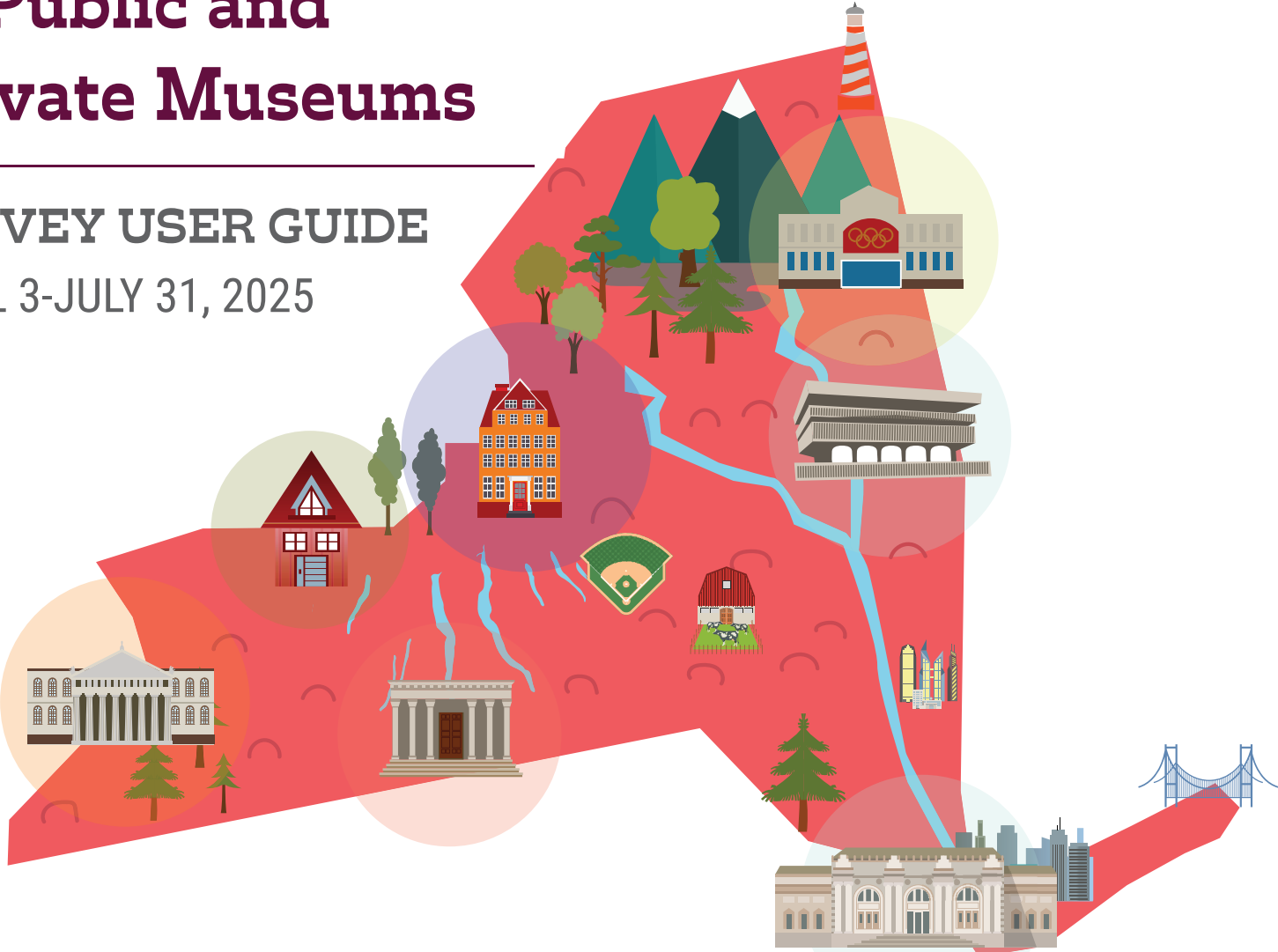


New York Study of Public and Private Museums

SURVEY USER GUIDE

APRIL 3-JULY 31, 2025





**Introduction to the
NY Study
of Public &
Private Museums**

WHAT IS THE STUDY?

THE New York Study of Public and Private Museums, is a sort of “census” of all chartered museums including zoos, historic sites, public gardens ... and more in the state of New York. A comprehensive study of museums in New York has never been conducted, and this project will help identify every museum in the state. The project was commissioned by the state legislature through statute. Data is critical to the state agencies that want to assess the needs of museums and track how future initiatives may positively benefit the museum sector.

Your data will contribute to research that will support keeping New York State museums open, accessible, and delivering impact in our communities.

This Study by Empire State Development, New York State Council on the Arts, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Department of State, and New York State Education Department is being conducted by Wilkening Consulting.

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HOW TO COMPLETE: SURVEY BASICS

The survey [web page](#) will be open for submissions until July 31, 2025.

You should use data from 2024.

For this survey, a well-informed estimate is preferred to no answer at all.

Some questions will be easy; some will take time, thought, and light research.

Keep this guide open as you go through the survey questions.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

WE are looking for every museum in the state of New York that:

- has a physical space where objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific significance or interest are stored and exhibited
- is also open to the public in some capacity
- is not-for-profit

For the purposes of this Study, the following institutions don't qualify as museums:

- Digital repository only
- Historical association with no exhibits
- Museum that is not open to the public/permanently closed
- For-profit museum

- ✓ Air and space museums
- ✓ Anthropology museums
- ✓ Aquariums
- ✓ Art museums or centers
- ✓ Arboretums/botanical gardens
- ✓ Children's museums
- ✓ Culturally or ethnically specific museums
- ✓ Historic houses
- ✓ Historic sites
- ✓ History museums
- ✓ Libraries with museum collections which serve as a key element of the visitor experience
- ✓ Natural history museums
- ✓ Nature centers or preserves
- ✓ Science/technology museums or centers
- ✓ Zoological parks
- ✓ Specialized museums (e.g., railroad, music, etc.)
- ✓ State parks with museum collections which serve as a key element of the visitor experience

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Plan to spend about 15 minutes entering your data, if you have everything at hand.

You may want to gather the survey information before you sit down to start entering. Expect to spend one to two hours collecting all the data you will need.

If your museum doesn't already keep a lot of data, it might take you a little longer.



TOOLS NEEDED

START by reading through the [survey questions](#).

Then start gathering your data. You'll need information on your museum's:

- Contact info and museum type
- Governance & financial information
- Visitation rates
- Facilities, collections, and operational disruptions
- Volunteers, staff, and training

Don't worry if you are missing some data. We will help you find the answers you need.

We've created a Data Collection Spreadsheet, accessible on [the Study website](#) to help you with gathering your information.

- This tool allows you and your team to quickly and collaboratively gather the data required for the survey.
- The worksheet includes a 1-page Excel document which will allow you to input all your data in one place before starting the survey.

When you have questions, look for answers in this guide. It is organized to match the parts of the survey.

HELPFUL LINKS

For a copy of the survey, go to:

<https://wilkeningconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/New-York-State-Survey-of-Public-and-Private-Museums-Survey.pdf>

For more information about the survey, visit:

<https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/>

To begin the survey, go to:

www.nymuseumstudy.com

Need help? Reach out to us at:

Zachary Finn | outreach@wilkeningconsulting.com

Noël Koehn | noel@wilkeningconsulting.com

HELPFUL INFO

Consider reading through the instructions before you begin to make sure you're prepared.

Relax! There's no need to enter all the data at one time. You will receive a link, so you can start and stop as needed.

Get your most helpful/knowledgeable board member, colleague, or volunteer to give you a hand.

Don't forget to hit "submit." Your survey isn't submitted until then.

Check your email. You will get a confirmation email that you've started as soon as you complete the second page of the survey.

You will receive an email with a PDF version of your responses to all the questions. You may want to save a copy for your files.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

THE Study includes a lot of questions...

THESE TIPS AND RESOURCES WILL HELP YOU BREEZE THROUGH IT.

For the best experience, complete this survey on a desktop computer or laptop. A tablet or phone will work, too.

Use the “back” and “next” buttons at the bottom of each page to navigate.

You can leave the survey and come back to it. Your information will be automatically saved. As soon as you start to enter data, you will get an email with a link that will let you get back in at any point.

Take a look through this guide or review the PDF of the Study questions before you start.

Consider gathering your data before starting the survey. You can use the data collection tools we’ve supplied. Fill in the worksheets in the PDF of the Study or type your data into the spreadsheets we’ve made.


Use this guide as a supplemental resource. It will provide support as you work through the survey or gather your answers beforehand.

GETTING STARTED

Download the PDF and look over the questions. Are there any questions you know you don't have info for? Mark them. These may be questions you want to prepare for, maybe using the worksheets we've provided.

Gather up any information; take notes; do anything that can help you get your information entered into the survey site.

Use the Data Collection Spreadsheet to compile all your information. Plus, you'll be able to continue adding to the spreadsheet, so you'll have your data in one place in the future.



Introduction to the Survey Questions

SURVEY SECTIONS

**The survey is broken down by topic.
These include:**

- | Museum information: contact details, hours, etc.
- | Governance
- | Finance: funding and income sources, fiscal stability
- | Paid staff, volunteer workers, training
- | Visitation
- | Facilities
- | Collections
- | External disruptions
- | America | 250th

Directory of Questions: *Organizational Information*

Legal name of museum OR parent organization name

The name you go by/public museum name (if different)

Museum's physical address

Is this also your mailing address?

For organizations whose mailing address is different than their physical address:

Museum's mailing address

Museum's physical location – County

Museum website

Museum phone number (ex. 518-000-0000; include hyphens)

Your contact information, in case we have any questions about your responses

If we have questions regarding any of your responses, would you prefer we reach out to you by email or by phone?

What type of museum are you? (Choose all that apply.)

If you had to pick a single discipline to describe your museum, which one would it be? (Choose only one.)

Which of the following best describes when you are open to the public? (Choose one.)

In a typical week, how many days per week are you open at least 4 hours per day? (Choose one.)

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

In the first section, we ask for the information that would be on your business card. We'll use your contact information to contact you if we need to.

When you submit your email address on the second page, you will get an email with a link to your survey. That way, if you need to take a break, you can come back and work on it again.

For this Study, a museum is an institution

- with a physical space
- where objects of cultural, historical, or scientific significance or interest are stored and exhibited
- that is open to the public

Does your organization have a collection of furniture? Trees? Animals? Books? Paintings? Scientific equipment? Something else?

Are you open to the public, so visitors can see your cool stuff?

Are you your own or part of another non-for-profit organization or government entity?

If you aren't sure whether your institution fits, just ask!

NEED HELP?
click here

MUSEUM INFORMATION

? What is the legal name of your museum?

If you have a parent organization, please give us that name.

? Is the name your museum uses with the public different from your legal name?

Let us know that.

? Are there multiple museums in your organization?

If your museums have independent identities (such as discrete leadership, names, websites, and the public views them as separate museums), each museum should respond separately.

If you have multiple sites that are under the same leadership, name, website, etc., only one response is necessary; simply fill in the name of the overall museum.

? Share your museum's physical address:

If your museum has multiple sites, input the address of your organization's headquarters.

For organizations whose mailing address is different than their physical address:

? Add your museum's mailing address:

Same as above. This is where you would want your membership forms sent.

? Where is your headquarters?

Let us know what county it is in.

? Share your museum's website URL:

If your museum doesn't have a website, feel free to include the digital platform (for example, Facebook) where you most regularly engage with your audience and provide updates.

? What's the main phone number for your museum?

MUSEUM DISCIPLINE AND HOURS OF OPERATION

? What type of museum are you?
Museums do a lot! Please be sure to mark all categories that fit your museum.

? What is your main focus? If you had to pick a single discipline to describe your museum, which one would it be?
What category BEST fits your organization? This might be hard if your museum works in many areas, and if you truly are multi-disciplinary, mark the first option.

Are you still having trouble selecting an answer? Try visiting tourism websites that feature your museum and reading through their descriptions. Sometimes an outside set of eyes helps! We know you do a lot, and picking one discipline can be tricky.

? When are you open to the public? In other words, when do you invite in visitors? Below are some examples your museum might find useful when answering this question.

“Our exhibition spaces are open seasonally but we often programming throughout the year.” *Please mark “Year-round”!*

“One of our sites is open part of the year, and the other is open the whole year.”
Please mark “Year-round”!

“We are renovating, so no one can visit right now.” *Please mark whatever will best fit your site when you reopen.*

Is your situation different? Send us an email. We’re here to help.

? Next, let us know how many days of each week you are open. If you are open for only part of the year, tell us about your schedule during your “open-to-visitors” season.

Directory of Questions: Governance

Which of the following best describes your museum's governance? (Choose one.)

For organizations that are academic museums or galleries:

Which of the following best describes your academic institution? (Choose one.)

Please indicate how many seats are on the following boards your museum has or that is affiliated with your museum.

Are you having trouble recruiting volunteers or board members?

GOVERNANCE

- ? Let us know about your museum's governance by picking the best answer from the list.**

If you aren't sure of the answer, check in with a board member or someone else in a leadership position.

Now help us understand your board structure.

- ? Tell us how many people serve on your**

- Governing board
- Advisory board
- Board of your friends group

Maybe you don't have one or more of these groups or boards. That's fine! We want to understand what you do have.

- ? Help the State understand volunteerism in museums.**

Are you having trouble recruiting volunteers or board members? Has it been hard to find people to help out?

Directory of Questions:

Financial Information

What were your museum's operating expenses for the 2024 fiscal year?

What were your museum's operating revenues for the 2024 fiscal year?

By percent, please provide a breakdown of your 2024 fiscal year operating revenue by income source.

Did you receive any state funding in 2021, 2022, 2023, or 2024? This can include operating or capital funding. (Choose all that apply.)

For organizations that received state funding:

What did your state funding pay for? (Choose all that apply.)

Do you have any cash reserves to cover operating expenses in an emergency? Examples of an emergency could be an unexpected closure (such as a pandemic) or damage to your site from a natural disaster. If so, how many months of expenses do you maintain in your reserves? (Choose one.)

If your museum had an unexpected significant expense, what options would be considered? (Choose all that apply.)

Do you consider your museum to be fiscally stressed? If yes, tell us more about your financial challenges.

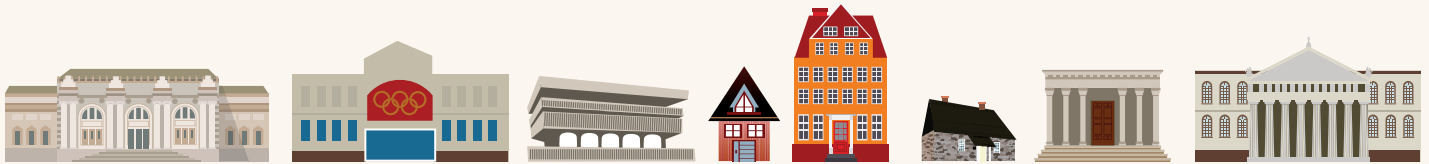
For organizations that are fiscally stressed:

We'd like to understand what financial challenges you are facing. Please share your concerns here. (Feel free to skip if you prefer not to answer.)

What is the likelihood that your museum will close/cease operations in the next 12 months?

If there is anything else you would like to share with us about your museum's financial health and funding needs, please feel free to do so here.

NOW WE'RE ON TO FINANCES.



Remember, we believe that museums are stronger together! The more data collected through this survey, the better picture will emerge of the financial needs of museums in New York. The data you provide for this survey about your museum's financial information will help NYS identify where state funding can best support museums.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In this section, please use information from your fiscal year.

Specifically, we need data from fiscal year 2024.

A fiscal year is the IRS-recognized 12-month period for 2024 during which your museum tracks revenue and expenses for tax purposes and accounting. It may or may not be the same as the calendar year. If you are not sure, check with whoever does your bookkeeping.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION – EXPENSES

? **What were your museum's operating expenses for the 2024 fiscal year?**

How much does it cost to operate your museum in a year?

Your total operating expenses for the 2024 fiscal year should include your operating costs, programs, and overhead. **It should NOT include capital expenses.**

If you do not know the answer to this question, we recommend consulting with your board of trustees, bookkeeper or other museum staff or volunteers who are involved with the financial operations of your museum.

If you are unable to locate this information, resources such as Guidestar, Propublica, or the IRS Searchable Tax-Exempt Database may have your organization's earlier filings, which can help you make an educated guess as to your 2024 operating revenue.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION – REVENUES

? **What were your museum's operating revenues for the 2024 fiscal year?**

In other words, how much money did your museum bring in during the 2024 fiscal year?

This includes earned income like ticket sales and events. Revenue also includes donations, grants, and endowment income.

Please do not include revenue raised for capital expenses or to increase your organization's endowment.

Remember to consult your board of trustees, bookkeeper or other museum staff or volunteers who are involved with the financial operations of your museum if you don't know. Nobody can be expected to know everything, after all!

If you are unable to locate this information, resources such as Guidestar, Propublica, or the IRS Searchable Tax-Exempt Database may have your organizations earlier filings, which can help you make an educated guess as to your 2024 operating revenue.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION – REVENUES

We'd like more detail, please.

Help us understand the source of your revenue.

? Please share what percent of your 2024 fiscal year operating revenue came from what income source. Use the categories in the survey:

- Municipal sources (county/city/town/village)
- State (direct allocation or grant, including NYSCA)
- Federal (direct allocation or grant, including IMLS, NEH, NEA, NSF, etc.)
- Admissions and ticket sales
- Other earned income (e.g., memberships, shop, food service, rentals, etc.)
- Donations from individuals and corporations (including: gifts above and beyond membership, fundraising, and corporate sponsorships)
- Private grants from foundations or other non-government sources
- Investment income (e.g., endowment or other investments)
- Direct support from a parent institution (e.g., college or university)
- Other support not listed above (Please tell us the source.)

The total should be 100%, although rounding may cause you to get up to 105% (that's OK!)

Are you unsure?

Consult with your board of trustees, bookkeeper or other museum staff or volunteers who are involved with the financial operations of your museum.

Do you track your income sources using different categories? (Perhaps you include admission or donations with earned income?)

Please make a reasonable estimate. You'll find help on making an educated estimate on the next page or in our "Good Estimates" video at <https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/video-resources/>.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION – REVENUES

Dividing your income into these categories might be a challenge, if you track revenue differently. Here are some ideas to help:

Do you have someone who helps with your financial records, like a bookkeeper or finance director?

Ask that person for help!

Ask your colleague to complete the finance questions in the data collection spreadsheet. Once the information is compiled, you can easily add it to the survey.

Does your museum track revenue using different categories? That's OK. Ask your finance expert to make reasonable estimates for this section.

If you don't have a bookkeeper or finance office,

Do you work with an outside auditor?
Check with that person or firm for help.

—OR—

Figure out how your institution tracks sales and revenue. Do you use a spreadsheet, point of sale system such as Square, QuickBooks, or another in-house tracking mechanism?

Identify the categories your organization uses to sort income.

From there, use your judgment to sort that information into the Study's revenue categories.

Consider consulting other staff, volunteers, or board members. Teamwork will likely help you make the best educated estimate.

STATE FUNDING

We are trying to measure the impact of funding from the state.

? If you are a private, non-profit museum or a municipally funded institution, tell us about any funding you received from the state in the last few years. Did you receive any state funding for operating OR capital expenses in 2021, 2022, 2023, or 2024?

Are you new to your museum?

Are you unsure of your answer? You might want to double-check with other staff, board members, and volunteers involved with developing grant proposals and fundraising.

Consulting others might be particularly important when considering past year's funding.

? If you received funds from the state, share with us what that money paid for. (Choose from the options provided in the survey).

FISCAL STABILITY

? How well are you prepared for a financial emergency? Do you have any cash reserves to cover operating expenses in a crisis such as an unexpected closure? Consider how you might manage if another pandemic happened. How about damage from a natural disaster? Do you have savings available for that situation?

? If you do have cash reserves, how many months of operating expenses do you maintain in your reserves?

? What if your museum had an unexpected significant expense? What options would you consider in response?

Are you uncertain about how your institution might respond? Talk with your leadership, from the director to the board.

? Next, let us know if you consider your museum to be fiscally stressed? If you do, please tell us more about your financial challenges.

What is “fiscally stressed”? Are you at risk of ceasing key operations, considering reducing staff, or lacking the funds to implement elements of your mission?

If you are fiscally stressed. . .

? Would you like to share more detail about your museum’s financial situation? If you would, please use this space. If you’d rather not share, that’s fine.

Remember, one goal of this Study is to identify the financial needs of museums in New York. The information you provide here will help state agencies develop initiatives responsive to these concerns.

? What is the likelihood that your museum will close/cease operations in the next 12 months?

FISCAL STABILITY

? **Finally, would you like to share anything else about your museum's financial health? What about your funding needs?**

If you want to make comments on this topic, this is the spot to do it. If you don't want to add anything, just move onto the next section.

Directory of Questions:

Employment

How many paid, permanent, full-time employees does your museum currently employ?

How many paid, permanent, part-time employees does your museum currently employ?

How many paid seasonal or temporary employees did your museum employ in 2024?

How many paid independent contractors did your museum employ in 2024?

How many volunteers donated their time to your museum in 2024?

In 2024, how many hours have volunteers contributed to your museum?

What organizations have your staff or volunteers (including board members) participated in trainings at in the past 3 years? (Choose all that apply.)

INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

Questions in this section relate to your museum's staffing and volunteer numbers.

Do you have a system for tracking the number of hours contributed by volunteers? If yes, then this section will be easy. If you don't, we will help you make good estimates.

We've provided a Volunteer Workbook and Data Collection Spreadsheet to make keeping this data easier in the future. To access go to:
wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/#resources

In this section, a few of the questions are about your current staffing, and most relate to staffing in 2024.

You may submit data from your fiscal year or the calendar year. Decide what works better for your institution. Just make sure that you include data from 12 consecutive months.

EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

DEFINITIONS

Let's make sure we're using the same language.
For this Study, please use the definitions below:

Permanent, full time: A full-time (30-hours or more), year-round employee with an indefinite term of employment (no end date).

Permanent, part-time: An employee who works less than 30-hours a week, year-round and has an indefinite term of employment.

Paid seasonal or temporary: a seasonal employee only works for part of the year, such as summers, and is paid as an employee. A temporary employee is hired for a specific period of time, such as an intern who is paid, and they are not hired to work a permanent, year-round schedule. *Unpaid interns should be considered volunteers for the purpose of this Study.*

Volunteer: A volunteer is an individual who provides unpaid services or work for your museum. For this survey, this also includes unpaid interns and student volunteers.

Contractor: A “contractor” is anyone hired to help your museum achieve its mission, who is not salaried/paid as an employee, whether they are hired long-or short-term. They are not paid through your payroll, and they may receive a n IRS Form 1099. For this survey, contractors could include curators, interpreters, social media managers, etc. *Please do not include contractors whose work does not directly support your mission, such as electricians or your auditor.*

EMPLOYMENT

- ? Please fill in the number of full and part time employees you have now, and let us know how many temporary or seasonal staff you had in 2024.**
- ? Then move on to paid independent contractors for your museum.**

- ? Next, let us know many volunteers donated their time to your museum in 2024.**
You may have some volunteers listed in your records who weren't able to contribute time in 2024. Please include only volunteers who were active during 2024. Please use your museum's definition of an "active" volunteer. We trust your judgment!

EMPLOYMENT

? In 2024, how many hours did volunteers contribute to your museum?

If you do not already collect this data, here are a couple of ideas:

- Try to think back to 2024. How many volunteers usually came in each week? Did anybody volunteer for only part of the year? How much time did each volunteer contribute? Maybe you have a library volunteer who comes in like clockwork: 3 hours every Tuesday afternoon. Do any volunteers help with special projects or events? How much time do you think each of them donated?
- Another method is to reach out to your volunteers to ask how much time they estimate they volunteered in 2024.
- You could even do both and then compare the numbers to try to improve your estimate.
- Once you have a number for each volunteer, then add those hours together for a total.

Then, consider implementing the “Volunteer Management Spreadsheet” available at <https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/#resources>. This free resource will allow you to easily track volunteer data moving forward. These numbers can be valuable for demonstrating community engagement to both donors and granting organizations. Plus, hours data can be helpful anytime you thank your volunteers.

Directory of Questions: *Visitation*

How many visitors visited your museum in 2024 in person?

Are you able to provide us with more detailed attendance data (good estimates are welcome!) about your visitors?

For organizations that marked “yes” to providing more detailed attendance data:

What percentage of your 2024 in-person visitation is from (fill in blanks)

For organizations that collect geographic information in different way:

What percentage of your 2024 in-person visitors were from (fill in blanks)

For organizations that marked “we did not collect geographic data this way either:”

Tell us about how you collect geographic data, so we can understand your system.
(We’d love your results as well!)

For organizations that marked “yes” to providing more detailed attendance data:

What percentage of your 2024 in-person visitors were (fill in blanks)

How many children participated in your K-12 school field trips to your museum in 2024 in person? This number should not include chaperones or teachers.

VISITATION

? Let us know how many people visited your museum in person in 2024. Use either fiscal year or calendar year data. Just be sure to include 12 consecutive months of information.

Your 2024 visitation numbers may include:

- General/everyday admissions
- In-person program participants
- Special event attendees
- K-12 school program attendees
- People who enjoyed your property/grounds/park
- And anyone else who visited/participated in person

If you do not have an exact number, please enter a good estimate!

To make an educated estimate of in-person visitors to your museum:

- Consider tracking attendance for a week or two to get some initial data.
- Consult your staff and volunteers to work together to develop an estimate of daily attendance and participation in programs and special events.

- If you have a point of sale system or financial management tool, use that to calculate the number of tickets sold for admission and events. For programs that were free, discuss with volunteers and staff who were present to make an estimate of total attendees.

If you are not already tracking visitation, we urge to you start! You will discover many ways to use this information. Try our Data Collection Spreadsheet as you move forward.

VISITATION

Next, we'd like to understand more details about your visitors.

? We're interested in knowing where your visitors came from and how old they were. Do you keep this information?

Are you not sure of your data? Please make a good estimate.

One way to create a reasonable estimate is to collect some data over the next week or two. Also, check on whether you have any demographic data. Use whatever you can collect to extrapolate for the whole year, keeping in mind that it's better to be more conservative than expansive in your estimate. For more information on how to make good estimates, watch our video at <https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/video-resources/>.

You'll see two ways to enter information about where your 2024 visitors came from. Please pick the one that works better for your museum.

TELL US EITHER

The percentage of your visitors who:

- traveled less than 50 miles from their home
- traveled more than 50 miles from their home

—OR—

The percentage of your visitors who visited from:

- New York State
- Neighboring state (PA, NJ, CT, MA, VT)
- Other U.S. state or territory
- Other countries

Perhaps you collect geographic data, but it doesn't fit into either of these reporting options. We're still interested in your information! Please share the details of your system and let us know what information you have gathered.

If you don't have the information for this question and can't make a good estimate, skip on to the questions about school field trips.

VISITATION – AGE & VISITATION: K-12

? We'd love to know how old your visitors are.

Enter your data by showing the percentage of visitors in each category below.

Remember, a good estimate is better than no answer. For help making good estimates, go to <https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/video-resources/> to find a video on the topic.

- Children (age 17 and younger)
- Adults 18 - 64
- Adults 65 or older (or however your museum defines “senior”)

? Did any students visit on field trips? How many children participated in in-person K-12 school field trips to your museum in 2024? Please do not include chaperones or teachers in this figure.

As always, if you're not sure, try to make a good estimate. Consult the staff or volunteers who work with school groups to try to reconstruct the information.

If you did not have any K-12 school groups visit in 2024, please let us know that.

Directory of Questions: *Collections*

What are the primary types of collections your museum owns? (Choose all that apply.)

For organizations with collections:

Are you able to provide us with the number of items in your collection by category? Good estimates are welcome if you don't have exact numbers.

For organizations that can provide the number of items in their collection:

How many items do you have in each category? Good estimates are welcome if you don't have exact numbers.

COLLECTIONS

Now we'd like to learn about your collections. We're interested in everything you have accessioned, whether inanimate or live collections.

? Please tell us what type of collections you steward:

- Fine art (e.g., paintings, sculptures, prints, etc.)
- Historical artifacts
- Natural history specimens (e.g., preserved animal and/or plant specimens, rocks and minerals)
- Live animals
- Live plants
- Archives/manuscripts/ephemera
- Photographs/negatives/moving images
- Indigenous Belongings
- Rare books

? Then let us know the size of your collections. Do you know the total numbers of animals, objects, plants, etc. your museum houses through a collections management database, spreadsheet, or other system? We want to understand the size of your collection by the same categories as above.

Remember, an educated estimate is better than no answer. We're interested in learning about the vast holdings of museums in New York!

Directory of Questions: *Facilities*

For organizations that are non-profits only:

Does your museum own or rent your primary facility/facilities? (Choose all that apply.)

For organizations that rent, have an agreement, or other:

Who has responsibility of care for your facility, such as repairs and maintenance?

For organizations that own their facility, care for a facility they do not own, or that are government and academic entities:

How many structures do you care for?

For organizations that are non-profits only:

Does your museum own or rent your primary facility/facilities? (Choose all that apply.)

For organizations that rent, have an agreement, or other:

Who has responsibility of care for your facility, such as repairs and maintenance?
(Choose one.)

How many structures do you care for?

What is the age of your museum facility (including historic properties). If you have more than one building, indicate all that apply for your primary structures.

For organizations that own their own facility or have responsibility of care:

Do you have a backlog of deferred maintenance and/or preservation concerns?

For organizations that marked “yes” to having concerns:

If you have an estimate of the costs to address your deferred maintenance or preservation concerns, please share it here.

Directory of Questions: *Facilities (continued)*

In case of an emergency (especially one related to severe weather), does your museum have an emergency/disaster plan or a cash reserve? Indicate the response that most applies for each option.

Do you have meeting or event space that outside organizations can rent?

For organizations that marked “yes” to having meeting or event space to rent:

What amenities can you provide for rentals? (Choose all that apply.)

We’d like to understand if your facility is fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, and if not, if you are facing challenges or working on a plan to increase accessibility. Which of the following best describes your facility? (Choose one.)

FACILITIES

Let us know about your museum's facilities.

You might be able to whiz through this section. Perhaps your museum operates out of a single building that you all know like the back of your hand.

But maybe it's more complicated. Museums with multiple structures from different eras in different states of repair may need to spend a little more time gathering information.

Consider using the Data Collection Spreadsheet as a spot to gather all your information. Invite anyone else—from staff to volunteers to board members—who might know details about facilities to contribute to the spreadsheet. Once all the data is assembled, you can plug it into the survey.

Are you seeing the questions in a different order or not encountering every question listed in this guide? It's not a mistake! In some cases, the sequence of questions depends on your answers. Look ahead if you need help with a question and haven't yet seen it in the user guide. Don't worry if a question is shown here, but it's not in your version of the survey.

FACILITIES

? **Is your museum a non-profit organization?
We'd like to know if you own or rent your
primary facility.**

If you do not own your building or buildings, please use the survey to help us understand who has the responsibility of maintaining the facility.

If your organization is responsible for caring for your building or buildings, please give us more details about the type and number of buildings in your care.

? **We're curious about your**

- Primary museum structures (public buildings with exhibitions, including visitor centers and educational centers)
- Buildings that solely support operations (offices, public restrooms, parking structures, grounds operations, collections storage)
- Sheds, barns, and other outbuildings (not open to public)

FACILITIES: PRESERVATION ISSUES

? Next, let us know the age of your museum facility (including historic properties).

If you have more than one building, tell us about just your primary structures, rather than structures only for supporting operations (for example, offices, parking structures, public restrooms, grounds operations, and collections storage).

? Do you have a backlog of deferred maintenance and/or preservation concerns?

In other words, are there any maintenance or preservation projects that you have put off because you don't have time, money, staff, expertise, or something else to accomplish them?

? If you do, please give us more information. Can you estimate the costs to address your deferred maintenance or preservation concerns? Please let us know to help us assess capital needs for the museum field.

We know this is an estimate. For this question, please tell us if your number is an official estimate from experts from the construction/preservation trades or is your informal estimate (even if it's a well-educated estimate!).

? Next, we'd like to know about preparations for emergencies and disasters. Does your museum have an emergency/disaster plan or a cash reserve for weather or another crisis?

Help us understand how well prepared you are for something unexpected and disastrous.

FACILITIES: RENTALS

? **Do you have meeting or event space that outside organizations can rent?**

State organizations are always looking for places to host training sessions and gather for meetings. By telling us about your rental facilities and capacity, you may be asked to provide space for these events in the future.

? **If you do, please share what amenities can you provide for rentals and whether your facility is completely accessible to visitors and guests with disabilities.**

- **What is challenging about accessibility and your facilities?**
- **Have you been able to start planning to increase accessibility?**

Directory of Questions:

External Disruptions

What do you anticipate will be the biggest external disruptions to your museum's operations in the next 12 months? (Choose all that apply.)

EXTERNAL DISRUPTIONS

We would like to know about any external threats to your museum. For this question, we are looking ahead, rather than at the past.

As with other parts of the survey, you may find the question is easier to complete if you consult your team and stakeholders for answers.

We know that it can be scary to think about potential problems. Help us pull together data on threats across the state. Please consider talking with your board, volunteers, colleagues, and supporters to gather a variety of perspectives on what will be the biggest external threats to your museum's operations.

Directory of Questions: *America | 250*

Is your museum planning on participating in America 250 | NYS? This initiative includes civics and democracy topics in the lead-up to the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026.

? Next year is the 250th year since the signing of the Declaration of Independence!

Is your museum planning on participating in America 250 | NYS? This initiative includes civics and democracy topics as we move closer to the big anniversary in 2026.

Please let us know what kinds of America 250 | NYS activities you have in the works. We are interested in definite plans as well as ideas.

To learn about New York State initiatives for the Semiquincentennial, visit: <https://www.nysm.nysed.gov/revolutionaryny250>

Directory of Questions:

Survey Experience

Approximately how much time did it take you and your colleagues to complete this data collection for New York State, including the time spent gathering the requested information?

If you have any feedback you would like to share about this data collection process, including how it could go more smoothly next time, please share it here.

If there is anything else you would like to share with New York State about your museum, and the challenges and opportunities you are facing, please do so here.

SURVEY EXPERIENCE

You're almost done! Thank you for everything you've gathered or entered so far.

Now please tell us about your experience participating in this Study.

Your answers here will help us moving forward, both as we support other museums completing the survey and as New York State develops any future data collection projects.

- ? Please let us know how long it took to complete the survey. Don't forget to include any time you or others spent gathering the requested information.**

- ? What else would you like us to know about participating in the Study? If you have ideas about how this survey could go more smoothly next time, please share them at this point.**
- ? Would you like to tell New York State anything else about your museum or about the challenges and opportunities you are facing? We'd like to know!**

FINAL THOUGHTS

Again, thank you for taking time and care to make the Study a success!

If you have to leave the survey at any point, know that you can always get back to your answers. Just use the link that went to your email as soon as you started adding data.

Let us know if you get confused or run into trouble. We can be reached at outreach@wilkeningconsulting.com.

And to find more resources related to the Study, please visit <https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums/>.

You might hear from us after you've finished the survey. We want to make sure that we understand your data and will get in touch if we have questions.

One last note: the more museums that participate in the Study, the more meaningful the data will be. Please let your colleagues at other institutions know about this project. The survey will remain accessible until July 31, 2025.

We're data people, and we bet you are, too. But perhaps not everyone in your organization is as excited about gathering and keeping information. The next few pages can help you make the argument that routinely tracking the information in this survey is good for your institution.

So, why does data matter?

WHAT CAN WE DO WITH DATA?

THE New York Study of Public and Private Museums has asked you to gather a lot of data.

What can you do with this kind of information at your own museum?

Visitation data help a museum share with stakeholders and donors ways in which their support allowed the organization to serve the public.

Museum leaders can combine visitation information and **staffing data** to make hiring and scheduling decisions by determining which days of the week are the most popular with visitors and therefore need the greatest number of staff on duty.

Where should the museum put its program resources? Which programs bring in the most people? From which programs do visitors learn the most?

How much **collections material** is the organization safeguarding? What are the strengths of the collection?

Facilities information helps an organization determine priorities related to buildings.

What is the state of **disaster planning** in the institution? Knowing the answer can help the museum become better prepared.

Museums with data can go to funders to make a case for increased support. And they can report to existing stakeholders about their impact.

In other words, museums can use data to make informed decisions, which increases their impact.

AND

Museums can use data to advocate for support, which increases their organizational capacity.

We are such data cheerleaders, that we have created tools to make your future data collection easier.

Use the Data Collection Worksheet going forward. It will provide you with one place to keep critical information.

How about volunteer data? If you don't already have a method for tracking volunteer numbers and hours, take a look at the Volunteer Workbook. This spreadsheet allows you to record—and develop reports from—hours donated by each volunteer with your organization.

Both spreadsheets are available as free downloads at



<https://wilkeningconsulting.com/ny-museums>



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