

GOLF IMPACT REPORT

Economic and Quality of Life

APRIL 2023



American Golf
Industry Coalition

KEY POINTS

The data and findings found in this report reflect the fifth study aimed at quantifying the size and scope of the economic impact of the industry within the U.S., the world's largest golf market. The previous studies, driven by the World Golf Foundation and the support of allied industry associations, were conducted in 2000, 2005, 2011, and 2016.

A \$102 Billion Industry ... With Even Bigger Reach

Golf is an incredibly popular recreational activity (roughly 1 in every 7 people participated in 2022 with an economic footprint comprising multiple sub-industries (golf courses, retail, construction, tourism, real estate and charity).

The game of golf drove **\$101.7 billion** in direct economic activity throughout the U.S. in 2022, an **increase of 20%** over its \$84.1 billion impact in 2016. But there's a significant ripple effect, too. Golf stimulates a deeper layer of economic activity in other complementary industries – a lifestyle that spurs millions to travel, make purchases, and build and buy homes. The industry's indirect and induced effects (\$124.9 billion) are even bigger than its direct contributions, meaning golf's complete economic portrait in the U.S. is much greater, totaling **\$226.5 billion** and enabling over 1.65 million jobs (including more than 1 million employees directly tied to the industry).

Charitable Impact Climbs to \$4.6 Billion

Golf has proven to be a tremendous vehicle for fundraising, both through outings and events at local golf courses as well as nationally-recognized professional tournaments and events.

In 2022, the total amount of money that golf raised for various charitable causes was almost **\$4.6 billion**, a **16% increase** compared to 2016 (\$3.9 billion)². The majority of giving – **over 90%** – was driven by events at local courses, with 4-out-of-5 facilities holding at least one charitable golf tournament or outing in 2022.

1. National Golf Foundation (2022). *Golf Participation in the U.S.*, 2023 edition. Jupiter, FL.

2. TECONOMY Partners LLC (2016). *2016 U.S. Golf Economy Report*. Columbus, OH

Golf Is Growing & Evolving

While the economic impact of the U.S. golf industry has grown by **63%** over the past two decades (from \$62 billion in 2000¹), the game itself is changing and growing as well. Alternative forms of golf (like Topgolf) have made the game more fun and accessible to a larger and more diverse audience, helping to push the game's overall participant base to **41.1 million** (up from 32 million in 2016²), while the on-course golfer population has never been more diverse in terms of both gender and race/ethnicity. There's a remarkable youth movement, too. In 2022, **almost half (48%)** of all golf participants (on- and off-course) were between the ages of 6 and 34, outsizing their share of the U.S. 6+ population (41%)². These youngest cohorts also have the most positive views of golf – **the majority (60%) agree that golf is “cool,”** or at least has the potential to become “cool.” The industry has never been as vibrant or youthful as it is today.

Good for People

Golf delivers value in ways beyond jobs, revenue, taxes, and multiplier effects. Golf is a lifestyle, a community asset, and a **positive contributor** to physical, mental and social wellness. Recent research highlights the game's critical role in helping people to escape their everyday stressors – especially 35- to 49-year-olds, who are much more likely than other age groups to say they play golf to recover from stress and recharge their mental battery. Golf courses have become especially valuable in the pandemic era, which operators nationwide seem to recognize. Surveys reveal that virtually every U.S. golf facility (97%) organized at least one recreational program or initiative in 2022 to expand golf's local reach and impact, in turn **elevating the quality of life** within their communities³.

Good for the Planet

Golf provides valuable green space, as trees and turfgrass at courses can improve air quality by producing oxygen and trapping pollutants, thus preventing them from reaching groundwater supplies. U.S. golf courses, which also serve as sanctuaries providing an essential habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals, continue to exhibit dramatic reductions, savings and technological advancements when it comes to environmental sustainability. Perhaps most notable is the industry's management of its most precious resource – water – with usage at golf courses dropping **29%** since 2005⁴. While a small portion of these savings is attributable to a reduction in facility supply, the bigger impact is from the industry's ongoing sustainability efforts: applying/using water more efficiently, and the implementation of best management practices that include water management guidelines, more drought-tolerant turfgrass, and an **11.5% reduction** in total irrigated acres at existing facilities.

1. SRI International (2002). *The Golf Economy Report*. Arlington, VA: SRI International

2. National Golf Foundation (2022). *Golf Participation in the U.S.*, 2023 edition. Jupiter, FL: National Golf Foundation

3. National Golf Foundation (2022). *Operators Survey*. Full article available at <https://www.ngf.org/why-are-you-thankful-for-golf/> Jupiter, FL: National Golf Foundation

4. GCSAA (2022). Water Use and Management Practices on U.S. Golf Courses. Lawrence, KS GCSA. Retrieved March 2023 from <https://www.gcsaa.org/environment/golf-course-environmental-profile>

OVERVIEW

Despite roots that go back hundreds of years, the game of golf has evolved dramatically since the previous Economic Impact Study in 2016.

Golf has long been entrenched in the fabric of American society as one of the nation's leading participation sports. But in addition to its rich history – both at the professional and recreational levels -- golf is a dynamic, growing and evolving industry that's impacting the broader United States economy in a wide variety of ways.

Indeed, golf is a recreational activity with a large economic footprint comprising multiple sub-industries, but also stimulates economic activity in other complementary industries – a lifestyle that spurs millions to travel, make purchases, and build and buy houses connected to golf.

The game of golf drove **\$101.7 billion** in economic activity throughout the U.S. in 2022, an **increase of 20%** over its \$84.1 billion impact in 2016.

So, how big is that exactly? To help put it in context, consider that Americans spent \$104.6 billion on shoes in 2022.¹

The golf economy also has a scope that rivals that of U.S. grain farming (\$102.8B). It's more than twice the size of the global running shoes market (\$48.4 billion)² and only about 25% smaller than an industry as ubiquitous as pets – as Americans in 2022 spent \$136.8 billion on food, treats, supplies, medicine, veterinary care, boarding, grooming, insurance, sitting and other services for their furry friends.³

The total economic impact generated by the business of golf, when indirect and induced effects are considered, is **\$226.5 billion**. Golf supports approximately **1.65 million jobs**, with a wage income of over **\$80 billion**. Over one million employees are directly tied to the U.S. golf industry.



1. Footwear Distributors & Retailers of American. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://fdra.org/key-issues-and-advocacy/footwear-retail/>

2. Yahoo Finance. (n.d.) retrieved April 2023 from <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/running-shoes-market-revenue-top-09300715.html>

3. American Pet Products Association (n.d) retrieved April 2023 from https://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

TOTAL IMPACT (DIRECT, INDIRECT & INDUCED)

\$226.5B



GOLF ECONOMY

\$101.7B



EMPLOYMENT

1.65M_{Jobs}



WAGES AND BENEFITS

\$80.1B



GOVERNMENT TAXES

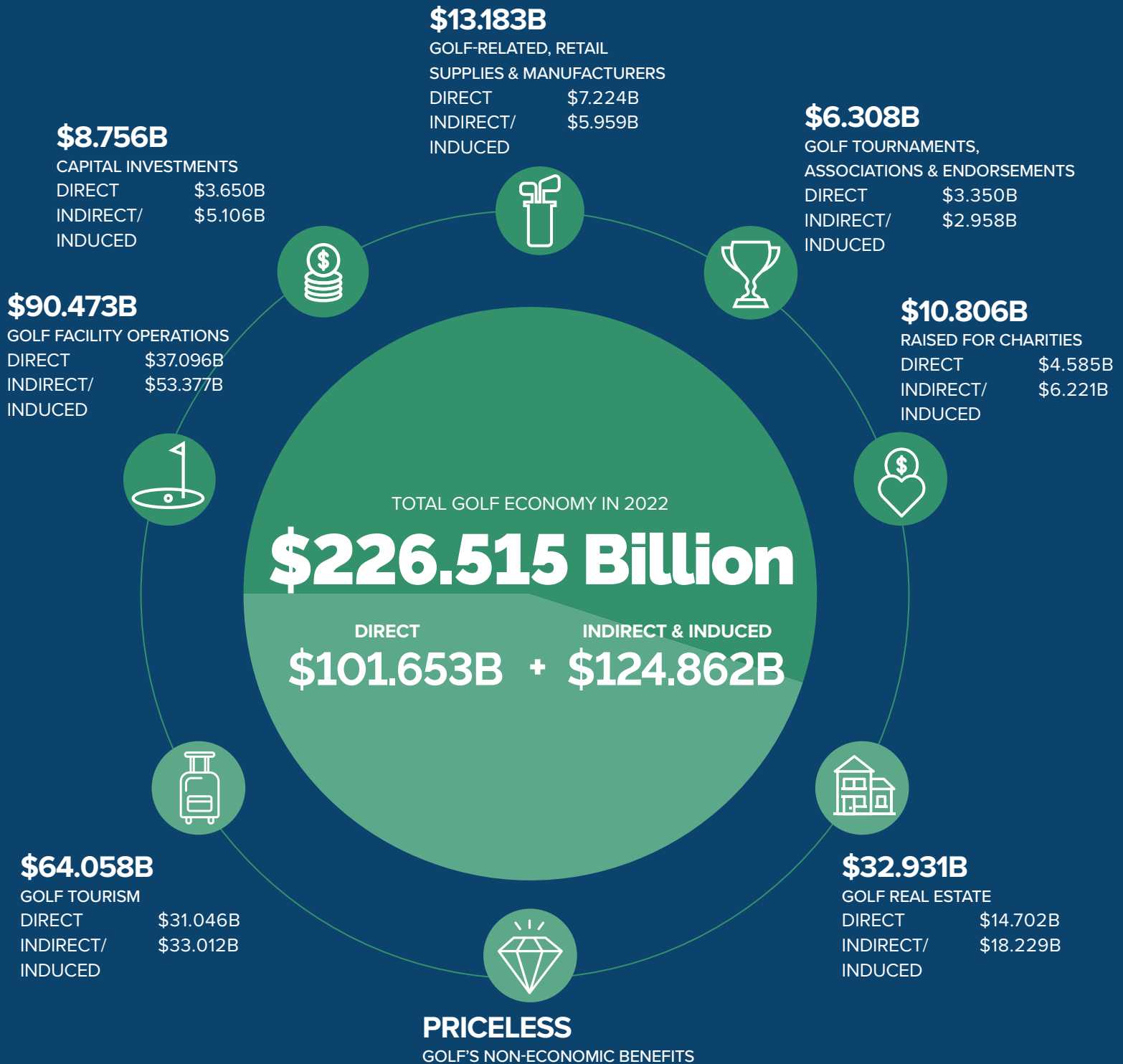
\$29.6B

CORE INDUSTRIES	JOBS & WAGES				TAXES		
	Direct Impact	Indirect/ Induced	Direct Jobs	Indirect/ Induced Jobs	Wage Income	State & Local	Federal
Golf Facility Operations	\$37.096	\$53.377	602,633	284,881	\$35.850	\$7.387	\$6.467
Capital Investments	\$3.650	\$5.106	25,156	26,131	\$3.645	\$0.345	\$0.727
Golf-Related Retail, Supplies & Manufacturers	\$7.224	\$5.959	66,040	31,897	\$3.760	\$0.721	\$0.698
Golf Tournaments, Associations & Endorsements	\$3.350	\$2.958	34,670	15,676	\$1.957	\$0.178	\$0.408
Raised for Charities	\$4.585	\$6.221	16,891	27,247	\$3.120	\$0.367	\$0.702
TOTAL CORE INDUSTRIES	\$55.905	\$73.621	745,390	385,833	\$48.332	\$8.998	\$9.002
ENABLED INDUSTRIES							
Golf Tourism	\$31.046	\$33.012	183,098	163,213	\$19.808	\$4.145	\$3.673
Golf Real Estate	\$14.702	\$18.229	76,371	97,000	\$11.972	\$1.449	\$2.368
TOTAL GOLF ECONOMY	\$101.653	\$124.862	1,004,859	646,046	\$80.112	\$14.592	\$15.043
TOTAL IMPACT	\$226.516		1,650,905 (Total Employment)		\$29.635		

\$ in billions

GOLF'S TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE U.S.

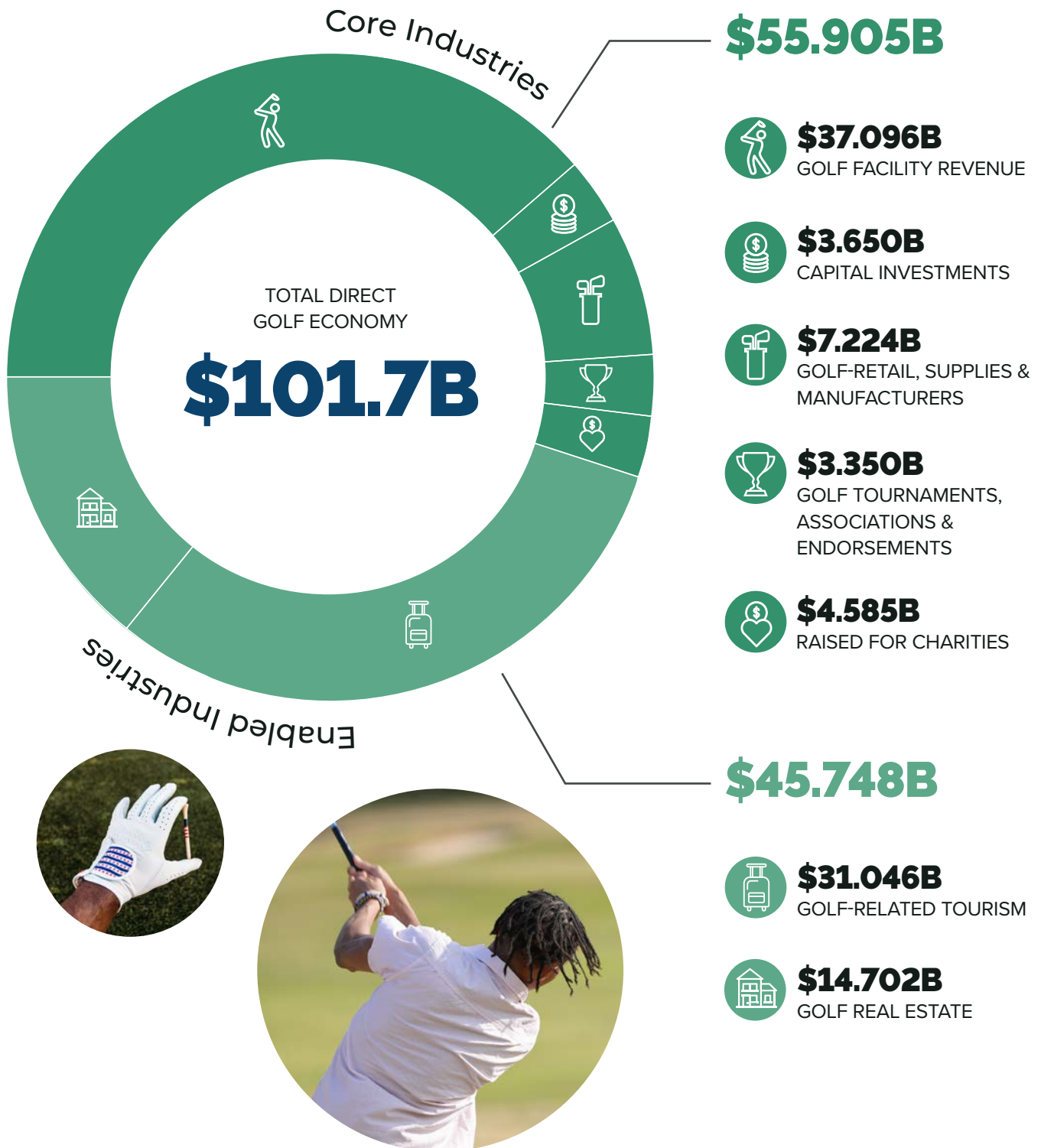
TOTAL IMPACT (DIRECT, INDIRECT & INDUCED)



CORE INDUSTRIES

ENABLED INDUSTRIES

SIZING THE DIRECT GOLF ECONOMY



DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Golf's direct economic impact encompasses seven areas. Most notable is golf facility operations, which accounts for more than one-third (36%) of the overall total. Also measured in this direct economic impact are capital investments and improvements at nearly 14,000 U.S. golf facilities; golf-related retail, supplies and manufacturers; golf tournaments, associations and charitable events; golf-enabled tourism; and golf real estate. There are almost 8,700 companies in the U.S. that have a primary interest in golf and nearly 3,500 additional golf associations and/or non-profit golf organizations¹.

The findings in the 2022 study demonstrate, in part, the impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on the U.S. golf economy due to increased levels of participation and play.

Since the first Golf Economy Report in 2000, the U.S. has experienced two significant economic recessions and, more recently, the social and economic impacts of a global pandemic.

The latter reinforced the significant mental, physical and social benefits of golf, which continues to attract more than 25 million on-course participants despite there being over 1,000 fewer golf facilities than in 2016. This market correction – a rebalancing of supply/demand and culling of underperforming facilities -- has improved overall financial health and strengthened the existing supply of almost 16,000 golf courses at the ~14,000 facilities.

Size of Direct U.S. Golf Economy by Segments (in \$ Millions)

CORE INDUSTRIES	2000	2005	2011	2016	2022	CAGR
Golf Facility Operations	\$20,496	\$28,052	\$29,852	\$34,417	\$37,096	1.3%
Golf Course Capital Investments	\$7,812	\$3,578	\$2,073	\$2,156	\$3,650	9.2%
New course construction	\$5,646	\$1,419	\$516	\$210	\$141	-6.4%
Investment in existing facilities	\$2,166	\$2,159	\$1,557	\$1,946	\$3,509	10.3%
Golf-Related Supplies	\$5,982	\$6,151	\$5,639	\$6,043	\$7,224	3.0%
Tournaments, Associations & Endorsements	\$1,293	\$1,682	\$2,045	\$2,442	\$3,350	5.4%
Golf Charitable Impact	\$3,200	\$3,501	\$3,911	\$3,940	\$4,585	2.6%
Total Core Industries	\$38,783	\$42,964	\$43,520	\$48,998	\$55,905	2.2%
ENABLED INDUSTRIES						
Golf Tourism	\$13,480	\$18,001	\$20,555	\$25,724	\$31,046	3.2%
Golf Real Estate	\$9,904	\$14,973	\$4,735	\$9,341	\$14,702	7.9%
New home construction & reconstruction	\$8,400	\$11,628	\$3,140	\$7,235	\$13,138	10.5%
Realized golf premium	\$1,504	\$3,345	\$1,595	\$2,106	\$1,564	-4.8%
Total Enabled Industries	\$23,384	\$32,975	\$25,290	\$35,065	\$45,748	4.5%
TOTAL GOLF ECONOMY	\$62,167	\$75,939	\$68,810	\$84,064	\$101,653	3.2%

1. Data Axle Reference Solutions. "Reference Solutions (formerly ReferenceUSA) U.S. Business Database/Advanced Search" February 2023 (2022 Data) <http://referencesolutions.data-axle.com>



➔ **Golf Facility Operations:** Revenue generated by playing fees and memberships exceeded \$37 billion in 2022. Restaurant and food & beverage also contributed heavily to a category that saw an almost 8% lift from the \$34.4 billion economic impact estimate in 2016. While the number of non-traditional, off-course golf venues continues to grow (golf entertainment, simulators and driving ranges), there were 1,068 fewer green grass golf facilities in 2022 than in 2016.¹



➔ **Golf Tourism:** Home to over 40% of the world’s golf courses and over 1,000 golf resorts, golfers generated just over \$31 billion in golf tourism-related expenditures in the U.S. in 2022. NGF estimates there were over 26 million U.S.-based trips of 50-or-more miles to play golf (with at least one round) and expenditures in this category includes anything beyond that spent at golf facilities -- such as travel, lodging, meals and incidentals.



➔ **Golf Real Estate:** NGF measured almost \$14.7 billion in expenditures related to new home construction, renovation and reconstruction in golf communities as well as economic activity associated with the property tax assessment valuation of golf homes and the “golf premium” associated with these homes. The opportunity to live in active, outdoor communities has gained popularity in recent years, amplified by remote work options and the pandemic.



➔ **Golf-Related Retail, Supplies & Manufacturers:** The primary contributor to this \$7.2 billion segment is consumer retail – most notably what golfers are spending on equipment, apparel, shoes, accessories and more (backing out what’s already counted at green grass golf facilities). Also captured is the manufacturing and support, as well as the business-to-business revenue from additional services and equipment, including commercial products like those that keep golf’s most important resource – the course – in the best shape possible.



➔ **Tournaments, Associations & Endorsements:** The PGA Tour, USGA, PGA of America and LPGA generate almost 50% of golf association revenue, but the U.S. is home to 3,467 golf associations or non-profit golf organizations in total. This segment has also been expanded to include endorsements from companies non-endemic to golf (think Rolex, NetJets and DraftKings) that pay golfers and golf associations to endorse products and services beyond the equipment and apparel deals accounted for in the retail category.



➔ **Golf Facility Capital Investment:** This \$3.65 billion segment takes into consideration major improvements at golf facilities beyond normal maintenance and operating expenditures. New golf course construction accounts for less than 4% of this total, which is comprised mostly of investments in improving courses (greens, teeing areas, bunkers, cart paths, new turf, irrigation systems) as well as renovations or upgrades to clubhouses and other buildings.



➔ **Charitable Giving:** The total amount of money that golf raised for various charitable causes was almost \$4.59 billion in 2022, a 16% increase compared to the \$3.94 billion in 2016. The majority of giving – over 90% -- was driven by charitable golf events at local courses, with 4-out-of-5 green grass U.S. facilities holding at least one charitable golf tournament or event in 2022.²

1. National Golf Foundation (2023). Proprietary Database, Jupiter. FL

2. National Golf Foundation. Facility Operators Survey (2023, February) U.S. Golf Operations Survey: National Golf Foundation Interviewer

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