



Representing the science center and museum field worldwide

2010 Science Center and Museum Statistics

The Association of Science-Technology Centers Incorporated (ASTC) is an organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering public engagement with science among increasingly diverse audiences. ASTC collects and publishes data about science centers and museums to help its members plan and manage their operations, and to provide basic information to those with an interest in the field. Of ASTC's nearly 600 members, 441 are science centers and museums operating or under development in 42 countries. Every U.S. state has at least one member; California alone has 36. The following information is based primarily on data collected from 161 ASTC science center and museum members from September through November 2010.

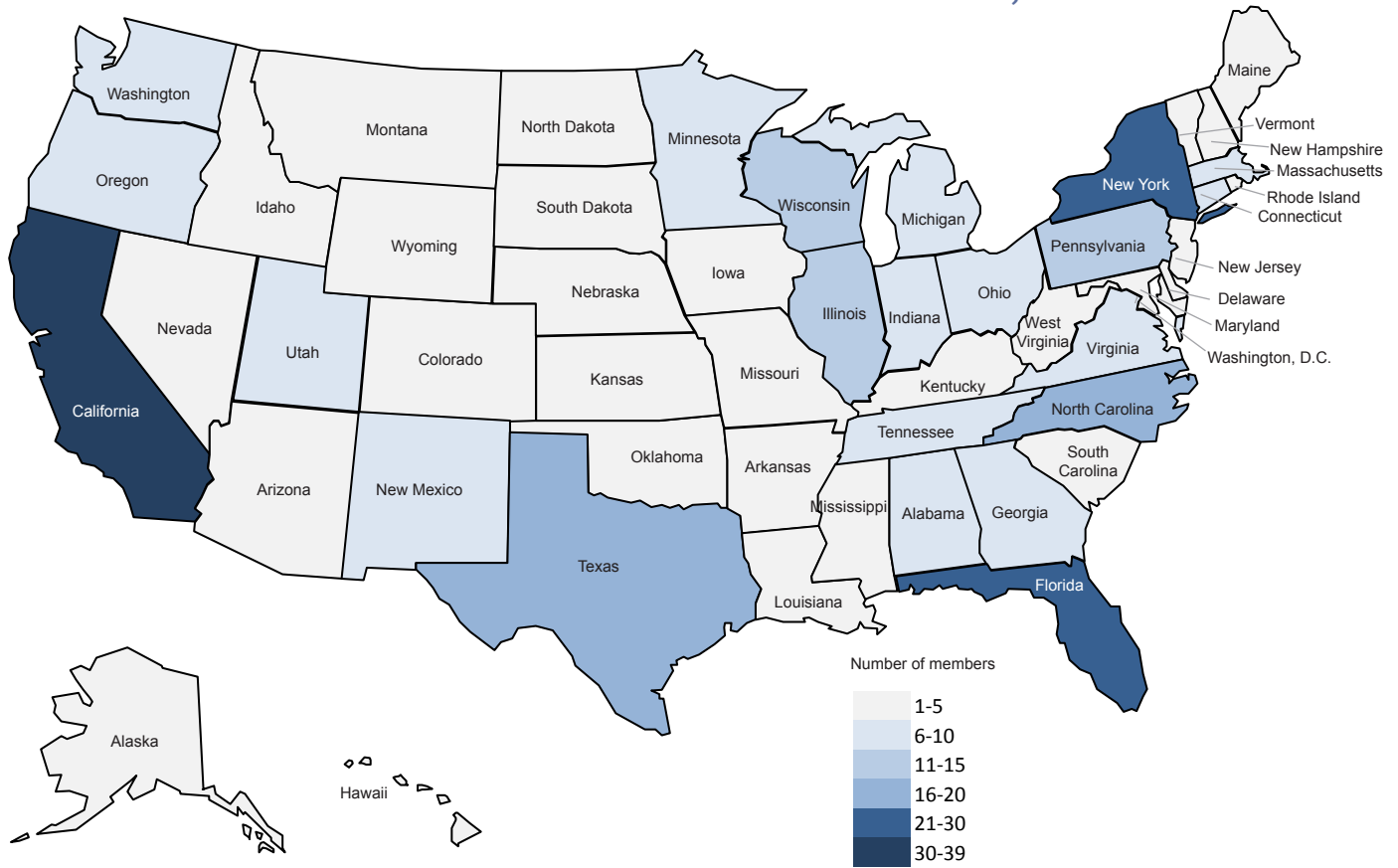
Science engagement around the globe

The map below reflects the worldwide distribution of ASTC members. In addition, ASTC partners with regional science center networks around the world.

Locations of ASTC science center and museum members, worldwide



Locations of ASTC science center and museum members, United States



Serving millions around the world

In 2010, 155 science centers and museums reported total attendance of over 75 million visits in their most recent fiscal year (63.5 million on-site and 12 million off-site). In the United States, total attendance for 114 centers was 45.6 million. Extrapolating from reported data to include all ASTC science center and museum members, **ASTC estimates that there were 89.6 million visits to member science centers and museums worldwide last year. An estimated 62.9 million visits were made to ASTC's 345 science center and museum members in the United States.**

Median on-site attendance at individual centers was 207,500, with 50% of respondents reporting an increase over the previous year. Paid on-site attendance also increased for 52.2% of the 136 respondents providing that data.

In surveys of ASTC governing members over the past nine years, we have found attendance fluctuates with the seasons, extremes of weather, disruptions caused by construction, special events, and changes in public policies, practices, and funding. On occasion, an exhibition or giant-screen film also may contribute to a significant change in attendance.

A science center for every community

Science centers vary widely in scale, from very large institutions, like the United Kingdom's National Museum of Science & Industry (with 700,000 square feet of exhibits), to very small centers, like Davis, California's Explorit Science Center (with just over 3,000 square feet of exhibits). Among the institutions reporting this

data in 2010, the median size was 34,900 square feet of interior exhibit space. In addition to the hands-on, experiential exhibits and programs that are the hallmark of science centers, 44% of respondents also have large-format theaters.

An integral part of the global educational infrastructure

School groups make up a significant percentage of science center and museum attendance. At the 151 institutions that reported both total on-site and school on-site attendance, school groups accounted for a median 16.7% of total on-site attendance.

Extrapolating from reported data to include all ASTC science center and museum members, **the estimated school group attendance was 16.2 million worldwide in 2010 (10.9 million in the United States)**. But field trips are just the beginning. Most science centers offer demonstrations and workshops, school outreach programs, professional development for teachers, curriculum materials, and programs for home schoolers.

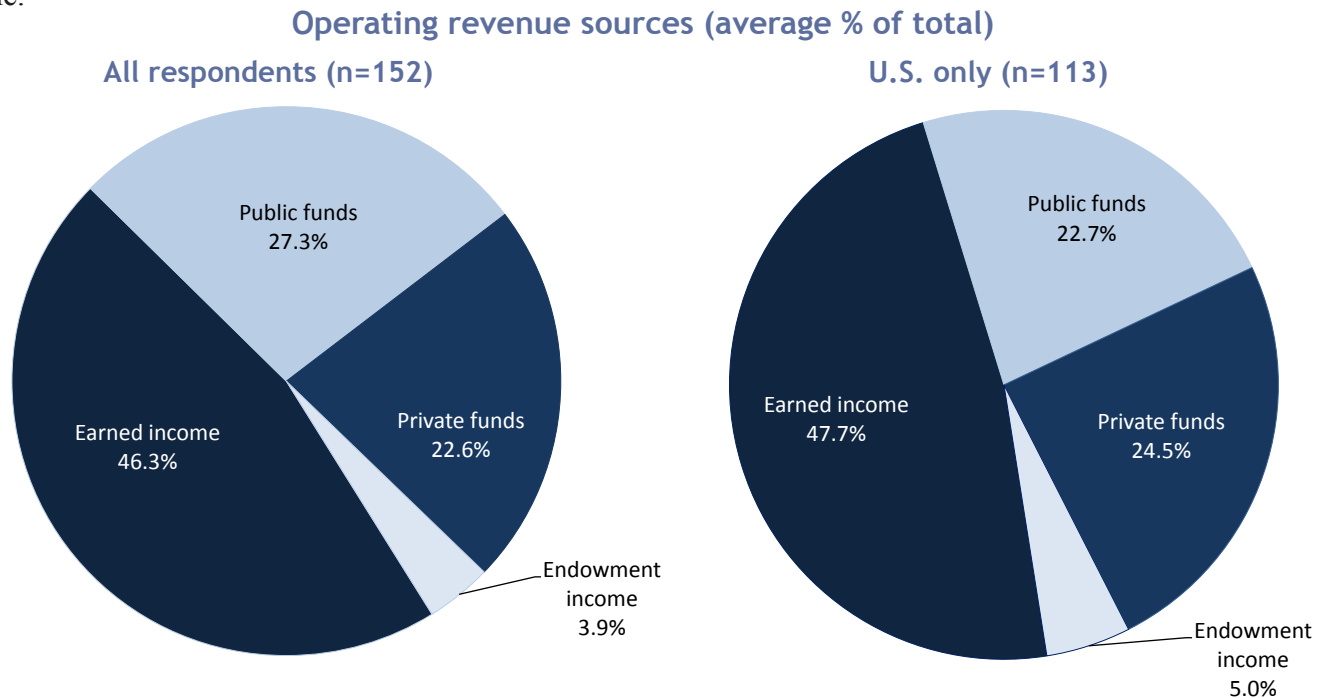
Connecting science with the community

Science centers offer places where science and citizens can meet. Many centers have scientists on staff, and some feature research facilities on-site. Through exhibits and programming, such as lecture series and science cafés, science centers help to bring current research findings to the public and encourage discussion and debate of current issues. Science centers also encourage the public to become involved in research projects themselves.

Science centers reach a wide audience. Most (92%) have membership programs, including family memberships. On average, member visits accounted for 24% of paid on-site visits to the 118 institutions providing this data.

Adding value to the local economy while enriching lives

As cultural amenities, science centers add value to their local economies. While they count on public funding, 46 cents of every operating dollar comes from ticket sales, program fees, facility rentals, and other “earned income” sources; 27 cents comes from public funds; 23 cents from private donors; and 4 cents from endowment income.



On average, earned income, which comes primarily from ticket sales and program fees, is the largest source of operating revenue. Most centers charge for general admission (90.1%), with adult admission prices ranging from \$1.29 to \$26.71 (\$4.00 to \$21.00 among U.S. institutions). The median admission charge worldwide is \$10.00, \$7.60 for children.

Public funding constitutes, on average, 27% of an institution's operating revenue (23% in the United States). On average, worldwide, 35% of institutions' public funds are from federal/national governments, 26% from states/provinces, 38% from local governments, and less than 1% from tribal/other public sources. In the United States, a larger portion (44%) of public funding comes from local governments.

The scale of operations varies widely among science centers and museums: 10% of respondents report operating expenses of \$879,962 or less; 10% report operating expenses of more than \$24,661,180. Median reported operating expenses were \$4,577,897. In the reported fiscal year, most institutions (75%) operated with a balanced budget or a surplus.

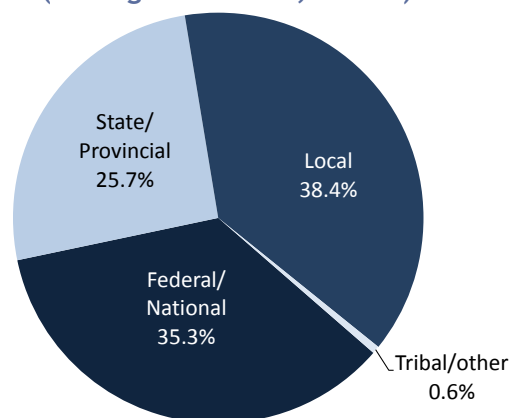
Science centers also bring jobs to their communities. More than 20,217 paid employees were reported by 161 institutions (135 U.S. respondents reported a total of 14,060 paid employees). The median number of full-time equivalent employees at individual institutions was 62. On average, personnel costs constitute 55% of operating expenses.

About the 2010 ASTC Statistics Survey

This document is based primarily on data collected in a survey carried out September–November 2010. The survey was distributed by email to the 444 science centers and museums that were then members of ASTC. By the time data entry closed, we had received 161 responses, a response rate of 36%.

The breakdown of respondents by institution type generally reflected that of the ASTC membership as a whole. 73.9% of respondents were U.S.-based, compared with 78.5% of members. Science/technology centers and museums are somewhat overrepresented making up 66.5% of respondents, compared with 55.6% of ASTC members. Institutions with budgets under \$1 million are underrepresented among respondents to the survey, however, making up only 13.7% of respondents compared with 40.1% of ASTC members.

Public revenue sources
(average % of total, n=123)



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