

EL PASO
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM:
FEASIBILITY &
SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

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El Paso Children's Museum
Feasibility & Sustainability Study

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The City of El Paso has become the 19th largest city in the United States.¹ It is “home to a young population whose labor force is bilingual, diverse and ready for our expanding economy.”² With one third of the population below the age of 18, El Paso is one of the youngest cities in the nation. The question of what El Paso can do to provide an excellent quality life for its “young” population is then brought up.

While El Paso continues to revitalize its downtown, there are opportunities to enhance and improve the area economically. El Paso wants to utilize areas in downtown that would benefit the community by building new institutions and creating a livable area.³ A city with a strong urban core attracts a younger educated population.⁴ Industries are then attracted to areas with a high young educated population, which convinces the industries to contribute to the community by sponsoring and funding organizations.⁵ As the El Paso community seeks to spark its economy with its downtown revitalization, the need for educated young people rises.

Texas is ranked the 43rd out of 50 states for the lowest percent of high school graduates. Budget cuts throughout the state have had a great impact on education but were carried out in response to the growing population of Texas and the insufficient revenue is being generated by the state.⁶ The effects these cuts have had at the municipal level have been negative. For example, El Paso was ranked last in an educational survey, bringing to discussion the demand to educate its young population.⁷

With a growing city, the demand for a learning institution that benefits the large population, quality of life, economy and community, becomes strong. A museum would be an institution that provides an educational experience for the community, thus being an attribute to the quality of life of a given community. According to the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA), the definition of a museum is a public or private non-profit organization that is designed for educational and aesthetic purposes. They must own and use tangible objects, maintain those objects and put them on display for the public on a regular basis.⁸ However, a children’s museum varies in services and agenda from conventional museums.

A children’s museum is an institution that provides an educational experience for the youth to improve the quality of life of a community. A children’s museum, according to the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM), is known as a place where children learn through play and exploration in environments designed just for them.⁹ A children’s museum challenges the stereotype of a traditional museum by providing engaging exhibits for children. In a traditional museum, where the average visitor is 37 years old, may have limited or no exhibit interaction appropriate for children.¹⁰ A children’s museum targets an audience of 12 years of age and under, with a purpose of demonstrating how the world around them functions. Children

¹ (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)

² (El Paso Museum of History, 2011)

³ (Flores, 2011)

⁴ (Nasser, 2011)

⁵ (Chew, Executive Director of Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

⁶ (Krugman, 2011)

⁷ (Tate, 2011)

⁸ (Institute of Museums and Library Services, 2008)

⁹ (Association of Children’s Museums, 2008)

¹⁰ (Smithsonian Institution, 2002)

are then allowed to learn in an environment deemed appropriate for their age group, making interaction comfortable and engaging.¹¹

A museum can either be a non-profit or for-profit organization. They are exempted from taxation because they are ideally beneficial to society.¹² This tax relief includes exemption from federal, state, sales, and property tax. The museum's surplus in revenue is not taxed as well but can only be spent on activities related to the operation of the organization. Apart from salaried employees and authorized vendors, no one affiliated with the organization, such as a board member or trustees, may receive a benefit from this surplus. A non-profit museum is also restricted on their methods of generating revenue. It is illegal for a museum to sell merchandise that does not pertain to its exhibits or mission statements. For example, a museum cannot sell refrigerators in its gift shop.¹³

For-profit museums like non-profit museums have an objective to educate its visitors, but differ in their ways of operation. They have more freedom than a non-profit museum in the sense that a for-profit museum may generate more revenue through its price of admission, advertising and other attractions, all which help promote and fund the museum.¹⁴ Another advantage is that the museum has complete control over where and how a museum's revenue will be spent. However, there are two disadvantages to being a for-profit museum. Firstly, for-profit museums cannot be an accredited museum under the American Association of Museums (AAM) requirements. Secondly, for-profit museums are not eligible for the many grants and policies created to help museums. These restrictions placed on for-profit organizations in limiting the sources they get. Nevertheless, the emergence and sustainability of many for-profit museums have been successful.

Community Scholars will determine the feasibility and sustainability of a children's museum in the El Paso community. The report will reflect what is needed to establish a children's museum, and what expenses go into sustaining a museum. The report then serves to be a reflective insight of El Paso, determining if there is room for the establishment of a children's museum in the museum industry. The report addresses the community of El Paso which includes general public in El Paso such as families with children and nonprofit organizations. It also targets the private sector which includes businesses and corporations.

Purpose

Almost one-third of the population in El Paso is under the age of 18 and with the population growth associated with Fort Bliss, the city faces the challenge of providing its citizens with an exceptional quality of life. The situation brings to question the need of more services orientated towards families and their children.

Community Scholars then presents the possibility of developing a children's museum in El Paso and will determine if there is a need to develop a museum as means of accommodating the current and growing youth population and providing them with age appropriate services. In

¹¹(Association of Children's museums, 2011)

¹²(Bloch, 2004)

¹³(Bloch, 2004)

¹⁴(Arroyo, No Dates)

determining the feasibility of a children's museum in El Paso, an analysis of El Paso's economy and demographics, in comparison to those of Albuquerque, New Mexico and Houston, Texas, will be made. The analysis would allow Community Scholars to comprehend the ideal market-taking into account current economic climate and target audience as two factors- for a children's museum.

As Community Scholars began researching the possibility of a children's museum in El Paso, new challenges arose in determining whether the city would be able to support it. Determining the expenses of a potential museum in terms of utilities, staff and exhibits became part of the analysis along with how the museum would acquire funding. Community Scholars looked at sources of funds for museums, whether a museum was included in a municipal budget, and the past and current financial state of a given museum. The accreditation process, important in the eligibility of certain grants, was a factor in comprehending the politics of operating and financing an organization.

Furthermore, the social and financial impact a children's museum could have on a community was brought up throughout the research. A factor that contributes to the success of a children's museum in relation to collaboration from both public and private sectors both sectors' interest for a museum, which becomes crucial in the prolonged sustainability of an institution.

Literature Review

Studies conducted by Sam Woods, T. Caulton and the Association of Children's Museums determined the effects and challenges of children's museums on a given community. These reports are a base element in the Community Scholars study of determining the feasibility and sustainability of a children's museum in El Paso. The studies included The Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report, Museum Economics and the Case for a Children's Museum. The Kronkosky Charitable Foundation's Research Brief on Children's Museums provided Community Scholars with the definition of a children's museum and the importance of play in a both a child's life and on his or her mental development.¹⁵ Even if a children's museum can be an asset to a community, the Kronkosky report goes on to list the challenges a museum may face. Community Scholars also looked at the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report conducted by Sam Woods. Woods determined if the development of a children's museum would benefit and be sustainable in the city of Mankato, Minnesota. The study consisted of comparing other children's museums in cities similar to Mankato, Minnesota. Woods looked at the museums in these cities in order to compare how they were established, the economic impact they had on their community and the attendance numbers they have reached since their establishment.¹⁶

Community Scholars used various reports and studies, all which were crucial to Community Scholars' research methodology, in comprehending the systems of children's museums and the factors and trends relevant to the feasibility and sustainability of a successful institution. "Kronkosky Charitable Foundation Research Brief: Children's Museums", a 2011 report from the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, provides in-depth definitions of what a children's museum is (age-appropriate entertainment for educating children, differences from

¹⁵(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2006)

¹⁶(Woods, No Date)

traditional museums, et cetera) and its objectives and importance to its surrounding community, be it economic or social. Sam Woods' "Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota: Case Study Report" looks into the economic challenges of several children's museums and their social value to communities and their families. "The Case for Children's Museum" released by the Association of Children's Museums (ACM) was needed to further expand on what these social effects are, which range from the effect limited family time has on childhood to the sense of community and enforced education values a children's museum can help promote.

The definition of a children's museum is crucial to Community Scholars' research by providing an understanding of the objectives of a children's museum, its services and target audience. In the Kronkosky report titled "Children's Museums," a children's museum is defined as a "place that encourages curiosity and stimulates learning while bringing families and children together."¹⁷ According to a report titled "Hands-on Exhibitions," children's museums differentiate themselves from traditional museums in four different ways¹⁸:

- Education is the main purpose behind every object, activity, and event
- Bright colors and special lighting effects catch children's attention and make exhibit labels easier to read.
- Exhibits are placed in the museum so that they accommodate the heights of all visitors
- Interactive contact with the exhibit is the most important factor in learning.¹⁹

Children's museums are often perceived as a generic substance without variance; nevertheless, they have many shapes and sizes. There are many emerging trends in the ever-growing children's museum market. A survey conducted by the Association of Children's Museums focused on determining the primary function of 42 children's museums in the U.S. These primary functions include:²⁰

- Outdoor exhibits
- Green sustainable practices
- Technology
- Appropriate corporate engagement
- Addressing major issues in society
- Inspiring creativity
- Creating accessibility for people with disabilities
- Enticing academic-museum partnership

These niches of a children's museum are reflective on what the museum has to offer to the public. This report touches base on the average target audience of children's museums and conveys factors that help a museum succeed in the present and in the future.²¹ The factors of success include:

¹⁷(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2011)

¹⁸(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2011)

¹⁹(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2011)

²⁰(Gyroscope Incorporated, 2010)

²¹(Gyroscope Incorporated, 2010)

- Advocacy
- Multi-touch relationships
- Inclusive design
- Creative problem solving opportunities
- Children having the opportunity to carry out career expertise.²²

The list above describes the factors for success of any children’s museum. The last two items present a need in the visitor experience for children, and how it would help the overall visitor experience in cognitive development. The report gives an in-depth understanding of the mechanics of running a children’s museum, and shows the newfound areas of growth in the identity of children’s museums.²³ If El Paso were to create and sustain its own children’s museum, incorporating many of the trends listed above may help with a healthy audience attendance.

Attendance is defined as a crucial factor on the development and sustainability of children’s museums because it generates 60 to 70 percent of a museum’s capital.²⁴ Woods states that children’s museums built in the cities similar to those of Mankato, Minnesota have higher attendance rates than expected. According to the Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report, families within a 10 mile radius of the museum are accountable for most of the attendance. The report stated that attendance for the selected museums was better than projected.²⁵ The report concludes that people will visit facilities that they enjoy. Children’s museums are thus considered an attraction that will draw residents and nonresident to a given area of a city.²⁶ By improving and maintaining museums to keep the attraction, both the community and museum benefit financially and socially.²⁷

In this same report, Woods described that a children’s museum will not only have a direct economic impact, but also an indirect economic impact on the community. The case study found that 30 percent of all development of children’s museums is to spark a revitalization of the downtown area of a city. The case study then introduces the idea that a children’s museum has a great economic impact because museums not only create revenue for employers but create a spillover effect in which people visit other facilities and organizations in the downtown area of a city. The effect is increased revenue of hotels, restaurants and stores in a given area. The economic impact of the arts and cultural non-profits organizations is also developed and creates 5.7 million jobs across the United States, as well as an increase in local, state, and federal tax revenues.²⁸

Like the Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report, the ACM affirms that more than 30 percent of children’s museums are known to be part of a downtown revitalization project.²⁹ As a result, children’s museums contribute to local economies and reduce economic barriers. According to the ACM, more than 30 million individuals visit children’s

²²(Gyroscope Incorporated, 2010)

²³(Gyroscope Incorporated, 2010)

²⁴(Woods, No Date)

²⁵(Woods, No Date)

²⁶(Woods, No Date)

²⁷(Woods, No Date)

²⁸(Woods, No Date)

²⁹(Association of Children's Museums, No Date)

museums around the world annually because they are sought-after attractions.³⁰ The influx in the attendance and demand for a children's museum where there is none present, conveys a lack of entertainment for the growing younger population. Children's museums also serve as community centers, build a social capital and engage community involvement.³¹

According to the Kronkosky report, one of the main problems children's museums face is maintaining the facility and acquiring funds to do so. Exhibits alone cost on average \$200 per square foot of usage, not including costs required for preserving and updating the museum.³² With limited government funds and high maintenance costs, the museums must also rely on donations, fundraisers and grants. Museums face another challenge to keep admission fees and membership affordable. However several museums offer programs to maintain availability to low-income families. For example, The San Antonio Children's Museum offers the Learn and Play Pass Program which allows reduced or even free admission to the museum.³³ Despite these challenges, children's museums are expanding as they are recognized as a valuable learning resource for children.

Cities in Texas similar to El Paso in size and demographics will be compared as means of assessing the demand for a children's museum if there is one in the El Paso community. Community Scholars will also look into attendance rates, budgets, and feasibility and sustainability practices of local El Paso museums. Unlike the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation's Research Brief and the Case for a Children's Museum reports, the effects the current economic downturn have had on museums both locally across the nation, was included in the Community Scholars research. Community Scholars will continue to analyze and expand this research in order to determine the feasibility and sustainability of a children's museum in El Paso.

Studies conducted by Sam Woods, T. Caulton and the Association of Children's Museums determined the effects and challenges of children's museums on a given community. These reports are a base element in the Community Scholars study of determining the feasibility and sustainability of a children's museum in El Paso. The studies included The Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report, Museum Economics and the Case for a Children's Museum. The Kronkosky Charitable Foundation's Research Brief on Children's Museums provided Community Scholars with the definition of a children's museum and the importance of play in a both a child's life and on his or her mental development. Even though an asset to a community, the Kronkosky report goes on to list the challenges a museum may face. Community Scholars also looked at the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report conducted by Sam Woods. Woods determined if the development of a children's museum would benefit and be sustainable in the city of Mankato, Minnesota. The study consisted of comparing other children's museums in cities similar to Mankato, Minnesota. Woods looked at the museums in these cities in order to compare how they were established, the economic impact they had on their community and the attendance numbers they have reached since their establishment.

³⁰(Association of Children's Museums, No Date)

³¹(Association of Children's Museums, No Date)

³²(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2011)

³³(Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, 2011)

Methodology

In determining the feasibility and sustainability of a children's museum in El Paso, Texas, Community Scholars will look into children's museums of cities similar to El Paso to convey the operational methods, economy climate and demographics of these select museums. Community Scholars has chosen to compare Albuquerque, New Mexico and Houston, Texas to El Paso. Albuquerque is similar to El Paso in size, population and demographics. Houston is a well established city that has a successful museum industry and is thus beneficial in understanding successful museum trends. Community Scholars will analyze employment rates, poverty level and demographics of these four cities. Community Scholars has used the U.S. Census Bureau to gather information on each of the city's economy, population, poverty level and demographics. Data for Albuquerque and Houston were compared to El Paso to determine trends and understand the environment in which successful and popular children's museums thrive in.

Community Scholars researched operational costs and sustainability of museums already established in and outside of El Paso. Local museums that Community Scholars looked at were the El Paso Museum of Art, the El Paso Museum of History, the El Paso Museum of Archaeology and the Insights El Paso Science Museum. Non-El Paso museums studied the Children's Museum of Houston, Explora Science Center and Children's Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Community Scholars was able to analyze each museum by obtaining IRS forms and gathering information from each. Attendance rates of each museum were gathered by contacting the institution. Additionally, Community Scholars created a correlation graph comparing the attendance rates with the distance of each museum was from Downtown El Paso to determine if there was a positive correlation between those two variables.

Museum feasibility reports on children's museums in Texas, New Mexico, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ohio were a crucial part of Community Scholars research. The reports served as museum models that demonstrated the trends and obstacles of creating a children's museum. The reports went into depth on methods targeting community outreach and sustainability through donations and fundraising. Community Scholars then applied these results and conclusions to its own insight of El Paso's ability to fund and sustain a children's museum.

Need for a Children's Museum in El Paso

El Paso has begun to fund the redevelopment of downtown in order to accommodate the population with a better quality of life.³⁸ In order to have a better quality of life, the demand for entertainment, especially those below the age of 18, needs to be met. As the industry of nightlife entertainment increases, the community of El Paso continues to have a small range of activities and places for the younger population.³⁹ A children's museum would create jobs to stimulate the economy and promote El Paso as fun and family friendly. El Paso strives to promote sustainable lifestyles to all its members, including children. Locating a museum downtown would then attract people to the area and hopefully create a spillover effect.⁴⁰

³⁸ (Flores, 2011)

³⁹ (Burge, 2011)

⁴⁰ (Woods, No Date)

El Paso Downtown Revitalization

Downtown El Paso is being renovated with a revitalization program guided by the Downtown 2015 plan. This will be helpful in increasing property value and attractiveness of the downtown area. The city adopted a tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) district for part of the Downtown Plan area that covers 288 acres. The TIRZ is an area of a city meant to attract investors and incite new investments on Downtown El Paso. Tax revenue, if generated from these investments, are collected and used towards the and downtown revitalization plan. In its first two years of the TIRZ, property values increased by 40 percent and reached \$446 million in value.⁴¹ The Downtown Plan will provide El Pasoans more opportunities to live, work, shop and play in the urban core. Projects and restorations that are already bringing people to downtown El Paso is the restoration of the Mills Building, the Doubletree Hotel, the new Federal Court House and the Mills Plaza District redevelopment.⁴² El Paso is seeking to provide a wide range of retail choices in downtown. As the downtown area is being revamped, there are many places to explore in the area. One can see the unique murals, visit museums like the El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso Museum of History, the Insights Museum, and Lynx Exhibit.⁴³

Albuquerque Downtown Revitalization Albuquerque's downtown revitalization has been nationally recognized and includes private, federal, state and city development, and renovation projects totaling over \$400M.⁴³ The Historic District Improvement Company (HDIC) is leading the revitalization effort, highlighting the downtown's importance as the state's center of retail, entertainment, culture and employment. HDIC works to institute Downtown Albuquerque as a mixed-income area where households of all income levels can live comfortably.⁴⁵ Since 2000, more than 40 new businesses have been established in Downtown Albuquerque. Downtown Albuquerque has residential districts that are being improved and renovated.⁴⁶

Houston Downtown Revitalization Developers have spent more than \$4B in the last decade to transform downtown Houston into a fundamental city center.⁴⁷ The Houston Downtown Management District has facilitated many of the public and private projects that have transformed downtown over the last decade. Since 1995, the District has started with its revitalization efforts. To keep the urban core modern and vital, the District continues to recruit investors, retailers and tenants while retaining those established already.⁴⁸

Museum Feasibility

A feasibility study would be the first step developing a children's museum. A feasibility report provides necessary guidance to the developers for design, construction and operationalization. It also sheds lights on potential market support, and predicts usage of a museum. A feasibility report also helps to determine the potential financial performance of an organization and the maximum amount of required developmental costs. In addition to costs, feasibility reports give physical planning parameters such as total land size needed and the

⁴¹ (The City of El Paso)

⁴² (The City of El Paso)

⁴³ (The City of El Paso)

⁴⁵ (HDIC)

⁴⁶ (Houston Downtown Management District)

⁴⁷ (Houston Downtown Management District)

⁴⁸ (Downtown District Houston)

imperative building space. Some feasibility reports go into detail in describing a set walk-through description, and what should be showcased in the initial presentations.

In order to conclude whether or not a children's museum is feasible in El Paso, a feasibility study is needed. In conducting the study, factors and trends Community Scholars analyzed were:

- Evaluation of Comparable Facilities
- Market Analysis
- Site and Area Evaluation
- Initial Start-Up Costs
- Funding for Museums

The above items will be expanded further into the report in approaching the museum services and goals, ideal location of establishment, expenses, target audience, possible revenue sources, and so forth of a children's museum in El Paso if one were to be created.

Evaluation of Comparable Facilities

In determining the feasibility of a children's museum in El Paso, Community Scholars has looked at the operation of select museums in the city as well as children's museums in Albuquerque and Houston. Information of this evaluation would include:

- Name and location of the facility
- Description of the services and target audience
- Annual revenues and expenses
- Financial performance

In the facility description, information on what a museum has to offer would be included.⁴⁹ Financial performance would be an overall evaluation of how well the facility is operating.⁵⁰ Development costs demonstrate developers costs spent in establishing the facility.⁵¹

Museums Operating in El Paso In El Paso there are a variety of unique museums that add to culture of the city. Three of the museums, the El Paso Museums of Art, History and Archeology, are operated and funded by the Multi-Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD).⁵² The purpose of MCAD is to provide educational activities that recognize the regions heritage.⁵³ Each of the museums serve a purpose for the city, working together to enrich the region. For example, the Insights El Paso Science Museum is geared to a younger audience.⁵⁴ However, according to Mandy Chew, director of Insights El Paso Science Museum, there is no competition between museums in the area such as Lynx and Insights because they each exist to serve the city.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ (Leisure Business Advisors, 2009)

⁵⁰ (Investopedia, 2011)

⁵¹ (Accounting Coach, 2011)

⁵² (Multi Cultural Affairs Department, 2011)

⁵³ (Multi Cultural Affairs Department, 2011)

⁵⁴ (Can this Man save Insights from Extinction?)

⁵⁵ (Chew, Executive Director of Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

Besides Lynx and Insights, there are a variety of museums in El Paso which cater wider range of audiences, such as The El Paso Scottish Rite Temple and The National Border Patrol Museum.

El Paso only has three non-profit museums which are funded by the City of El Paso. They are:

- The El Paso Museum of Art
- The El Paso Museum of Archaeology
- The El Paso Museum of History

The El Paso Museum of Art offers different temporary exhibitions, films, lectures, concerts, and other educational programs to the general public, serving an estimated 100,000 visitors per year. It is the only accredited museum within a 250-mile radius and has had a reliable record of accreditation, first being accredited in 1972, then 1985, and most recently in 2001. The El Paso Museum of History exists for the educational benefit of the community and promotes the understanding of multinational history.⁵⁷ Dedicated to the narration, interpretation and preservation of found artifacts, the El Paso Museum of Archeology uses archeology to not only to learn about the past but also inform visitors on El Paso culture.⁵⁸ In 2010, the El Paso Museum of Art received \$805,949 for administration and \$304,854 for curatorial, the Museum of History received \$562,365 for operations and the Museum of Archeology received \$157,388.⁵⁹

El Paso has numerous museums that vary in their services and target audience. They are:

- El Paso Insights Museum
- Lynx Exhibits
- The Intellizeum
- The National Border Patrol Museum
- El Paso Holocaust Museum
- El Paso Scottish Rite Temple
- Centennial Museum and Gardens
- Chamizal National Memorial
- The Railroad and Transportation Museum
- Magoffin Home

Both Lynx Exhibits and the Intellizeum target children as their main audience. Lynx displays traveling exhibits aimed at families and their children. The Intellizeum is a Head Start facility that provides interactive learning for children.⁶⁰ The other museums listed above cater a different audience. The National Border Patrol Museum is the only one of its kind in the nation and displays the history of the U.S. Border Patrol.⁶¹ The El Paso Holocaust Museum aims to educate the public about the Holocaust as a way of ensuring that similar acts will not be repeated.⁶² The Chamizal National Memorial commemorates the Chamizal Treaty of 1963 which ended a

⁵⁷ (El Paso Museum of History, 2011)

⁵⁸ (El Paso Museum of Archeology, 2011)

⁵⁹ (2010 Budget Book by Chapter, 2010)

⁶⁰ (Region 19 Educational Services Center)

⁶¹ (National Border Patrol Museum, 2011)

⁶² (The El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center, 2011)

boundary dispute between America and Mexico.⁶³ The Centennial Museum and Gardens was the first museum in El Paso and works in partnership with the University of Texas at El Paso.⁶⁴ Most of the museums, with the exception of Insights and Lynx, do not charge admission and most are located in Downtown El Paso.

The Insights El Paso Science Museum, like Lynx and Intellizeum, has the objective of providing interactive and engaging learning to children, its main audience. Opened in 1980, the museum is a privately owned, privately funded, non-profit organization and is the only museum in El Paso with permanent and traveling exhibits aimed to teach children about science through hands-on interaction. It charges \$8 admission for adults, \$4 for children from age's four to 11 and no admission for children under the age of three.⁶⁶

For several years, Insights has faced financial difficulties and has struggled in attracting more visitors each year. The average visitation of Insights Museum is around 30,000 visitors per year and is projected to be at 39,000 for 2011, after more exhibits have been brought and renovations have been made to the museum. However, having a high attendance number does not predict the financial success of a museum. In 2007, the museum had reportedly received approximately 77,000 visitors due to a popular dinosaur exhibit. Despite hosting such a successful exhibit, Insights lost revenue. The exhibit alone cost \$125,000 plus \$6,000 a month on electricity, not including maintenance and staff salary. Since becoming Executive Director at Insights, Mandy Chew has cut spending on half and has made plans to keep the museum open.

As downtown El Paso is being revitalized, there is focus to renovate the Insights Museum. The possibility of rebranding Insights El Paso Science Museum as a "children's science center" has been brought up in the discussion of renovating the museum. Insights Museum will continue to incorporate the philosophy of a children's museum, which stresses interactive learning for children, but has the focus of being a museum opened to all ages. Considering that the majority of El Pasoans are Hispanic, the museum hopes to have exhibits with English and Spanish labels as means of targeting bilingual visitors. This in turn, may help increase attendance museum for most exhibits fail to include both English and Spanish labels. Since Insights Museum is perceived as a children's museum by the majority of people in El Paso, Community Scholars will use Insights as a model for research and analysis.

Revenue Comparison of Insights Science Museum and El Paso Museum of Art Community Scholars compared the revenue and expense sources of a non-profit, non-municipally funded museum, El Paso Insights Science Center, to that of a municipally-funded museum, the El Paso Museum of Art as means of demonstrating the funding streams of two museums that operate under different budgets. Insights and the El Paso Museum of Art were also compared to one another, considering that Insights is recognized as a struggling museum while the art museum is considered a successful El Paso museum. Figures used for the comparison were obtained from the 990 IRS forms for Insights and the El Paso Art Museum].

⁶³ (Chamizal National Memorial, 2011)

⁶⁴ (Museum History, 2011)

⁶⁶ (Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

In the table below it is the comparison of the city funded El Paso Museum of Art Foundation and the non-city funded El Paso Insights Museum. Insight’s IRS form for fiscal year 2008 was the most recent one available to Community Scholars.

Table 1: Museums Revenue and Expenses

		Insights Museum at El Paso (2008)	The El Paso Museum of Arts Foundation (2009)
Revenue	Contributions	\$123,648	\$44,636
	Program Services	\$302,721	-
	Memberships	\$15,281	-
	Investment Income	\$1,575	-\$6,669
	Special Events	\$10,329	-
	Sales	\$29,250	-
	Total Revenue	\$482,804	\$37,967
	Grants Paid		\$65,905
Expenses	Salaries	\$186,796	
	Professional Fees	\$6,421	
	Utilities, Rent, Occupancy	\$49,653	
	Printing, publications,	\$5,236	
	Other	\$254,663	\$95,514
	Total Expenses	\$502,769	\$95,514
	Net Revenue	-\$19,965	-\$57,547

Source: Guide Star

The Insights Museum at El Paso had total revenue of \$482,804 for the year 2009.⁷² The revenue consisted of \$123,648 from contributions, \$302,721 from program services, \$1,575 from investments, \$10,329 from special events, \$29,250 from sales, and \$15,281 from other sources. Insights expenses totaled \$502,769 creating a net loss.⁷³ The El Paso Museum of Arts Foundation had total revenue of \$37,967 in the year 2009. The total revenue consisted of \$44,636 from contributions and the negative \$6,669 from investment income, while total expenses accounted to \$95,514.⁷⁴ Both of these museums had a net loss as indicated.

Children’s Museums Outside of El Paso Community Scholars looked at the children’s museums in Houston and Albuquerque in comparing these facilities to the Insight’s Museum in El Paso. These museums are the Children’s Museum of Houston (CMH) and the Explora Science Center and Children’s Museum in Albuquerque.

The CMH was founded in 1980 by a group of parents wanting to elevate childhood development to a community-wide priority. The museum operates as a non-profit organization, 501(c)3 under the direction of Board of Directors.⁷⁵ It is able to gain revenue through public and private contributors and serves more than 850,000 people annually. CMH has a diverse visitor demographic. According to annual reports Latinos make up 40 percent of the on-site audience,

⁷² (GuideStar)

⁷³ (GuideStar)

⁷⁴ (GuideStar)

⁷⁵ (Children's Museum of Houston, No Date)

followed by Anglos with 27 percent, African-Americans with 26 percent and Asian Americans with 6 percent.⁷⁶ The museum's main target audience is children below the age of 12. Bilingual programs are offered to the uprising Hispanic community, thus providing children the opportunity to learn about different areas of science, math, health, engineering, civic engagement, culture and social studies. The CMH offers access to 14 galleries of interactive and stimulating learning. Permanent exhibits include, Flow Works, Kidtropolis, USA, Tot*Spot, and Think Tank, among many others. In Flow Works, children are able to experience and manipulate the concepts of energy flows through the medium of water. Kidtropolis, USA is designed for kids to learn about money by starting a business of their own, choosing and securing a business loan, and taking on the tasks of real-life jobs by earning Kidtropolis money. Tot*Spot is made for children up to 36 months of age. Stimulating and appropriate activities are made in mind to enhance the growth and development of young kids. The exhibit Think Tank involves solving riddles, puzzles, mirror magic, optical illusions and other interactive hands-on activities for children.⁷⁷ Parents Magazine has named the Children's Museum of Houston "Americas No.1 Best Children's Museum" for the year 2009 to 2010.⁷⁸

The Explora Science Center and Children's Museum serves as part science center and part children's museum to the Albuquerque community. It serves more than 200,000 people a year with more than 550 inquiry-based programs that inspire significant thinking and scientific learning.⁷⁹ It has also developed many bilingual programs to engage the school-age population. Explora has a 51 percent Hispanic, 38 percent Anglo, 5 percent Native American and 4 percent African-American school-age visitor rate.⁸⁰

Children are exposed new experiences about science, technology and art. Through its Classroom Explorations initiative, Explora has developed more than 200 STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs that provide service to 86 of the 89 New Mexico's state school districts. Explora is supported by private contributors, public allocations and paid programs.⁸¹ The museum works with low-income families and programs, such as the Youth Intern Program, are available for teens on free or reduced-priced school lunch.⁸² Teens learn to teach scientific programs for children at Explora's summer camps.⁸³ In 2010, Explora was awarded the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, being recognized for its extraordinary civic, educational, economic and social contributions. This is the highest award given out for community service in the nation.⁸⁴

Some of Explora's attractions include Shapes of Sounds, Strange Light, Moving Air, Paradox Café and Experiment Sound. These exhibits were designed to be hands-on in providing an engaging and educative experience for children. Something unique Explora has is "Adult Night". Upon request, Explora created a night on which adults can experiment with new

⁷⁶ (Children's Museum of Houston, 2010)

⁷⁷ (Children's Museum of Houston, 2010)

⁷⁸ (Children's Museum of Houston, No Date)

⁷⁹ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

⁸⁰ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

⁸¹ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

⁸² (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

⁸³ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

⁸⁴ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

activities, explore exhibits, enjoy live entertainment and view the night sky without the presence of children.⁸⁵

Revenue Service Forms for Museums As part of its research, Community Scholars analyzed the revenue service forms for two El Paso museums, El Paso Museum of Art and the Insights Museum, and two non-local museums, the Children’s Museum of Houston and the Explora Science Center and Children’s Museum in Albuquerque. These revenue forms compare the fiscal years for the various museums in accordance with the site evaluation stage of the feasibility section of the Community Scholars’ research. The data below shows the fiscal data for the El Paso Museum of Art.

Table 2: El Paso Museum of Art IRS Forms

	2007	2008	2009
Contributions & Grants	\$125,030	\$170,332	\$44,636
Program Service	\$41,467	\$0	\$0
Investment Income	\$78,727	-\$168,870	-\$6,669
Other	\$0	\$938	\$0
Total Revenue	\$245,224	\$2,400	\$37,967
Total Expenses	\$191,984	\$79,518	\$95,514
Net Revenue	\$53,240	-\$77,118	-\$57,547

Source: GuideStar

The sources of revenue throughout these three years have been consistent. The investment income for 2008 was at negative \$168,870. The Museum of Art had much lower total revenue in comparison to the two other fiscal years. The table below shows Insights Museum’s fiscal figures for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008. It must be noted that IRS forms for these years were the most recent and only ones available to Community Scholars.

Table 3: Insights Science Museum IRS Forms

	2006	2007	2008
Contributions & Grants	\$66,461	\$82,028	\$123,648
Program Service	\$217,216	\$137,854	\$302,721
Investment Income	\$78,727	0	\$1,575
Other	\$6,130	\$24,141	0
Total Revenue	\$359,676	\$540,000	\$482,804
Total Expenses	\$819,682	\$331,842	\$502,769
Net Revenue	-\$460,006	\$208,158	-\$19,965

Source: GuideStar

According to the table, contributions and grants are steadily increasing within the three year period of 2006 to 2008. This trend demonstrates that museum support from the public sector is

⁸⁵ (Explora, Children's Museum in Albuquerque)

increasing as well. However, the museum operated at a net loss in the fiscal years of 2006 and 2008. The table below shows revenue and expenses for the Houston Children’s Museum Inc. Revenue is divided between contribution and grants, program service revenue which included admission, investment income and other types of revenue.

Table 4: Houston Children’s Museum Inc. IRS Forms

	2007	2008	2009
Contributions and Grants	\$10,595,987	\$9,282,196	\$3,905,545
Program Service Revenue	\$1,686,220	\$2,326,956	\$3,401,758
Investment Income	\$525,120	-\$1,566,227	\$552,512
Other Revenue	\$2,310,404	\$1,010,873	\$1,342,221
Total Revenue	\$15,118,731	\$11,053,798	\$9,202,036
Total Expenses	\$7,591,327	\$9,361,361	\$10,498,894
Net Revenue	\$7,527,404	\$1,692,437	-\$1,296,858

Source: Guide Star

According to the table, the CMH had a decrease of net revenue from fiscal year 2007 to 2008, and in 2009 operated at a net loss. For the following table, the fiscal years for 2007, 2008 and 2009 are shown for the Explora Science Center and Children’s Museum in Albuquerque. This table shows the revenue streams as well as expenses for the museum.

Table 5: Explora Science Center & Children’s Museum of Albuquerque IRS Forms

Revenue	2007	2008	2009
Contributions and Grants	\$2,228,330	\$2,714,656	\$2,423,372
Program Service Revenue	\$1,142,685	\$888,874	\$936,987
Investment Income	\$31,374	-\$16,182	\$3,524
Other Revenue	\$122,973	\$132,302	-\$73,279
Total Revenue	\$3,525,362	\$3,719,650	\$3,290,604
Total Expenses	\$3,658,901	\$3,841,329	\$3,670,169
Net Revenue	-\$133,539	-\$121,679	-\$379,565

Source: GuideStar

As seen in the table above, the Explora museum has operated at a loss for its last three fiscal years. However, Explora has been honored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2010 for its “extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions.”⁸⁶

Market Analysis

This step of the feasibility process analyzes market areas relative to the location. Demographic characteristics for residing markets in the cities of El Paso, Albuquerque and Houston and museum attendance and exhibit trends were studied to determine indications for future support and target audience for a potential children’s museum. The following have been analyzed:

⁸⁶ (Explora museum wins national honor , 2010)

- Age Groups
- Race Demographics for Children
- Population Growth
- Museum Attendance
- Exhibits

Age distribution shows the percentage of the target population in proximity to the location. Population growth shows the growth of the number of people for a given city. Attendance figures for museums across the nation as well as audience trends in response to the economy were analyzed, while exhibit trends was a crucial factor in assessing what is needed for a museum to be successful.

Demographics Texas, responsible for almost 25 percent of the nation’s growth, is urbanizing quickly and has grown by 20.6 percent to have a population of 25.1 million, within the last decade.⁹⁰ Four Texas counties have been among the top ten population growths in the nation, mostly around the Dallas-Fort Worth area.⁹¹

The following tables and graphs will explain the demographics in El Paso and compare them to Albuquerque and Houston. As one can see from the table, El Paso has a notably higher young population than the comparison cities.

Table 6: Age Groups in El Paso and Similar Cities (By Percentages)

Age Groups	El Paso	Albuquerque	Houston
Under 5 years	9.7	7.7	8.8
5 to 9 years	7.9	6.3	7.3
10 to 19 years	16.2	12.6	13.6
20 to 54 years	45.9	51.5	52.8
55 to 84 years	20.1	20.1	16.4
85+	1.3	1.8	1.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 26% of the population was under the age of 14 in El Paso from 2005-2009. The median age of the population was about 32 years old.⁹² With the new surge of military personnel, El Paso will experience further growth. Since 2000, the population of El Paso has increased by over 100,000 people, with a 7.4 percent increase in children under 14 years of age. The city is projected to have a 69.7 percent increase in population by 2040 which does not include the growth at Fort Bliss.⁹³ The total population of the City of El Paso for the year 2010 was 649,121.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ (Ayala, 2011)

⁹¹ (Snyder, 2009)

⁹² (El Paso, Age & Sex, 2009)

⁹³ (Population: El Paso, Texas, 2011)

⁹⁴ (2010 Census Interactive Population Search)

The tables below shows the racial demographics of children in El Paso, Albuquerque and Houston. Based on the graphs, El Paso is not as highly diverse as some of the compared cities because as a border city, it has a high population of Hispanic residents.⁹⁵

Table 7: Race Demographic of Children (By Percentages)

Ethnic Background	El Paso	Albuquerque	Houston
White	76.8	59.9	53.2
African American	2.90	4.1	24
American Indian and Alaska	0.60	5.9	0.3
Asian	0.80	2.5	4.7
Native Hawaiian	0.10	0.0	0.2
Other	15.60	20.2	15.6
Two or More	3.20	7.3	2.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the table, El Paso has low population of Asian, Native Hawaiian, American Indian and Alaska Native and African American children. Houston, too, has a low percentage of American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian children but has the highest t percentage of African American and Asian children in comparison to El Paso Albuquerque. On the percentage of White children, El Paso has the highest with 76.8 percent and Houston has the lowest, with 53.2 percent. The table below shows the percentage breakdown of White children, classifying between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics.⁹⁶

Graph 8: Children with Hispanic Background (2005-2009, by Percentage)

White Ethnic Background	El Paso	Albuquerque	Houston
Hispanic or Latino origin	85.20	55.5	53.0
White Alone, not hispanic	10.20	29.7	17.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Of all the compared cities, El Paso has the highest Hispanic population with 85.2 percent and Houston has the lowest with 53 percent. El Paso thus has the lowest percentage of White children while Albuquerque has the highest with 29.7 percent. When creating services for children in El Paso, demographics need to be taken into account. El Paso is growing at a fast rate and incites the possible need of more services in the goal of providing citizens with a good quality of life.

Population Increase The growing populations are accredited to the events of expansion of city, quality of life improvements and longer life expectancies. The following paragraphs discuss the population increase of the cities of El Paso, Houston and Albuquerque.

El Paso experienced a population increase of 200,000 in the past decade. El Paso County's population is currently 800,647 and the city's population is at 649,121. In 2000 El Paso had a population increase of 15 percent and had a Hispanic population rate of 78 percent, while in 2010, the rate went up to 82 percent.⁹⁷ The stationing of troops in the El Paso area has also

⁹⁵ (Children Characteristics, 2005-2009)

⁹⁶ (Children Characteristics, 2005-2009)

⁹⁷ (Loria, 2011)

affected the population rate. From the roughly 105,000-population increase of El Paso in 2010, the military accounts for approximately 40,000 of it.⁹⁸ The table below shows the population trends that have occurred from 1990 to 2010 in cities in Texas and New Mexico. The percent change is also included to compare how much a population has grown or has decreased.

Table 9: Population Trends

City	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change
El Paso	515,342	563,662	649,121	25.96%
Houston	1,630,553	1,953,631	2,099,451	28.75 %
Albuquerque	384,736	448,607	545,852	41.87%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There has been an increase in population in all three cities. El Paso had the lowest percent change. Houston has the largest population in Texas, and among El Paso and Albuquerque, while Albuquerque has had a continuous stable growth, as shown in the table.

Attendance Museums around the United States have an estimated 34,000 visitors per years since 2000.¹⁰¹ It should be noted that this figure is a rough estimate, considering different types of museums vary in their average number of visitations. In 2004, 61 museums, including 12 children’s museums, reported an average attendance of 262,969, and in 2005 these museums experienced an attendance of 259,595.¹⁰² The table below shows the average number of visitations per year for different types of museums.

Table 10: Annual Average Museum Visitation by Type (2009)

Type Of Museum	Annual Average Visitations
Art Museum	44,878
Children’s / Youth Museum	130,870
General Museum	58,500
Historic Site	11,700
History Museum	10,000
Natural History/ Anthropology Museum	58,176
Living Collections	208,574
Science/ Technology Museum	357,103
Specialized Museum	22,000

Source: American Association of Museums

According to the table above, children’s or youth museums are the third most visited type of museum in the United States.¹⁰³

Museums in El Paso have annual visitations ranging both below and above the annual average visitations for different types of museums. From 2009 to 2010 El Paso Museum of Art had a total attendance of 105,000.¹⁰⁴ This number is compared to the total average visitations of

⁹⁸ (Malloy, 2011)

¹⁰¹ (American Association of Museums)

¹⁰² (Money Group, 2005)

¹⁰³ (American Association of Museums)

¹⁰⁴ (El Paso Museum of Art)

art museums in the nation, which are 44,878 as indicated by the table above. The El Paso Museum of History had a total attendance of 60,400 for the same period.¹⁰⁵ This number is compared the national average number of visitations for history museums, which is 10,000. The Insights El Paso Science Museum had a total attendance of 32,968 in 2010, and this number is below the annual average visitations for science/technology museums, which is 357,103 visitations.¹⁰⁶

In the mountain-plains area, in which Texas is located, there has been an increase of 5%5percent of attendance to children's museums from July 2008 to July 2009.¹⁰⁷ Specifically in Texas, there has been an increase of attendance to children's museums from July 2008 to July 2009.¹⁰⁸ The economic downturn has been a contribution to this trend because by attending museums it is a more economic alternative to spending money on costlier activities.¹⁰⁹ The rise of attendance could also be caused by local people staying home and visiting museums as means of inexpensive entertainment.¹¹⁰ For example, the Exhibit Museum of Natural History at the University of Michigan has had an increase of attendance even though it suggests a six dollar donation per visitor.¹¹¹ The trend of increased attendance is most apparent in free museums, but having a low admission rate close six dollars is considered inexpensive.¹¹² Also the average cost for a museum is seven dollars which is cheaper than a movie ticket.¹¹³

Exhibits Increased attendance figures at museums are attributed to exhibits. Exhibits include permanent, temporary, venue-only, and traveling exhibits. According to the Smithsonian Institution, non-art exhibitions are most expensive when they are permanent and traveling. Temporary and venue-only exhibits on average cost less. The Smithsonian Institute concluded that in order to attract more frequent visits of locals they need an increase of temporary exhibits rather than permanent.¹¹⁴

The Insights El Paso Science Museum experienced a 77, 000 attendance during a dinosaur exhibit compared to its regular 30, 000 attendance annually.¹¹⁵ Insights has spent \$1.2 million on a Titanic exhibit, \$125,000 on the dinosaur exhibit and \$25,000 in a dental exhibit. Although the museum has had increased attendance during exhibits, the attendance admission does not suffice to break even with the total cost of the exhibit. For example, the dinosaur attraction drew in a lot of visitors, but due to the high cost of the exhibit and the expenses of running and maintaining the attraction, Insights lost revenue.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁵ (El Paso Museum of History)

¹⁰⁶ (Chew, Executive Director of Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

¹⁰⁷ (Children's Museum Association, 2008-2009)

¹⁰⁸ (Children's Museum Association, 2008-2009)

¹⁰⁹ (Jones, 2009)

¹¹⁰ (Katz, 2010)

¹¹¹ (New England Traveler News Network, 2010)

¹¹² (New England Traveler News Network, 2010)

¹¹³ (Katz, 2010)

¹¹⁴ (Smithsonian Institution, 2002)

¹¹⁵ (Chew, Executive Director of Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

¹¹⁶ (Chew, Executive Director. Insights El Paso Science Museum, 2011)

Site and Area Evaluation

Site and area evaluation is another step crucial to the feasibility report. These factors include market proximity, physical limitations or constraints, access routes, traffic patterns, surrounding development and potential complementary and competitive corporations.¹¹⁷ Market proximity is the location of the company and how centered it is to the target audience. Physical limits or constraints involve the geography of the location and how accessible it is to the target audience.¹¹⁸ Access routes are roads that lead to the location of the institution. Traffic patterns influence the accessibility of access routes. The surrounding development pertains to the construction and its negative impact on businesses' aestheticism.¹¹⁹ Business aestheticism is the incorporation of the principles of beauty into the architecture. Potential complementary facilities serve as a mutual relationship in generating revenue for both companies. On the other hand, competitive facilities sell the same or offer similar goods.¹²⁰

Downtown: A Prime Location Downtown is a prime location and factor for industry, commercial developers and professional recruitment. Downtown is considered a "good incubator for new small businesses."¹²¹ When business owners look for a location to open their corporation, they find that strips and outlet malls are very expensive. Downtown locations generally have lower rents as opposed to other locations. The downtown area of a city is at the heart of the community, and the site for government, art, church and financial institutions. This central location serves as an important community space where members of all segments of the community can meet for parades, speeches and other community events. The advantage of market participation in downtown is that tourism may have positive influence on complementary goods. Complementary goods are goods that whose use is interrelated with the use of an associated or paired good.¹²² This expenditure on goods gives the taxpayers a return on public investment because of infrastructure downtown. This infrastructure generates revenue in various markets located in a downtown area. Concentrated activity in downtown thus helps reduce sprawl by concentrating activity to one area.¹²³

In Figure 1 below, Community Scholars analyzed the correlation between a museum's distance from Downtown El Paso to the museum's attendance numbers. El Paso's Main Public Library Branch was used as a landmark in calculating distance from Downtown El Paso.

¹¹⁷ (Leisure Business Advisors, 2009)

¹¹⁸ (City of Albuquerque, 2005)

¹¹⁹ (Aesthetic Construction Design, No Date)

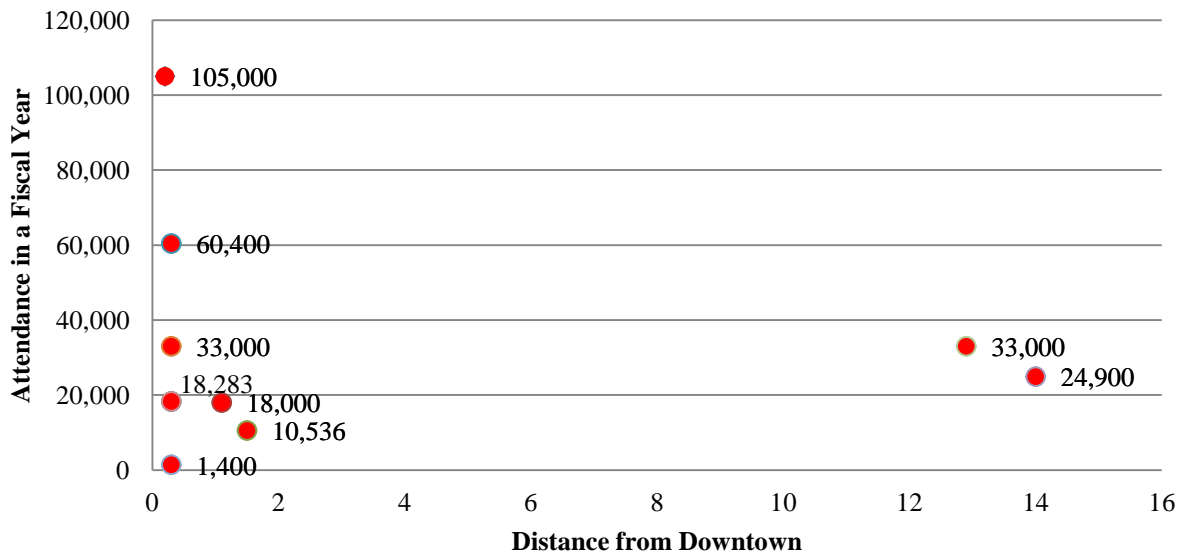
¹²⁰ (Bhattacharya, 2011)

¹²¹ (Maine Development Foundation, No Dates)

¹²² (Business Dictionary, 2011)

¹²³ (Maine Development Foundation, No Dates)

Figure 1: Correlation of Attendance and Distance



Based on the graph, museums closest to Downtown El Paso have higher attendance numbers. These museums are Insights El Paso Science Museum, The El Paso Holocaust Museum, and the El Paso Scottish Rite Temple. Although two of the city-funded museums are adjacent to many of the other museums they receive a much higher attendance. The El Paso Museum of Archeology and the National Border Patrol Museum, farthest from the El Paso Public Library, receive a similar amount of attendance which leads to the assumption the two are visited consecutively since they are in such close proximity.

Initial Startup Costs

The cost of starting a museum is generally elastic. Elasticity is the proportionate change in the volume of a product that will be bought as a result of a unit change in price.¹³³ It is elastic because of the different variables that go into the creation of a children's museum.¹³⁴ These variables include:

- Building and Land
- Staff Member Salaries
- Exhibits and Artifacts
- Information Technology and Office Equipment
- Theatre/Auditorium
- Restoration of Artifacts
- Advertising
- Permits
- Insurance
- Contingencies

¹³³ (Investopedia, 2011)

¹³⁴ (Meier, 2003)

The items above are considered when creating the initial budget, which is based on startup expenses of a museum.¹³⁵ In theory, the quality of the museum is dependent on the money invested into the museum. If El Paso were to open its own children’s museum, the attractions and exhibits would be reflective of its budget. There is no universal model for starting a museum because of the price elasticity.¹³⁶ Funding for the establishment of a new children’s museum would take the collaboration of the businesses in the city of El Paso. It would require many donations from businesses, corporations and many other individuals. Collaborations and donations would be the only form of revenue because there are virtually no grants available for starting museums.¹³⁷

Startup Model Since there is a lack of available models on the creation of a children’s museum, Community Scholars created a model which demonstrates the start-up expenses needed for creating a children’s museum if one were to be established in El Paso. The figures were based on the fiscal averages for the years of 2009 and 2010 for the Insights El Paso Science Museum. The building fund was calculated using the cost of the facility constructed in 1993. Community Scholars adjusted for the inflation rates from the year of 1993 to 2010.

Table 11: Start-up Model for Children’s Museum

Expense	Cost
Building Cost	\$4,691,294.12
Salaries and Wages	\$104,157.60
Other Expenses	\$83,777.56
Exhibits	\$390,916.67
Total Expenses	\$5,270,145.95

Source: Hernandez; Leon

According to the graph, the least amount of money that is to be spent is on the salaries on staff salary. Other expenses include: consulting fees, advertising fees, insurance, memberships, maintenance etc. The highest expense is the building fund; whereas the lowest expense is the startup salaries.

Funding for a Children’s Museum

Funding for a museum determines whether the museum may prosper or fail. It is important for both the start up of the museum and the sustainability of the museum. Funding for a museum includes federal, state and city funds, grants, admission prices and donations.¹³⁸ As previously mentioned, the Lewis County Children’s Museum is predicted to get 60 percent of its running costs through admissions, rentals and special exhibits. The other 40 percent is collected through grants and donations.¹³⁹ In contrast, the American Association of Museums (AAM) accounted that museums get 28 percent form admissions and shops, 36 percent form donations, 25 percent from government funding and 12 percent from investments and endowments.¹⁴⁰ Although the government does provide funds for museums, there has been a 15 percent decrease

¹³⁵ (LaFleur, 2008)

¹³⁶ (Meier, 2003)

¹³⁷ (Texas Historical Commission, No Dates)

¹³⁸ (American Association of Museums)

¹³⁹ (Lewis County Children's Museum)

¹⁴⁰ (Smith, 2010)

over 15 years on the dependence on these funds in the year 2006 for 800 museums across the country.¹⁴¹ The decrease in reliance on government funds are due to the reductions of fundraising a museum experiences after receiving a government grant.¹⁴² Museums rely more on private funds because they account to about an average of 6.1 million dollars annually while government funding only averages to 1.3 million dollars annually.¹⁴³ Federal and state agencies and corporations made budget cuts in due to the economic downturn.¹⁴⁴

The AAM conducted a survey in 2010 on the percentage of museums that reported either a decrease or increase of revenue in funding sources; 383 institutions across the United States participated in the survey. The table below shows the categories of revenue sources used in the survey as well as the percentage of museums that either reported an increase or decrease for a given revenue source.

Table 12: Museums Report on Funding Streams 2010

Funding Revenue Source	Decrease	Increase
Total Revenue	52.6%	28.2%
Government Funding	51.8%	12.3%
Individual Donations	37.0%	35.8%
Corporate Donations	36.3%	18.7%
Foundation Support	26.1%	25.8%
Admission Fees	28.4%	39.9%
Membership Fees	28.5%	27.4%
Other	28.1%	35.1%
Investment Income	37.3%	36.2%

Source: American Association of Museums

The table demonstrated most museums' total revenue decreased by 52.6 percent. Community Scholars has inferred that this was due to the nation's economic recession. However, most museums reported an increase in admission fees with 39.9 percent and 27.4 percent for membership fees. Despite the economic recession, this reported increase may be due to people visiting museums as means of inexpensive entertainment.¹³²

Grants A non-profit tax-exempt organization is one in which the income is not distributed to the shareholders, but rather the income goes to the organization itself. A local museum in El Paso, Insights Museum, is an example of a tax exempt non-profit organization.¹⁴⁶ These types of organizations are eligible to apply for grants provided by the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) and grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Some of the TCA grants include:¹⁴⁷

- Arts Create -1
- Arts Create -2

¹⁴¹ (American Association of Museums)

¹⁴² (Payne, 2003)

¹⁴³ (Payne, 2003)

¹⁴⁴ (Philanthropy News Digest, 2011)

¹⁴⁶ (Insights Museum: Getting Bigger and Better, 2011)

¹⁴⁷ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

- Arts Create -3
- Arts Create -4
- Arts Create -5
- Arts Create Sub granting
- Arts Respond Performance Support
- Arts Respond Project
- Cultural Districts Designation Program
- Designated Funding/Commission Initiatives
- Touring Roster Inclusion
- Young Masters

These grants provide from \$75 to thousands of dollars to create, improve and sustain museums in the state of Texas. The Young Masters grant gives up to \$2,500 per year, up to three years for students from the 8th to 12th grade to advance the future of the arts.¹⁴⁸ A grant such as the Designated Funding/Commission Initiatives would be a potential funding source for a children's museum for non-profit institutions are eligible to apply for the grant if they help promote the arts and economy of Texas.¹³⁵ Several IMLS grants are:

- 21st Century Museum Professionals Grants
- Conservation Project Support
- Museums for America

These grants provide from \$5,000 to \$200,000 to create, sustain, or improve museums all across the United States. For example, the Museums for America grant provides from \$5,000 to \$150,000 for up to three years, for future planning of museums, which would, in turn, improve the infrastructure of the community.¹⁴⁹ There are grants available for museums to thrive and sustain themselves as successful non-profit organizations. The opportunities are available for museum to get funding but there are certain qualifications to be met to be eligible for funding. For example, a children's museum can apply for the 21st Century Museum Professionals, Conversation Project Support and Museums for America if it were to meet their eligibility requirements which is to be a private non-profit organization with a tax-exempt status, be located in one of the 50 states, be permanently established for educational and aesthetic purposes and own and or use tangible objects that are on display at a regular basis to the public.¹³⁶ If a children's museum were to be established in El Paso under these requirements, then the grants mentioned above would be potential sources in the funding of the museum. Information as to which El Paso museums have applied and received any of the grants listed above could not be obtained by Community Scholars.

Museum Eligibility for TCA Grants In order for a museum or organization dealing with the arts to be eligible for grants it must fulfill certain requirements. Some of these requirements include exemptions from taxes, being an established organization in the state of Texas and complying with outstanding contractual obligations with the state of Texas and with federal regulations like Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

¹⁴⁹ (Hildreth, 2011)

¹⁵⁰ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

Ineligibility for these grants includes grants to be used for social events, facility expenses and debt recovery expenses. Other circumstances would include activities for which students get college or university academic credit, projects for for-profit organizations and retroactive funding.¹⁵¹ Retroactive funding is funding for projects that have been completed or expenses incurred before the program deadline.¹⁵² Also the organization must be community oriented and create change within the community itself to benefit from it.¹⁵³ Grants limit the organization's flexibility to spend the money on areas the museum would prefer to spend on.¹⁵⁴

When an organization applies for a grant, the application is reviewed under three criteria: artistic quality, capability and impact. The artistic quality would include the artistic significance, impact on the artists and the quality of the service. The capability would include the budgeting, planning, implementation and evaluation of the service. Impact is the attendance of the organization, the outreach and educational opportunities and how it contributes to the community.¹⁵⁵

Fundraising Generating revenue for an institution is most successful when personal connections are built throughout the community increasing the amount of private donations. To create such a connection, the museum needs to promote its need for community donations and its promise to help the community. The goal statement of the museum therefore should include improving the education and future of the community and other needed services. In the late 1990's art museums would spend about \$438,000 in fundraising efforts to raise about \$985,000, but by the beginning of the 2000's for every \$688,000 spent, they raised an estimated \$1,898,000.¹⁵⁶

Fundraising also has its flaws including misconceptions from donors that museums are publically funded, and the assumption that their money is better spent elsewhere. Another drawback is if an organization is a national institution, it might not appeal to donors who might want to donate to locally funded institutions. Museums must also compete with other museums in the area to get funds, and have to present themselves as a more profitable and valuable asset to the community to get such support. Funding a new organization is then difficult because it lacks the reputation and achievements of museums in the area that have been in the community longer.¹⁵⁸

Donations & Sponsorships According to the AAM 36 percent of revenues come from donations.¹⁵⁹ Donations come from individuals, corporations, foundations and bequests. Donors are attracted to organizations that have low overhead costs and operating expenses, because it is a sign that the organization is being run efficiently.¹⁶⁰

Donations from corporations and foundations are known as sponsorships. Sponsorships can either be long term or short term financial support that contributes to a large percentage of

¹⁵¹ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

¹⁵² (Glossary of Canada Council Terms, 2005)

¹⁵³ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

¹⁵⁴ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

¹⁵⁵ (Texas Commission on the Arts)

¹⁵⁶ (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2001)

¹⁵⁸ (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2001)

¹⁵⁹ (Smith, 2010)

¹⁶⁰ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

total revenue. For example, the Children Museum of Houston has more than 80 sponsorships and about 7 of these sponsorships contribute more than a hundred thousand dollars each.¹⁶¹ Also, Explora Science Center & Children’s Museum has approximately 60 sponsorships.¹⁶²

The chart below breaks down the donations received from corporations, foundations, bequests and individuals. It gives the percentages of donations from these sources contribute to the overall donations total. This is an average of national giving to the arts departments.

Table 13: Donations to the Arts by Sources

Donation Source	Percent
Corporation	5%
Foundation	23%
Bequests	8%
Individuals (Small Scale Donations)	12%
Individuals (Large Scale Donations)	52%

Source: Center on Philanthropy Panel Study, 2005 Wave, Foundation Center, Conference Board, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury

In 2005 most of the art donations were contributed by individuals giving high scale donations, or large amounts. Foundations make up 23 percent of donations, small scale donations from individuals make up 12 percent, bequest make up 8 percent, and corporations contribute 5 percent to the total donations.¹⁶³

Demands for the Community Museums depended greatly on attendance in order to be successful in late 1990’s.¹⁶⁴ Even though only 28 percent of the revenues came from admission in 2010 it is still critical for attendance to stay high for success.¹⁶⁵ El Paso has a population of 219,402 below the age of 18, making it a potential site for a children’s museum.¹⁶⁶ A museum is liable to engage visitors in its attractions, but the community must be supportive with visitations and donations.¹⁶⁷ For example, the Lewis County Children’s Museum in Chehalis, Washington is a recently established museum. It predicts to obtain 60 percent of its running costs through admissions, rentals and special exhibits.¹⁶⁸ This demonstrates the dependence of a museum’s funding on its community. Collaboration between the museum and community is crucial.

Civic engagement is the promotion of increased quality of life for the community through the involvement and cooperation of the community itself.¹⁶⁹ Civic engagement is important for a successful museum, and community engagement would be in the form of volunteering and museums donations. A suggested idea for El Paso would be to have students at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) volunteer across the community, in hopes that more citizens would volunteer at museums.¹⁷⁰ For example, the El Paso Insights Museum of Science has collaborated

¹⁶¹ (Children’s Museum of Houston, 2010)
¹⁶² (Explora, Children’s Museum in Albuquerque)
¹⁶³ (Falk, 2011)
¹⁶⁴ (Garnier)
¹⁶⁵ (Smith, 2010)
¹⁶⁶ (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)
¹⁶⁷ (Waltl, 2006)
¹⁶⁸ (Lewis County Children’s Museum)
¹⁶⁹ (Children’s Discovery Museum Newsletter, 2010)
¹⁷⁰ (Discovery Place Kids, 2011)

with UTEP engineering students, who are building exhibits for the museum, as one of several objectives of its renovation plan.¹⁷¹ Such collaborations benefit both the museum and the student by improving the services of a museum and providing the volunteer with academic experience and or an internship.

Volunteering A form of civic engagement is volunteering. Factors that affect volunteering rates to be higher would be to have higher rates of homeownership, high percentages of high school or college graduates, and large numbers of nonprofit organizations. Factor attributed to low volunteering rates would be higher percentages of multi-unit housing, longer commuting times, and higher rates of foreclosure, unemployment and poverty. Table X below provides poverty, high school graduates and college graduates rates for the cities of El Paso, Albuquerque and Houston.¹⁷²

Table 14: Cities Poverty, High School Graduates and College Graduates Rates (2005-2009)

City	Poverty Rate	High School Graduates	College Graduates
Houston	19.2%	70.4%	27.0%
Albuquerque	13.5%	85.9%	31.8%
El Paso	22.2%	68.6%	18.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the table, El Paso has the highest poverty rate and the lowest high school and college graduate rates from the two other cities. Community Scholars developed the table to determine the total monetary value of service contributed by estimated volunteers per each city.

Table 15: 2006-2009 Cities Volunteering Rates and Volunteer Hours per Capita

City	El Paso	Albuquerque	Houston
Population	602,672	515,107	2,191,400
Volunteer Rate	15.6%	26.8%	23.8%
Total Number of Volunteers	94,017	138,049	521,553
Volunteer Hours per Capita	14.8	29.4	32.7
National Dollar Value Per Hour	\$21.36	\$21.36	\$21.36
Total Value	\$29,721,406.18	\$86,692,563.22	\$364,290,167.02
Value Per Capita	\$49.32	\$168.30	\$166.24

Source: Volunteering in America, Independent Sector, U.S. Census Bureau

Community Scholars multiplied the total population of the city by the volunteer rate obtained from Volunteers in America to get an estimated total number of volunteers in each city.¹⁷³ Then total number of volunteers is multiplied by the volunteer hours per capita to the national monetary value of one hour of service to get the total value of service contributed per each city. It is noted that volunteering allows institutions to cut down on expenses and focus on the expansion of its operation.

When comparing Table X to Table X, it should be noted that Albuquerque has the highest volunteering rate and is the city with the lowest poverty rate and highest high school graduates

¹⁷¹ (Insights Museum: Getting Bigger and Better, 2011)

¹⁷² (Volunteering In America 2010 : National, State, and City Information, 2010)

¹⁷³ (Volunteering in America, 2006-2009)

from the cities being analyzed. El Paso has the lowest volunteering rate, a trend further supported by the city's high poverty rate and lowest high school and college graduates compared when compared to Albuquerque and Houston.

Despite El Paso having the lowest volunteering rate, it had an estimated of 94,017 volunteers in 2010. Volunteers in El Paso contributed an estimated of 30 million dollars of service. El Paso only has a 3.3 percent volunteer rate in the arts and sports which may be due to the lack of non-profit organization in the area of the arts.¹⁷⁴

Sustainability

Sustainability can be interpreted in two different ways: the first one would be to sustain an organization by breaking even, creating a total income equal to total expenses, each year and the second one would be to create a surplus to create fund reserves for the economic downfalls.¹⁷⁵ If a museum is established as a non-profit, it does not mean that the museum should not generate a net income and surplus, the museum should create funds for future crisis.¹⁷⁶ An organization could offer good services and management and still face hardship. There is a misconception that a successful organization uses both earned and contributed incomes proportionally. Earned income is the revenue the institution has earned, while contributed income is money given. Presently it is said that an organization will be most successful if it has two major types of funding whether it be government funding, corporate funding and or individual and foundation funding.¹⁷⁷

In order to sustain a museum, its operating costs must be met. The table below shows the operating cost of two museums. Operating costs only include the general utilities expenses, wages expenses, office upkeep, and miscellaneous expenses. This does not mention the total revenue; it is only what it takes to run the museum.

Table 16: Children's Museums Operating Costs and Attendances during 2008

Children's Museum	Operating Costs	Attendances
Children's Museum at La Crosse	370,000	47,641
A Hands-On Adventure Children's	145,000	15,000

Source: Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Case Study Report

Both of these museums reported that they receive 60 to 70 percent of their revenue from attendance fees and memberships, and 30 to 40 percent from fundraising, donations and grants.¹⁷⁸ The percentages of these children's museums revenue from attendance, is much higher than the 28 percent that the AAM estimated as the national average.¹⁷⁹

Aside from funding, a museum must establish a relationship with the community in order to be sustainable. Without the support of a community, a museum has a greater chance of

¹⁷⁴ (Volunteering in America, 2006-2009)

¹⁷⁵ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

¹⁷⁶ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

¹⁷⁷ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

¹⁷⁸ (Woods, No Date)

¹⁷⁹ (Smith, 2010)

economic failure. Museums must also have an economic, physical, and social impact on the community; it needs to open its doors to the diversity of the community.¹⁸⁰

Museum Economics The economics of museums incorporates the general idea of analyzing museums as an economic unit. The basis for economic analysis in museums is based on the relationship between input (exhibits, manpower etc.) and output items in terms of revenue generated.¹⁸¹

Cost Structure Museums have a unique cost structure. They have high fixed costs and low variable costs.¹⁸² Fixed costs are the costs that remain constant, regardless of any change in company's activity.¹⁸³ Variable costs are costs that change in proportion to change in a company's activity or business.¹⁸⁴ The marginal cost of a visitor in a museum is zero. Efficient pricing close to marginal cost henceforth never covers the costs involved.¹⁸⁵ Marginal cost is the increase or decrease in the total cost of a production run for making one additional unit of an item.¹⁸⁶ The costs of museums are dynamic which puts the enterprise at a disadvantage. When costs are dynamic they are constantly changing in an upwards trend. Museums face the disadvantage that many enterprises with dynamic costs face. That disadvantage is known as a productivity lag. A productivity lag makes the corporation generate continuity in rising costs.¹⁸⁷ Productivity lags are formed when costs in the museum will rise relative to costs in the economy. These rising costs (wage rates and costs of maintenance) have to be met with revenue even though productivity improvements in the museum will lag behind.¹⁸⁸ This is an overview of economic cost structure for museums.

Earned Income Museums across the country have opened restaurants and gift shops in their museums to generate a higher earned income. Although this might sound attractive to visitors it can have downfalls when it comes to the private funders. When a museum relies greatly on earned income, donors are more than likely to be less willing to support the organization.¹⁸⁹ Other earned income sources for children's museums include:

- Children's Theatre
- Photography for Special Events
- School Partnerships
- Snack Sales
- Attraction Rides
- After School Programs

Having a children's theater not only provides revenue for the museum, but also promotes talent within the community. Children's museums are collaborating with schools, creating a contract

¹⁸⁰ (Westervelt, 2010)

¹⁸¹ (Meier, 2003)

¹⁸² (Meier, 2003)

¹⁸³ (Investopedia, 2011)

¹⁸⁴ (Investopedia, 2011)

¹⁸⁵ (Meier, 2003)

¹⁸⁶ (Business Dictionary, 2011)

¹⁸⁷ (Meier, 2003)

¹⁸⁸ (Heilbrun, No Dates)

¹⁸⁹ (American Association of Museums, 2009)

with the school districts to offer them admissions and programs. School partnerships earned one museum \$150,000, 12.5 percent of the museum's total revenue.¹⁹⁰

Contributed Income Contributed income includes cash, donations, and grants given to the institution. Contributed income can be seen as an unreliable source because it is subject to change if the donor desires. Organizations relying heavily on contributed income may have a weaker financing system but gains support of more donors.¹⁹¹

Economic and Social Impact on Community In order for a museum to have long-term sustainability, it must be able to contribute to the community socially and economically.¹⁹² Children's museums contribute \$448 million towards economic activity, and thus improve the quality of life of a community.¹⁹³

The table below shows a prediction of how children's museums will contribute to jobs, and revenue to households, local and state government. The numbers entered for attendances range from 50,000 to 200,000 and the expenses were from \$50,000 to \$400,000.

¹⁹⁰ (Association of Children's Museums, 2010)

¹⁹¹ (Elizabeth Cabral Curtis, 2010)

¹⁹² (Westervelt, 2010)

¹⁹³ (Association of Children's Museums, 2008)

Table 17: Estimates of Economic Impact for a Non-Profit Organization in El Paso County

Model A (\$200K Expenses)	Attendance	Expenses	FTE Jobs	Household Income	Local Revenue	State Revenue
Children’s Museum	50,000	\$200,000	6	\$143,762	\$7,888	\$9,108
Nonprofit Arts and Culture		\$1,488,500	39.7	\$650,251	\$76,315	\$80,171
Total Industry Impact		\$1,688,500	45.8	\$794,013	\$84,203	\$89,279
Model B (\$100K Expenses)	Attendance	Expenses	FTE Jobs	Household Income	Local Revenue	State Revenue
Children’s Museum	50,000	\$100,000	3	\$71,881	\$3,944	\$4,554
Nonprofit Arts and Culture		\$1,488,500	39.7	\$650,251	\$76,315	\$80,171
Total Industry Impact		\$1,588,500	42.8	\$722,132	\$80,259	\$84,725

Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator

The Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator from the Americans for the Arts organization was used to derive the figures in the table, which shows the economic impact a non-organization has on its community. The organization seeks to promote non-profit organizations of all forms of the arts.¹⁹⁴ The results are estimates of similar populated communities. Total expenditures are the total money spent in events by audiences and the arts and culture nonprofits organizations, and event-related expenses. Full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs are the total jobs that the community provides “supported by the expenditures made by your arts and culture organization and/or its audiences.”¹⁹⁵ Household income is the total of money the organization provides in forms of includes salaries, wages, and proprietary income. Government revenue is the total money the local and state government make “from taxes, license fees as a result of the expenditures made by your arts and culture organization and/or its audiences.”¹⁹⁶ The table shows that regardless the total expenses, the impact is greatly affected by the number of attendees.

In the table below the average amount of money spent per attendee in event-related expenses on arts and culture events is shown. This data was collected in 2007 from cities with populations of 500,000 to 999,999, of residents of El Paso spending in El Paso’s arts and culture events, and non-residents of El Paso spending in El Paso’s arts and culture events.

¹⁹⁴ (Americans for The Arts)

¹⁹⁵ (Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator)

¹⁹⁶ (Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator)

Table 18: Average Amount of Money Spent per Person for Events with the Arts

Type of Expenses	Community Member (500 to 999K Persons)	El Paso Resident	El Paso Non-Resident
Refreshments	\$3.06	\$4.81	\$6.57
Meals	\$11.19	\$6.19	\$15.27
Souvenirs	\$3.43	\$2.12	\$5.37
Clothing & Accessories	\$1.61	\$2.13	\$2.68
Transportation	\$2.78	\$2.03	\$6.14
Child Care	\$0.36	\$0.43	\$0.05
Lodging	\$5.28	\$0.58	\$18.28
Other	\$1.19	\$0.21	\$0.28
Total	\$29.77	\$18.50	\$54.64

Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III; Economic Impact of Arts and Culture Study of El Paso, Texas

The table above shows that a person spends on average \$29.77 at an arts and cultural event in a city of a population of 500,000 to 999,999. Event related expenses not only benefit the museum, but create a spill-over effect which attracts more people to a certain area, specifically the downtown of a city. Museums then make an economic and social impact by inciting people to spend and invest in their own community.¹⁹⁷ The above information, for residents and non-residents of El Paso, was collected from 946 customer and, or participants of cultural and arts businesses close to the event. In the fiscal year 2007 a total of 1.9 million attendees spent 47.4 million dollars on arts and culture related events in El Paso.¹⁹⁸ El Paso's residents' spending is below the average of similar cities to its own, but non-residents of El Paso spend above the average in arts and culture events. Table X above demonstrates that tourists spend the most money on events in El Paso. Therefore it is more beneficial to attract tourists as a way to increase revenues.¹⁹⁹

A children's museum would help with the revitalization of downtown by attracting residents and tourists to the area generating more revenue for nearby businesses.²⁰⁰ A children's museum may also develop pride in a community, and encourage people to support local businesses.²⁰¹ In the Case for Children's Museums it was stated that "a creative community is one worth living in and visiting", and a children's museum would expand the community's creativeness.²⁰²

Base Line Economy for Each City

The economies of Albuquerque, Houston and El Paso have been thriving since the 2009 recession. Each city has experienced a growth in population and economy. El Paso's population is growing from the incoming military and the Mexican nationals moving into the city. Albuquerque is continuing to expand its downtown therefore employment and city budget has grown. Houston's economy is doing well, and continues to steadily grow.

¹⁹⁷ (Woods, No Date)

¹⁹⁸ (The Economic Impact of Arts and Cultures Study of El Paso, Texas, 2007)

¹⁹⁹ (The Economic Impact of Arts and Cultures Study of El Paso, Texas, 2007)

²⁰⁰ (Woods, No Date)

²⁰¹ (Cobbleston Children's Museum of Fredericksburg)

²⁰² (Association of Children's Museums, 2008)

Economy of Cities El Paso is experiencing a rise in its economy since the 2009 recession. Many factors taking part in the re-establishment of the economy are the military installation in Fort Bliss, the migration of Juarez citizens and the workforce in El Paso. Employment is up 0.4 percent and rose 36th among the 100 large metro areas.²⁰³ El Paso is gaining surplus from Hispanic consumers that cross over the national border to shop. Mexican nationals spent an estimated amount of \$1.4 billion in entertainment and shopping centers in 2010.²⁰⁴ Also, the large number of troops being stationed in Fort Bliss has benefited the El Paso economy. Nearly \$5 billion of construction at Fort Bliss has built El Paso's financial system over the course of five years.²⁰⁵ Between the first and last quarter (first three months and last three months) the economic output of El Paso had a 0.9 percent increase.²⁰⁶

Albuquerque is the leading economic city in New Mexico, it accounts for approximately half of the economic activity in the state.²⁰⁷ The city is experiencing a high economic growth with the revitalization that is taking place in downtown. Businesses are growing and expanding Albuquerque's workforce.²⁰⁸ Areas of major agricultural industries are located in Albuquerque. More than 700 manufacturing firms are located in the city, providing goods and gaining revenue for businesses. Major manufacturing goods that are located in Albuquerque are Intel, GE and General Mills.²⁰⁹

Houston is a developed city with a constructive economy. The city sustains itself through a large energy and chemical workforce.²¹⁰ Houston is the largest city in the South with one of the largest economic statuses. It also has one of the world's largest oil centers and its Texas Medical Center is the largest hospital in the world, generating more revenue for the city.²¹¹

The table below compares the employment and unemployment rates of each city. With the numbers given in the table Community Scholars was able to better determine how well a city was doing.

Table 19: Employment Status (2005-2009)

City	Employed	Unemployed
El Paso, TX	282,6376	23,042
Albuquerque, NM	255, 317	15,679
Houston, TX	1,043,381	86,893

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the data, Houston and with a high number of established businesses, the number of employed and unemployed people is the highest. Considering that El Paso and Albuquerque have a smaller population than Houston, El Paso has a higher employment and higher unemployment figure than Albuquerque.

²⁰³ (Kolenc, 2011)

²⁰⁴ (Burge, 2011)

²⁰⁵ (Hunt, 2011)

²⁰⁶ (Kolenc, 2011)

²⁰⁷ (City-Data)

²⁰⁸ (HDIC)

²⁰⁹ (City-Data)

²¹⁰ (City-Data)

²¹¹ (Infoplease)

Sustainability and Attendance Even though museums have noted an increase in attendance they have had a decrease in revenue. Admissions are not the principal source of money for museums, according to the American Association of Museums it is only 28 percent of the total revenue.²¹² This percentage might be low due to the 35 percent of museums that provide a free admission that participated in this survey. Also admissions have become more common in 2008 59 percent of museums surveyed by the AAM had a fee, and in 2009 it increased to 65.7 percent of museums with fees.

AAM found that the museums with severe economic stress were more likely to be ones with low attendance rates. The decrease of attendance could be caused by decreased tourism and decreased school visits.²¹³

Discussion

A children's museum in El Paso would clearly benefit the community. With the tables and figures within the report Community Scholars has identified El Paso as an ideal city to establish a children's museum. El Paso has a large young population and is ready for an expanding economy. The success of a children's museum would depend if the community is willing to commit and contribute to the institution. Also as El Paso's downtown continues to revitalize, establishing a children's museum in the area may benefit the Downtown 2015 Plan.

Conclusions

Based on our research, Community Scholars has come to conclude that success does not measure by whether a museum is running at a net loss or net gain. For example, the Children's Museum at Houston operated at a net loss of \$1,296,858 from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 and is considered one of the best children's museums in the nation. Therefore in order for a museum to be successfully sustained it must offer good services in order to generate and maintain the public's interest. As for any business, the quality of its product and services tends to reflect the amount of money and dedication that was invested in the business. Therefore the main factor that contributes to a museum's success is how much is invested and how many people attend the museum. Also, as El Paso continues to revitalize downtown, establishing a children's museum will enhance downtown visitation by local and out of town visitors. It will create a spillover effect for local businesses which can improve our economy. In relation, Explora Science Center and Children's Museum and Children's Museum of Houston are both located in the downtown areas of their cities.

Furthermore, without the support of the community there is no civic engagement, which is crucial to the success of a museum. Civic engagement will not only be affected with visitations, but also with donations. People invest in success, but if they do not see a clear future for the institution they are less likely to invest or donate to an institution that might fail. An example would be the El Paso Museum of Art which has achieved an attendance of 105,000 and is considered a successful museum in the city. Although the museum operated at a net loss of \$57,547 from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 it is successful because it is a valued asset in the community.

²¹² (Smith, 2010)

²¹³ (Katz, 2010)

In order for a museum to be sustainable in the El Paso community it must achieve high attendance rates ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 visitors per year. A museum can be a value asset to the community and as previously state. If visitors enjoy visiting a museum, more than likely they will want to support it, whether by donating or volunteering. For museums to continue having high attendance throughout the years, it must continue to attract visitors by rotating exhibits and so forth. Keeping interesting exhibits, bringing in exhibits and having an affordable price it will influence frequent visits from members of the community. The El Paso community will have to have a strong support of this institution, if not the museum will not be able to be feasible or sustainable.

The El Paso community clearly has a demand for a children's museum but if the community is not willing to support the museum, then the museum would face financial difficulty. However, El Paso would need to define and look at its current museums before deciding on expanding its museum district. El Paso has a children's science center, Insights, and as one member of the community had said, the city and community should focus on already established museums. El Paso has low volunteering rates which can affect the operation of a museum, as seen in our volunteer table volunteering could help an institution cut back in expenses and in effect the museum could focus in expanding and enhancing the facility with new attractions.

A children's museum is therefore feasible and sustainable as long as it follows the requirement of achieving high attendances, having strong financial support throughout the community and having a structural financial plan on a year-to-year basis. The above points will be a challenge for the El Paso community, but if a children's museum were to exist, the community would benefit financially and socially from it.

Recommendations

In the establishment of a children's museum in El Paso, Community Scholars recommends the following:

There should be a structured financial plan on a year-to-year basis of the museum. The museum would have to clearly identify its expenses and its revenue to build a plan in which it reflects a good quality of service. El Paso should set aside funds for a tax base in contributing to a children's museum. The museum would depend primarily on the city in its initial phase of establishment.

A children's museum should strongly promote El Paso and itself. Advertising for the institution can provide high attendance rates the museum needs to be successful. A strong collaboration with education like El Paso Independent School District would achieve high attendances as well. With collaboration with schools the museum brings in children but influences other members of the community to visit the museum. If the museum continues to provide an enjoyable experience more than likely there will be repeated attendees and thus helping with the success of the museum. To continue the interest the museum should have updated services and rotate exhibits it currently has and bring in new attractions.

In order to establish a children's museum there must be a string initial funding source this means that in helping the museum both the public and private sector must contribute, this could come from collaborations, sponsorships and donations. Also, engaging businesses to sponsor the children's museum is crucial in the establishment and continued function of a children's museum considering that museums rely on sponsorships and donations.

Another recommendation is to locate the children's museum in Downtown El Paso because it is a prime location for businesses and tourism. Lastly, due to the lack of support from the El Paso's community, the next best thing would be to rebrand and renovate what we currently have. Insights Science Center is an institution which is dedicated to children in educating them in the areas of science and technology. The rebranding of Insights as a children's museum would create renewed interest and better serve El Paso's youth if the museum's quality of its "product" were to be improved. Additionally, the city should focus on renovating existing museums before establishing another museum.

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