

Committee for Science For Kids

ISSUE 2 – VOTE FOR Imagination Station

Frequently Asked Questions

Property Tax Replacement and Increase for the operation and maintenance of Imagination Station.

Replacing the 0.17 Mill with a 0.1975 Mill for a 5-year period, first collected in 2023

1. How much will the levy cost? Is it a new tax?

The science center is requesting a levy replacement on Lucas County's November 2021 Election Ballot for a 5-year, one-fifth (0.1975) mill property tax to replace their current five-year, one-sixth (0.17) mill property tax. This levy will cost just \$6.91 per \$100,000 in residential value annually. Imagination Station's levy is the smallest on the 2021 Lucas County General Election Ballot. This levy will allow us to reach the original \$1.5 million/year levy amount that was originally approved by voters in 2008, but was never reached because of the decrease in housing prices due to the financial crisis.

2. How much money will the levy generate for Imagination Station?

The science center is projecting to collect \$1.5 million annually from the replacement levy.

The Lucas County auditors have projected the millage could generate \$1.6 million, however they also factor in an 8-10% reduction of collections annually. We are doing the same projections as the Lucas County Auditor's office.

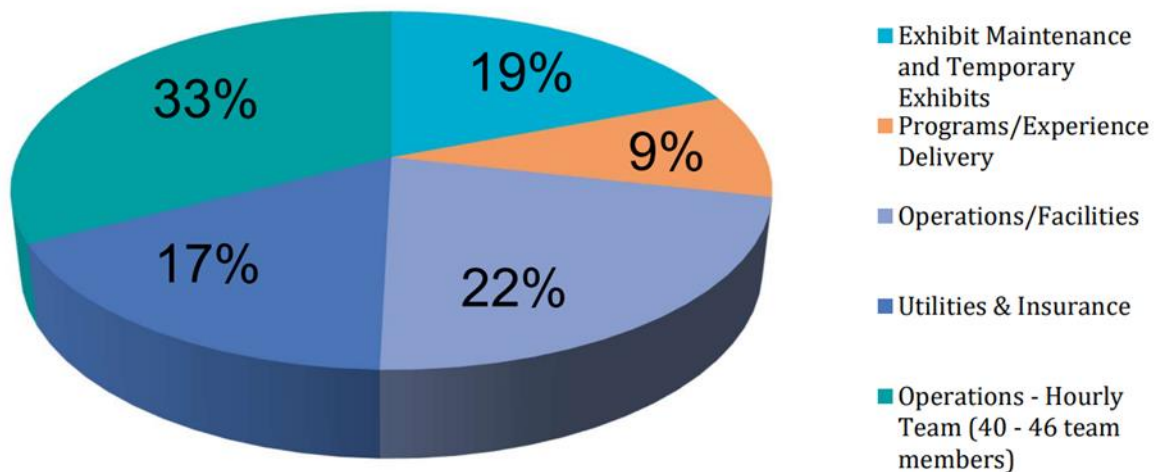
Funds generated from the 2021 levy replacement will total approximately \$1.5 million per year which represents 27% of the science center's annual budget. Imagination Station will assume the responsibility for the difference and is NOT requesting any additional funds.

3. How will Imagination Station use the levy money?

Funds generated from the replacement of the existing levy will ensure Imagination Station can continue providing new experiences and maintain a vibrant science center that is a resource to families, educators and the community.

The expenses of bringing in traveling exhibitions, maintaining and enhancing permanent exhibits, operating the facility including the new KeyBank Discovery Theater and providing visitors with hands-on activities, are all integral to carrying out the science center's mission to serve the community by providing informal science education and fun in order to spark a passion for the sciences by combining interactive exhibits and educational programming.

Allocation of Public Funding



Imagination Station employs their mission to impact:

- **Community** – responsible steward of the northwest Ohio community; actively participates in community growth opportunities and educational partnerships.
- **Families** – offers a unique opportunity to learn together; exploring the science center, asking questions and sharing in the educational process, all while spending quality time together.
- **Schools** – serves as an extension of the classroom by offering teachers valuable, academically aligned curriculum guides to enhance their students' visits. Over the past 18-months, Imagination Station transformed its in-person programming into a virtual platform to support educators and families with at-home learning.
- **Careers** – builds vital life skills- curiosity, creativity, tolerance of ambiguity, resilience and the ability to work effectively with others. The same skills that are fostered through STEM education and have the power to shape a community while preparing an individual for a career.

4. Who pays for the levy?

The levy is assessed against all property in Lucas County and will be paid by all property owners: residential, commercial and industrial.

5. Imagination Station's passed a general operating levy renewal in 2016, Is this a new levy?

This is not an additional levy for the science center. The levy will replace funding the science center already receives in order to continue offering the residents of Lucas County outstanding learning opportunities. This levy will allow us to reach the original \$1.5 million/year levy amount that was approved by voters in 2008, but was never reached because of the decrease in housing prices due to the financial crisis.

6. What did Imagination Station do last year while it was closed?

Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, Imagination Station reimagined what a science center's role could be within the community when in-person interactions were no longer safe. We completely transformed all our in-person programming to a virtual platform, developed and distributed 4300 educational kits to support families and schools, created engaging video content to keep children learning at home and provided curriculum and materials to the YMCA's first responder daycare, in addition to utilizing our unique resources to support essential workers and the Northwest Ohio community.

Education Resources: [click link](#)

Virtual Programming: [click link](#)

Additionally, we used the time while the science center could not be open to invest in upgrades to the facility. We replaced the roof and HVAC system, constructed a new public entrance that can accommodate more school buses and includes more ADA parking, painted the outside of the building, and added a publicly accessible retail space. In addition, we added the brand-new public experience of The KeyBank Discovery Theater. All of these improvements were made using state or private funding and did not use levy funds

7. How is Imagination Station funded?

More than 90% of science centers across the nation depend on some form of public funding, including Imagination Station. Since 2012, Imagination Station has grown other sources of revenue to reduce the dependency on public funds, currently the public funds represent only 27% of our total operating budget. Presently, 70% of the science center operating budget is from other sources of revenue including admission, membership sales, contributed revenue and other programs. The public funding has historically made up been between 25-28% of the operating budget. The science center would not be able to continue operations at the current level without the public funding.

8. Are there any special benefits to Lucas County residents?

The levy passage has enabled Imagination Station to provide residents of Lucas County with:

- Free Saturday admission for Lucas County kids, ages 12 & under
- Discounts on films on Saturday in The KeyBank Discovery Theater for Lucas County kids
- Discounts on admission rates
- Discounts on school visits

9. How does your funding model compare to other science centers?

More than 90% of science centers across the nation receive a form of public funding. Imagination Station ranks ahead of its peers in key metrics commonly applied to museums and science centers.

In 2018, Imagination Station's average cost per visitor is \$20.44 as compared to the ASTC (Association of Science and Technology Centers) 2018 Data Survey* that reported the average cost per visitor being \$23.29. Imagination Station continually operates lower than other science centers of like sizes across the country.

**This is the last survey prior to the pandemic and the science center under construction.*

10. What happens if the levy replacement does not pass?

The public funding is vital to continue delivering outstanding science experiences, like our community deserves. Without the public funding, Imagination Station's ability to be a positive force within the community would be severely impacted. The loss of levy funds would require us to cut back on our educational offerings—including our temporary exhibitions—or force price increases that would be prohibitive to many of the families and schools in Lucas County, who benefit from the science center's programs the most.

11. How many team members does Imagination Station employ?

Currently, Imagination Station employs 28 full-time and 22 part-time team members. Prior to the pandemic, Imagination Station had 33 full-time and 48 part-time team members. Currently, Imagination Station has several open positions that are featured on our website. Imagination Station has worked with 400 volunteers as of April 2021, who have logged more than 14,480 volunteer hours.

12. How is Imagination Station governed?

Imagination Station is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors.

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Vice Chairs

James Hoffman – KeyBank

Robert Savage – Savage & Associates

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Marianne Peters – Savage & Associates

Mark Ridenour – Dale Management Company, LLC

Bruce Rumpf – Job 1 USA

Christopher Trunck – Owens Corning

Ron Unnerstall – University of Virginia

Steve Zerby, Owens Corning

13. How many visitors does Imagination Station attract each year?

Since opening on October 10, 2009, the science center has hosted more than two million visitors.

- More than 200,000 visitors per year: 40% are Lucas County residents
- 416,450 educators and students utilized the science center

- 61,000 Lucas County children have participated in the free Saturday admission program

Traditionally, the science center draws in more than 200,000 visitors each year, and around 40% of visitors are Lucas County residents.

14. Why should I support Imagination Station if I never use it and don't have kids?

Imagination Station is a valuable resource and a critical investment in Toledo's future for families, schools and the community. Students who are exposed to real-world science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiences that are not possible within the classroom are more likely to have significant, long-term increases in their achievement and attitudes towards the sciences.

In recent years, Imagination Station has expanded its activities outside of children and families, including Science After Dark events for adults and unique learning and entertainment opportunities in the KeyBank Discovery Theater. The KeyBank Discovery Theater, will be utilized throughout the year to provide unique and immersive learning experiences not available in other formats and will provide an additional attraction to bring visitors to downtown Toledo. Imagination Station is also available for business rentals and training events. There really is something for everyone at Imagination Station!

15. What educational programs does Imagination Station offer?

Meeting Imagination Station's mission to serve the community by providing informal education and fun in order to spark a passion for the sciences.

Imagination Station is committed to growing program offerings in a responsible, sustainable way. That is why programs have been introduced over time to meet the needs of multiple audiences.

- Outreach – Recognizing the limited transportation budgets in many school districts, Imagination Station features extensive outreach program offerings that take science education to schools and community centers, including *Science Festivals*, *Workshop on Wheels*, *Extreme Science Demonstrations*, *Pre-School Workshop on Wheels*, *StarLab®* and *Toledo Tinkers: Through a Child's Eyes* have impacted more than 162,366 students through March 2021 and teachers since Imagination Station opened.
- Science Weeks – In collaboration with national initiatives and working with local partners, Imagination Station features special science weeks that deliver specific science content to visitors through fun, interactive activities.
- Hot Summer, Cool Science Summer Camps – These popular week-long summer camps have served children ages 6 to 13, for 10 seasons. In 2014, the program expanded to include offsite locations to reach more northwest Ohio families.
- Homeschool Workshops – This monthly program covers a variety of topics – from chemistry to astronomy, and all the messy science in-between. We have served 756 kids and 531 families through this program.
- Scout Badge Programs – To help scout troops reach their badge and belt loop requirements, Imagination Station hosts Scout Badge workshops that engage the scouts and inspire them to achieve their goals. Prior to the pandemic, more than 1,000 scouts earned their badge through in-person programming. Since the pandemic, we have served 475 girl scouts virtually.

- Science Story Time – In the Mini Explorers Clubhouse, an Imagination Station team member shares an engaging story followed by a hands-on science activity with kids’ kindergarten age and younger.
- Science at Home – a library of fun and exciting experiments you can do from the comfort of your own home. Simple ingredients and step-by-step instructions make learning easy for every budding scientist.
- Think Tank Workshops – give students and visitors a way to explore specific content that may be difficult to teach in the classroom. These 45-minute sessions offer structured, hands-on curriculum that will open minds and encourage learning.
- Tinkering Workshops – designed to embrace your creativity using the engineering design process to create something that is all your own. With both virtual and in-person options, there is a workshop that will meet the needs and interests of all scientists.
- Educator Resources – In addition to meeting the needs of younger visitors, Imagination Station delivers a range of professional development for educators that include:
 - Prep4Ed – A monthly program that acclimates educators to the science center prior to a field trip so their students can get the most out of their experience
 - Exhibit Guides – Educational companions that accompany specific exhibits and learning worlds
 - Science Demonstration Videos – Educational videos of our weekly TV segments that demonstrate and explain a variety of science concepts
 - DIY Activities – Step-by-step instructions for science activities along with the science behind each experiment
 - Virtual Science Engagement – The same engaging educational content available through our in-school outreach adapted for a live virtual presentation
 - Free admission – Teachers receive free admission every day
 - Discover.ed – A monthly electronic newsletter for educators highlighting resources and educational content
- Educational Partnerships – Imagination Station is an active member of the educational community and has partnered with the University of Toledo, Lucas County Schools including Sylvania Public Schools and Toledo Public Schools, Lourdes University, Bowling Green State University, Northwest Ohio Center for Excellence in STEM Education (NWO) and WGTE to deliver professional development and programming.
- Adopt-a-School – Schools are facing fiscal challenges, budgets are being cut and field trips are being canceled. The Adopt-a-School program gives corporations and foundations a way of directly impacting the children in their community by providing them with educational outreach programs and field trips to Imagination Station. The science center has adopted 52,908 students, educators and chaperones through the Adopt-a-School program.

16. Why does Toledo need Imagination Station? How do they partner our educators?

Imagination Station specializes in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programming and is equipped to help children discover the world around them through hands-on activities. We know that some of the best learning doesn’t always fit inside a classroom. Offering teachers powerful tools to effectively teach science in the classroom is a responsibility that Imagination Station takes seriously, and why we are considered an educational partner in Lucas County and Northwest Ohio.

According to the Status of Elementary School Science Teaching Report, teachers do not feel equally qualified to teach all academic subjects, with science being the most lacking of the disciplines (compared to mathematics, language arts and social studies). Imagination Station works with teachers to provide the resources necessary to facilitate engaging, STEM based activities for the classroom.

17. Where is the funding coming from for the levy campaign?

The levy committee is fundraising for the 2021 levy campaign through businesses and private citizens. There are many ways to support us- being a volunteer, offering a financial donation or by requesting a yard sign.

18. How can I help ensure Imagination Station passes the levy?

- Vote – Every vote counts! Early voting begins October 5 and Election Day is November 2, 2021. Visit co.lucas.oh.us for your polling information.
- Offer your endorsement – Write a letter of support.
- Volunteer – Click [here](#) to request a yard sign and to find out how to get involved in keeping Imagination Station in the community.
- Make a contribution – Funds for the 2021 levy campaign are being provided by private donation. Please send contributions by mail: The Committee for Science for Kids, Attention: Jason Mueller, Treasurer, 1000 Jackson Street, Toledo, OH 43604