

EXPLORING FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY: COST AS A POTENTIAL BARRIER TO VISITATION

A Museums for Me data story

Museums want to be accessible to all members of their community. Cost and financial accessibility are not the most important considerations to people planning an initial museum visit; the relevance and quality of exhibitions are the top consideration. However, cost is a more important consideration for the occasional museum-goers and may be a significant barrier to more frequent visitation.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER BEFORE PLANNING A VISIT TO THE MUSEUM?

(Top 2 answers)

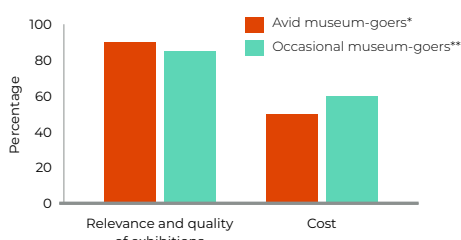
OVERALL

Relevance and quality of exhibitions

88%

Cost

54%



*Avid museum-goers visit museums more than 2 times a year.

**Occasional museum-goers visit museums 2 or less times a year

When pressed on what might entice more frequent visits, avid and occasional museum-goers rated stories relevant to them as the greatest factor (see [Getting to Relevance Through Accessibility and Representation](#)). Where the avid and occasional museum-goers opinions diverge is around the role of cost. Occasional museum-goers rated local access to museums, access to admission-free spaces, and lower cost as greater drivers to repeat visitation than avid museum-goers. This suggests the hard costs of admission and the cost of travel to access museums are barriers to return visits for the occasional museum-goer.

CONSIDER WHAT MIGHT MAKE YOU GO TO THE MUSEUM MORE OFTEN.

(Top 5 answers)

OVERALL

If museums told stories that are important to me

43%

If museums told stories that are important to different communities

40%

If there were more museums near me

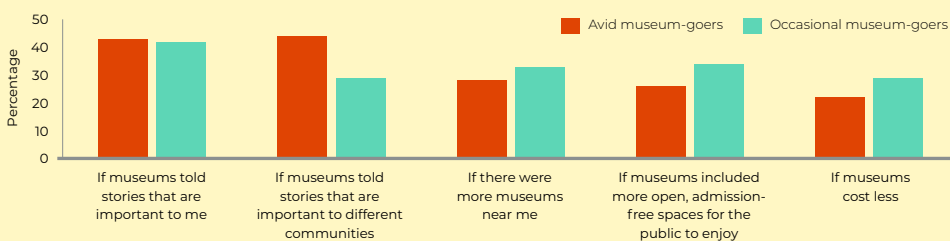
30%

If museums included more open, admission-free spaces for the public to enjoy

29%

If museums cost less

24%



Most Canadians see the value of a visit to a museum, but that does not always lead to actual visitation. Cost and financial accessibility are still prominent concerns for visitors.

MUSEUMS ARE A WASTE OF MONEY:

OVERALL

Agree

8%

Neutral

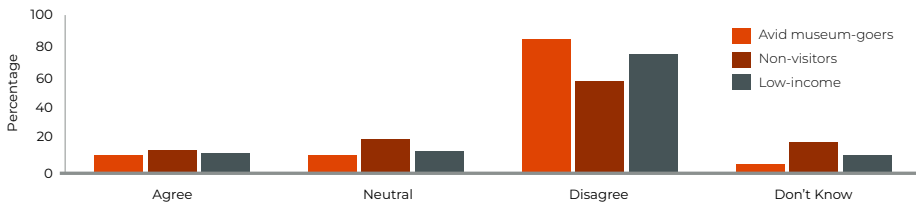
11%

Disagree

77%

Don't Know

4%



MUSEUMS ARE AN EXPENSIVE FORM OF RECREATION:

OVERALL

Agree

23%

Neutral

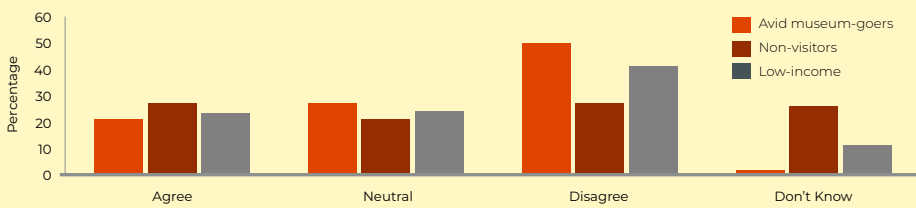
24%

Disagree

47%

Don't Know

6%



To understand the gap between the high value placed on visiting museums and the perception of museums as expensive we need to look at the visitation and economic data. Non-visitors are more likely than low-income respondents to think museums are a waste of money, and low-income respondents are more likely to be non-visitors. This suggests that while museums might not be seen as a waste of money, many non-visitors likely still see museums as an indulgence.

IN GENERAL, HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT MUSEUMS IN CANADA?

OVERALL

Avid museum-goers

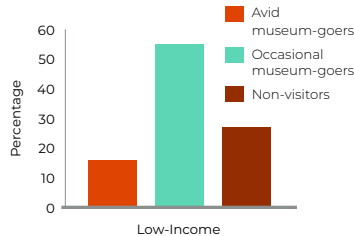
20%

Occasional museum-goers

60%

Non-visitors

19%



Despite being valued in general by the community, there is a significant percentage of people that simply do not visit museums. There are many reasons for this, including cost. Museums can remove this barrier to visitation by waiving entrance fees, offering more admission-free spaces, or by making collections, exhibits, and programs accessible for free online. Initiatives like these increase financial accessibility, ensuring that cost is less of a barrier to visitation.

Working toward a more relevant and representative museum includes creating a financially accessible space for a diverse community. Along with better representation, targeted outreach activities, and increased community engagement, decreasing cost per visit is one way that museums can help their community to continue to see and appreciate their value.

All data collected as part of a 2021 national survey, *Museums for Me*, undertaken as part of *Reconsidering Museums*. For detailed information on questions and responses, see the [Museums For Me: Engaging Canadians on the Future of Museums - What We Heard report](#).

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