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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: June 5, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Reopening and Modified Operations Guide**

I have attached a Reopening and Modified Operations Guide for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (ASDM).

We have reviewed these guidelines and believe they are a model for reopening similar facilities. I have been in contact with ASDM Executive Director Craig Ivanyi and congratulated him and his Reopening Committee on the development of practical and effective guidelines for reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ASDM has met or exceeded the temporary measures recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Their plan is to open with capacity limitations by advanced reservations only and will provide important pre-visit information regarding public health notices. ASDM has installed 19 hand sanitizer stations throughout the grounds in addition to nine public restrooms with soap and water. They have updated six traditional water fountains to touchless fountains and high-risk, high-touch exhibits will not be open. Enhanced custodial practices and "the clean team" are dedicated to keeping restrooms and high-touch surfaces regularly disinfected. All staff and contractors will be screened for wellness each day and will be wearing face coverings. Face coverings are required for visitors where physical distancing cannot be maintained such as the gift shop and reptile room.

ASDM's plan is excellent and should be replicated by others.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services  
Dr. Terry Cullen, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department  
Diane Frisch, Director, Attractions and Tourism  
Craig Ivanyi, Executive Director, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

ARIZONA-SONORA  
**DESERT  
MUSEUM**

Healthy Environment

Healthy Animals

Healthy People



**REOPENING & MODIFIED  
OPERATIONS GUIDE**

**JUNE 2020**

# Commitment to Health and Safety



In addition to protecting our natural world, protecting the health and safety of Desert Museum personnel, guests, and animals has always been of paramount importance. This commitment is stronger than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 17, 2020 it became necessary to close the Museum to the

public for the first time in history. On-site operations were reduced to only essential functions required to safeguard our facilities and continue to provide world-class care to our living collections.

The Museum is a non-profit organization that is primarily funded through ticket and membership revenue. Saying goodbye to our guests, even for a short time, resulted in the loss of millions of dollars and thousands fewer visitors being inspired to live in harmony with our natural world. To our supporters, we miss you and we need you!

Though we are anxious to get back to work and continue our mission, we are committed to following the guidance of public health and government agencies and are keeping health and safety at the forefront of every decision. Based on recommendations from The White House, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Pima County, and the CDC, Museum leadership developed a thoughtful plan to modify our operations and guest experience to allow for a gradual, safe reopening. This guide outlines the plan and contains important information for guests to consider prior to visiting.

**We can't wait to see you at the Museum soon!**



This guide was developed by a reopening committee with input from other staff, volunteers, and trustees.

# Reopening Committee

Craig Ivanyi– Executive Director

Carolyn Carson– Chief Financial Officer

Maria Castano– Executive Assistant

Debbie Colodner– Director of Conservation Education and Science

Luz Curiel– Human Resources Manager

Brian Denham– Chief Operating Officer

Marie McGhee– Art Institute Associate Director

Stephane Poulin– Director of Living Collections, Maintenance & Exhibits

Lynnae Wenker– Associate Director of Philanthropy

**Recommendations, regulations, and local statuses are changing regularly and Desert Museum staff intend to be adaptable in our approach. This guide outlines the plans for the initial phase of reopening. It will be regularly evaluated and modifications will evolve as we have the opportunity to observe results and as circumstances change. No specific time frame applies to any part of this guide. We are extremely grateful to our continued loyal visitors and members and we appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to keep the natural world, our animals, and the people of our global community safe.**

# Staff and Volunteers

Throughout the closure, essential personnel have been hard at work on-site continuing to care for our plants, animals, and facilities. Many staff members transitioned to working remotely. Where feasible, this will continue for the foreseeable future. We recently began an incremental approach to bringing additional team members back to work on-site each week.

We have been unable to benefit from on-site volunteers since closing and this will unfortunately continue through the initial phase of reopening.



## Staff Safety and Wellness

Our team members are regularly reminded not to report to work if they are unwell. In compliance with Pima County regulations, all personnel are screened for COVID-19 symptoms, including body temperature, prior to each shift. Those demonstrating signs of illness or a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted to work until

receiving medical clearance. All personnel are required to wear face coverings any time they may come in contact with another person. Other personal protective equipment is worn based on job responsibilities in accordance with all relevant regulations. Physical distancing is strictly practiced whenever possible.

Staff receive regular training and communications regarding health and safety guidelines and relevant personnel are receiving additional training on sanitation practices. Additionally, healthy behavior and hygiene reminders are posted throughout the grounds, including employee areas.

Shared equipment and tools are sanitized anytime the equipment is transferred to another person. This includes golf carts, radios, phones, and computers. Hand sanitizer and restrooms with soap and water are readily available and regular use is highly encouraged.



# Visitor Capacity

In order to ensure physical distancing can easily be maintained, we will closely monitor foot traffic and are temporarily restricting attendance to no more than 50% of the normal comfortable capacity. This may be adjusted seasonally, or after observing guest flow. School group and tour group visits will not occur until public health recommendations are adjusted.



## Advanced Ticket Sales/Reservations

Visitor capacity is accomplished through advanced ticket sales/reservations only, and timed entry. Tickets for a specific date and entry time must be purchased and reserved at least one day in advance, either online or by phone during business hours. Ticket purchases are not available on-site. Tickets are sent electronically for printing or scanning from a mobile device. Important pre-visit information and a digital grounds map are sent with the digital ticket.



Members must also reserve a “free ticket” using this process, including making reservations to use complimentary guest tickets that come with membership if applicable.

The daily attendance maximum is distributed throughout the day with hourly entry times. One can enter the Museum any time on or after their specified ticket time, but not before. For example, a ticket holder with a 10:30am entry time may enter any time after 10:30am (until a half hour before closing), but may not enter before 10:30am.

Details about this process can be found at [desertmuseum.org](http://desertmuseum.org).



**Tickets MUST be purchased and reserved in advance.  
Members must also make advance reservations.**

# Guest Arrivals



Signs on Kinney Road, at the parking lot entrance, and along the parking lot pathways will highlight that we are open only to those with advance reservations.

The entry process is completely touchless. Upon approach, signs will guide guests to the entrance gate. The gate will be permanently open and no touch is required to enter. Guests can scan their own tickets and no contact with staff is needed. Guest Services team

members are available behind a protective panel to observe the entry process and answer questions. The exit gate is on the opposite side of the patio and also touchless.

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## Strollers/Wheelchairs/ECVs

Strollers, manual wheelchairs, and electric scooters are also available for rent by advance reservation. The transaction takes place at the same time as the ticket purchase or member reservation. These items are brought to the front entrance for the guest and are sanitized immediately before they are claimed, and again after use.

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Those that prefer not to make purchases or reservations online can do so by calling Guest Services at **(520) 883-1380** daily from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

# Guest Experience

It is necessary to modify the guest experience to reduce guest contact points, limit surface contact, and allow for appropriate distancing. Some areas and exhibits will be unavailable during the initial phase of re-opening. Below is a status summary of the Museum's main areas and exhibits.

**Packrat Playhouse- Closed**

**Hummingbird Aviary- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Large Aviary- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Earth Sciences- Open.** One-way foot traffic. Cave portion closed.

**Ancient Arizona- Open.** Mine dump/fossil dig closed.

**Cat Canyon- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Ironwood Gallery- Closed**

**Warden Oasis Theater- Closed**

**Stingray Touch- Open for viewing.** No touch. No fee– included.

**Baldwin Building and Gallery- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Warden Aquarium- Open**

**Life on the Rocks- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Reptile/Invertebrate Halls- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**Mountain Woodland- Open**

**Desert Grassland- Open**

**Desert Loop Trail- Open**

**Riparian Corridor- Open**

**Life Underground- Open.** One-way foot traffic.

**All Gardens- Open**



## Other notable modifications to the guest experience include:

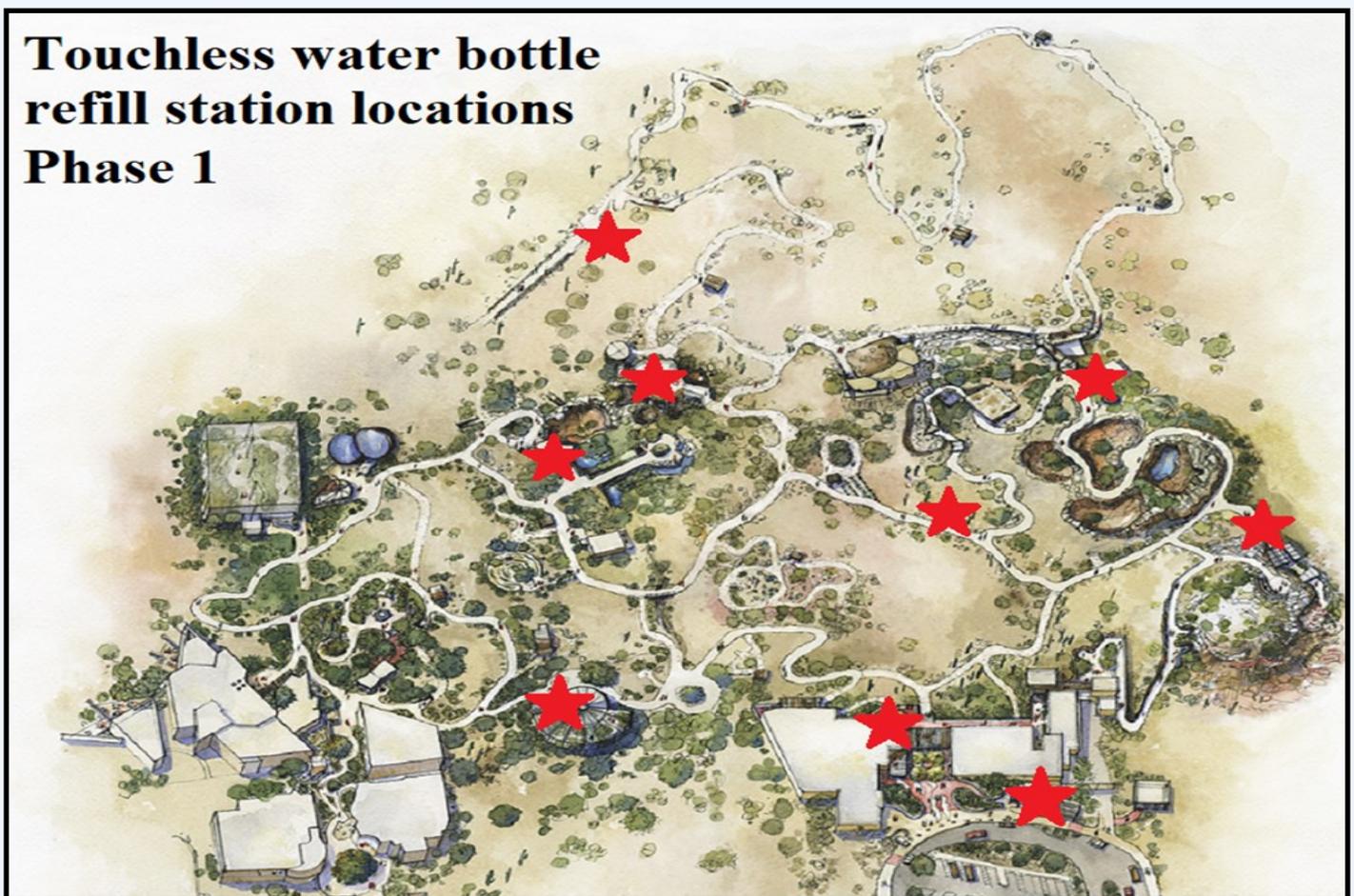
- Some interactive activities and signs have been temporarily removed.
- The climb-through areas of the cave and Life on the Rocks are unavailable.
- On-grounds interpretive talks and programs are temporarily suspended.

# Guest Experience



## Important Notice

In accordance with Pima County public health regulations, traditional water fountains must be eliminated unless touchless. The Desert Museum has added 6 new touchless water bottle refill stations for a total of 9. It is highly recommended that guests bring a refillable bottle, or a personal supply of bottled water. Bottled and canned water is also available for purchase. Water bottle refill stations are marked on the map below.



# Food and Beverage

**The Ironwood Terraces Restaurant and Phoebe's Café are open daily. The Cottonwood ice cream and snack shop is open intermittently.**

The Museum's food and beverage partner, Craft Culinary Concepts (CCC), follows all general Museum health and safety guidelines in addition to their own detailed plan to enhance already rigorous sanitation and food safety practices. Their plan was developed following industry specific guidelines from Pima County, ServSafe and the National Restaurant Association. In addition:

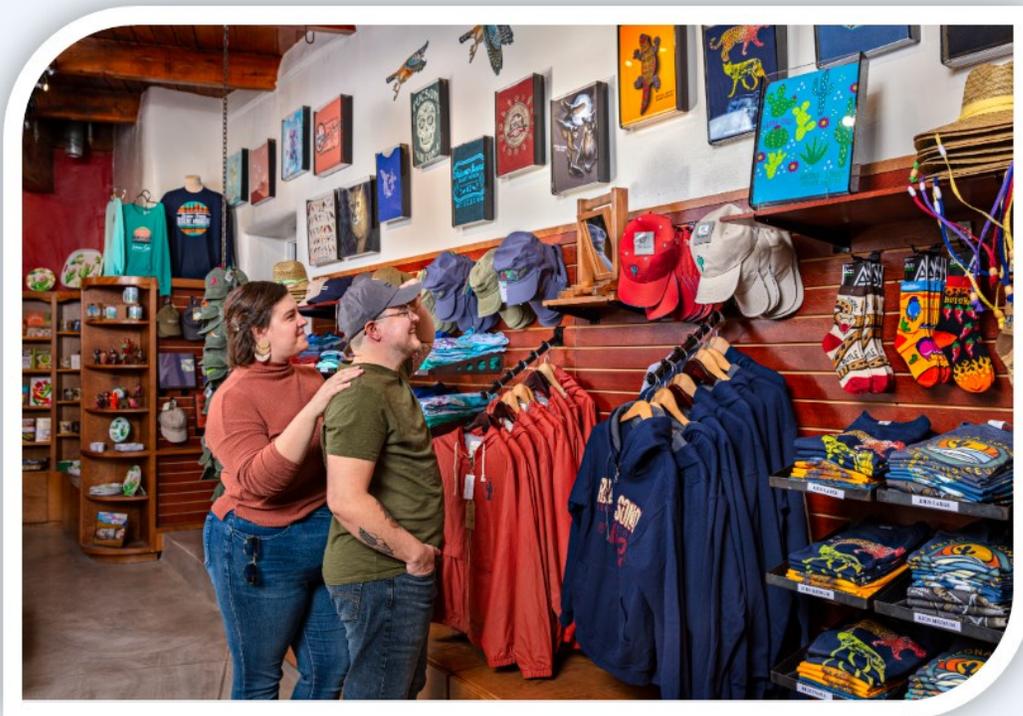
- CCC implemented a COVID-19 precautions training.
- They conduct wellness screenings on all personnel before each shift.
- Employees are required to wear disposable face coverings and disposable gloves. Gloves are changed regularly.
- A 54-point pre-opening checklist has been implemented.
- Additional hand sanitizer stations have been added. Portion pack condiments and napkin/utensil kits are provided at point of sale; no self-service condiments or utensils.
- Beverage refill stations are not available.
- Plexiglass shields are present at cashier locations.
- Social distancing markers throughout, with additional advisory signs.
- Seating capacity reduced and re-distributed. Tables are a minimum of 6 feet apart and no more than 6 people are permitted at each table.



# Gift Shops

The main Mountain House Gift Shop, and Ironwood Shop are open daily.

The Museum's retail partner, Native and Nature, follows all general Museum health and safety guidelines. They also conduct employee wellness screenings before each shift and are enhancing cleaning practices by regularly sanitizing high touch surfaces and items. Staff are required to wear face coverings, or clear protective face shields. Trying on apparel is not permitted. Social distancing markers have been added to all shop areas. Plexiglass panels are present at cashier locations. Both shops have a reduced capacity of no more than 50% of the normal capacity.



# Custodial/Sanitation

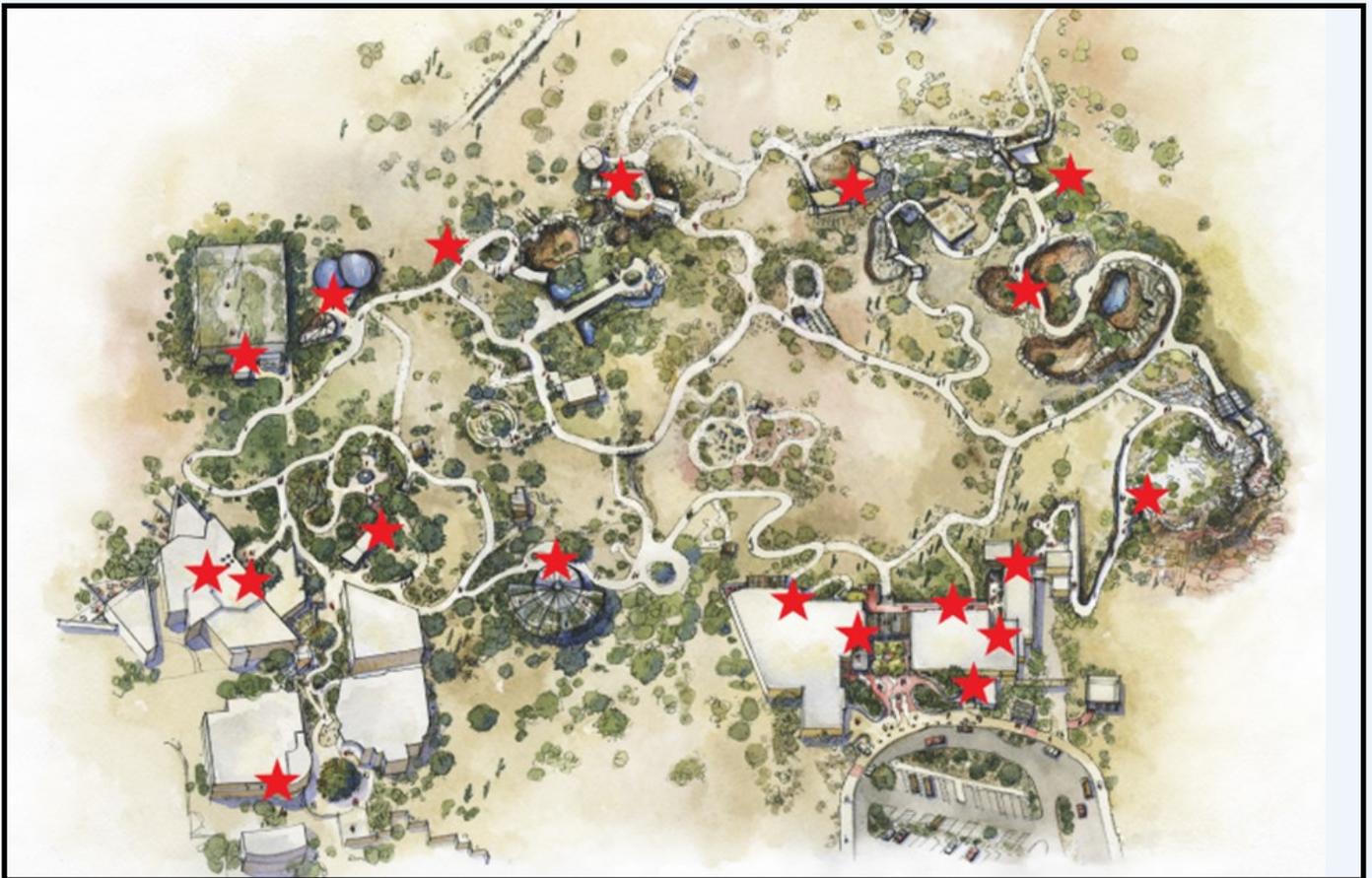
The Desert Museum has always employed stringent sanitation practices, and has made further enhancements for the safety of staff and guests.

- Custodial staff schedules have been altered to focus maximum resources on public areas during open hours.
- All staff members are responsible for public health and safety. Additional team members from other departments, including members of management, have been added to “The Clean Team” and will be identified with badges.
- Where possible, doors will remain open to limit contact.
- Public restrooms are cleaned continuously, averaging once every two hours.
- High-touch surfaces such as door handles and railings are sanitized continuously, averaging once every hour.
- The Museum uses products which are EPA approved and effective against viruses, bacteria, and other airborne and blood-borne pathogens.



# Custodial/Sanitation

There are 9 public restrooms available with soap and water. In addition, hand sanitizing wipes and/or hand sanitizer dispensers containing a minimum of 60% alcohol are available in 19 places throughout the grounds. Locations are indicated on the map below.



# Guest Safety and Responsibilities

**Self Exclusion**– Guests experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, fever, or other general feelings of illness should not visit the Museum.

**Face Coverings**– In accordance with public health advisories, guests age 2 years and older are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth area. Where social distancing is not easily maintained, such as indoor areas, face coverings are **required**. Guests may not enter the reptile/invertebrate halls, aquarium, Earth Sciences Center, or gift shops without a face covering.

**Physical Distancing**– Guests are asked to please follow the recommended 6ft physical distancing at all times and to comply with directional foot traffic postings.

**Hygiene**– Guests are strongly encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or take advantage of the additional hand sanitizer dispensers often. Guests should avoid touching and leaning on surfaces, railings, fencing, etc. Touching exhibit windows is not permitted.



**It is essential for everyone's safety that these practices are followed. If one is unable or unwilling to follow these guidelines, they should not visit the Museum at this time.**

**Those found in violation will be required to leave the grounds.**



**First Aid**– Minor first aid is limited and administered only in circumstances where assistance is absolutely required. Security officers will happily provide first aid supplies for cuts/abrasions, cactus thorns/splinters, etc. but will not directly assist guests in these cases. CPR and other lifesaving first responses are still performed as needed. We contact EMS/911 in emergency situations. Guests that fall ill or report experiencing symptoms while on-site are required to discontinue their visit and encouraged to seek medical attention. If they are unable to transport themselves, they will be given access to an isolated first aid room until EMS arrives.

# Public Notices and Signage

Due to the extent of modified operations, there are many important messages for visitors. The Museum will use a variety of communication methods including the website, social media, and on-site signage.

- Public health notices and health and safety guidelines are posted on our website and on social media and are also prominently posted on large physical signs at the front entrance.
- The same messages are printed on the back of the grounds map, and also appear on a large digital monitor just inside the main entrance.
- Important pre-visit messages are posted on the ticket purchasing web page, and are sent electronically to those who make purchases or reservations.
- Hygiene and COVID-19 informational signs are posted in all restrooms.
- “High touch hot spot” signs are present throughout the grounds reminding guests to avoid touching railings, exhibits, etc.

- Physical distancing signs are posted throughout the grounds in English and Spanish. Ground distancing markers are present in all buildings, main thoroughfares, and exhibit areas.

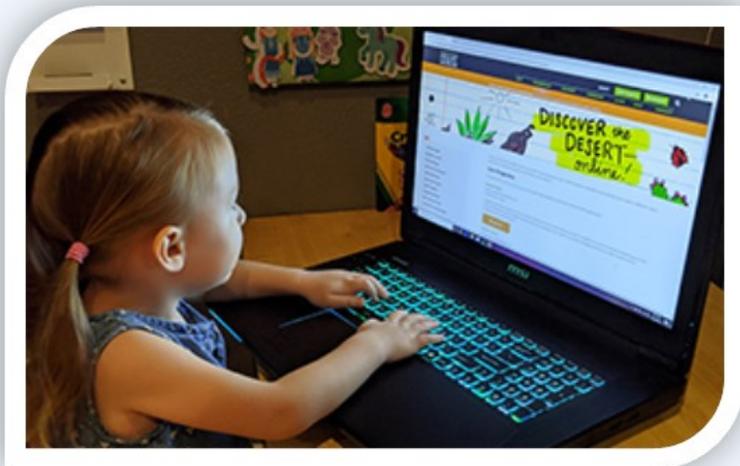


# Other Museum Initiatives

Museum scientists, staff, and volunteers continue to perform field work and research with strict social distancing and PPE practices.

Art Institute classes are planned to be available shortly after opening. Classes will have limited attendance and strict physical distancing practices. Work surfaces and supplies will be sanitized before and after each class.

Off-site community engagement and outreach will not occur during the initial phase of reopening. The Museum is instead offering a full host of on-line programming for all ages.



Education camps and classes will not occur in the initial phase of reopening, but future sessions are being planned. A virtual youth summer camp is available in early June.

# Updates



This plan will be continually evaluated and will evolve as circumstances and recommendations change. For the most up to date information, visit our website at [desertmuseum.org](http://desertmuseum.org) or follow us on social media.

For general inquires, please feel free to e-mail us at [info@desertmuseum.org](mailto:info@desertmuseum.org) or call us at (520) 883-1380. For inquiries specific to this guide, please contact Brian Denham via e-mail at [bdenham@desertmuseum.org](mailto:bdenham@desertmuseum.org) or by phone at (520) 883-3006.

We encourage those who do not plan to visit at this time to stay connected on social media, by participating in our virtual classes, or by purchasing or renewing your membership. Your support has never been more valuable and we thank you.

The mission of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the Sonoran Desert.



zoo



botanical garden



art gallery & classes



natural history museum



aquarium