

FEBRUARY 2010 QUICK POLL RESULTS: CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS' EARNED INCOME NEEDS

3. Does your museum have a unique source of earned income that could be a model?

Yes: 23.2% (13 respondents)

No: 76.8% (43 respondents)

If yes, please describe.

- We operate a Center for Children's Learning and offer professional development to educators in our community and across the country
- Possibly. We've developed, and are working on expanding, a 'playscape express' model of mobile exhibit(s) that we designed, and now fabricate and sell to other children's museums (existing and emerging) and other venues that involve children.
- Professional development for early childhood educators @ statewide program held in various sites throughout the state.
- We have an IMLS MFA grant for a family literacy effort in partnership with local schools that will bring about 6,000 children and parents into the Museum for evening events. We're showing an increase in membership sales as a result of the program and, of course, an upswing in rental income.
- We own a 4 story historic building. We operate as a children's museum on 3 floors and rent the top floor out to local businesses in need of affordable, prime downtown office space. Rental income is just under \$100K for the floor. Serving as a landlord provides its own set of challenges!
- In School Museum Experiences - we take a field trip to the schools. Not sure if this is unique to us, but is easier for large classes of very young children and more economical.
- Photography of special events.
- A "Paint your own pottery" studio.
- Our museum is city owned and operated. It has a long history of working with local schools. Most of the local schools contract with the museum to teach hands-on science classes in their classrooms. Not only does this give us a stable income, it connects children and families with the museum. The families often have their favorite teachers who teach them regularly throughout their elementary school years. We are a free museum, so we earn no revenue from field trips. More than half of our revenue comes from our Education Department. The rest is contributed by the city. In addition, we offer many onsite, fee-based classes and camps to the general public and have quite a loyal following. We are also looking at having an adult education class offered. It will be a college credit course in veterinary training using our Zoo animals and run by our Zoo staff.
- Family Science Nights and School Partnerships. I'm not sure if these are unique, but we have contracts with our city school district to provide admissions and programs to all their students. In 2009 our contracts totaled \$150k, or about 12.5% of our total revenue.
- We do charge additional for temporary exhibitions. We offer them free to members but do charge walk up guests. Not sure if this is unique enough to count. We've also added a carousel and sell popcorn, both of which created additional, not significant, revenue streams.
- We believe and have found that "earned revenue" is only worthy of serious study when it's placed into a "mix" context related to contributed revenue, endowment revenue, etc., and how that mix relates to not only day/day, month/month, year/year operations, but longer-term capital needs, deferred maintenance needs, etc.
- Professional development.
- Children's theatre - children performing for children and families