

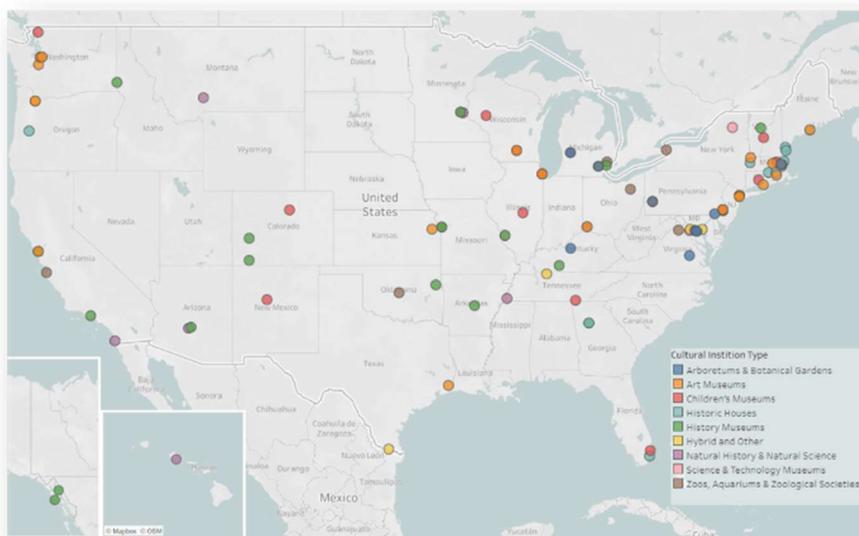
# Culture Over Carbon Project Background

Memphis Museum of Arts and History, Memphis, TN

Climate change is a global challenge, but one that has actionable solutions to cut energy use and carbon emissions that are fueling temperature rise. Using less energy to run the buildings where we live, learn, and work is one of the critical solutions to address climate change because the [built environment represents 39% of U.S. global carbon emissions](#). The Culture Over Carbon project provides cultural institutions actionable data and recommendations to understand how their buildings use energy, help create roadmaps to reduce energy at individual institutions and the sector as a whole, and lower carbon and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to reduce their impacts on climate change.

Under the project, 130 cultural institutions from across the country provided energy use data for over 200 buildings. Analysts evaluated the data, looking for field-wide use patterns and provided recommendations for key efficiency actions.

Recommendations were also provided to prepare institutions for expected building code and policy changes that may impact them.



## What the data tells us

The patterns that emerged from the analysis is the first estimate of the sector's energy impacts on climate and will support the strategic planning for making reductions in line with the goal of avoiding the worst effects of climate change. Consumption patterns between the participants varied widely due to factors including the age of facilities, such as historic homes, or specialized needs to maintain collections, such as those in art museums.

Art museums were the most represented institution type, and typically had the highest energy use per square foot. Children’s museums typically had the lowest energy use per square foot.

## Impacts

The analysis and recommendations will help individual institutions reduce operating costs to improve their financial condition, pursue capital funds for energy-related projects, and prepare for expected changes in energy availability and regulations.

Because they educate and bring communities together in the preservation of culture and history, cultural institutions have an opportunity to showcase solutions and shift behaviors through leading by example. Saving money through energy efficiency can provide extra funding for programming at cultural institutions, offering valuable public education services, particularly in marginalized communities.

Collectively, the participating institutions use an estimated one billion kWh per year. That amount of energy is equivalent to 25% of the [power produced at Hoover Dam](#).

If the participating cultural institutions decreased their energy use by 20% the energy saved would be enough to power over 6,000 homes a year--or every household in Gulf Shores, Alabama. That 20% energy savings across all of these facilities would translate to \$20 million dollars in savings per year (assuming a \$.10 per kWh commercial rate). The related annual carbon and other GHG emissions reductions would be like taking 10,000 cars off the road.

## Learn more

Visit: <https://ecprs.org/engagement/culture-over-carbon/>

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Site Energy Use Intensity (kBtu/sf-yr) Summary by Cultural Institution Type

