrastructure to innovation, our spaces must evolve with the needs of all events we host.
- **Financial:** Remaining self-supporting and fiscally responsible. By improving efficiency and optimizing revenue, we ensure long-term sustainability.

In the following pages, our leadership team will share insights into each of these priorities and the milestones achieved, offering their perspectives on how, together, we are advancing GWCCA’s mission and preparing for the opportunities ahead.

Down in Chatham County, the Savannah Convention Center marked its 25th anniversary alongside the opening of its long-anticipated expansion, which has doubled exhibit space and enhanced meeting capabilities. With this major milestone complete, plans are now in full motion for an adjacent headquarter hotel—further strengthening Savannah’s position as a premier convention destination and driving economic growth for the region and the state.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as CEO and for the support of our team, board, stakeholders, partners, and the communities we proudly serve. Together, we are not only creating unforgettable customer experiences today—we are also building a brighter, stronger future for GWCCA and the state of Georgia. It is a true privilege to lead this remarkable organization, and my commitment is to honor our history while guiding us toward even greater achievements.

With appreciation,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Kevin Duvall**  
Chief Executive Officer

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

– Henry Ford

## MISSION VISION VALUES



### Mission

The State of Georgia established Georgia World Congress Center Authority to develop and operate Georgia World Congress Center, Centennial Olympic Park, and related facilities. These facilities exist for the primary purpose of promoting and facilitating events and activities that generate economic benefits to the citizens of the state of Georgia and the city of Atlanta as well as enhance the quality of life for every Georgian.



### Vision

To deliver exceptional events and unforgettable experiences.



### Values

#### **WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE**

We embrace proactive and responsible behaviors that create ownership of outcomes for the individual and the business.

#### **WE ARE AUTHENTIC**

We operate with transparency; encourage vulnerability and expression of self and others to foster an inclusive environment for our customers.

#### **WE ARE ONE**

We move with a unified purpose and voice to ensure our customers experience radical hospitality.



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Overview Committee



# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Highlights, Milestones, and Momentum  
During FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)



**JUL**

The **GBTA (Global Business Travel Association) Convention**, held July 22–24, brings together more than 5,400 delegates for the largest global gathering in the business travel industry, offering opportunities to learn about innovations, network with peers, and explore new business opportunities.

**AUG**

Atlanta selected to host the **2031 NCAA Men's Final Four at Mercedes-Benz Stadium**—marking the city's fifth time hosting the event and its first at this venue. Previously, Atlanta welcomed the Final Four in 1977 at The Omni and three times at the Georgia Dome (2002, 2007, 2013), making it one of only eight U.S. cities to reach this milestone.

**SEP**

GWCC and Signia by Hilton Atlanta host **Hilton's Americas Leadership & Commercial Conference**, uniting hospitality leaders to share insights and plan for future growth. The hotel also welcomes the Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference, where Governor Brian P. Kemp announces record-breaking tourism numbers for the second straight year and the state's continued No. 5 market share ranking nationwide.

**OCT**

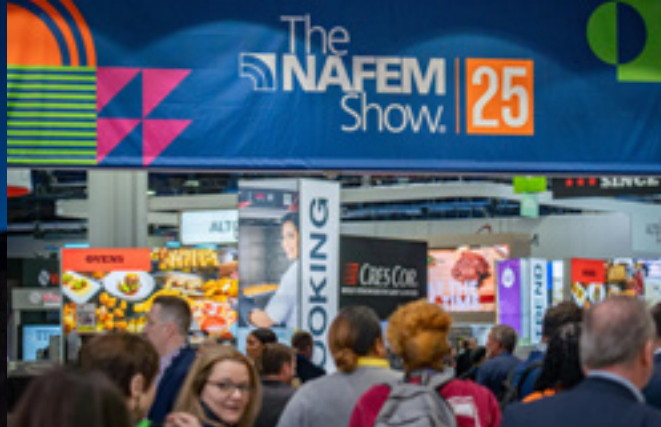
Atlanta selected to host **Super Bowl LXII**, marking the city's fourth time welcoming the championship and the second at Mercedes-Benz Stadium—the last being in 2019. GWCC's Sidney Marcus Auditorium set the stage for the second edition of the Michelin Guide, as new metro Atlanta eateries earned a place in the world-renowned culinary guide.

**NOV**

GWCC welcomes **SC24**, the world's premier supercomputing conference, where El Capitan—the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory supercomputer—was verified as the fastest in the world. The event sets new records with 18,104 attendees from around the globe and nearly 500 exhibitors, including 136 first-time participants, showcasing groundbreaking innovations on the exhibit floor.

**DEC**

GWCCA loses two key figures with the passing of **Dan Graveline**, the Authority's first executive director whose visionary leadership elevated the Authority's standing on the global stage, and former Georgia Governor and U.S. President **Jimmy Carter**, whose leadership was pivotal in the Authority's creation. Their contributions laid the foundation for GWCCA's success and continue to shape its mission today.



**JAN**

Mercedes-Benz Stadium hosts the **57th annual Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl**, a College Football Playoff quarterfinal that delivered one of the season's most thrilling matchups. Texas defeated Arizona State in double overtime, adding another unforgettable chapter to the Bowl's storied history. Later that month, GWCCA's board of governors proudly recognized Nath Morris, president of the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, expressing gratitude for IPPE's generosity, trust, and continued partnership.

**FEB**

GWCC welcomes the return of **The NAFEM Show** for the first time since 2007. Held February 26–28, the event showcases the latest in foodservice equipment and supplies, connecting manufacturers with qualified buyers to explore new technologies and solutions shaping the future of the commercial foodservice industry.

**MAR**

The **Fountain of Rings at Centennial Olympic Park** reopens with cutting-edge enhancements, offering guests four daily choreographed water shows, featuring sprays reaching over 15 feet, a fog system with 200 individual emitters, and—during evening performances—more than 250 LED ring lights creating vibrant 360° illumination, all perfectly synchronized to music. These upgrades were made possible by a \$2.5 million grant from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation.

**APR**

GWCCA's Legislative Overview Committee Chairman, **Brandon Beach**, is appointed U.S. Treasurer by President Donald Trump, becoming the first Georgian to hold this prestigious position.

**MAY**

Atlanta's homegrown fan convention, **MomoCon**, celebrates its 10th anniversary on the GWCCA campus, welcoming over 60,000 fans from across the country. The four-day event showcases the best in animation, gaming, comics, and cosplay, featuring panels, celebrity guests, cosplay contests, live music, gaming tournaments, and hands-on workshops, offering an immersive experience for fans of all ages.

**JUN**

Atlanta and the GWCCA campus prepare for 2026 as MBS hosts six matches of the **FIFA Club World Cup 2025™** including group stage games and a quarterfinal, as the tournament took place in the United States for the first time from June 15 – July 13, 2025.

# CULTURE AND TEAM

At Georgia World Congress Center Authority, our people are the heartbeat of the organization. Their energy, talent, and dedication fuel the excellence and service that define every experience we deliver. Building a strong, inclusive, and engaged culture is central to who we are, and I couldn't be prouder of the team behind our success.

This year, we celebrated a meaningful milestone: 77 team members—over 40% of our workforce—marked their first anniversary with GWCCA. That number represents more than a statistic; it reflects accomplishments taking root as long-term careers and the commitment that drives us forward. We also honored colleagues reaching major anniversaries and those concluding remarkable careers in retirement—true testaments to our culture of loyalty and dedication.

We strengthened team culture through recognition, engagement, and appreciation and it continues to be reflected in our annual engagement survey results. Our new team member recognition program shines a spotlight on individual and team achievements, with honorees recognized by CEO Kevin Duvall at monthly board meetings. In March, we also rolled out complimentary lunch for all team members at Bridge Point Café—this gesture of appreciation was embraced with genuine enthusiasm.

Equally important, we've continued creating moments of connection, from our Team Summit and Fall Fun Day to the Spring Cookout and the ever-popular Sundaes on Monday. These gatherings remind us that community is the heart of culture.

Speaking of community, the Authority, through the generosity of our team, proudly supported Clark's Christmas Kids Holiday Gift Drive by donating baby dolls, doll accessories, tablets, sporting goods, and video games, helping bring joy to two children in Georgia's foster care system.

Finally, supporting the performance of our team means equipping people to succeed. This year, we expanded learning opportunities to strengthen leadership and operational excellence, while many deepened their professional growth through active involvement in industry and community organizations.

Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to a workplace where every team member feels valued, supported, and inspired—because it is our incredible team that powers GWCCA's ability to deliver unmatched service and experiences.

Enjoy the images and numbers on the following pages that further tell our story.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Miranda".

**Ron Miranda**

Chief Human Resources Officer

# GWCCA Service Awards, CEO Recognition, and Retirees

At GWCCA, our team members are at the heart of everything we do, and we're proud to celebrate those who contribute with dedication and care. From service milestones to CEO recognition and retirements, these honors reflect the dedication, passion, and spirit that make the Authority so special. Congratulations to all!

## SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS



number of team members who celebrated their 1-year anniversary during the fiscal year

**5 Years**  
Omoró Wynn

**10 Years**  
Omar Benton  
Erle Coleman  
Kishanna King  
Charity Kinsey  
Rayshawn Young

**15 Years**  
Darryl Bouges  
Delphine Claggion  
Beverly Owens  
Willie Styles  
Robert Vincent

**20 Years**  
Chris Chadwick  
Joseph Sturdivant

**25 Years**  
Hasan Orlovic  
Jason Rutledge

**35 Years**  
Wayne (Hal) Rosser

## CEO RECOGNITION

**Teri Agosta**  
GM, Signia by Hilton Atlanta

**Chris Duggar**  
Director of Accounting

**Michelle Jacobs**  
Guest Services Manager

**Kay Lawrence**  
Sr. Accounting Manager

**Henry Lyons**  
Banquet Supervisor

**Tyree Pittman**  
Finance Manager

**Brandie Remmer**  
Security Manager

**Rey Rodriguez**  
Director of Finance

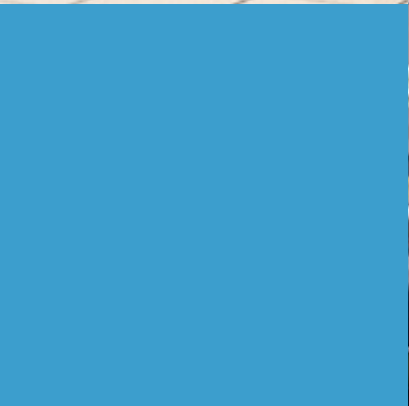
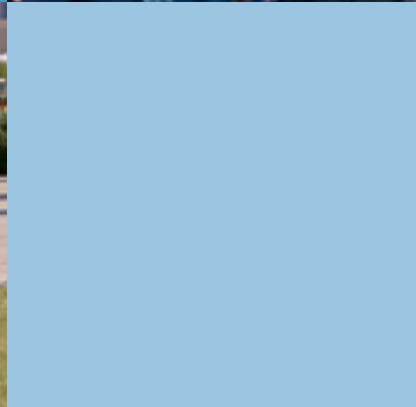
**Marc Vincent**  
Director, Emergency Preparedness

**Hannah Workman**  
Assistant Director of Catering (Signia by Hilton Atlanta)

## RETIREEES

**Jeff Oden**  
VP of Campus Operations

**Frank Poe**  
Executive Director



# GWCCA Team Member Industry Presence, Professional Development, and Community Involvement

GWCCA team members shine beyond our campus-leading in the industry, growing through professional development, and giving back to the communities we proudly serve.

## **Stacey Church**

Chief Operating Officer

- Appointment: IAVM Board Chair

## **Amanda Vaden-White**

Event Manager

- Certification: IAVM Venue Management School (Year 1)

## **Brittany Martin**

Event Manager

- Certification: IAVM Venue Management School (Year 1)

## **Kelly Bryl**

Event Manager

- Appointment: Chair of Membership Events, WISE Atlanta
- Certification: IAVM Venue Management School (Year 1)

## **Colleen Etheridge**

Project Manager

- Recipient: Volunteer of the Year, Osborne High School

## **Joseph Scheafer**

K9 Officer

- Recipient: Chief's Commendation

## **Harriet Thomas**

Director of Talent Development and Communications

- Appointment: Faculty, Academy of Venue Safety and Security, IAVM

## **Joe Bocherer**

Chief Commercial Officer

- Appointment: Editorial Advisory Board  
ConventionSouth magazine

## **Lindsay Strickland**

Vice President of Government Relations

- Recipient: College of the Arts Distinguished Alumna Award, Valdosta State University
- Recipient: Atlanta Business Chronicle "Women of Influence"
- Member: Georgia Hotel Lodging Association, Government Relations Committee
- Member: Gigi's House Board
- Member: Jekyll Island Foundation Board
- Member: Main Street McDonough Board

## **Alisha King**

Administration Manager

- Certification: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Cornell University

## **Holly Richmond**

Director of Communications

- Leader: Girl Scout Cadette Troop 20534

## **Marc Vincent**

Director of Emergency Preparedness

- Recipient: Chief's Commendation

## **Lisa Murphy**

Director of Human Resources

- Certification: Strategic Human Resources Leadership from Cornell University
- Certification: Society for Human Resource Management Certified Professional
- Certification: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

## **Ardrina Porter**

Revenue Strategy Manager

- Certification: Revenue Analytics and Price Optimization from Wharton School of Business

## **Melana McClatchey**


Vice President, Hotel Counsel

- Certification: Hospitality Accounting from Cornell University




# What Our Team Members Are Saying...

Each year, GWCCA conducts an engagement survey to better understand team members' sentiment, engagement, and satisfaction. The insights gained help us see how our people experience the workplace and identify opportunities for growth. The 2025 results highlight strengths in mission alignment, trust, and the value of our benefits. These findings both celebrate what we're doing well and guide how we continue to evolve — ensuring a culture where team members feel connected, supported, and inspired.

97.1% 

### Commitment to GWCCA's Mission

97.1% of employees report being strongly committed to helping GWCCA achieve its vision and goals. This exceeds typical industry benchmarks and reflects the organization's strong sense of purpose.

76.9% 

### Retention & Loyalty Signals

76.9% of employees see themselves working at GWCCA two years from now, up from 68.3% in 2024. This nearly 9-point increase year-over-year signals improving workforce stability and loyalty.

92.3% 

### Alignment to Strategy

92.3% of employees understand how their role contributes to GWCCA's strategy and goals. This demonstrates strong role clarity and alignment with organizational objectives.

84.6% 

### Pride in Organization

84.6% of employees feel proud to tell others where they work. This remains consistently high and reflects positively on GWCCA's reputation and internal culture.

85.6% 

### Manager Trust and Feedback

85.6% of employees trust their immediate manager to be reliable and honest. In addition, 84.6% report receiving positive feedback when they do a good job, both of which exceed industry benchmarks.

81.7% 

### Benefits Competitiveness

81.7% of employees believe the benefits offered by GWCCA are comparable to other organizations, far surpassing the hospitality/leisure industry benchmark of 53–62%.

# CUSTOMER

To exceed expectations, one guest and one event at a time. Our new brand promise is what drives decisions and shapes the experiences we create for every guest and customer. Across every department—sales, event and guest services, food and beverage, electrical services, parking, communications, and IT—customer success is at the heart of our work. During fiscal year 2025, our priorities continued to be laser focused on generating demand and strengthening satisfaction at every customer and guest touchpoint.

This past year, we achieved strong momentum in bookings, with notable growth in repeat business from conventions, youth sports groups, and associations that continue to choose our venues for their consistent value and reliable service. Sales activity remained robust, with 137 site visits completed—each one a critical opportunity to secure future business. This level of engagement not only drives revenue but also deepens relationships with key meeting planners and decision-makers, keeping Georgia World Congress Center’s campus top of mind in a competitive market. The Authority’s sales team, in partnership with ACVB, further advanced our presence by maintaining strong industry visibility and strategic engagement. These efforts go beyond showing up—they position the city and our campus as a premier destination, foster meaningful connections, and expand future opportunities.

Delivering on our brand promise requires excellence beyond sales. This year, our Event Services team enhanced client resources with a new 30-day training program, an updated meeting planner guide, and supplemental tools to improve readiness and clarity.

Our Guest Services team elevated its well-trained workforce—increasing staffing, introducing quarterly training, and rolling out new branded uniforms that strengthen team identity and guest recognition.

These efforts are reflected in our results. Meeting planner scores came in on average at 4.47 out of 5 (among the highest scores since we began tracking in 2017) while attendee scores were an exceptional 4.75 out of 5. Food and beverage operations also reached new heights, with Levy Food Services delivering a record \$35.4 million in revenue and donating 1.3 tons of food to local nonprofits, underscoring their role as both a top-tier hospitality partner and a driver of community impact.

Together, these achievements highlight the strength of our customer-first approach: higher satisfaction, deeper loyalty, and growing recognition that our campus is not just a set of facilities—it’s an experience that drives success for our customers and lasting impact for our community. Enjoy the by-the-numbers stories on the pages ahead to learn how we continue to deliver on our brand promise.



**Joe Bocherer**  
Chief Commercial Officer

# Measuring Success Through Satisfaction

Meeting planner and attendee overall satisfaction (OSAT) scores reflect how well GWCCA is meeting—and exceeding—expectations. Fiscal year 2025 results demonstrate the impact of our team members’ dedication and the value we bring to every event and attendee on our campus.

## Brand Promise:

To exceed expectations, one guest and one event at a time.



4.47

Meeting Planner



4.74

Attendee

“CCLD was amazing, and I felt very supported by the staff from the pre-con through the end of the event. Huge kudos to Colleen for helping us navigate the escalator modernization project and to the staff for their transparency throughout the situation.”

Amanda H.  
NRPA

“This is our 4th year having a partnership with GWCC for Invest Fest. Each year there is growth and improvements in all areas. The attentiveness to our group from ALL depts at GWCC is greatly appreciated.”

Ashley M.  
Invest Fest

"I was just at the Nafem show and I have to tell you I am 63 years old. I've been in the restaurant bar business for over 45 years. I've been going to different business-related conferences for the past 40-something years. Please share this with your employees. They were absolutely fantastic!!! Very friendly, informative and personable... was a great experience!"

Dan R.  
NAFEM Attendee

# The Power of Booked Business

At GWCCA, booked business is the lifeblood of our success. Each secured event not only guarantees future revenue but also fuels economic impact across Georgia and reinforces Georgia World Congress Center’s position in a highly competitive market. A strong bookings calendar provides financial stability, highlights enduring customer partnerships, and affirms the Authority’s role as a catalyst for growth and opportunity locally, regionally, and statewide. With FY25 results as a guide, follow along to learn how our Sales team brings this vital process to life.

## SITE VISIT:

A pre-event inspection of a potential venue to evaluate its suitability, confirm logistics, assess capabilities, and meet the event team before finalizing a contract

## TRAVEL AND PROMOTION:

Strategic industry engagement that builds visibility, connects with decision-makers, and strengthens client relationships through in-person representation

## BOOKED BUSINESS:

The total value of signed contracts for future events regardless of when the facility will receive payments



## 137 site visits

conducted by GWCCA Sales Team during the fiscal year, generating a sales pipeline potential of future impact representing:

**\$28.6+ million**  
in rental revenue

**\$36.1+ million**  
in F&B spend

**1 million**  
total room nights and attendees, respectively



## Client Engagement

Connecting with more than 200 clients and nearly 300 meeting industry executives via strategic industry events.



## 125 confirmed groups

This booked business, a combination of site visits and strategic engagement by the Sales team throughout the fiscal year, produced:

**\$18+ million**  
in total revenue

**\$18+ million**  
in F&B commitments

**750K+**  
total room nights



# Partnership in Action

Behind every successful event on the GWCCA campus are strong partnerships that keep operations running seamlessly. Food and beverage providers elevate the guest experience, parking teams ensure smooth arrivals, IT experts keep audiences connected, and power suppliers keep the show running—each playing a vital role in delivering exceptional events. Here are a few statistics generated by the Authority’s partners during fiscal year 2025.

**29**

Number of new digital screens installed by CCLD, the Authority’s IT partner, bringing the total to 230 digital signage displays on campus.

**502,000+**

Number of cars parked during the fiscal year by SP+, the Authority’s parking services provider. This includes over 6,000 vehicles parked overnight, which generated more than \$300,000 in additional revenue.

**12,039**

Exhibitors serviced by Edlen, GWCCA’s power solutions provider, stemming from 94 events produced...up approximately 34 percent from the previous fiscal year.

**4.8**

Overall satisfaction score (OSAT) awarded to CCLD by meeting planners for the third consecutive year — reflecting consistent excellence and reliability.

**141,650**

Number of transactions captured by Levy, GWCC’s food services partner, during Cheersport Nationals, setting a record for retail transactions totaling more than \$2,642,884 in just 2.5 days.

**\$9.7 Million**

Fiscal year commissions paid to GWCCA by Edlen, an increase of nearly 11 percent from the previous fiscal year.



# Building Our Brand

As GWCCA continues delivering exceptional service and strong event outcomes, Communications plays a vital role in capturing and sharing those stories. With a more focused, strategic content approach, we've expanded reach, reinforced the Authority's brand, and elevated visibility among clients, attendees, stakeholders, and the broader community. This progress highlights meaningful gains in strengthening GWCCA's reputation and positioning the organization for continued growth.



## GWCCA Account Highlights:



Gained **1,030** new followers (19% increase)  
**2,612** unique visitors to page  
**13.2%** engagement rate (14% higher than competitors)



**26,080** total followers (482 new; 2% increase)  
**22%** higher new follower growth than FY24  
**4.03 million** content reach (52% higher than FY24)  
**2,206** content interactions (13% higher than FY24)



**5,402** total followers (889 new; 19% increase)  
**43.6k** content reach (173% higher than FY24)  
**3,720** content interactions

## Centennial Olympic Park Account Highlights:



**1,110** new follows (9.9% increase)  
**4,498** content interactions (100% increase from FY24)  
**71.2k** content reach (174.7% increase from FY24)

# GWCC 50th Anniversary

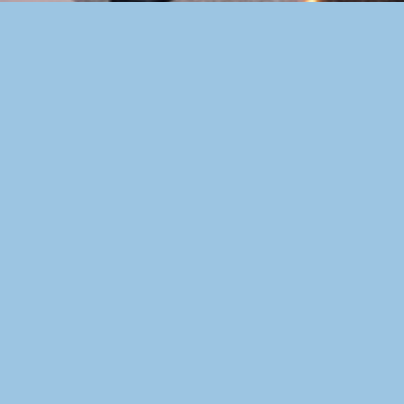
On Tuesday, October 1, 2024, the Authority officially kicked off activities celebrating five decades of fueling Georgia’s economic growth, cultural vitality, and statewide progress.

Georgia World Congress Center’s A/B Lobby was transformed into a vibrant “Then to Now” cocktail reception that carried guests back to 1974—when Building A first broke ground—and forward into the future with sleek design, cutting-edge technology, and visionary innovations. Guests enjoyed an immersive journey through music, food, and drinks inspired by both the 1970s and today, while hearing first-hand stories from hospitality and business pioneers who remembered the early days of the Congress Center and the bold question that started it all: What if we build a convention center?

Special remarks from Rep. Calvin Smyre underscored the lasting impact of that vision. Smyre, instrumental in passing the legislation that created the Georgia Dome, highlighted how those decisions paved the way for transformative projects that now anchor Georgia’s economy and symbolize the state’s spirit of progress and innovation. Today, GWCCA’s campus stands as one of the nation’s most iconic destinations for conventions, entertainment, and world-class sporting events.

The evening also paid tribute to Dan Graveline, the Authority’s first executive director. Over his 33-year tenure, Graveline’s leadership turned the Georgia World Congress Center campus into a catalyst for downtown Atlanta’s revitalization, a cornerstone of the state’s tourism and hospitality industry, and a powerful engine of economic growth. The celebration featured the unveiling of a portrait of Graveline, now proudly displayed in the Authority boardroom, honoring his enduring legacy.

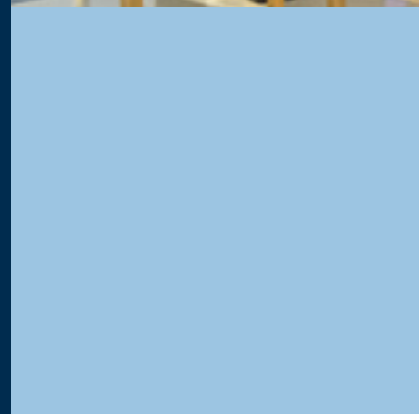
More events and commemorations are planned for 2026, with highlights to be chronicled in next year’s annual report.



**50**

**GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER**

Celebrating 50 Years of Unconventional Experiences



# FACILITIES

In the live meetings and events industry, exceptional facilities are the foundation for unforgettable experiences. To meet the evolving expectations of customers, guests, and talent from around the globe, venues must be safe, flexible, and high performing. At the Authority, we embrace this standard as both a responsibility and an opportunity.

Currently, we have more than \$102 million in capital investments underway, including \$73.8 million already in active construction, \$12 million in design, and \$16.2 million in the planning phase, with the goal of transforming spaces and infrastructure across our campus. These projects go beyond aesthetics or maintenance—they safeguard our long-term competitiveness, attract world-class events, and ensure we continue driving economic impact for Georgia. Additionally, we completed \$12.4 million in projects ranging from new interior wayfinding and exterior enhancements to critical infrastructure upgrades—all delivered using GWCCA resources and reflecting our commitment to responsible stewardship.

Our Public Safety team also played a vital role in maintaining a secure, compliant, and prepared environment. In FY25, they managed public safety for 99 events, implemented elevated safety protocols at five major events, and supported nearly 3 million guests through planning and daily operations—showcasing their responsiveness and dedication to proactive risk management.

Meanwhile, Signia by Hilton Atlanta entered its second year with strong momentum. Bookings, revenue, accolades, and guest satisfaction all trended upward. We welcomed a new general manager, Scott Ward, in May and his subtle leadership style is already paying dividends and enhancing operations. Looking forward, the Authority’s campus master plan continues to lay the foundation for the next phase of growth, ensuring our venues remain efficient, visitor-friendly, and globally competitive.

Together, these investments and initiatives reflect a singular vision: creating an environment where safety, innovation, and guest experience converge—delivering both immediate impact and long-term value for our campus, our community, and our future. Explore the following pages to see how these efforts are shaping the GWCCA campus into a destination that sets the standard for the live events industry.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey".

**Stacey Church**  
Chief Operating Officer



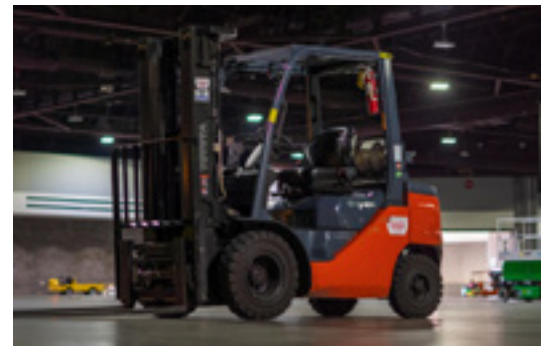
# GWCCA Historical Project Funding

Since 2002, the Authority has invested nearly \$175 million in self-funded capital improvements across its facilities—an unwavering commitment to keeping GWCCA’s campus at the forefront of the meetings and events industry. These investments aren’t just upgrades; they are strategic moves that ensure our venues remain flexible, innovative, and competitive on the global stage. By continually enhancing our spaces, GWCCA drives tourism, sparks new business opportunities, and fuels job growth across the region.

This forward momentum positions Atlanta and the Authority’s campus to continue to host premier meetings such as Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), TED Next and the world’s most celebrated sporting events, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, the 2028 Super Bowl, and the 2031 NCAA Men’s Final Four. Each investment reinforces Atlanta’s reputation as a city built to host the extraordinary—delivering unforgettable experiences while maximizing economic impact for the community, region, and state.

In fiscal year 2025 alone, the Authority reinvested nearly \$5 million into projects at GWCC and Centennial Olympic Park to create a seamless, world-class guest experience. The following summary highlights the Authority’s historical investment record, one that proves our commitment to shaping the future of events in Atlanta.

| FISCAL YEAR  | GWCC FUNDED          |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 2002         | \$31,600,000         |
| 2003         | \$0                  |
| 2004         | \$906,547            |
| 2005         | \$1,033,744          |
| 2006         | \$794,500            |
| 2007         | \$3,342,316          |
| 2008         | \$1,469,146          |
| 2009         | \$3,498,983          |
| 2010         | \$746,879            |
| 2011         | \$1,400,784          |
| 2012         | \$483,143            |
| 2013         | \$1,287,718          |
| 2014         | \$2,600,000          |
| 2015         | \$31,432,687         |
| 2016         | \$2,324,950          |
| 2017         | \$6,034,548          |
| 2018         | \$3,225,015          |
| 2019         | \$12,766,321         |
| 2020         | \$6,742,792          |
| 2021         | \$41,595,010         |
| 2022         | \$4,523,054          |
| 2023         | \$6,270,282          |
| 2024         | \$5,766,778          |
| 2025         | \$ 4,773,700         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$174,618,898</b> |



## Facility Improvement Projects and Upgrades

In fiscal year 2025, GWCCA completed a series of facility enhancements and strategic upgrades designed to elevate the guest experience, strengthen infrastructure, and preserve the long-term value of our campus. Guided by customer feedback and industry trends, the Authority also invested in select event equipment to reduce reliance on rentals while expanding our ability to seamlessly support high-volume events—reinforcing GWCCA’s commitment to service excellence, operational efficiency, and responsible stewardship of resources. Highlights are outlined below.

- › **Centennial Olympic Park Fountain of Rings** upgrade/refurbishment
- › **Georgia Ballroom** equipment upgrades
- › Escalator modernization: **Thomas Murphy Ballroom**
- › **Green Parking Deck** stair repairs/  
**Blue Parking Lot** restriping
- › Replacement of **Building B Phase III** fire pump and motor
- › **10,000** black folding chairs
- › **5,500** meeting room chairs
- › **500** banquet rounds
- › **1** forklift



# Public Safety

Public safety and emergency preparedness are at the core of GWCCA’s commitment to providing a secure and welcoming environment for our team members, partners, and every guest visiting our campus. This fiscal year, these dedicated teams advanced that mission through a myriad of initiatives and activities like training, life-safety inspections, and strengthened community and agency partnerships—ensuring we remain ready for any situation. Highlights from the year reflect both our proactive approach to safety and our continued investment in protecting the millions of people who visit and work on our campus each year.

**2,032**

Hours of training on topics such as firearms, legal, human trafficking, gang awareness, and active shooter

**3 Million**

Approximate number of guests visiting GWCCA’s campus for events that were monitored through EOC activation

**8,722**

Instances of life safety duties conducted by the EOC; examples include fire extinguisher inspections, approval of event floors plans, and multi-level booth inspections/approval

**26,472**

Number of calls handled by the GWCCA Emergency Communications Center

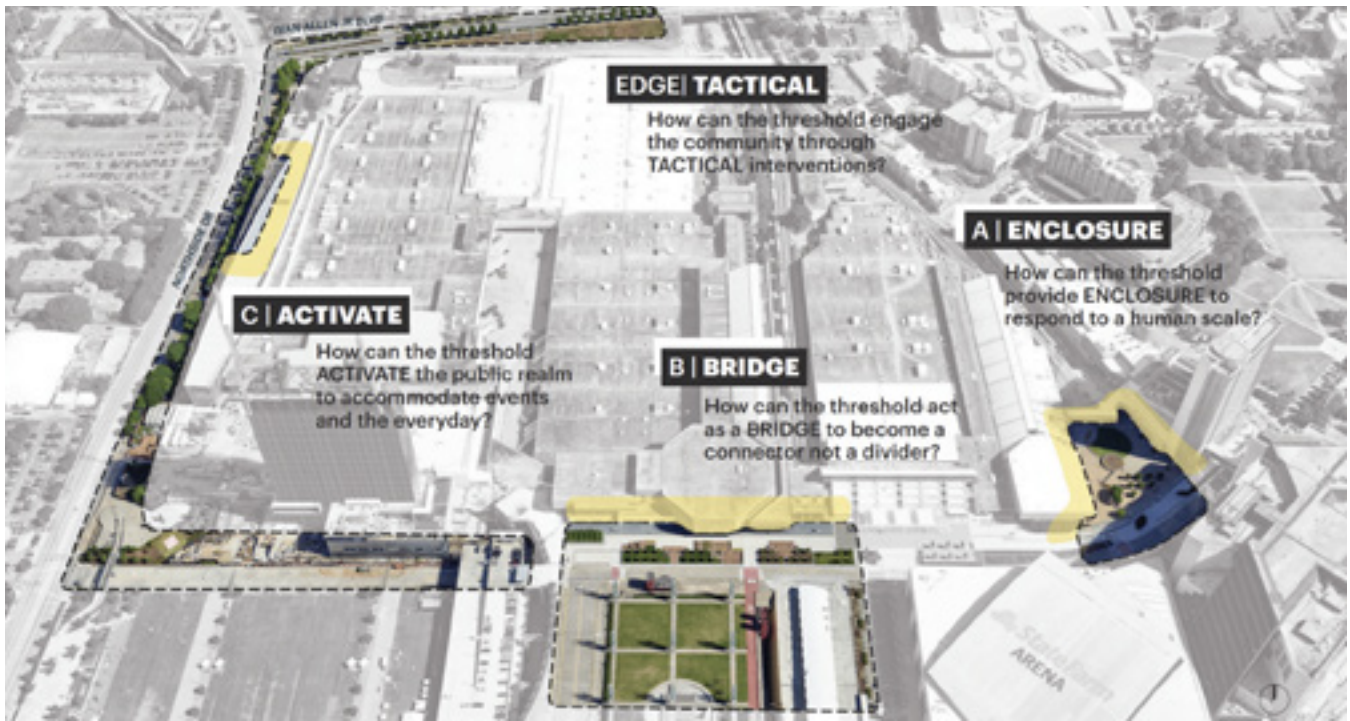
**80**

Number of days the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated during the fiscal year

**5**

Number of client-requested building lockdowns facilitated





## GWCCA Campus Master Plan

GWCCA’s campus master plan provides a strategic roadmap for transforming our facilities and spaces into a more cohesive, flexible, and welcoming urban destination that serves Atlanta’s local community as well as visitors from around the globe. A phased framework approach has allowed for the opportunity for each project to build on the last—advancing the Authority’s vision while maintaining flexibility for the future. Sustainability, community integration, and pedestrian-friendly design remain central to the approach, ensuring our campus is both resilient and open to new opportunities.

To date, two of the plan’s three phases have been completed—Campus and Threshold—with the Building phase currently underway. The Threshold phase was designed to explore how the campus welcomes and connects with people and focused on several questions: What stories should our thresholds tell? What features will make each entry point distinct yet cohesive? How can resilience be integrated so that design not only withstands but also mitigates risks while enhancing environmental stewardship? These guiding questions shaped the Threshold phase and will continue to

inform the Building phase. The ultimate outcome of the three-phase process will be a decision-making framework that guides future development and facility enhancements, strengthens the customer experience, benefits surrounding neighborhoods, and maximizes the Authority’s economic impact. Importantly, it also anticipates and complements adjacent developments such as Centennial Yards, The Center, and Georgia Tech.

Looking ahead, the plan outlines strategies across “Now, Near, and Next” timeframes—spanning 5, 10, and 20+ years—to ensure both immediate and long-term success.

GWCCA remains committed to building a campus rooted in community, designed for the future, and one that will resonate on the world stage.

During the fiscal year, the Authority shifted its focus from The Home Depot Backyard to exploring opportunities for International Plaza. By reimagining this space more strategically, GWCCA seeks to connect with and complement surrounding developments and establish a more seamless, integrated experience for guests across the campus and its neighborhood.


# Signia by Hilton Atlanta

In only its second year, Signia by Hilton Atlanta has firmly established itself as both a premier hospitality destination and a powerful asset to the Georgia World Congress Center Authority campus. Guest satisfaction continues to climb—Tripadvisor rankings have surged 46 spots—and event space performance is earning praise with satisfaction scores exceeding 90 percent. At the same time, the hotel is securing long-term business, exemplified by a three-year partnership with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), representing 9,675 room nights and \$2.1 million in room revenue.


Signia by Hilton Atlanta is poised to play a central role on campus during next summer’s FIFA World Cup, with soccer fans and sponsors already securing more than 2,600 room nights and committing significant food and beverage spends tied to FIFA matches. This early momentum reflects exactly why it was built—to serve as a premier destination for major events while driving lasting economic impact for the GWCCA campus.



Beyond its economic impact, Signia has distinguished itself in the Atlanta market: it is the most followed hotel on social media (in comp set) and is regularly recognized by lifestyle and industry publications for its spa, meeting and event spaces, and food and beverage experiences. From thousands of room nights booked to countless meals served and social impressions made, the numbers tell a story of energy, engagement, and growth. Its success underscores the value of visionary investment and strategic partnership, while setting a new benchmark for hospitality in Atlanta.




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12 Best Hotels in Atlanta


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SPA & BEAUTY *today*


Georgia Guide: The Best Spas in Atlanta




**10,391**  
number of croissants sold



**\$2,778**  
most expensive bottle of wine sold



**638**  
groups serviced



**10+**  
celebrity visits, including Mark Cuban, Nick Saban, and Olympian Dominique Dawes



**4**  
NFL teams booked, including Dallas Cowboys and Los Angeles Chargers

# Savannah Convention Center

Fiscal year 2025 was defined by momentum, growth, and meaningful progress at the Savannah Convention Center (SCC). The year's most significant milestone occurred on April 30, with the official ribbon cutting for the facility's long-awaited expansion. The additional space has already enhanced SCC's ability to attract and host premier events, resulting in 162 total events—an increase of 27 over the previous fiscal year.

SCC continued to strengthen its team through strategic hiring and the promotion of key personnel across multiple departments. These efforts contributed to record performance outcomes, with the center welcoming more than 202,000 attendees, an increase of nearly 4,000 from the previous year. Customer satisfaction reached 96.1 percent, up nearly five percentage points, reflecting the team's commitment to delivering exceptional service and creating memorable experiences for clients and guests.

On the financial front, the convention center outperformed budget expectations by 14.5 percent. The introduction of a new frictionless parking system exceeded projections, serving over 34,000 vehicles in just five months and generating a 253 percent increase over budget. Additionally, exhibitor services revenue increased by 56 percent, or approximately \$231,000, compared to the previous fiscal year, underscoring the success of operational improvements and increased event activity.

Anticipation continues to grow around the convention center's next major development—Signia by Hilton Savannah. The forthcoming hotel will feature 444 guest rooms, 38,000 square feet of meeting space, several dining options, and a rooftop bar and restaurant overlooking the river. With an estimated investment of nearly \$400 million and an anticipated 2028 opening, the project will serve as a transformative addition to Savannah's hospitality landscape, further enhancing the city's appeal as a leading meetings and events destination.

Together, these achievements reflect a year of remarkable progress and position the Savannah Convention Center for continued success in the years ahead.





# FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2025 was one for the record books. Georgia World Congress Center Authority achieved its strongest financial performance ever—delivering nearly \$76 million in total revenue, exceeding budget by more than \$10 million, and setting new benchmarks that reaffirm our leadership in the convention, hospitality, and events industry.

This success reflects the power of strategic focus and disciplined growth. Through smart rate management, high-quality event bookings, and exceptional food and beverage performance, we demonstrated how operational excellence drives meaningful results.

Built on momentum and collaboration, our achievements underscore the strength of our partnerships. Together with our service providers, we delivered outstanding guest experiences and exceeded financial goals—underscoring the value of teamwork and consistent execution.

Equally important, we maintained a strong focus on expense management and resource stewardship. Even with record activity levels, the Authority operated efficiently, balancing growth with fiscal discipline to ensure that every dollar invested continues to yield long-term value for our stakeholders.

The impact of these efforts reaches far beyond our campus. Millions of people visited our facilities this year, supporting thousands of jobs and generating substantial economic benefit for communities across Georgia. Together, we continue to elevate the state's position as a premier destination for tourism, conventions, and entertainment.

Our hotel operations also contributed meaningfully to this success, with the Signia by Hilton Atlanta establishing itself as a flagship property in the state's hospitality portfolio. Strong demand, effective management, and strategic event alignment have positioned the hotel as a cornerstone of the campus experience and a catalyst for future growth.

As we close the books on this fiscal year, the Authority's financial position remains exceptionally strong. Innovation, efficiency, and collaboration continue to guide our work, and we are well-positioned to build on this momentum. Looking ahead, we will continue to invest strategically, deepen partnerships, and deliver exceptional value to our customers, partners, and the citizens of Georgia.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet".

**Janet Finlayson**  
Chief Financial Officer

**\$1.9B**  
in economic  
impact

**152**  
events hosted

**3,463,573**  
visitors welcomed

**15,392**  
jobs supported

**\$644.8M**  
in additional  
labor income

# The Power of Visitor Spending

Economic impact—the additional, new dollar spending generated by a specific organization or event—is more than just a number; it tells the story of how Georgia World Congress Center Authority drives growth and progress across the state. Each year, activity on campus sparks new spending from out-of-state visitors, including event attendees, exhibitors, and organizers. These dollars generate revenue, support the hospitality industry, and sustain the vibrant mix of hotels, restaurants, and attractions, drawing visitors year-round.

As one of Georgia’s most powerful economic engines, GWCCA creates measurable impact that reaches far beyond its facilities, strengthening communities, fueling statewide prosperity, and delivering lasting value to the state’s economy. The following highlights showcase the scale and significance of visitor spending based on analysis provided by Georgia State University.

## \$1.94 Billion

Visitors, exhibitors, and organizers spent \$1.08 billion directly, generating a total economic impact of \$1.94 billion—meaning each dollar spent added 80 cents to Georgia’s economy. Out-of-state visitors accounted for \$1.68 billion, or 86 percent of this total.

## 2.6 Million Visitor Days

About 1.15 million visitors – 33 percent of all attendees to GWCCA’s campus – came from out of state. The 152 events held during the fiscal year created more than 2.6 million out-of-state visitor days, fueling significant economic impact.

## \$127.5 Million / \$93.7 Million

In addition, this economic activity generated additional tax revenues for state and local governments. The Authority contributed \$127.5 million in tax and fee revenues to the State and \$93.7 million to local governments. The latter figure includes \$29.9 million in hotel/motel taxes.

## \$230 - \$596

The average daily spend by an out-of-state visitor to GWCCA’s campus can range from \$230 to nearly \$600 depending on the type of event they are attending. Expenditures such as lodging, food and beverage, transportation, retail, and recreation are categories used to determine daily spend.

| GWCCA CAMPUS EVENTS           | ATTENDANCE       |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Conferences                   | 99,550           |
| Consumer Shows                | 160,222          |
| General Meetings/Other        | 47,895           |
| Graduations                   | 7,400            |
| Participation Sports          | 253,928          |
| Spectator Events              | 2,526,665        |
| Trade Shows                   | 336,066          |
| Outdoor/Charity/Entertainment | 28,287           |
| Film Shoot                    | 3,560            |
| <b>Grand Total</b>            | <b>3,463,573</b> |

| GWCCA CAMPUS TAX REVENUES |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| State Sales Tax           | \$56,989,129         |
| State Personal Income Tax | \$33,075,943         |
| State Hotel/Motel Fee     | \$8,988,357          |
| Other Taxes/State         | \$28,441,602         |
| Local Hotel/Motel Fee     | \$29,949,602         |
| Local Sales Tax           | \$63,757,039         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>        | <b>\$221,201,672</b> |

# Georgia's Economic Engine

GWCCA's campus remains a leading force in Georgia's tourism industry, generating over \$112 million in direct profit for the state in fiscal year 2025. Over the past 15 years, the Authority has consistently strengthened Georgia's economy, contributing an average of more than \$50 million annually.

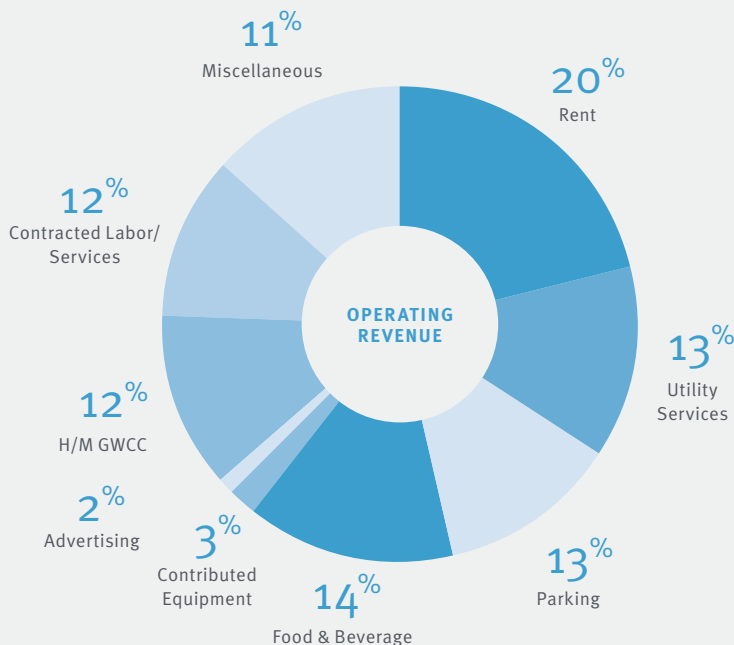
## ATLANTA CAMPUS

| Date        | Operating Revenue                                    | Operating Expense | Operating Profit/(Loss) |
|-------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 2010        | 68,707,527   | 69,818,566        | (1,111,039)             |
| 2011        | 78,280,863   | 73,931,987        | 4,348,876               |
| 2012        | 76,410,365   | 73,661,411        | 2,748,954               |
| 2013        | 89,504,084   | 83,551,929        | 5,952,155               |
| 2014        | 89,459,952   | 86,857,029        | 2,602,923               |
| 2015        | 96,645,804   | 89,540,897        | 7,104,907               |
| 2016        | 104,526,078  | 95,640,972        | 8,885,106               |
| 2017        | 108,371,541  | 102,092,148       | 6,279,393               |
| 2018        | 59,024,482   | 52,880,256        | 6,144,226               |
| 2019        | 69,582,696   | 60,730,953        | 8,851,743               |
| 2020        | 47,086,781   | 51,143,201        | (4,056,420)             |
| 2021        | Did not issue economic impact report due to COVID-19 |                   |                         |
| 2022        | 53,118,264   | 41,259,730        | 11,858,534              |
| 2023        | 57,626,826   | 50,929,042        | 6,697,784               |
| 2024        | 69,117,275   | 68,390,870*       | 726,405                 |
| <b>2025</b> | <b>76,056,785</b>                                    | <b>75,602,572</b> | <b>454,213</b>          |

Note: Net Operating Profit ties to audited financial statements, excluding OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), pensions, and depreciation. Figures prior to 2018 include Georgia Dome. \*Includes \$8.4M in project expenses utilizing reserve funds.

## GWCCA Revenue & Expenses

The Authority reported over \$76 million in operating revenue, with more than 20 percent (over \$15 million) generated from rent. Operating expenses exceeded \$75 million, with the majority allocated to personal services and regular operations.



### OPERATING REVENUE

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Rent                      | 15,391,532        |
| Utility Services          | 9,671,264         |
| Parking                   | 10,137,372        |
| Food & Beverage           | 10,865,756        |
| Advertising               | 1,793,378         |
| Contributed Equipment     | 2,118,512         |
| H/M GWCC                  | 9,157,820         |
| Contracted Labor/Services | 8,737,052         |
| Miscellaneous             | 8,184,099         |
| <b>Operating Revenue</b>  | <b>76,056,785</b> |

### NON-OPERATING REVENUE

|                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| H/M Tax - ACVB  | 34,916,588        |
| Land Lease      | 2,218,970         |
| Miscellaneous   | 5,741,899         |
| <b>Subtotal</b> | <b>42,877,456</b> |

## STATE OF GEORGIA

| State Tax Revenue  | − | Debt Service   | = | State Profit       | *Direct Profit to Georgia |
|--------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 87,901,235         |   | 36,921,791   |   | 50,979,444         | 49,868,405                |
| 76,219,994         |   | 36,691,726   |   | 39,528,268         | 43,877,144                |
| 57,187,264         |   | 30,686,513   |   | 26,500,751         | 29,249,705                |
| 59,096,921         |   | 30,864,376   |   | 28,232,545         | 34,184,700                |
| 72,762,330         |   | 32,180,471   |   | 40,581,859         | 43,184,782                |
| 71,872,730         |   | 32,898,503   |   | 38,974,227         | 46,079,134                |
| 87,097,971         |   | 30,969,143   |   | 56,128,828         | 65,013,934                |
| 104,273,146        |   | 31,566,447   |   | 72,706,699         | 78,986,092                |
| 98,772,115         |   | 34,397,803   |   | 64,374,312         | 70,518,538                |
| 109,437,916        |   | 35,567,114   |   | 73,870,802         | 82,722,545                |
| 80,309,796         |   | 35,278,562   |   | 45,031,234         | 40,974,814                |
|                    |   | Did not issue economic impact report due to COVID-19 |   |                    |                           |
| 82,859,833         |   | 18,011,319   |   | 64,848,514         | 76,707,048                |
| 100,406,695        |   | 18,594,600   |   | 81,812,095         | 88,509,879                |
| 99,136,800         |   | 17,413,268   |   | 81,723,532         | 82,449,937                |
| <b>127,495,031</b> |   | <b>15,637,829</b>                                    |   | <b>111,857,202</b> | <b>112,311,415</b>        |

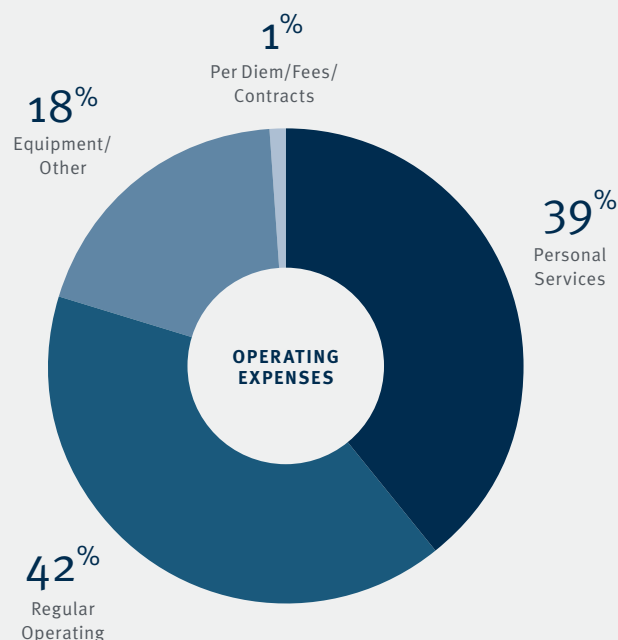
\*Direct Profit to Georgia is calculated by adding GWCCA's operating profit/loss and state profit.

## OPERATING EXPENSES

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Personal Services           | 29,315,196        |
| Regular Operating           | 31,771,201        |
| Equipment/Other             | 13,590,199        |
| Per Diem/Fees/Contracts     | 925,976           |
| <b>Operating Expenses</b>   | <b>75,602,572</b> |
| <b>Net Operating Profit</b> | <b>454,213</b>    |

## NON-OPERATING EXPENSES

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| ACVB H/M Tax     | 34,916,588        |
| Interest Expense | 1,930,279         |
| Miscellaneous    | 3,002,246         |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  | <b>39,849,113</b> |



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## CREDITS

The Georgia World Congress Center Authority 2025 Annual Report was written by Holly Richmond, director of communications, and produced by the GWCCA Communications Department.

**Photography:** Austin Simmons, digital content manager, Bonnie Heath, Chris Helton, and the Savannah Convention Center.

**Graphic Design:** David Wells, DL Creative

**Master Plan Image:** HKS

**Signia by Hilton Savannah Renderings:** Cooper Carry, The Johnson Studio, Songy Highroads

**Sources:** Economic impact analysis courtesy of Peter Bluestone, Associate Director, Fiscal Research Center, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University.

Digital versions of this and previous GWCCA Annual Reports are available at [www.gwcca.org](http://www.gwcca.org).



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