

2026

BOURBON

ECONOMIC IMPACT

*Kentucky Bourbon is now a **\$10.6 billion** signature industry supporting more jobs with more distilleries in more Kentucky counties than ever before.*



Distilling generates **23,935 jobs in Kentucky**, an increase of 800 jobs in the last two years despite cutbacks, with annual salaries, wages, and benefits of **\$2 billion**.



Today, there is a record inventory of **17.1 million barrels** of spirits aging across the state, up 11% from the year prior, of which **16.1 million are Bourbon**.



Kentucky has **125 licensed distilleries** operated by 104 companies in **45 Kentucky counties**, the most since the Repeal of Prohibition in 1933.



The distilling industry generates **\$372 million in state & local taxes**, an increase of \$200 million in the past 10 years. It also pays **\$2 billion** in federal alcohol excise taxes every year.



Distillers paid an all-time high of **\$75 million** in taxes on aging barrels in 2025, a 163% surge in the last five years alone. Kentucky remains the only place in the world that taxes aging barrels of spirits.



The tax-assessed value of all barrels aging in Kentucky was a **record \$10 billion** in 2025, up 27% from 2024.



Distillers filled **3+ million barrels** of Bourbon in 2024, down slightly from 2023 but the second straight year topping the 3 million mark.



Distillers purchased more than **27 million bushels** of Kentucky corn in 2025, 84% of which was from Kentucky farmers, a record high. That amounts to 10% of the state's total corn production.



KDA members spent **\$700+ million to purchase barrels** in 2024, of which 67% were from cooperages in Kentucky.



Trade disputes continue to harm Kentucky's whiskey exports, which were only **\$363 million in 2024**, a 26% decrease from their peak in 2019.



Kentucky whiskey **exports to Canada**, formerly its largest export country, were **down 42%** through October 2025. **Exports to the European Union**, once its largest export market, were **down 13%**. Exports of Kentucky's distilled spirits to Japan, France, and Germany have also declined.



Kentucky Bourbon has the **second-highest job multiplier** in the state behind the automobile industry, supporting farm families, cooperages, truckers and more spin-off jobs.



KDA members are in the middle of a **10-year, \$3.55 billion capital investment campaign**, investing \$2.1 billion since 2020 with \$1.45 billion planned for the next 5 years.



Kentucky dominates the national distilling scene with **27% of both the country's spirits output and employment**, with Tennessee second at 8.4%.