



Museums in a Pandemic: Snapshot of Impacts in Fall 2020

November 4, 2020

We have conducted two surveys since May 2020 to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting children's museums. The most recent survey of ACM member institutions took place from September 24 to October 18, 2020. Overall, 96 US-based children's museums were represented in the survey. Below are initial findings; future reports will provide more detail.

- Funding** – All participating museums that applied for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds received them. Nine out of ten museums that applied for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) funds received them. Three quarters of museums that applied for local/state government programs and two thirds that applied to state arts/humanities councils received funds. Museums had less success in getting direct funding from some agencies. Less than a quarter that applied to the NEH, IMLS, and NEA received funds. Private funding is an increasingly reliable source of support for museums. Of the 77 that applied to private sources, all but three received support.
- Financial Reserves** – Seventy-two museums reported how long their financial reserves could support their institution. From the time of the survey, the average length was nine months.
- Collaborations** – Eighty-one museums have built new or expanded existing partnerships. The most common partners were social service organizations, K-12 schools, and other museums.
- Opening** – Of the 48 museums currently open to in-person visitors, four had to reclose for a period, ranging from three to fifteen days. Of the 35 that are currently closed, 14 have reopening dates planned for 2020 or 2021.
- Staffing** – Eighty-three museums reported staff reductions. Of those, 38% of full-time staff have been furloughed or laid-off, or had reduced hours. For part-time staff, 80% have been furloughed or laid-off, or had reduced hours. Of the 31 museums that employed contractors at the start of the pandemic, 14 had let go of some or all contractors by fall 2020.

ACM TRENDS

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