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The American Association of Museums (AAM) estimates that there are approximately 17,500 museums in the United States (American Association of Museums (AAM), n.d.[b]). While the sizes and types of these organizations vary immensely, museums must fulfill specific requirements in order to receive federal funding:

- Legal recognition as a non-profit institution or governmental organization
- Educational in nature
- Own, utilize, care for, and exhibit tangible objects on a regular basis
- Maintain a minimum of one full-time professional staff member
- Provide services to the general public for a minimum of 120 days a year

To receive accreditation by the AAM, a museum must meet the above requirements and also demonstrate the ability to:

- Maintain a formally stated mission
  - Formally document its collections and objects
  - Operate at a physical facility/site for a minimum of 1,000 hours a year
  - Remain open for a minimum of 2 years
  - Legally own 80% of its permanent collection
  - Retain a full-time director
  - Demonstrate financial stability
- (AAM, n.d.[c])

As of December 31, 2008, there were 776 American museums accredited by the AAM, with 34 more in the application process for accreditation (AAM, 2009).

Four museums in the San Antonio area currently maintain national accreditation. They include the McNay Art Museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Fort Sam Houston U.S. Army Medical Department Museum, and the Witte Museum (AAM, n.d.[a]). Current demographic and operating statistics for American accredited museums appear in the following tables.

<b>Demographic Information for Accredited American Museums</b>	
<b>Type of Museum</b>	<b>%</b>
Aquarium	<1
Nature Center	<1
Children/Youth	1
Zoological/ Park	1
Arboretum/Botanical Garden	2
Specialized (e.g. aviation, railroad)	3
Science/Technology	4
Natural History/Anthropology	7
Historic House/Site	8
General	9
History	23
Art	42
<b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>	
	<b>%</b>
1-5	15
6-15	30
16-30	20
31-50	12
51-70	5
71-100	7
101-150	5
151-200	2
More than 200	6
(AAM, 2009)	

<b>Operating Information for Accredited American Museums</b>	
<b>Budget Size</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$350,000	9
\$350,000-\$499,999	7
\$500,000-\$999,999	18
\$1,000,000-\$2.9 Million	30
\$3 Million-\$4.9 Million	12
\$5 Million-\$14.9 Million	15
More than \$15 Million	9
<b>Governing Authority</b>	<b>%</b>
Other (joint, trust)	2
County/Regional	2
Federal	4
Municipal	7
State	7
College/University	15
Private Non-profit	63
(AAM, 2009)	

**Impact of Museums**

The ability to formally and informally educate remains an essential and enduring mission of museums. When surveyed, Americans perceived museums as a significant, valuable, and honest tool available for educating students. Nearly 11,000 museums in the United States provide educational programs to students in grades K through 12, focused primarily on art, history, math and/or science. In fact, museums spend more than \$1 billion each year to implement professional development programs for teachers, traveling exhibits, school visits from museum staff, and guided field trips (AAM, 2003).

Museums can also socially impact people’s lives on an individual, community, and societal level (Dodd & Sandell, 2001). For example, isolated populations, including individuals who are unemployed, disabled, or elderly, can seek out volunteer opportunities in museums to build new skills, acquire confidence, and develop valuable social networks (Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Dodd, O’Riain, Hooper-Greenhill, & Sandell, 2002). Volunteerism within museums is prevalent: one in 480 Americans over the age of 18 volunteers in a museum (AAM, 2003).

In addition to educational and social benefits, museums also economically stimulate local communities by their ability to attract tourists. A recent study revealed that that 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers, or 118.3 million adults per year participate in cultural/heritage activities and

contribute \$192 billion annually to the economy (Mandala, 2009). While out-of-town tourists typically spend money at local shops, restaurants, and other businesses, tourists who visit museums spend nearly twice as much on their trips as tourists who do not visit museums. One of the reasons why museums succeed in drawing such a large number of visitors is that they are affordable. Nearly 57% of the museums in the United States are free to the public. Of the museums that do charge admission, nearly 59% offer free days, and 98% offer special discounts (AAM, 2003).

**Museums: Looking Towards the Future**

Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are marked by their increased utilization of technology. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) (2006) reported that 63% of museums received funding for technology in 2004, compared to 84% in 2001. The same study discovered that 37% received funding in 2004 to support the digitization of their collections, similar to the 38% rate in 2001. Online museum resources include artifact databases, web-based exhibits, and educational programs. By providing information about exhibits and offering digital representations of artifacts on the Internet, museums connect with an even greater number of people. Internet images are likely to inspire individuals to view the “real” artifact in the museum (Moore, 2002).

In addition to technological enhancements, museums must also take into account “the shift to the global economy, the rising importance of self-directed lifelong learning, and the expectation of customized, on demand audience experiences” (IMLS, 2009, p.13) that will drive the role of museums in the communities of the future.

**Changes in Deductions for Museum Gifts**

Museums depend on private philanthropy, but with the installation of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, many museums are losing out on major funding from their fractional-gift donations (Taylor, 2006). These gifts are usually pieces too expensive for museums to buy. The Pension Act creates two restrictions affecting fractional gifts (Taylor, 2006; H.R. 4, 2006):

- Donations time-frame limited to 10 years or until the time of the donor’s death (whichever comes first). If the gift is not completed in time, then the IRS will recapture all previous deductions, plus interest.

- The artwork loses value due to changes in deductions. The donated artwork receives a fresh appraisal each year, if the art piece either appreciated or depreciated from the previous appraisal, then the deduction will be taken from the lower of the two appraisals.

Museums worry that this change in tax deductions will discourage wealthy donors from giving valuable artwork (Taylor, 2006).

### Museums in Texas

Museums are a relatively recent development in Texas. Two of the state's oldest museums, the Buckhorn Hall of Horns and the teaching museum at Our Lady of the Lake College, were founded in San Antonio in 1881 and 1896, respectively. The number of museums in Texas has grown rapidly over the past few decades. In 1978, the Texas Historical Commission estimated that there were 410 museums in the state (Tyler, 2009). By 2006, the Texas Association of Museums database listed 671 museums (Texas Association of Museums, 2008).

*In Bandera County*, the Frontier Times Museum displays artifacts including various Native American and cowboy objects. This museum also exhibits the artwork of local artists and craftsmen (Frontier Times Museum, n.d.).

*In Comal County*, the Sophienburg Museum and Archives portray 19<sup>th</sup> century life in New Braunfels through a wide-ranging display of historic documents such as family genealogies, maps, almanacs, oral history tapes, and church records, to name a few. It also preserves millions of photographs and hundreds of thousands of personal papers and public documents for research purposes (Sophienburg Museum and Archives, 2008).

*In Kendall County*, the Agricultural Heritage Center in Boerne features items relating to outdoor ranching and farming life in the Hill Country and south Texas (Museums USA, 2009a).

*Bexar County* offers more than 30 museums appealing to a wide range of interests and ages. Two of its most popular accredited museums are the Witte Museum and the McNay Art Museum.

Established in 1926 by the San Antonio Museum Association, the Witte Museum's permanent collection consists mainly of ethnographic, cultural, and scientific artifacts from south Texas (Museums USA, 2009d). The McNay houses over 7,000 works of art, approximately 700 of which are 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century European and American paintings and sculptures. Its non-circulating library features 30,000 volumes on applied art and art history (Museums USA, 2009b).

Another accredited museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA) opened the impressive 15,000 square foot Lenora and Walter F. Brown Asian Art Wing in 2005. In May of 2009, the Museum Reach extension of the San Antonio Riverwalk was opened with new riverfront access along the Museum's north side (SAMA, 2009). SAMA also possesses artifacts from around the world, including an extensive collection of Ancient, Latin American, African and Oceanic art (Museums USA, 2009c). Other museums in Bexar County include the Spanish Governor's Palace, the San Antonio Art League Museum, the San Antonio Children's Museum, the Texas Pioneer, Trail Drivers, and Texas Rangers Museum, the Wooden Nickel Museum, the Texas Highway Patrol Museum, the Texas Air Museum, and the Texas Transportation Museum.

### Snapshot of Approximate Annual Attendance in Museums in the Greater San Antonio Region

(as reported to the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation)

Museum	Annual Attendance
Witte Museum	265,000
Institute of Texan Cultures	200,000
San Antonio Children's Museum	150,000
McNay Art Museum	125,000
San Antonio Museum of Art	80,000
Frontier Times Museum	10,000
Museo Alameda	8,000
Sophienburg Museum	5,000
San Antonio Art League	3,000
<i>NOTE: All figures are estimates for calendar year 2008, rounded to nearest thousand</i>	

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