

WESTERN NC MUSEUM STATISTICS

100% OF MUSEUMS TEMPORARILY CLOSED
during the initial crisis

75% OF MUSEUMS HAVE FACILITY DAMAGE

and have not received financial support from insurance or FEMA

90% OF MUSEUMS RECEIVED NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT
from their local government for relief work or from their insurance provider for lost revenue

\$3.2+ MILLION IN ECONOMIC LOSSES
September - October 2024

80% OF MUSEUMS are engaged in hurricane relief efforts

80% OF MUSEUMS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE for FEMA disaster grants for non-profit organizations

100% OF MUSEUMS forecast decreased revenue and attendance over the next six months



There are 10 museums in Western NC whose operations have been negatively impacted by Hurricane Helene. These organizations are not eligible for the recovery funding that has come down from the state, from FEMA, and in most, they are not eligible for coverage from their insurance provider(s) for lost revenue.

The North Carolina Science Network respectfully request members of the state legislature to direct one-time grants to museums who are current or past recipients of state funding through the North Carolina Science Museums Grant Program.



ANNUAL IMPACT OF WNC MUSEUMS

1.56 MILLION
VISITORS SERVED

\$56.4 MILLION
ECONOMIC IMPACT

NC SCIENCE NETWORK PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR
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WESTERN NC MUSEUMS

EVERY COUNTY

Grandfather Mountain
Nature Museum

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Asheville Museum of Science

North Carolina Arboretum

Western North Carolina
Nature Center

HENDERSON COUNTY

Hands On! Children's Museum

Team ECCO Aquarium

MACON COUNTY

Highlands Nature Center

RUTHERFORD COUNTY

KidSenses Children's Museum

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

Cradle of Forestry, FIND Outdoors

Pisgah Astronomical
Research Institute - PARI



The North Carolina Science Network is a statewide partnership of 50+ museums that advance STEM education and strengthens tourism from the blue ridge mountains to the crystal coast.

ncsciencenet.org

EVERY COUNTY

"Grandfather Mountain [Nature Museum] is a major draw for tourists to come to the mountains of NC and those who come to visit the mountain, [and] in turn support the many small businesses in the area."

Jesse Pope, Executive Director & President
Grandfather Mountain Nature Museum

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

"AMOS was closed to the public for four weeks due to [the] disaster. [Due to] the closure, continued lack of water, school closures and reduction in visitors during a busy season has created a financial hardship. Area educators and families depend on AMOS to provide hands-on, engaging activities that meet or exceed North Carolina's K-12 educational standards, help close the achievement gap in STEM, and spark a greater interest in education and fields that require STEM skills. Due to the significant financial hardship AMOS has been unable to focus on the planning of programs that are already in demand now and will continue to be such as camps, field trips, and afterschool."

Amanda Bryant, Executive Director
Asheville Museum of Science, AMOS

HENDERSON COUNTY

"Many WNC museums have been deeply affected by the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Helene. Institutions such as Hands On! play a crucial role in the region's tourism landscape and are essential for fostering community by addressing the educational, social, emotional, and developmental needs of children. To meet the rising demand for services and support within the WNC community—while also recovering from our own economic setbacks—financial assistance is essential for our museums."

Joseph Knight, Director and CEO
Hands On! Children's Museum

MACON COUNTY

"Our museum makes significant and measurable educational contributions to our community and region. Were our programming to cease, our region would be poorer for the loss of science and nature programming that is much-loved and very much in demand by kids and teachers."

James Costa, Executive Director
Highlands Nature Center

RUTHERFORD COUNTY

"Over 20 years ago KidSenses was founded to help revitalize a rural main street community which was suffering economic decline resultant from the loss of most of the textile industry. It is vitally important for this museum and others to continue their role as providers of safe and fun educational environments."

Willard Whitson, Executive Director
KidSenses Children's Museum

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

"Our facility draws tens of thousands of visitors every year, which directly supports local businesses, jobs, and the regional tourism economy. The absence of the museum would mean a loss of this economic activity, affecting hotels, restaurants, and shops in the surrounding area."

Carolyn Ashworth, President/CEO
Cradle of Forestry, FIND Outdoors