

PORT DISCOVERY
Children's Museum
ANNUAL REPORT

FY2025



MOMENTUM FY2025

Looking back on FY2025, one word defines the year: momentum.

This was a year of donors and partners saying yes – to Port Discovery as a hub for joyful learning, a training ground for educators, and a place that strengthens families and communities.

At April's Play It Forward, we shared news of two transformative gifts: \$2.5 million from the Lilly Endowment to create Joyful Steps, a new character-building exhibit, and \$500,000 from the Sherman Family Foundation to expand the At Play Learning Institute (APLI). APLI has already become a statewide model, serving 239 parents and caregivers, 273 children, and 92 educators this year through 17 cohorts, with more to come next year!

We also advanced the first phase of our Master Infrastructure Renewal Plan. Construction began on Galactic Builders, a space-themed STEAM adventure, and Skies, a sensory-friendly environment inspired by the rhythm of the sky. Design work began on the next wave of exhibits that will continue into 2026, including Joyful Steps, a teaching kitchen, and a new fish-inspired climber in the Atrium.

Everyday impact remained at the core of FY2025: nearly 200,000 visitors enjoyed the museum, supported by programs like free admission for military families, discounted school visits, \$5 PlayMakers tickets, and \$10 Community Days. And we closed the year with \$2.5 million allocated from the Governor's capital budget for critical renovations to our building.

FY2025 was a year of progress, promise, and preparation. None of it would have been possible without our Board, staff, funders, and YOU—the families and educators who believe in the power of play. Together, we've built the momentum that will carry Port Discovery into its next exciting chapter. Thank you!

With gratitude,



Carter Arnot Polakoff
President and CEO

FY2025 By the Numbers

184,415

Total attendance between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025

22,997

Students and teachers who came to the Museum as part of an in-person field trip, 59% of which represent Title 1 schools

18,548

PlayMakers attendance (a 4% increase from FY24!)

2,419

Attendance for \$10 Community Days

512

Parents, grandparents, caregivers and their young children who received direct service as part of a Parents at Play cohort, our signature multigenerational program that provides parenting resources, tools, and strategies to caregivers in support of play-based learning and early childhood development

4,692

Military service personnel and veterans who came as part of the Salute the Troops program, including over 400 families who came for a free evening of play-based learning at Port Discovery's USO Night

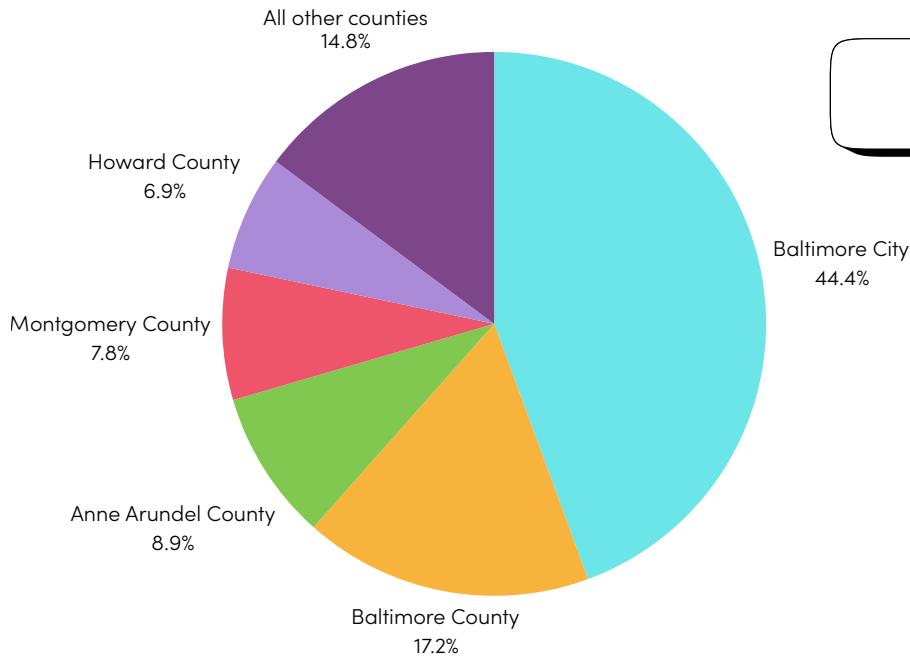
3,266

Number of visitors during Sensory Mornings and Sensory Group Afternoons – dedicated times for visitors with special needs or who benefit from a calmer, low sensory museum experience

Economic Impact

- ☀ The Museum employed 76 full and part-time staff
- ☀ 50% of visitors receive free or reduced entry through our various access initiatives
- ☀ Hosted 111 corporate volunteers from ten regional businesses who served over 1,000 hours assisting on essential Museum projects
- ☀ Provided over 130 free admission tickets to health partners such as Johns Hopkins Hospital's Kennedy Krieger Institute, Believe in Tomorrow, Casey Cares, Mt Washington Pediatric Hospital, and Ronald McDonald House as part of our Nonprofit Partner Access Fund.

FY2025 Geographic Visitor Spread

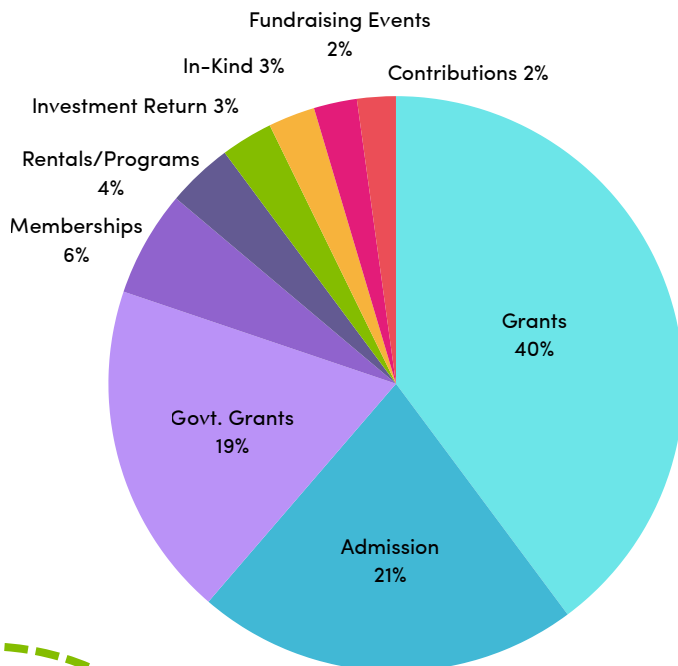


121,417 visitors from Maryland!

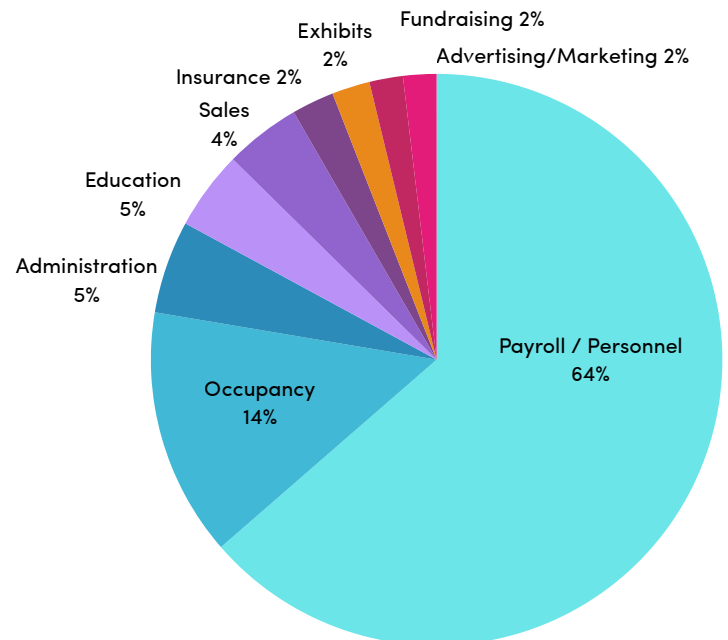
28,153 additional visitors from across the US!

FY2025 Budget

Revenue



Expenses



Program Spotlights!

USO Night: November 8, 2024

On Friday, November 8, 2024, we welcomed 700 regional military children and their families for a night of playful learning! Every year, we have the honor of welcoming over veterans, active-duty military members, and their families to enjoy an unforgettable evening at the museum, free of charge. This cherished event, in partnership with Maryland USO offices, is our way of showing deep appreciation for their service. USO Night is not just about fun and games; it's a heartfelt welcome to new families in the area, helping them feel at home in their new community.



Noontime New Year: December 31, 2024



On December 31, Port Discovery hosted its annual Noontime New Year, a family-friendly festive event to ring in the new year well before midnight. The day activated the Museum with special games, creative activities, and engaging exhibits – all leading up to 12 noon, when we celebrated the new year with a balloon drop. It was a fun party for all (that also gets everyone to bed on time!).

Port Discovery in the Community

Port Discovery's Port2Port program, which takes the Museum on the road, had a full schedule in FY2025. Port2Port brought programming in the arts, STEM, early literacy, and health/fitness to 29 schools, festivals, and partners events in Baltimore City, and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Howard Counties.



At Play Learning Institute

Port Discovery's At Play Learning Institute (APLI) grew in leaps and bounds in FY2025, expanding Community Partners at Play cohorts across Baltimore City and into new Maryland counties, and piloting our first Professionals at Play workshops to great success. The program year kicked off with a formal MOU in place with Baltimore City Public School System's Office of Early Learning for APLI to provide workshops to all BCPSS Judy Center Early Learning Hubs over the next two years.

APLI offers training and critical resources to empower Maryland's families, communities, and the early childhood workforce to apply playful learning strategies in their homes, classrooms, and relationships with our youngest learners.

Direct Service in FY2025

512

Parents, caregivers, and their children who participated in a Families At Play, Parents At Play, or Grandparents At Play workshop

11

of Judy Center Early Learning Hubs who were Community Partners At Play sites

65

Educators served in the pilot year of Professionals At Play



"This program was wonderful, very fun and educational! I also feel like programs like these are very important in urban areas. Shout out to the amazing ladies from Port Discovery who showed us kindness and patience each week. My family and I are excited about using our Port Discovery membership so we can continue to learn and play!"

Parent participant
Communities At Play, Fall 2024

"Our team walked away excited and motivated to integrate more intentional play-based learning into our daily practice. The session sparked new ideas, deepened our understanding of the power of observation and creativity, and made theory feel practical and applicable. It was a truly impactful experience."

Danielle Frye, M.A.T. Early Childhood Special Education
Senior Director, Stoler Early Learning Center, JCC Greater Baltimore City
Professionals At Play, Spring 2025





On Saturday, February 1, 2025, Port Discovery brought together the best breweries and wineries from around the region for an adult evening of premier tastings. Over 350 party-goers enjoyed a fun night-at-the museum vibe and raised over \$19,000 to support our initiatives.

Special thanks to all 2025 Hops & Vines participating vendors and entertainment partners!



Food & Beverage Vendors:

- ☀ Dulceology Bakery
- ☀ Evolution Brewing Co.
- ☀ Fogo De Chao
- ☀ Founders Brewery
- ☀ Guilford Hall Brewery
- ☀ Hard Rock Cafe
- ☀ Kechy Pizza Co.
- ☀ Lytos Vodka
- ☀ Milkhouse Brewery
- ☀ Monument City Brewing Company
- ☀ Phillips Seafood
- ☀ Sandy Bottom Cocktails
- ☀ Taharka Brothers

Entertainment Partners:

- ☀ Charm City Clue Room
- ☀ DJ Kee Bee
- ☀ Forever Cottman 360

Sponsors:

- ☀ Ziger | Snead Architects
- ☀ The Lancelotta Family

Play It Forward

The Magic of Play

On April 4, 2025, Port Discovery hosted its annual fundraising gala, Play It Forward, with the theme honoring the “Magic of Play.” The evening brought together Baltimore’s community of advocates for children, families, and playful learning to celebrate the power of play, reflect on Port Discovery’s impact, and look ahead to exciting new developments at the Museum.



Play It Forward Sponsors

Grand Illusionist

- J.S. Plank & D.M. DiCarlo Family Foundation
- Lewis Contractors

Arcane Wizard

- CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
- Sinclair, Inc.

Enchanting Alchemist

- BGE
- M&T Bank
- McCormick & Company, Inc.
- Christina & Alex Smith
- The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company

Spellbinding Supporter

- &Wealth
- The Cordish Companies
- Groove Commerce
- The Houff Foundation / Ashley & Charlie Hatter
- JMI Equity
- Monument Sotheby's International Realty
- George A. Roche
- Stewart Title Guaranty
- Zolet Lenet and Fink Group at Morgan Stanley

Magic Maker

- Ernst & Young
- Dana Henson/Platform Construction
- Heritage Financial Consultants
- Nancy & Tony Imbraglio
- Knott Mechanical
- Dr. Julie Militello
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Senator Dennis Rasmussen
- Saul Ewing LLP
- The Yaffe Family

Mystical Friend

- Baltimore Fiscal Partners, LLC
- Monica Brandes & George Jones
- Byrnes and Associates
- Capital Services
- Martina & Nick Dilks
- First National Bank
- Hatzel & Buehler, Inc.
- Lucky's Coffee, Ice Cream & Candy

Business Members

Business Members give their employees and their families one year of free admission to Port Discovery. Support received through the Business Membership program allows the Museum to continue to provide a unique, state-of-the-art educational experience, and subsidize admissions for families in need.

- American Trading and Production Corporation
- BGE
- Broadmead
- Brown Advisory
- Constellation
- COPT Defense Properties
- Global Refuge
- Gross Mendelsohn
- Harbor Park Garage
- JMI Equity
- Lucta
- M&T Bank
- McCormick & Company
- Morgan Stanley
- Municipal Employees Credit Union of Baltimore
- Pandora
- RadNet
- Space Telescope Science Institute
- State Employees Credit Union of Maryland
- T. Rowe Price
- Transamerica
- Wegmans Food Markets

Business Membership is offered at three levels: Visionary, Leader, and Partner. Additional benefits may include:

- Member Mornings
- Customized volunteer opportunities and team-building workshop
- Special recognition on a Community Day
- Extra tickets for guests
- Discounts on Museum facility rentals
- Complimentary tickets to our annual gala

Thank You!

Thank you to all of our supporters who gave in the past year! Your donations were essential for Port Discovery as we reaffirmed our role as a community partner, learning lab, and resource for all families.

The list below represents gifts and donations made across all museum campaigns between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025

Organizations

Arts for Learning Maryland
Association of Children's Museums
Association of Science and Technology Centers
Bainum Family Foundation
Baltimore Community Foundation
Baltimore County Commission on Arts & Sciences
Baltimore National Heritage Area
Bank of America
BGE
Blanket Fort Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Campbell Foundation, Inc.
Davis Family Foundation
E.C. Wareheim Foundation
Ensign C. Markland Kelly Foundation
Eureka Strategic Consulting
The Goldsmith Family Foundation
Gorn Foundation
Groove Commerce
Hard Rock Heals Foundation
Hatzel & Buehler, Inc.
The Helen Pumphrey Denit Charitable Trust
The Herbert Bearman Foundation
Hippodrome Foundation, Inc.
Howard County Arts Council
J.S. Plank and D. M. DiCarlo Family Foundation
Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
Jack Wilen Foundation, Inc.
The John J. Leidy Foundation
The John P. and Elizabeth Y. McKinnell Family Fund
Joseph & Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds
The LaVerna Hahn Charitable Trust

Lockhart Vaughan Foundation
Lois & Philip Macht Family Philanthropic Fund
M&T Bank
The Marion I. and Henry J. Knott Foundation
Mary and Daniel Loughran Foundation
Maryland 529
Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development
Maryland State Department of Education
The Matthew Korn and Cynthia Miller Family Foundation
McCormick & Company, Inc.
The Morris A. Mechanic Foundation
Nora Roberts Foundation
The Orokawa Foundation
PNC Bank
Ports America Chesapeake, LLC
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Robert F. Schumann Foundation
Samuel G. and Margaret A. Gorn Foundation
Schwab Charitable
Sherman Family Foundation
Stanley Black & Decker
State of Maryland
T. Rowe Price Foundation
TD Bank
Thomas Wilson Foundation
Transamerica
The Venable Foundation
Walmart #2045 Nottingham
Wegmans Food Markets
William G. Baker Memorial Fund
Ziger/Snead LLP

Thank You!

Individuals

Greg Abel
Abiade Adeleye
Hollys Anaele
Christopher Anderson
Helen and Francis Anderson
William Anderson
Susan and Bowie Arnot
Genie Arnot
Rhea Arnot and Helmut Jenkner
Mary Hannah Arnot
Bonnie Aubuchon and David Holmes
Alexander Baer
Tamara Baer and Mike Flood
Chris Baggan
Kory Bailey
Jennifer Barrett
Nicole Battista
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Erin and Douglas Becker
Rheda Becker and Robert Meyerhoff
Katie Beltz and Emanuel Figueroa
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Brett Bernard
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Erica and Michael Bloom
Lauren Blum
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McCall Brown
Michael Brown
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Jennifer and Michael Burns
Michael Cafarchio
Steve Canaras
Margaret Cardano
Holly Carnevale

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Katie Carter
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Tamaren Daniels
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Jordon Eanet
Ashley Eisenberg
Christine Estuart-Ruiz
Jacquelyn Evans
Dorie Fain
Sean Farrell
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John Fazio
Pamela Felton
Margery and Charles Fenwick
Raina and Guy Filippelli
Sasha Franklin
Aimee and Mark Fulchino
Dan Fulmer
Christina and Gregory Gasbarro
Dennice Gayme and Christophe Maynard
Carol Geidt
Hans-Robert Gibbs
Jason Goldsmith
Katie and Jeffrey Graham

Thank You!

Individuals

Olufunmi Greengold
Steven Griffin
Teri and Greg Guarnaccia
Melissa and Randy Guttman
Skylar and Tim Heiss
Jason Heller
Holly Henson and Dan Mecchi
Dana Henson
Delaphine and Daniel Henson
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Gay and Chris Legg
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Mariangela Gil Luzardo
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Catherine and George McClelland
Megan and Brian McCormack
Erin McDonnell
Bryant McIver
Jennifer and Paul McKinnell
Matthew McLain
Marian McLaughlin
Lindsay Mehta
Shaan Mehta
Robert Meyerhoff
Kimberly Mitchell
Lindsay Monti
Elizabeth Moore
Doni Morgan
India Morrison
Robyn and Jason Murphy
Edna Musgrove
Meagan North
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Bryn Parchman
Yojinde Paxton
Ken Pennington
Andrea and Jay Perman
Melanie Perreault
Jennifer and Brice Phillips
Joanne and Mark Pollak
Stefan Popescu
Jenna Pratz

Thank You!

Individuals

Sami Quinn
Senator Dennis Rasmussen
Sarah Regan
Keith Reilly
Tracey Ribero
Jonathan Rivlin
Shantell Roberts
George Roche
Jayme Rodriguez
Kingsley and Mark Rooney
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Rick Williams
Daisy and Gavin Youngquist
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Thomas Zink
Lisa and Morry Zolet

Board of Directors

This list represents the Museum Board of Directors in FY2025

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Managing Director, Senior Treasury Manager –
Bank of America

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Founder – Sterling Partner

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Kelli Coffman
Senior Vice President of Museum Operations

Rachel Demma, Ed.D.
Vice President of Learning & Community Impact / Director, At Play Learning Institute

Sonja Cendak
Vice President of Development & Marketing

Hope Myers
Vice President of Exhibits & Facilities



Founded in 1998 and located in Baltimore City's Inner Harbor, Port Discovery is the region's preeminent children's museum. Port Discovery's mission is to provide unique opportunities and high-quality experiences that make play accessible, educational, and fun for all. Our work is driven by the vision to foster joy, connections, laughter, and learning through purposeful play. We believe in a world where the value of learning through play is recognized and respected, backed by the science that demonstrates the power of play to transform the lives of children (and their families).

With 80,000 square feet of exhibits, experiences, and programs, a day at Port Discovery encourages children to use their imagination, explore how things work, build confidence, and learn and practice social and emotional skills. Since opening in 1998, the Museum has served over 5.5 million visitors as one of the Mid-Atlantic region's leading children's museums and is one of the top four most visited museums in Baltimore.

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