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## 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.<sup>1</sup>
- Americans from all ranges of income and education visit museums, and museum volunteers contribute a million hours of service every week.<sup>2</sup>

### Museums Serve the Public

- Many museums offer programs tailored to veterans and military families. In 2014, more than 2,200 museums participated in the Blue Star Museums initiative, offering free admission to all active-duty and reserve personnel and their families.<sup>3</sup> This effort served over 700,000 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 work with veterans to address post-traumatic stress disorder.
- 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 objects<sup>5</sup> 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 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."<sup>6</sup>

### 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.<sup>7</sup>
- Museums help teach the state, local or core curriculum, 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 students in school groups.<sup>8</sup>
- 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.<sup>9</sup>
- 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) and the general public.
- 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.<sup>10</sup>

## Museums Are Economic Engines

- Museums employ more than 400,000 Americans and directly contribute \$21 billion to the U.S. economy each year<sup>11</sup> and billions more through indirect spending by their visitors.
- Seventy-eight percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities such as visiting museums. These travelers spend 63 percent more on average than other leisure travelers.<sup>12</sup>
- Arts and cultural production constitute 4.32% of the entire U.S. economy, a \$698 billion industry, more than construction (\$586.7 billion) or transportation and warehousing (\$464 billion).<sup>13</sup> And 4.7 million workers are employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving \$334.9 billion in compensation.<sup>14</sup>
- Governments that support the arts find that for every \$1 invested in museums and other cultural organization, \$7 is returned in tax revenues.<sup>15</sup>
- 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 billion in local, state and federal tax revenues.<sup>16</sup>
- Arts and cultural spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting both commodities and jobs. For example, for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created.<sup>17</sup>
- 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.<sup>18</sup>

## 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.<sup>19</sup>
- About 26% of museums are located in rural areas<sup>20</sup>; other museums reach these communities with traveling vans, portable exhibits and robust online resources.

## Museums Are Trustworthy

- Americans view museums as one of the most important resources for educating our children and as one of the most trustworthy sources of objective information.<sup>21</sup>
- Museums are considered a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers or even personal accounts by relatives.<sup>22</sup>

## Museums Save Species

- Museums support more than 2,600 field conservation and research projects with \$160 million annually in more than 130 countries.<sup>23</sup>
- 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.

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[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] [businessweek.com/slideshows/2012-09-26/americas-50-best-cities](http://businessweek.com/slideshows/2012-09-26/americas-50-best-cities)

- [7] American Alliance of Museums 'Museum Financial Information Survey' (2009)
- [8] Ibid.
- [9] Education Next 'The Educational Value of Field Trips' (2014)
- [10] Swan, D.W. 'The Effect of Informal Learning Environments on Academic Achievement during Elementary School' paper presented to the American Educational Research Association. (2014)
- [11] AAM Financial Information Survey
- [12] U.S. Travel Association
- [13] U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account
- [14] Ibid.
- [15] Americans for the Arts 'Arts and Economic Prosperity IV' (2012)
- [16] Ibid.
- [17] National Endowment for the Arts
- [18] American Alliance of Museums 'Annual Condition of Museums and the Economy' study (2013)
- [19] American Alliance of Museums 'Annual Condition of Museums and the Economy' study (2013)
- [20] Institute of Museum and Library Services 'Museum Universe Data File' (2014)
- [21] Lake, Snell, Perry public opinion survey commissioned by the American Alliance of Museums (2001)
- [22] Indiana University study
- [23] Association of Zoos and Aquariums

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