

Business aviation at KU

Private aircraft is an efficiency tool with a clear return on investment

The University of Kansas has owned an airplane for more than 40 years. Today, KU owns a Cessna Citation CJ4, purchased entirely with private donor funds. We also have a fractional ownership share of a second plane, which we can use a set number of days per year.

KU staff make every effort to fly commercial — and *do* most of the time. But as a research university with national interests, a Division I athletics program, and a mission to serve all corners of Kansas, commercial flight is often inefficient or impossible. In these cases, private aviation is necessary. We monitor this resource closely, and we use it because it is an efficiency tool with a clear return on investment. Here are key points about KU's private aviation use:

Our aviation arrangement has a clear return on investment

KU uses \$1.4 million annually in state funds to operate private aircraft. That amount is more than offset by new money the plane helps generate by enabling our staff to attend high-yield events. For example, private aviation helps KU interact with donors, who last year contributed \$155 million to KU. Donor relations is especially reliant on flexible travel, given 40 percent of donors live outside Kansas.

Additionally, private aviation enhances our ability to partner with federal lawmakers, funding agency administrators and national groups like the Association of American Universities. These partnerships are crucial to KU's efforts to elevate our status as a research university and win research grants. Last year, KU researchers brought \$230 million in research funding to Kansas.

Beyond donor relations and research, private aviation is crucial for Kansas Athletics to recruit student-athletes and compete in the Big 12 Conference. Conference membership is worth millions of dollars per year in TV revenue, and that doesn't even begin to account for the recruitment and reputational benefits that come with being in a Power Five conference.

The reality is, each of the abovementioned dollar amounts would decline without private aircraft.

Nearly 22 percent of flights are for medical-related activity

Nearly 22 percent of our flights are associated with KU Medical Center and the University of Kansas Cancer Center, which provides cancer screenings to medically underserved parts of the state.

Our aviation needs are validated by a national consultant

Our aviation strategy is validated by the VanAllen Group, a respected aviation consulting company that examined our flight history, resources, and needs, and compared us to peer universities.

Federal regulations limit how we can pay for aircraft operation

Federal Aviation Administration regulations don't allow KU to charge unaffiliated entities for flight services. State funding must be used by all affiliated University entities to pay for use of the airplane.

The way we use it, private airfare is an efficiency tool

Beyond return on investment, private aviation is an efficiency tool. Travel is not just about mileage; it's about matching staff schedules to commercial flight availability. Kansas is the 15th largest state in the nation in square mileage, and it's challenging for KU to serve Kansas without private aircraft.

Arrangements like KU's are common among our peers

Every Big 12 school has an aviation arrangement involving private planes or charters. Nationally, private aviation is common – especially at flagship universities serving rural states – including Auburn, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Clemson, Iowa State, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Oregon, Penn State, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.