

Museum Facts

Museums Are Popular

- There are approximately 850 million visits each year to American museums, more than the attendance for all major league sporting events and theme parks combined (483 million in 2011). By 2006, museums already received an additional 524 million online visits a year just from adults, a number that continues to grow.¹
- Museum volunteers contribute a million hours of service every week.²

Museums Serve the Public

- Many museums offer programs tailored to veterans and military families. In 2016, more than 2,000 museums participated in the Blue Star Museums initiative, offering free admission to all active-duty and reserve personnel and their families.³ This effort served over 923,000 people, while many other museums offer military discounts or free admission throughout the year. Some museums invite veterans to tell first-hand accounts of events in our nation's history or help veterans dealing with post-war stress.
- Museums also provide many social services, including programs for children on the autism spectrum, English as a Second Language classes and programs for older adults with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments.⁴ Some museums also facilitate job training programs, provide vegetable gardens for low-income communities and serve as locations for supervised visits through the family court system.
- Museums preserve and protect more than a billion objects⁵ and help communities better understand and appreciate cultural diversity.
- Museums tell important stories by collecting, preserving, researching and interpreting objects, living specimens and historical records.

Museums Are Economic Engines

- Museums employ more than 400,000 Americans and directly contribute \$21 billion to the U.S. economy each year⁶ and billions more through indirect spending by their visitors.
- Seventy-six percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities such as visiting museums. These travelers spend 60 percent more on average than other leisure travelers.⁷
- Arts and cultural production constitute 4.2% of the entire U.S. economy, a \$704 billion industry, more than construction (\$619 billion) or utilities (\$270 billion).⁸ And 4.7 million workers are employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving \$339 billion in compensation.⁹
- Museums and other nonprofit cultural organizations return more than \$5 in tax revenues for every \$1 they receive in funding from all levels of government.¹⁰
- The nonprofit arts and culture industry annually generates over \$135 billion in economic activity, supports more than 4.1 million full-time jobs and returns over \$22.3 billion in local, state and federal tax revenues each year.¹¹
- Arts and cultural spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting both communities and jobs. For example, for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created.¹²
- Despite growth in the economy overall, more than two-thirds of museums reported economic stress at their institutions in 2012, and only a small (and shrinking) percentage of America's museums receive federal funding of any kind.¹³

¹ Institute of Museums and Library Services study

² American Alliance of Museums 'Museum Financial Information Survey' (2009)

³ National Endowment for the Arts

⁴ American Alliance of Museums 'Museums On Call' report (2013)

⁵ Heritage Health Index (2004)

⁶ AAM Financial Information Survey

⁷ Mandala Research, LLC 2013

⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Americans for the Arts 'Arts and Economic Prosperity IV' (2012)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² National Endowment for the Arts

¹³ American Alliance of Museums 'Annual Condition of Museums and the Economy' study (2013)

Museums Partner with Schools

- Museums spend more than \$2 billion a year on education activities; the typical museum devotes three-quarters of its education budget to K-12 students.¹⁴
- Museums help teach state and local curriculums, tailoring their programs in math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography and social studies.
- Museums receive approximately 55 million visits each year from student groups.¹⁵
- Students who attend a field trip to an art museum experience an increase in critical thinking skills, historical empathy and tolerance. For students from rural or high-poverty regions, the increase was even more significant.¹⁶
- Teachers, students and researchers benefit from access to trustworthy information through online collections and exhibits, although many museums need more help enhancing online access and developing their digital collections.
- Museum websites serve a diverse online community, including teachers, parents, students (including those who are home-schooled).
- Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science in third grade than children who did not. This benefit is also seen in the subgroup of children who are most at risk for deficits and delays in achievement.¹⁷

Museums Are Trustworthy

- Museums are considered the most trustworthy source of information in America, rated higher than local papers, nonprofit researchers, the US government, or academic researchers.¹⁸
- Museums are considered a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers or even personal accounts by relatives.¹⁹

¹⁴ American Alliance of Museums 'Museum Financial Information Survey' (2009)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Education Next 'The Educational Value of Field Trips' (2014)

¹⁷ Swan, D.W. 'The Effect of Informal Learning Environments on Academic Achievement during Elementary School' paper presented to the American Educational Research Association. (2014)

¹⁸ Reach Advisors (2015)

¹⁹ Study by Rosenzweig and Thelen for Organization of American Historians at Indiana University

Museums Are Community Anchors

- In determining America's Best Cities, Businessweek.com placed the greatest weight on "leisure amenities [including density of museums], followed by educational metrics and economic metrics...then crime and air quality."²⁰
- Money Magazine's annual 'Best Places to Live' survey incorporates the concentration of accredited museums.²¹

Museums Serve Every Community

- Museums are committed to ensuring that Americans of all backgrounds have access to high-quality museum experiences, regardless of an individual's ability to pay or to traditionally access a museum. In 2012, 37% of museums were free at all times or had suggested admission fees only; nearly all the rest offered discounts or free admission days.²²
- About 26% of museums are located in rural areas²³; other museums reach these communities with traveling vans, portable exhibits and robust online resources.

Museums Save Species

- Accredited museums support more than 3,200 field conservation and research projects with \$186 million annually in more than 121 countries.²⁴
- Museums are involved with conservation breeding, habitat preservation, public education, field conservation and supportive research to ensure survival for many of the planet's threatened or endangered species. Museums also conduct or facilitate research to advance the scientific knowledge of the animals in human care and to enhance the conservation of wild populations.

²⁰ businessweek.com/slideshows/2012-09-26/americas-50-best-cities

²¹ Money Magazine <http://time.com/money/3996519/best-places-to-live-2015-map/>

²² Ibid.

²³ Institute of Museum and Library Services 'Museum Universe Data File' (2014)

²⁴ Association of Zoos and Aquariums