

# ASTC Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey

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Year-in-Review  
Aggregate Report

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# INTRODUCTION

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## The ASTC Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey

In response to the continuing impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on science centers and museums, ASTC has been conducting a Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey since June 2020. This ongoing survey project contains a data-benchmarking tool for members to collect and report on their visitor attendance and operational status.

In March 2020, nearly overnight, every one of the Association of Science and Technology Centers' (ASTC) almost 500-member science centers and museums around the world closed their doors to the public. By October, just over 50% of ASTC's members had reopened to the public. However, due to rising COVID-19 cases, many member institutions reclosed during Winter 2020, with most reopening again throughout the first half of 2021.

Throughout the pandemic, with changing local, state, and federal guidance, every institution has made context-specific decisions about facility operations and public programming. Based on what is known about ASTC members' annual operating income, duration of closing, length of reopening, and the percentage of usual visitor attendance being received, it is conservatively estimated that across ASTC membership, since March of 2020, there has been a loss of almost \$1 billion in revenue compared to a typical prior year.

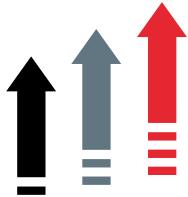
This report provides an aggregate view of the data collected during the last year in the ASTC Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey. As weekly data is being continuously collected, ASTC will release additional summaries and reports as they become available.

# KEY FINDINGS

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The following is a summary of key findings from the data within this report. All data was collected between May, 2020 - July, 2021

## Visitor Attendance

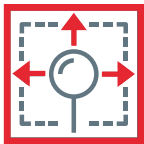


Science centers and museums have experienced a gradual rise in attendance throughout the last 14 months.

Visitor attendance in 2021 is progressively approaching reported attendance rates from 2019.



## Facility Operations



Reopened institutions have continually expanded their facility operations throughout the last year.

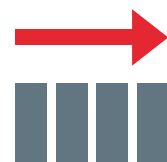
## Public Programs

Science center and museum public programming has been extensively impacted by COVID-19.



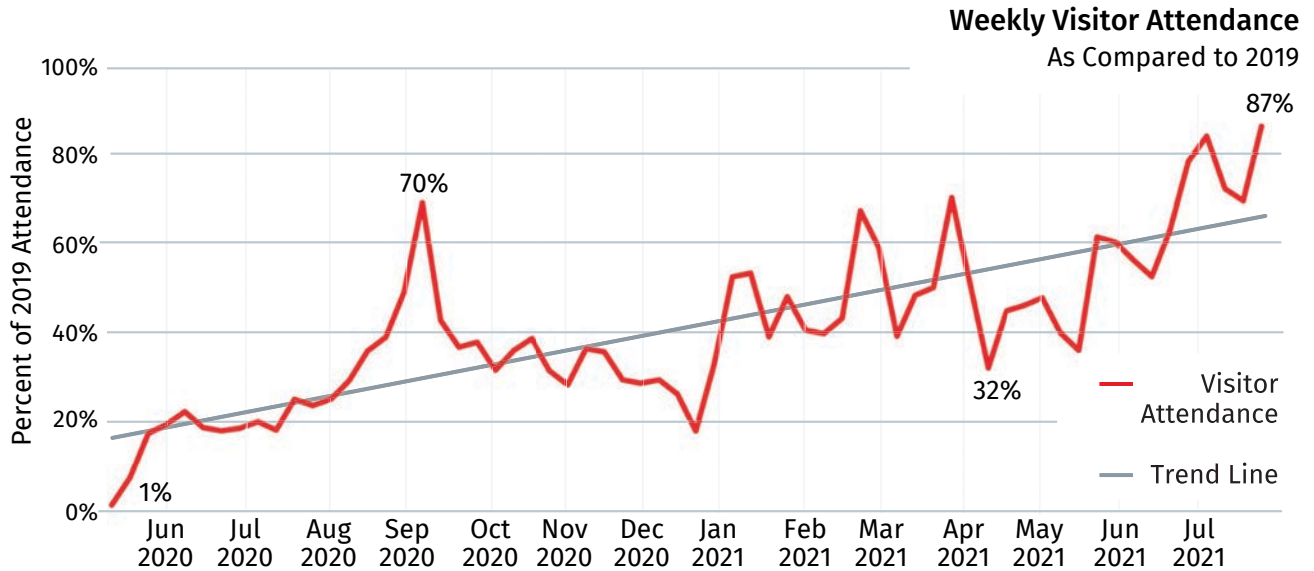
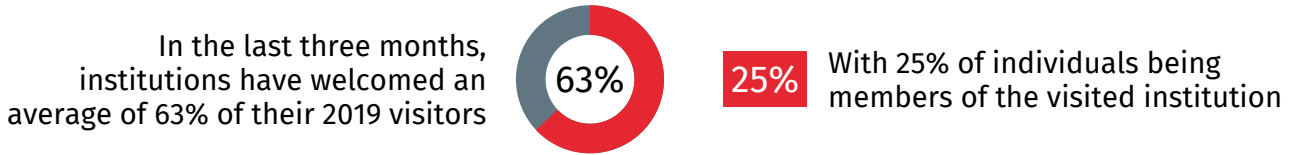
Open institutions have incrementally increased their public program availability since May 2020.

Closed institutions have offered consistent programming since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

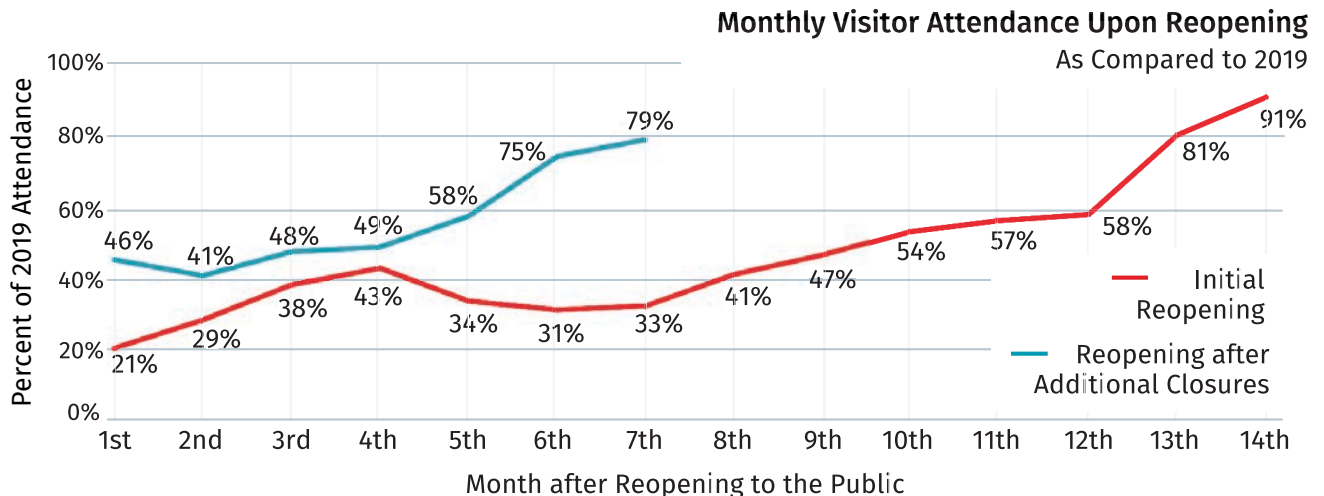


# ATTENDANCE

Throughout the last year, science centers and museums that reopened to the public after closing due to COVID-19, have been experiencing an overall trend of gradual increase in their visitor attendance.

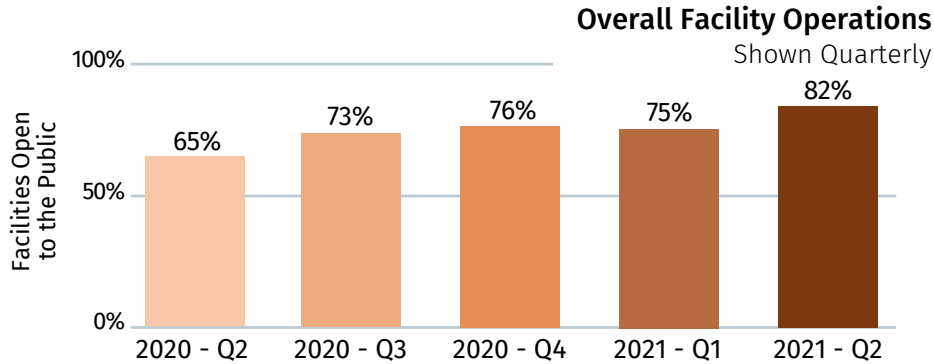


The trend of gradual increase in visitorship can be seen more effectively through monthly attendance rates by length of time after institutions' initial reopening to the public, as this helps account for local variation in the progression of the pandemic. Even institutions that had additional closures after their initial reopening, experience a positive growth in visitor attendance upon reopening again.



# FACILITY OPERATIONS

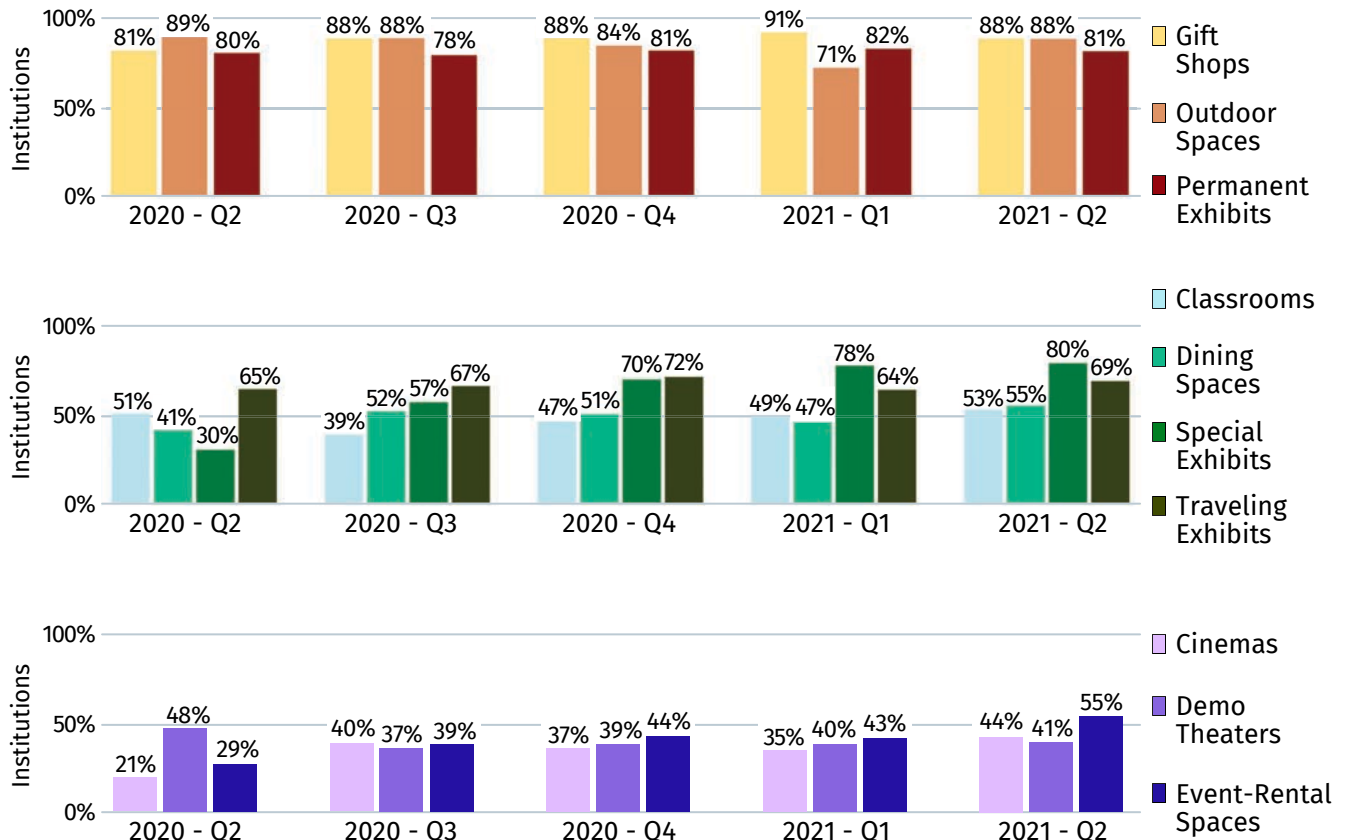
Over the past year, reopened institutions have incrementally expanded their facility operations, with an average of 80% of facilities being open to the public in the last three months.



Although varying circumstances such as seasonal differences and changes in guidance around COVID-19 may impact facility types differently, overall facility operations have remained relatively consistent, or increased, in operating status. The following graphs demonstrate the progression of quarterly operation for each facility type.

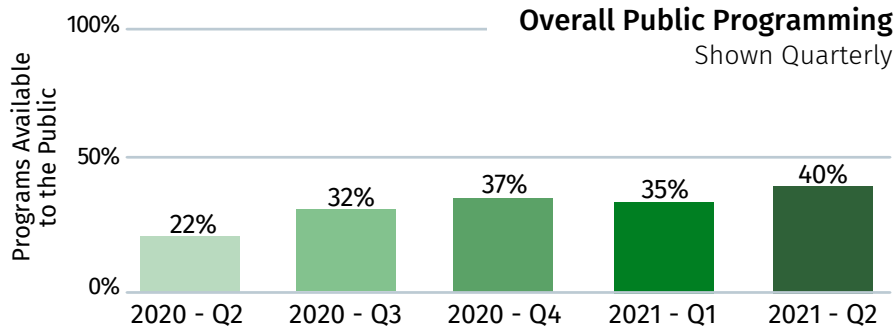
## Facilities Open to the Public

Shown Quarterly



# PROGRAMS: OPEN INSTITUTIONS

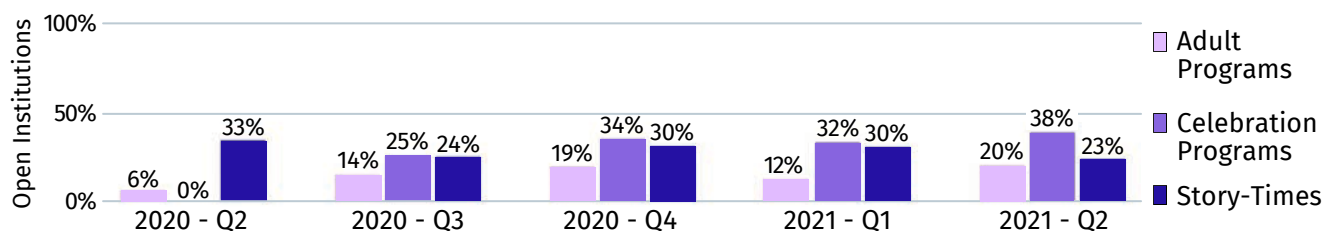
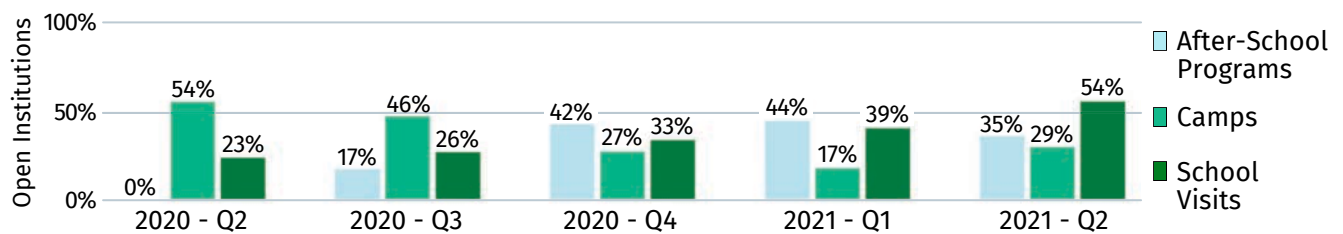
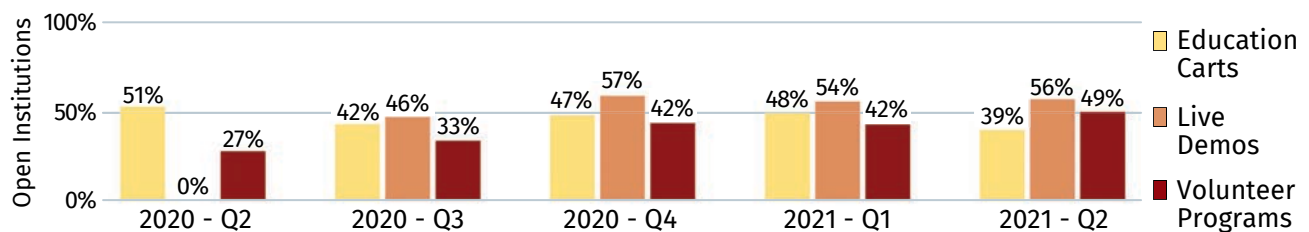
Overall, open institutions have had steady rates of public program offerings, providing 42% of their typical programming in the last three months



In addition to steady program offerings, open institutions have been progressively increasing the availability of specific program types. The following graphs illustrate the progression of quarterly public programming at open institutions for each program type.

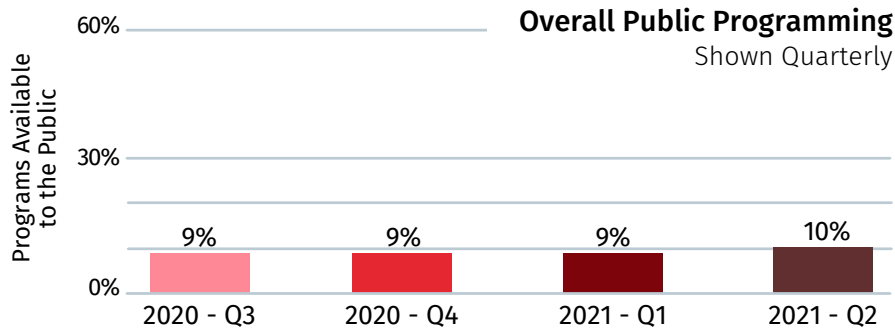
## Public Programs at Open Institutions

Shown Quarterly



# PROGRAMS: CLOSED INSTITUTIONS

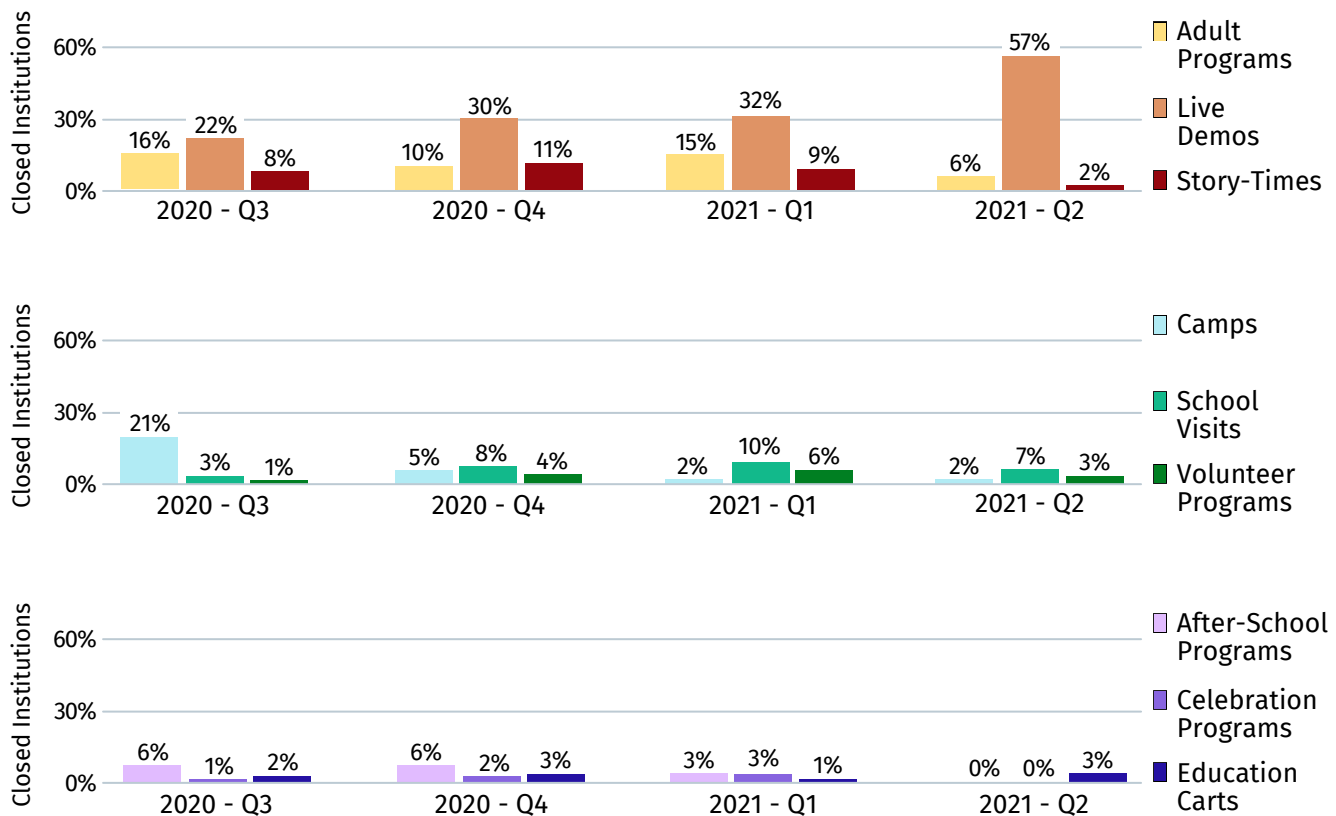
In general, closed institutions have been consistent in public program availability, offering 12% of their typical programming in the last three months.



While program offerings have been consistent, circumstances such as resource limitations and virtual adaptability have impacted closed institution programming, causing wide availability variations between specific program types. The differences in program availability can be seen in the following graphs, which show the progression of quarterly public programming at closed institutions for each program type.

## Public Programs at Closed Institutions

Shown Quarterly





## ABOUT THE DATA

This report represents the data collected thus far, including everything reported for the week of May 13, 2020 through the week of July 28, 2021.

**81**  
Reporting  
Institutions

**74** Institutions Reporting Open Data  
**27** Institutions Reporting Closed Data

### Monthly Institution Reporting Counts

2020		2021	
May	4	January	54
June	23	February	52
July	62	March	54
August	60	April	51
September	64	May	45
October	63	June	45
November	57	July	40
December	53		

### Institution Reopening Months

2020	
May	5
June	25
July	27
August	2
September	2
October	2
November	1
2021	
January	6
February	5
March	3
April	2
May	3
June	5

**Institution Reclosures**

**14** Institutions Reclosed  
**14** Reopened Again

## METHODOLOGY

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The following details the methodology behind the Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey, which is comprised of two data collection tools, the Baseline Survey and the Weekly Survey.

### The Baseline Survey

To begin participating in the survey project, institutions completed the Baseline Survey, reporting on their 2019 operations including daily or weekly visitor attendance, facilities, and typical programs offered by the institution. These data points provide a benchmark, enabling comparison to the attendance and operations status data reported each week. Once submitted, an institution could begin participating in the Weekly Survey.

### The Weekly Survey

In the Weekly Survey, institutions report their on-site attendance, facility statuses, and the programs offered during their previous operating week. Due to a variance in when institutions begin their operating week, the Weekly Survey contains a designated reporting time frame for each week; this time frame is determined by the institution's most recently completed operating week that includes the Wednesday indicated in the survey. Each survey is labeled by the reporting week to which it belongs.

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*The Weekly Attendance and Operations Survey* is open to all ASTC science center and museum members, regardless of their reopened status. Institutions receive a specific set of questions depending on their reopened status; if a participating institution is not open to the public, they report on the programs offered for the week, as well as predicted daily hours and facility operations upon reopening.

# TERMINOLOGY

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This report refers to specific terminology, data collection, and analysis methods; these terms and processes are explained below.

## Weekly Visitor Attendance

All visitor attendance data is presented as a percentage, showing the comparison between the provided 2019 attendance data and reported 2020/2021 attendance counts for the given week.

## Facility Type

Ten facility types, such as permanent exhibits, outdoor exhibits, cafes, etc., are presented in the weekly survey and resulting data. The data within this report represent the facility type as a whole and do not contain weighted data based on the total number of individual facility types. In addition, these data do not take into consideration the relative size of the facility within an institution's total space.

## Facility Operation Status

In the weekly survey, institutions are asked to report the operating status of their facilities, selecting either Fully Open, Partially Open, or Closed for each facility type. A fully open operating status indicates that the facility type is open to the public and currently has minimal to no restrictions for visitors, outside what is normal for that facility. A partially open operating status indicates that while the facility type is open to the public, there are current restrictions in place for visitors; this could include limiting capacity, restricting areas of access, timed interactions, and more.

## Program Type

Nine program types, such as camps, live demonstrations, adult programs, etc., are presented in the weekly survey and resulting data. Similar to facility types, program data within this report represent the program type as a whole and do not contain weighted data based on the amount of individual programs within a program type offered by an institution.