

SUPPORTING ILLINOIS' BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES

Illinois' airports support the state's businesses and industries in a multitude of ways. The state's airports support major corporations and small businesses alike by providing services such as chartered passenger flight and air cargo services daily. The Illinois manufacturing industry is also supported by the state's airports, as many manufacturing facilities are located on airport properties.

SUPPORTING BIG BUSINESS IN CHICAGO

Illinois is home to the corporate headquarters of 37 Fortune 500 companies located across the state.¹ These companies include various industries such as Boeing, McDonald's, United Airlines, Exelon, Archer-Daniels-Midland Company (ADM), and Mondelez which are all located in downtown Chicago. Additional companies include Caterpillar and Walgreens, which are located in the Chicago suburbs.

One way to measure executive air travel activity is by number of itinerant air taxi and commuter operations at airports. Itinerant air taxi operations are defined as aircraft operations performed for hire or compensation with aircraft that have a seating capacity of more than 60 seats or a maximum payload capacity of more than 18,000 pounds. Commuter operations are defined by the FAA as trips with advance departure location, departure time, and arrival location, terms of service and aircraft type, and where frequency of operations is at least five round trips per week on at least one route between two or more points. In 2019, Chicago Executive Airport (PWK) facilitated over 14,000 itinerant air taxi and commuter operations.²



PWK is not the only airport in the Chicago region that supports executive travel. Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Chicago Midway International Airport (MDW), and DuPage Airport (DPA) all operate general aviation terminals for executives. In 2019, ORD saw over 265,000 itinerant air taxi and commuter operations and MDW facilitated over 26,000 itinerant air taxi and commuter operations.³ DPA saw over 5,000 air taxi and commuter operations in 2019.² DPA supports business travel in Chicago through the use of the airport's four active runways, two instrument landing approach (ILS) approaches, and a 1 million square foot apron. The airport's primary runway is able to accommodate corporate jet operations.⁴ DuPage also supports business and employment in Chicago at its on-airport DuPage Business Center, a 640-acre business park.

SMALL BUSINESSES AT GA AIRPORTS

Illinois airports also support small businesses in the state. Across Illinois, small businesses are located at and operate out of Illinois general aviation (GA) airports. These small businesses range from aviation specific business, such as aircraft maintenance companies, to non-aviation businesses such as retail shops and concessions. Aircraft maintenance companies are examples of small businesses located at Illinois' public airports. Examples of such businesses are Avionics Place, Inc. at Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD) and Midwest Aero Restorations at Vermilion Regional Airport (DNV). Avionics Place, Inc is an aircraft maintenance company that specializes in avionics repair and upgrades for general aviation aircraft. The company is one of the oldest avionics shop Illinois and has been in operation in the state

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since 1974. The company operates out of a 6,550 square foot hangar at RFD and employs 10 people. Midwest Aero Restoration, located at DNV, is another aviation specific business located at an Illinois public airport. Midwest Aero Restorations specialized in restoring historic aircraft and employs 12 people at the airport as a fixed-base operator.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Manufacturing is an important industry in Illinois's economy. The manufacturing industry makes up over 12 percent of the state's economic output and employs almost 10 percent of the state's workforce. In 2019, the manufacturing industry was responsible for over \$56 million worth of good exports. Illinois airports support the state's manufacturing industry by providing space for manufacturing companies to operate out of, as well as providing air cargo facilities for the efficient shipment of manufactured goods. An example of a manufacturing company located at an Illinois airport is The Boeing Company at MidAmerica St. Louis Airport (BLV). Boeing's defense-related manufacturing facilities are located at BLV and are connected to the Scott Air Force Base, making it a key location for the defense manufacturing industry. Boeing's facility at BLV employs 210 people and handles production activities and test flights.⁵ Boeing's economic impact to the Illinois economy is set to expand with the support of BLV. In January 2021, the company announced plans to expand its current operations at BLV. The expansion project will take three to four years to complete and involves construction of a new taxiway and highway entrance. The Boeing expansion project is just one piece of larger expansion plans at BLV. The airport recently received a \$9.7 million federal grant for terminal expansion.⁶



¹ "<https://www.illinoispolicy.org/illinois-has-4th-most-fortune-500-corporate-headquarters-in-u-s/>; https://www.thecentersquare.com/illinois/37-companies-headquartered-in-illinois-made-fortune-500-list/article_d1cd6880-a5f9-11ea-a052-57f9a1eae873.html"

² FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF), 2019

³ <https://www.privatefly.com/private-jet-hire/chicago-ohare-intl-airport-A5453.html>; <https://www.flyvictor.com/en-us/private-jet-airports/chicago-midway-international-airport-mdw/#/>

⁴ <https://www.dupageairport.com/airport-authority/about/>

⁵ <https://www.aviationpros.com/aircraft/commercial-airline/news/21205116/proposed-boeing-development-in-early-stages-at-midamerica-st-louis-airport>

⁶ <https://flymidamerica.com/midamerica-airport-expansion-to-finish-a-year-early-thanks-to-9-7-million-grant/>

SUMMARY

Illinois airports support large corporate business and small businesses alike in a variety of ways. Illinois airports support corporate travel by offering general aviation terminals and amenities for executives and corporate travelers. Illinois' airports also host small business and large manufacturing tenants that rely on proximity to air service to meet their business and shipping needs.