



WonderLab Museum of Science, Health and Technology  
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*The WonderLab Museum of Science, Health and Technology is a premier center for informal science education and discovery. WonderLab provides opportunities to experience the wonder and excitement of science through interactive exhibits and programs that stimulate curiosity, encourage exploration, connect to the arts and everyday life, and foster lifelong learning.*

WonderLab was established in 1995 as a traveling science outreach program coordinated by six volunteers. In 1998, WonderLab opened a small museum in downtown Bloomington. At that time, fundraising was initiated to build a larger, permanent museum on a downtown site donated to WonderLab by the city of Bloomington. The current award-winning museum opened its doors to the public on March 29, 2003. The two-story 15,000-square-foot facility features exhibit galleries, a flexible programming space, gift store, and an adjacent outdoor garden. It is located adjacent to Bloomington's B-Line Trail in the heart of the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District.

### Year 2021 WonderLab At-a-Glance

- **Incorporation Date and Status:** 1995 as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization
- **Total people served on-site and off-site between 1995 and December 2021:** 1,418,262 on-site children, adults and infants; 8,573 WonderCamp or other summer science enrichment program registrations; 146,057 people through off-site outreach programs; and 8,775 families and teachers through virtual programs since March 13, 2020.
- **WonderLab visitors in 2021:** 18,966 on-site (46% members, 49% nonmembers, 3% groups, 2% rentals/birthday parties); 1,310 off-site outreach; 429 WonderCamp registrations (274 individual children); and 1,987 families and teachers through virtual programs.
- **Personnel in 2021:** 19 FTE staff (25 individuals) and 150 volunteers (5,153 volunteer hours)
- **Exhibits:** The gallery features over 80 hands-on science exhibits for visitors of all ages. Exhibit areas include the Hidden Life of Deserts (new in 2021), SandScapes (returned in 2021), Water Works exhibit, Oliver Winery Grapevine Climber, Science Sprouts Place / Sprouts Lab (infants through age 5), Coral Reef Aquarium, and exhibits on everyday phenomena such as air, bubbles, engineering and construction, electricity and magnetism, human body, light and color, natural sciences, gravity and motion, and sound and music. Exhibits, programs and activities are also featured in the outdoor Bushnell WonderGarden.
- **Interactive Programs:** WonderLab offers a host of educational programs, workshops, demonstrations and presentations that serve preschool-age through adults, teacher professional development, and outreach programs brought to off-site locations. Year 2021 included a total of 358 programs, held in-person or on-line with the Zoom platform. These included:
  - In-Person: (1) 92 on-site early childhood series programs for 563 people (Discovery Time, Science Sprouts, Science Story Time); (2) 57 on-site programs, demonstrations and workshops for 965 people; and (3) off-site outreach to 1,310 individuals at schools and festivals.
  - On-Line: (1) 99 early childhood series programs for 518 families (Discovery Time, Story Time, Baby Brilliance); (2) 112 all-age series programs for 1,013 families (Science Explorations, Dive Deeper, Animal Hour, STEM Sunday, CoderDojo, Ask Me Anything); (3) 5-day Codemakers Codebreakers program for 20 children; (4) 2 programs for 57 families on Martin Luther King Jr Day; (5) 3 group visits for 133 students and teachers; (6) one After Dark for 52 adults; and (7) 3-day 2021 Summer Science Institute for 38 middle and high-school science teachers, in partnership with IU Environmental Resilience Institute.

### 2021 Museum Operation:

- The museum was closed to the public during Mar 13 - Aug 12, 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It reopened on Aug 13, 2020 with restricted days and times, reduced attendance capacity, on-line reservations, new types of visits, and new policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of staff and visitors.
- During 2021, all museum staff were vaccinated and received booster shots once these were available. Some staff continued working remotely during 2021, while most staff returned to the museum.
- Prior to the pandemic, the maximum museum capacity was 230 visitors at any one time. The pandemic necessitated a greatly reduced capacity, based on regional Covid-19 status and the need for staff and visitors to physically distance. The capacity was 7% (17 visitors) in Jan 2021 and increased to 28% (65 visitors) in Dec 2021 (when waiting lists were sometimes needed).
- Timed Ticketing (TT) and Double Bubble (DB) visit types continued in 2021. During Jan-July, TT reservations on-line continued with limited availability for walk-up tickets. Starting in Aug, TT reservations were no longer needed. Also starting in Aug, the three 2.5-hr TT time slots were replaced by two 3.5-hr time slots (with cleaning between slots), and TT was scheduled on Sun, with Wed kept for DB, group visits, birthday parties and rentals, all of which involved single use of the museum and required reservations.
- Museum fees increased in Aug 2021 for TT (\$10 nonmember increased to \$12.50) and DB (\$75 nonmember increased to \$95; \$52 member increased to \$70). The fee increase was needed due to continuing high operating expenses.
- Year 2021 dates of note: The museum returned to 6 days per week operation starting on May 11. On-site group visits began on May 7. On-site programs began on April 3 in the garden, and on July 8 inside the museum.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

### Educational Resource

WonderLab provides informal science experiences that benefit thousands of schoolchildren and help schools address Indiana science standards. Each summer, the museum offers WonderCamp, weeklong science enrichment programs for children entering grades K - 6. In a typical year, WonderLab welcomes 12,000 children and chaperones on group visits, and over 300 children at the off-site WonderCamp. In 2021, there were 615 children and chaperones on group visits, and 274 individual campers.

To make WonderLab experiences more accessible to low-income youth and families, WonderLab's Connecting to the Community (C2C) program provides free or greatly reduced admissions to the museum, free admission for Big Brothers Big Sisters participants and selected other regional agencies, and free scholarships for WonderCamp. WonderLab is a member of the Access Pass Program, a statewide partnership that allows qualifying low-income Indiana families the opportunity to visit WonderLab and other sites for \$2/person. In a typical year, C2C supports free or greatly reduced admission for 5,000 museum visitors and 35 camp scholarships. In 2021, C2C supported free or greatly reduced admission for 1,286 museum visitors and 44 camp scholarships.

### Economic Resource

WonderLab is located in downtown Bloomington, in an Urban Enterprise Zone. It is a major destination along the B-Line Trail, a downtown greenway. In a typical year, WonderLab attracts over 82,000 visitors to downtown Bloomington from a ten-county region and beyond, and surveys indicate that they spend over \$560,000 in downtown shops and restaurants annually. All of the surveyed visitors said that WonderLab was "very important or important to the quality of life in Bloomington."

### Volunteer Resource

Each year, the museum enriches community life by bringing together over teen and adult volunteers from all parts of the community. WonderLab makes a special effort to offer middle, high school, and college students meaningful opportunities to enhance their workplace skills. Teens are involved as mentors to younger children in WonderLab's summer science camps and as museum guides assisting the public. In a typical year, this involves over 600 teens and adults. In 2021, this involved 150 teens and adults.

### Tourism Resource

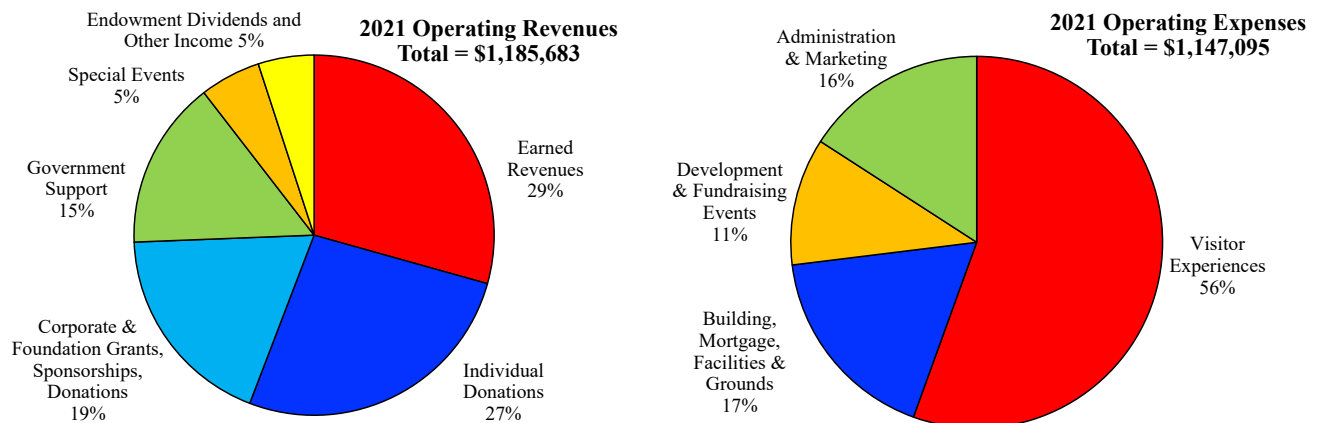
WonderLab is a regional destination – in a typical year, 63% of non-member general admission visitors and 73% of group admission visitors come from beyond Monroe County. In 2021, 51% of non-member general admission visitors and 65% of group admission visitors came from beyond Monroe County. The 2021 top Indiana counties for non-member general admission visitors (in decreasing order of attendance) were Monroe, Marion, Lawrence, Hamilton, Johnson, Morgan, Owen, Greene, Daviess and Hendricks Counties, similar to past years.

### Award-Winning Museum

WonderLab has won numerous awards. It received the "2021 Best of the Best" People's Choice Award (category of museums) from Herald Times readers. It was selected by Parents magazine among the top 25 science centers in the US (2008) and by American Towns Media as the "Best of 25" science museums and centers in the US (2016). WonderLab regularly receives a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

WonderLab relies on *earned revenue* and *philanthropic support*. In a typical year before the pandemic, for every \$1 in earned revenue, WonderLab must raise an additional \$0.90 through contributions from individuals and businesses, special events, grants and endowment cash distributions. This reflects a commitment to keeping WonderLab as affordable as possible to families and schools. In Year 2021, due to the continuing Covid pandemic and reduced museum capacity, for every \$1 in earned revenue, WonderLab had to raise \$2.41 from contributions, special events, grants, government support (e.g., PPP forgiven funding), and endowment cash distributions.



For information about making a donation to WonderLab, please contact Amy Osajima, Donor Relations Director, at (812) 337-1337, ext. 14 or [giving@wonderlab.org](mailto:giving@wonderlab.org)