

FIELD TRIP GUIDE

2026-2027



TENNESSEE
AQUARIUM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Planning Your Visit

Non-School Group Admissions

School Group Admissions

Add-On Programs and Experiences

Complimentary Admission for Title 1 Schools

Lunch Options

Safety Policy

Cancellation and Reservation Policies

Be Prepared

What to Expect

Rules and Guidelines

Day of Visit

Visiting the Aquarium First:

Drop Off, Parking and Check-In

Aquarium First Map

Visiting the IMAX First:

Drop Off, Parking and Check-In

IMAX First Map

Helpful Extras



PLANNING YOUR VISIT

This packet is full of info that will help you prep for the big day. Below are some need-to-know basics and day-of-visit expectations. We know being a group leader is a big responsibility, and we are here for you. Let's make your visit a FIN-tastic one!

Non-School Group Admissions

(For any pre-reserved group of individuals of 15 or more)

ADULT (18+):

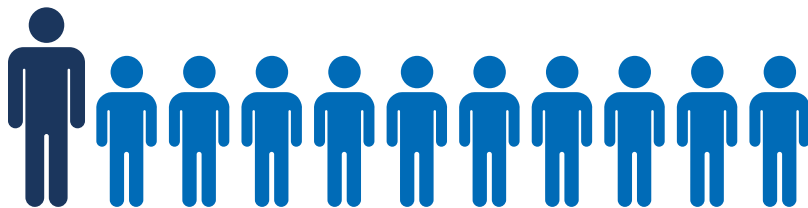
\$34.95	Aquarium
\$9.00	IMAX
\$42.95	Aquarium-IMAX Combo

YOUTH (4-17):

\$26.95
\$9.00
\$34.95

Chaperones:

Ages 4-17 are required to have 1 chaperone per 10 guests. **Your group will not be charged for required chaperones.** Guests 3 and under are free and will not be counted toward your group total.



Ages 4-17

AQUARIUM ADDRESS:

1 Broad St.
Chattanooga, TN 37402

CONTACT INFORMATION:

groupsales@tnaqua.org
tnaqua.org/plan-a-visit/groups/
(423) 265-0698

HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

Thanksgiving Day
(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2025)

Christmas Day
(THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2025)

All June and July visits must fall on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday to receive the summer education rate.

School Group Admissions

(For any pre-reserved, accredited school of 15 or more students visiting through May 31, 2027.)

STUDENT:

\$11.00	Aquarium
\$6.00	IMAX
\$16.00	Aquarium-IMAX Combo

EXTRA ADULT/PARENT:*

\$32.95
\$8.00
\$40.95

REQUIRED CHAPERONE:

Free for Aquarium and/or IMAX

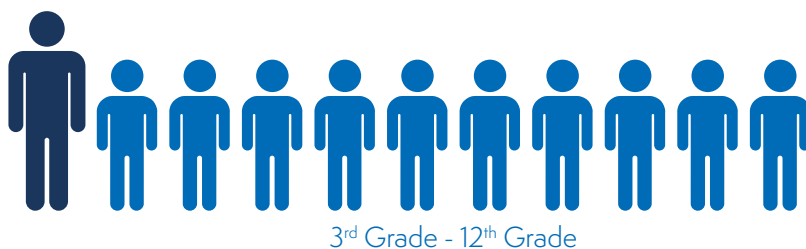
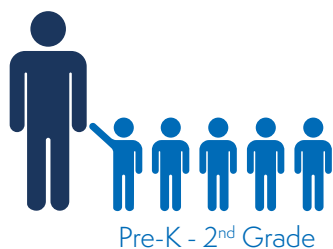
*Pricing is only available if adults or parents are included in reservation totals. Rate not available on site.

Chaperones:

Pre-K through 2nd grade groups are required to have one chaperone per every 5 students. 3rd grade through 12th grade groups are required to have one chaperone per every 10 students. Your group will not be charged for required chaperones. All extra

adults/parents will need tickets. Please include these extra adults/parents in your group reservation or pre-purchase full-price tickets through our website.

Please do not plan to purchase tickets on site the day of the visit.



Education Programming:

If your group is interested in an educational program during your visit, please select that check box while completing the group sales form. Educational programs are subject to availability and limited to

max 30 students at once. Larger groups will be given options for splitting aquarium and educational program times. Group sales will discuss available programs once a field trip date is confirmed.



Add-On Programs and Experiences

Inreach programs (held at the aquarium) are designed for a **classroom size group (~25-30 students)** and specific grade levels based on state standards, however several can be modified on request for your grade/age group. We recommend 30 minute sessions for activities for PreK-K groups. All other programs are about 45 minutes, except for fish/shark dissections which require 1.25 hours. Please feel free to ask questions or further describe what you would like your group to gain from this experience in the form's comment section.

NOTE:

Not all inreach programs will have an ambassador animal present. When they are present, a touch experience is not guaranteed and is dependent on animal behavior/protocol and CDC recommendations (*children 4 and under, immunocompromised individuals, and adults 65 and older are NOT recommended to touch reptiles*).

GENERAL PUBLIC



Animal Encounter

GRADE LEVEL: N/A

Participants will observe and interact with 3 ambassador animals and corresponding biofacts while learning about their **amazing adaptations** and habitats.

STANDARDS:

Can be modified to hit certain standards regarding adaptations and environmental impact.

Exhibit Chat

GRADE LEVEL: N/A

Participants will learn about the animals' unique adaptations and behaviors, and discover how we can all help protect them in the wild. You can choose a **10-minute chat** at one of the following exhibits: Penguins' Rock, Secret Reef, Lemurs Forest, River Giants, or Delta Country.

STANDARDS: N/A

Shaping Our Oceans

GRADE LEVEL: N/A

Join us as we explore different levels of life within our **oceans** and our connection to the Gulf. Participants will discover how we affect our oceans while living hundreds of miles from the coast and will meet some of our **ambassador animals** along the way!

Not available on Wednesdays/Saturdays.

STANDARDS:

TN: 4.ESS.3.2
GA: S2F3; S3L2; S7L4
AL: SCI.5.10.2; SCI.6.15.2;
SCI.6.15.3; SCI.6.16.4; SCI.7.6.4

ELEMENTARY (K-5th)

Alive or Not?

GRADE LEVEL: K

How do we determine if something is **alive or not**? Participants will interact with **biofacts and ambassador animals** in search of evidence of feeding, breathing, movement, reaction to the environment, and reproduction to determine if something is alive or not.

STANDARDS:
TN: K.LS1.2; 1.ETS1.1
GA: SKL 1
AL: SCI.K.3.1-4

Life Cycles

GRADE LEVEL: 1st-2nd

Which animals go through metamorphosis? Participants will explore **multiple life cycles** seen through **insects, reptiles, and amphibians** and meet some of our young and adult animal ambassadors.

STANDARDS:
TN: 2.L21.3
GA: S2L1
AL: SCI.2.6.2

Name Game

GRADE LEVEL: 2nd-5th

How do scientists decide what group an animal belongs to and what tools do they use? Participants will use an animal's physical adaptations to **classify** them while utilizing dichotomous keys. Then using their new knowledge, will identify a live animal ambassador!

STANDARDS:
TN: 2.LS1.2
GA: S5LI
AL: SCI.3.7.2-3

Behind the Scenes

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd-5th

Ever wonder where aquarium staff feed and train our animals? Take a look from the **top of one of our exhibits**, Secret Reef or River Giants, to experience the care behind the scenes.

Only available for 8 year olds and up; groups may be split due to space constraints.

STANDARDS:
TN: 3.LS4
GA: S4LI

Food Webs

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd-5th

Who is eating who and why is that important? Participants will play a **food web** game that explores trophic levels and how they can be broken or changed over time.

STANDARDS:
TN: 3.LS2.4; 3.LS4.3
GA: S4LI
AL: SCI.5.14.1; SCI.5.15.1-3

Stream Scene

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd-5th

Dive into your local stream and meet the critters who call it home. Participants will play a game to understand our **environmental impact** on local waterways and what they can do to help.

STANDARDS:
TN: 3.LS4.3; 4.LS2.4
GA: S3L2; S5L4
AL: SCI.5.10.2

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6th-8th)

Owl Discovery

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-7th

Participants will learn all about the elusive owl by **dissecting** an owl pellet! They will observe and identify different types of bones to discover the owl's latest meal.

STANDARDS:

TN: 7.LS1.6
GA: S7L4
AL: SCI.7.8.4

Behind the Scenes

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-8th

Ever wonder where aquarium staff feed and train our animals? Take a look from the **top of one of our exhibits**, Secret Reef or River Giants, to experience the care behind the scenes.

STANDARDS:

TN: 7.LS3
GA: S7L4

Food Webs

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-8th

Who is eating who and why is that important? Participants will play a **food web** game that explores trophic levels and how they can be broken or changed over time.

STANDARDS:

TN: 6.LS2.1; 6.LS2.4; 6.LS4.1
GA: S7L4
AL: SCI.7.6.1-5

Name Game

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-8th

How do scientists classify animals and what tools do they use? Participants will use an animal's physical adaptations to **classify** them while building a cladogram. Then using their new knowledge they will identify some of our live animal ambassadors!

STANDARDS:

TN: 8.LS4.3
GA: S7L1
AL: SCI.7.15.2; SCI.7.16.1

Laurel Dace Race

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-8th

Discover how the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute (TNACI) is saving an **endangered species** and how responsible land management can protect this unique Tennessee fish.

STANDARDS:

TN: 6.LS2.1; 6.LS2.4; 6.LS4.1
GA: S6E6
AL: SCI.6.15.2; SCI.6.16.4-5; SCI.7.9.1-2

Stream Scene

GRADE LEVEL: 6th-8th

Dive into your local stream and meet the critters who call it home. Participants will play a game to understand our **environmental impact** on local waterways and what they can do to help.

STANDARDS:

TN: 6.LS2.1; 6.LS2.4; 6.LS4.1
GA: S6E6
AL: SCI.6.15.2; SCI.6.16.4-5; SCI.7.9.1-2

HIGH SCHOOL (9th-12th)

Behind the Scenes

GRADE LEVEL: 9th-12th

Ever wonder where aquarium staff feed and train our animals? Take a look from the **top of one of our exhibits**, Secret Reef or River Giants, to experience the care behind the scenes.

STANDARDS:
TN: BIO1.LS4.3
GA: SB5
AL: B.9.3

Dissection Lab

GRADE LEVEL: 9th-12th

Participants will get **hands-on experience** in the life of a biologist by dissecting an animal to learn about its external and internal anatomy. Groups can choose: **fish or shark.**

Please request animal upon booking, however, it is subject to availability.

STANDARDS:
TN: BIO1.LS4.3
GA: SB5
AL: B.9.3

Laurel Dace Race

GRADE LEVEL: 9th-12th

Discover how the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute (TNACI) is saving an **endangered species** and how responsible land management can protect this unique Tennessee fish.

STANDARDS:
TN: BIO1.LS4.3
GA: SB5
AL: B.9.3

Stream Scene

GRADE LEVEL: 9th-12th

Dive into your local stream and meet the critters who call it home. Participants will play a game to understand our **environmental impact** on local waterways and what they can do to help.

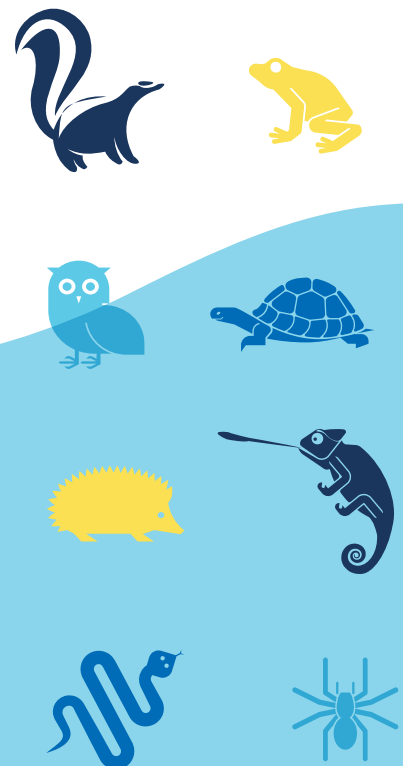
STANDARDS:
TN: BIO1.LS4.3
GA: SB5
AL: B.9.3

Sustainable Seas

GRADE LEVEL: 9th-12th

Through a fishing simulation, participants will take part in **"the tragedy of the commons"** and explore how technology, population growth, and sustainable practices impact fish catches and fisheries management.

STANDARDS:
TN: BIO1.LS4.3
GA: SB5
AL: B.9.3





Complimentary Admission for Title 1 Schools

If your school is Title 1 or participates in The National School Lunch Program, you might be eligible to have all, or a portion, of your visit covered if you are visiting the Aquarium and/or IMAX. Title 1 schools may also apply for bus reimbursement. No food

purchases or education program add-ons will be eligible for complimentary admission. Please ask the group sales team for more details and to see if your school qualifies.

Title 1 Bus Reimbursement Program:

Schools that meet Title 1 requirements and make a visit to the Aquarium and/or IMAX 3D Theater between August — May can apply for up to \$250 per bus for up to 3 buses in reimbursement. Funding is limited and is based on a first come, first served basis. **Please contact groupsales@tnaqua.org for more information.**



Lunch Options

Reserve a Mellow Mushroom lunch or snack pack from the Tennessee Aquarium so your group can refuel and get right back to exploring the rays, penguins, otters and more! Seeing an IMAX film? Pre-order a Snack Pack for any show. IMAX concessions are available beginning at the 12:00 P.M. show. ***Mellow Mushroom lunches must be purchased through the Tennessee Aquarium to receive pricing below. Our Group Sales team will confirm the location where your group's Mellow Mushroom lunch will be delivered upon your arrival.***

Choose a Mellow Mushroom lunch (pictured below), snack pack (pictured right), or both:



MELLOW MUSHROOM LUNCH — \$14

- Personal pan cheese pizza
(vegan or gluten-free options available)
- 2-pack of Grandma's chocolate chip cookies
- 12-ounce canned Dasani water



SNACK PACK — \$5

- Small popcorn
- 12-ounce canned Dasani water



Eating at the Aquarium

All Aquarium lunches and snack packs must be purchased and paid for a week before your visit. Visit our [Group Food](#) page for details. There are no indoor dining options available for any groups unless your group has reserved an IMAX film with Aquarium provided meals or snack packs. Otherwise, please plan to eat outside or on your bus, rain or shine. **Remember that all seating on the Aquarium Plaza is first come first served and cannot be reserved for lunches.**



Safety Policies

Our Security Team at the Tennessee Aquarium consists of licensed security officers who are all trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and /or paramedics, which allows us to respond to a variety of incidents. A Chattanooga police officer is on site to ensure a safe environment for our guests.

When school groups visit the Aquarium, school resource officers (SROs) are welcome to accompany the group. If an accompanying SRO is carrying a weapon (concealed or unconcealed), they should notify our security team at their time of arrival. They will need to be vetted by our Security Team to ensure proper identification during an emergency situation.





Cancellation and Reservation Policies

Your group's visit date and time will be held tentatively until the due date outlined in your Group Visit Agreement, at which time a signed copy of the Agreement is required. If the executed contract is not received by such date, the Aquarium reserves the right to release the date/time to another group.

Should unforeseen circumstances cause the Aquarium to cancel your reservation, written notification will be provided, and any prepayment will be refunded except for meal or snack pack payments made within seven days of your visit date.

BE PREPARED

Please bring one form of payment

Group payments must be consolidated into one business check or credit card payment on the day of your visit. You can always contact us ahead of time for a balance update.

There is no entry without payment

Come prepared with final payment. If your group mailed in a check, call a few days before your visit to ensure it has been received. If there is no payment at check in, you will need to contact the bookkeeper at your organization or provide an alternative credit card. The Aquarium does not accept POs or personal checks.

Know your numbers; tickets are limited

The Aquarium has a limited number of tickets available per hour. It is important for us to have an accurate count early on so we can reserve your tickets. It's OK if your group numbers fluctuate slightly on the day of the visit, but we want to try our best to be prepared.



Parents must purchase tickets online or be included on your reservation

If parents are not included on your reservation, they will need to purchase tickets online in advance. To receive the reduced group rate, the parent or additional chaperone must be included on the reservation.

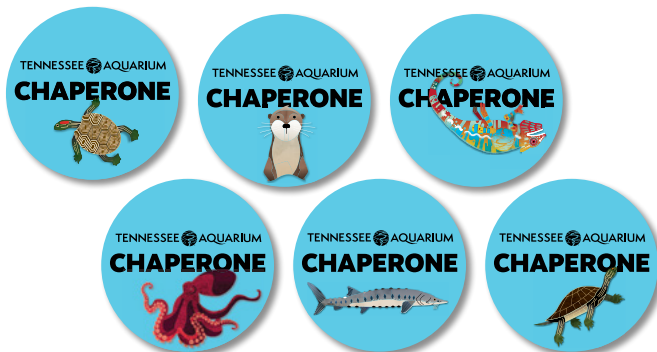
WHAT TO EXPECT

It's always best for the person who made the reservation to check the group in, but anyone can do the job if they have the right tools. You will need:

- ☐ **Reservation code** (order number on the group confirmation)
- ☐ **Name of the group**
- ☐ **Final numbers of students and adults in group** (We require you do a pre-count before you arrive at the check in desk.)
- ☐ **Business check, credit card, or cash for final payment** (No personal checks or POs will be accepted.)



GROUP LEADER



ADULT CHAPERONES

Stickers and Tickets

Groups will receive a set of stickers that will act as your 'tickets' to the Aquarium. The group leader will receive a gold Aquarium sticker and all other chaperones included on the group reservation will receive a blue Aquarium sticker. If your group is viewing an IMAX film, the showtime will be written on every sticker.

Hand out your stickers!

If you run out of stickers for your chaperones, it's a good indicator that your count was off. Return to the ticketing center to purchase any additional tickets as needed. **ALL ADULTS need a sticker or a physical ticket for entrance.** Students and children do not receive stickers, but they need to 'STICK' close to a chaperone to gain entrance to all buildings or IMAX films. All stickers need to be visible and stay on the wearer for the duration of visit. Stickers are non-transferrable.

Group Orientation

A Tennessee Aquarium team member will welcome your group and give a brief orientation. Your check-in cashier will explain where to go for orientation.

The Big Split

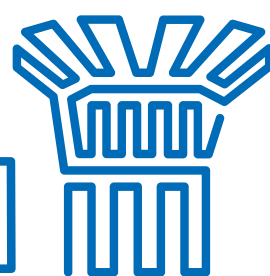
Be prepared for your group to be split up depending on size. This may mean half of your group starts Ocean Journey while the other half starts River Journey. It also means that big groups will be split into smaller groups and 'pulsed' into the building over a short period of time. It is our Visitor Services team's job to make this as quick and easy as possible. They will let you know what to do once on site.



RIVER JOURNEY



OCEAN JOURNEY



IMAX 3D THEATER

TIME TO DIVE IN!

The Aquarium is self-guided, meaning its designed for your group to tour on their own and not miss a thing! Remember, there are two buildings to tour!

Places to Eat Lunch

The IMAX 3D Theater:

(This space is only an option for lunch if you have purchased both IMAX tickets and a lunch/snack pack.) Take a seat and have a '3D' dining experience while watching a film on the IMAX giant screen! Please note groups are not permitted to eat in the IMAX lobby.

Aquarium Plaza:

Stone ledges, benches, and seasonal water features make the Plaza a great place to spread out and enjoy a Mellow Mushroom lunch or snack pack with a view! There are some assorted picnic tables, but each of these are first come, first served to any guest and cannot be reserved. **Covered space is limited, and the Aquarium does not have backup areas for inclement weather.**

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Final attendance numbers should be updated at check-in prior to processing payment. No refunds will be issued after check-in.

Larger groups may be divided into subgroups. Subgroups will be pulsed into the Aquarium buildings and should remain physically distant from other subgroups during their visit.

Chaperones must remain with their students at all times while visiting the Tennessee Aquarium and IMAX 3D Theater, including the Plaza area outside.



Use caution on all escalators. Guests should stand facing forward while keeping feet on the center of the tread. **Do not sit, play, or climb on the escalator.** Keep loose clothing and shoelaces clear of steps and sides. Crocs and open-toed sandals should not be worn on escalators.

Be polite and respectful of other visitors by remembering to speak quietly and walk instead of run.

Be polite and respectful of the animals that call the Tennessee Aquarium home by not tapping on exhibit windows, using laser pointers, or putting anything into the water.

Please do not use flash photography in Aquarium galleries.



Remember to use a two-finger touch with our Aquarium touch animals.

If you have a written activity, do not use the exhibit windows or interpretive panels for support. These surfaces scratch easily.

Outside food and beverages, chewing gum, smoking, and vaping are prohibited inside the Aquarium buildings and IMAX Theater.

Please remind your participants that there are two Aquarium buildings — River Journey and Ocean Journey — and the tour will take two to two and a half hours.



RIVER JOURNEY



OCEAN JOURNEY

Don't forget to share the behavior guidelines with your groups!

DAY OF VISIT:

VISITING THE *AQUARIUM* FIRST



Drop Off and Parking

Drop off your Group before you Park:

If convenient, your group may unload at the horseshoe drive in front of the Aquarium. The vehicle then should move to a permanent parking space.



School Bus or Tour Bus:

Buses may park along Power Alley, the street behind the IMAX, and Aquarium Way on the north side of the IMAX. Buses may remain parked free of charge for the duration of the visit. Overflow bus parking is located in the Riverfront Lot underneath the Olgiati Bridge.



Cars or Large Vans:

Public parking is available throughout downtown, including a lot in front of the Aquarium's River Journey building and two nearby garages. Prices vary by lot, and parking is typically available for \$14 and under.

In the event of a street closure, the Tennessee Aquarium will notify groups via email to provide alternative directions and/or parking.

Where to Check In:

Please check in at the Aquarium Ticketing Center located on the Plaza across from the River and Ocean Journey buildings. Plan to arrive at least 20 minutes before your scheduled entry time to begin the check-in process. **Remember, the Aquarium and IMAX are on Eastern Time.**



AQUARIUM FIRST

*Group Visit Drop Off
and Bus Parking*



DAY OF VISIT:

VISITING THE *IMAX* FIRST



Drop Off and Parking



School Bus or Tour Bus:

Buses may park along Power Alley, the street behind the IMAX, and Aquarium Way on the north side of the IMAX. Buses may remain parked free of charge for the duration of the visit. Overflow bus parking is located in the Riverfront Lot underneath the Olgiati Bridge.



Cars or Large Vans:

Public parking is available throughout downtown, including a lot in front of the Aquarium's River Journey building and two nearby garages. Prices vary by lot, and parking is typically available for \$14 and under.

Where to Check In:

Please check in at the IMAX Box Office, located near the entrance of the IMAX building. Plan to arrive at least 20 minutes before your scheduled film to begin the check in process. **Remember, the Aquarium and IMAX are on Eastern Time.** After your film, please stop by the main ticketing center to check-in for your orientation before touring the main buildings.



IMAX FIRST

*Group Visit Drop Off
and Bus Parking*



HELPFUL EXTRAS

Restrooms

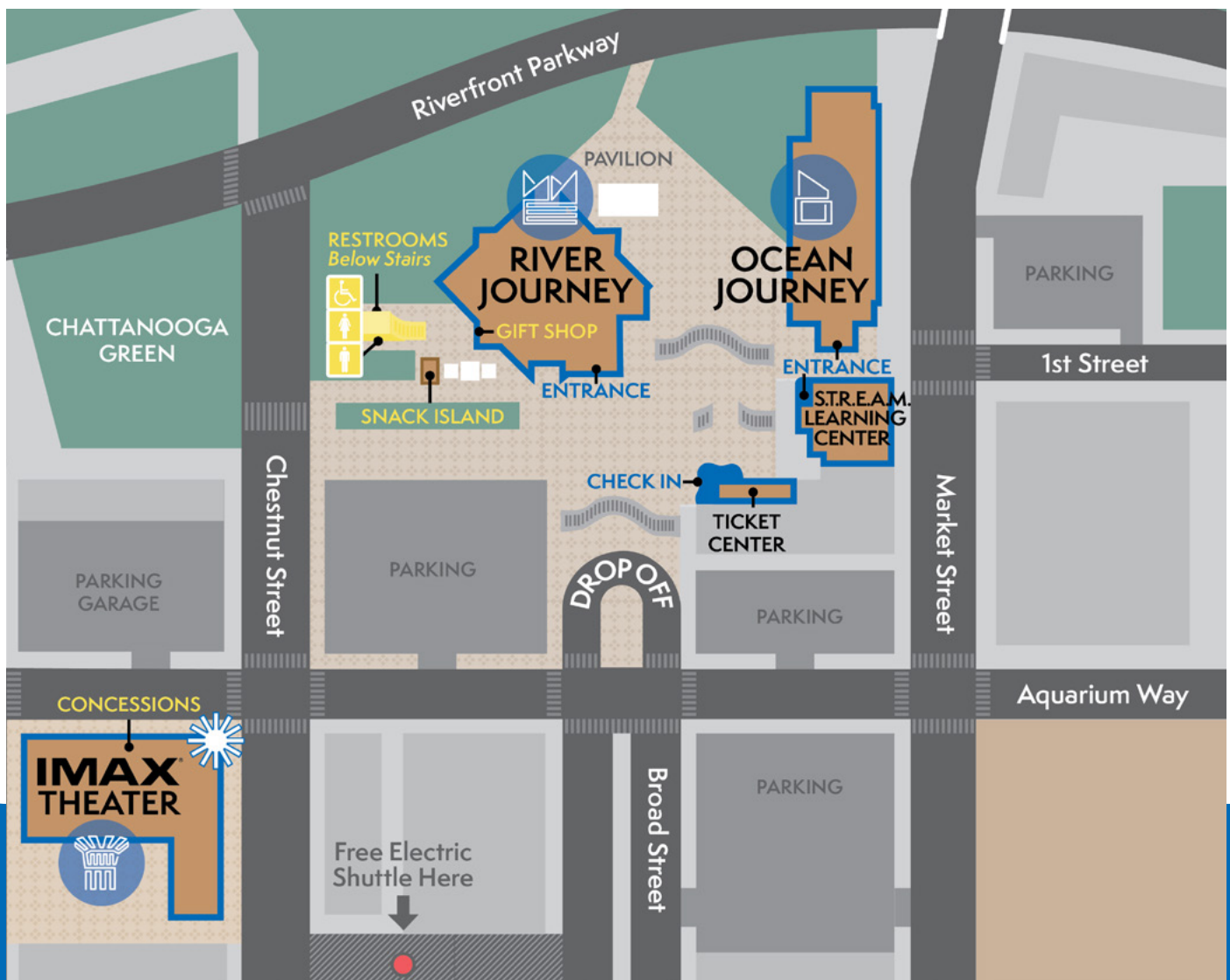
If your group arrives early, there are restroom facilities on the plaza. Once inside the buildings, there are restrooms spread throughout.

Gift Shops

Groups will have the best shopping experience at the River Journey gift shop. This shop can accommodate larger groups.

Concessions

Snack Island, our concession stand, is located outside near the River Journey exit. There is also a concession stand inside the IMAX Theater. Water fountains are located on the ground floors of each building. Please note that IMAX concessions are available beginning at the 12:00 P.M. show. Groups needing concessions outside of these hours may pre-order snack packs.





In the event Overflow Bus Parking 1 is full or closed, buses may park at a city owned lot located near Finley Stadium.