

Exploration Place

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

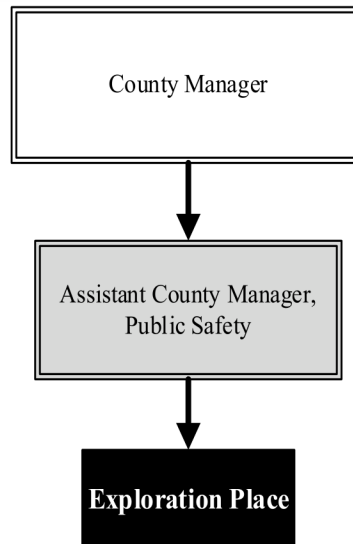
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Overview

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. Recent transformational investments include the Wichita Foundation Amphitheater, which hosts free outdoor films, concerts, and wellness programming, and the new destination Adventure Playscape that opened in March 2026. This nationally distinctive 10-playground environment is designed to attract families from across the region and significantly increase visitation.



Strategic Goals:

- *Be the number one ranked visitor attraction in Wichita*
- *Be recognized as one of the premier science centers in the nation*
- *Reach every child in Kansas with STEM educational programming*
- *Achieve annual attendance of 1.0 million visitors*
- *Participation from all demographics in our community, proportional to their size*
- *Increase out-of-state visitation to 10.0 percent and out-of-county visitation to 45.0 percent*

Highlights

- Facility attendance was about 400,000
- 40,000 participants attended free community programs, including RiverFlix, Riverside Yoga, Parkrun, and amphitheater events
- Provided about 12,000 free field trips to Title I students and 30,000 additional free admissions through access programs
- Successfully advanced the \$27 million capital campaign funding major enhancements including the amphitheater and Adventure Playscape



Accomplishments and Strategic Results

Accomplishments

Exploration Place has sustained strong growth, achieving record attendance, membership, and community engagement. The organization expanded its role as both a regional destination and a statewide education provider through:

- Launch of new exhibits and immersive experiences
- Expansion of free and low-cost access programs for underserved populations
- Delivery of large-scale community programming in the amphitheater
- Opening of the Adventure Playscape in March 2026
- Continues to play a leadership role through partnerships with local, statewide and regional organizations

Strategic Results

Exploration Place has the following goals and outcomes for 2025

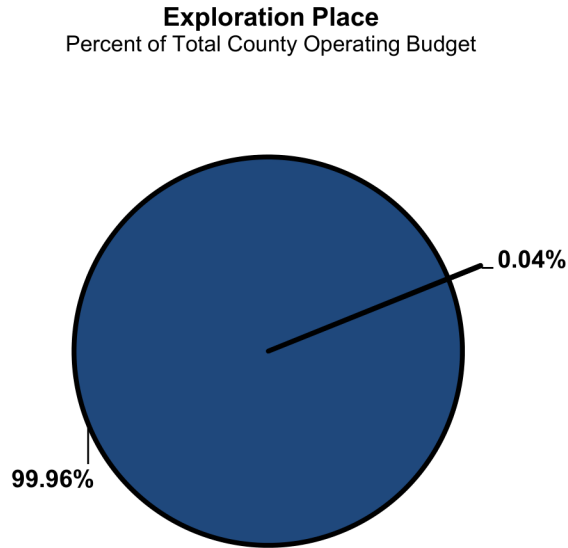
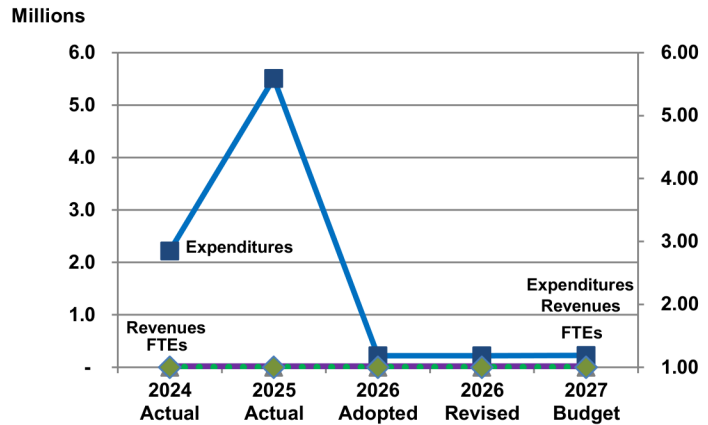
In 2025, Exploration Place aimed to have an average Google review rating above 4.5 to reflect high visitor satisfaction. In 2025 Exploration Place maintained an average of 4.7 out of 5.0 stars. Long term Exploration Place aims to achieve an annual attendance of 1.0 million visitors a year, and in 2025 they reached about 400,000 visitors with significant growth anticipated after the March 2026 opening of the Adventure Playscape.



Significant Budget Adjustments

There are no significant adjustments to Exploration Place's 2027 Recommended Budget.

Departmental Graphical Summary

Expenditures, Program Revenue & FTEs
All Operating Funds

Budget Summary by Category

	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amount Chg '26 Rev.-'27	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27
Expenditures							
Personnel	202,794	213,489	219,901	219,901	227,347	7,445	3.39%
Contractual Services	2,017,346	5,296,828	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commodities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	2,220,140	5,510,317	219,901	219,901	227,347	7,445	3.39%
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

Fund	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amount Chg '26 Rev.-'27	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27
General Fund	2,220,140	5,510,317	219,901	219,901	227,347	7,445	3.39%
Total Expenditures	2,220,140	5,510,317	219,901	219,901	227,347	7,445	3.39%

Significant Budget Adjustments from Prior Year Revised Budget

Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs
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Total	-	-	-
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Budget Summary by Program

Program	Fund	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27	26-'27' FTEs
Exploration Place	110	2,220,140	5,510,317	219,901	219,901	227,347	3.39%	1.00
Total		2,220,140	5,510,317	219,901	219,901	227,347	3.39%	1.00

			Budgeted Compensation Comparison			FTE Comparison		
Position Titles	Fund	Grade	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget
President CEO Exploration Place	110	CONTRACT	167,744	174,454	174,454	1.00	1.00	1.00
Subtotal					174,454			
Add:								
Budgeted Personnel Savings					-			
Compensation Adjustments					9,933			
Overtime/On Call/Holiday Pay					-			
Benefits					42,959			
Total Personnel Budget					227,347	1.00	1.00	1.00