

Exploration Place

Mission: *To inspire a deeper interest in science and technology through creative and fun experiences for all.*

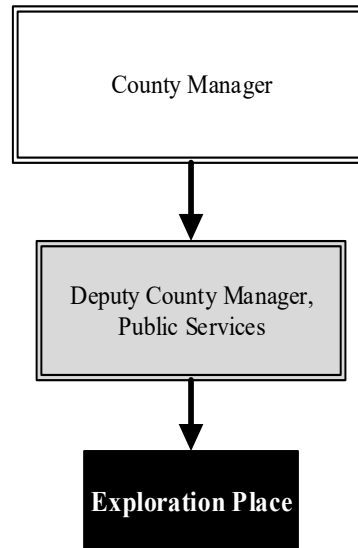
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Overview

Exploration Place, the Sedgwick County Science and Discovery Center, connects the community to a world of wonder and opportunity. It enriches quality of life for county residents by providing fun, creative, and interactive learning experiences that are accessible to everyone, in a world-class facility. The organization supports economic prosperity both as a significant tourism draw, and by providing educational programs that ensure a pipeline for the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce of the future. In 2023-24, Exploration Place achieved its highest ever public attendance, exceeding 400,000 visitors.



Strategic Goals:

- *Be the number one ranked visitor attraction in Wichita*
- *Be widely recognized as one of the finest science and technology centers in the nation*
- *Reach every child in Kansas with educational programming*
- *Attract a total attendance of 1.0 million people per year*
- *Participation from all demographics in our community, proportional to their size*
- *Increase out-of-state visitation to 10.0 percent of paid attendees*
- *Increase out-of-county visitation to 45.0 percent of paid attendees*

Highlights

- Facility attendance in 2023-24 was 409,975
- Free access was provided to 83,840 people in 2024, representing 20.0 percent of total attendance
- Memberships reached an all-time high of 10,753 households
- Opened the new Wichita Foundation Amphitheater with a Drone Light Festival that attracted nearly 10,000 paid attendees



Accomplishments and Strategic Results

Accomplishments

Exploration Place continued the strong growth seen since 2022, including record attendance and record membership. A new permanent exhibit called Team Lab was created. More than 2,000 visitors attended Exploration Place's solar eclipse event. Traveling exhibits included Bricktopia, DC Super Heroes, and Toytopia.

The Wichita Foundation Amphitheater, part of the \$27.0 million Exploration Place 2 (EP2) expansion campaign, opened and a destination playscape is set to open in 2026. The fundraising campaign has raised \$24.0 million, 89.0 percent of its goal.

Strategic Results

Strategic results for Exploration Place included the following measures in 2024:

- Maintained an average Google review of 4.7 out of 5.0 from 2023;
- 11,599 students of Title I schools were admitted on free field trips, an increase of 2,343 students from 2023; and
- in 2023, Exploration Place recorded 405,543 attendees. In 2025, Exploration Place admitted 409,975 attendees, a new record high.

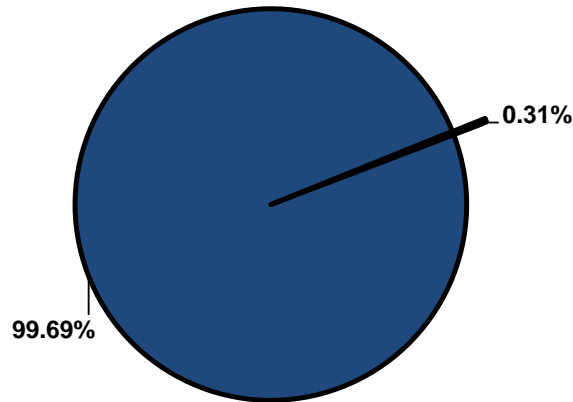


Significant Budget Adjustments

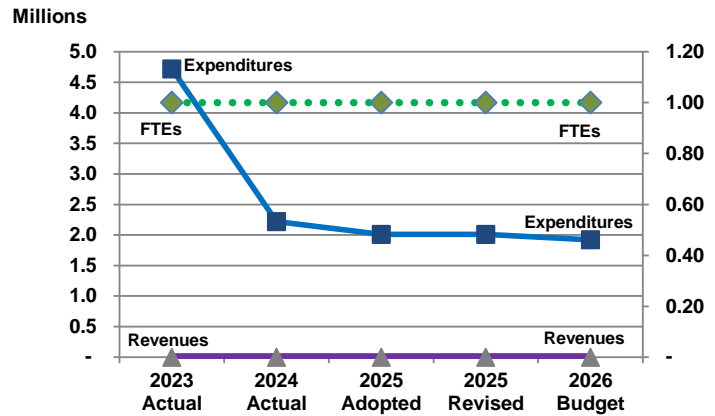
Significant adjustments to Exploration Place's 2026 Recommended Budget include a decrease in contractals (\$100,000) to offset a budget imbalance.

Departmental Graphical Summary

Exploration Place
Percent of Total County Operating Budget



Expenditures, Program Revenue & FTEs
All Operating Funds



Budget Summary by Category

	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Adopted	2025 Revised	2026 Budget	Amount Chg '25 Rev.-'26	% Chg '25 Rev.-'26
Expenditures							
Personnel	202,292	202,794	209,576	209,576	219,901	10,325	4.93%
Contractual Services	4,517,848	2,017,346	1,800,741	1,800,741	1,700,741	(100,000)	-5.55%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commodities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	4,720,140	2,220,140	2,010,317	2,010,317	1,920,642	(89,675)	-4.46%
Revenues							
Tax Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Licenses and Permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charges for Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All Other Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)							
Property Tax Funded	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	0.00%
Non-Property Tax Funded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total FTEs	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	0.00%

Budget Summary by Fund

	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Adopted	2025 Revised	2026 Budget	Amount Chg '25 Rev.-'26	% Chg '25 Rev.-'26
Fund							
General Fund	4,720,140	2,220,140	2,010,317	2,010,317	1,920,642	(89,675)	-4.46%
Total Expenditures	4,720,140	2,220,140	2,010,317	2,010,317	1,920,642	(89,675)	-4.46%

Significant Budget Adjustments from Prior Year Revised Budget

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs
Decrease in contractuals to offset a budget imbalance	(100,000)		

Total (100,000) - -

Budget Summary by Program

Program	Fund	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Adopted	2025 Revised	2026 Budget	% Chg '25 Rev.-'26	25-'26' FTEs
Exploration Place	110	4,720,140	2,220,140	2,010,317	2,010,317	1,920,642	-4.46%	1.00
Total		4,720,140	2,220,140	2,010,317	2,010,317	1,920,642	-4.46%	1.00

Position Titles	Fund	Grade	Budgeted Compensation Comparison			FTE Comparison		
			2025 Adopted	2025 Revised	2026 Budget	2025 Adopted	2025 Revised	2026 Budget
President CEO Exploration Place	110	CONTRACT	159,757	167,744	167,744	1.00	1.00	1.00
Subtotal					167,744			
Add:								
Budgeted Personnel Savings					-			
Compensation Adjustments					11,342			
Overtime/On Call/Holiday Pay					-			
Benefits					40,815			
Total Personnel Budget					219,901	1.00	1.00	1.00