

GETTING TO RELEVANCE THROUGH ACCESSIBILITY AND REPRESENTATION

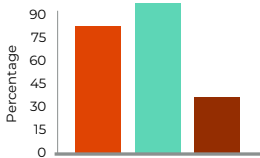
A Museums for Me data story

Museums strive to remove barriers to visitation by creating accessible, safe, and welcoming environments for all visitors. Identifying the barriers that remain and removing those barriers can increase participation of occasional and non-visitors.

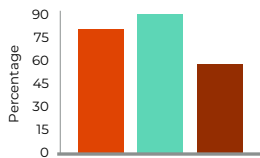
The Canadian public feels safe and welcome in museums. The more a person visits museums, the more likely they are to feel safe and welcome in them. Many non-visitors see museums as safe and valuable to society, however they are less likely than avid museum-goers to feel welcome in them. When responses from non-visitors are broken down further, the majority simply do not know if they would be welcomed in museums. This identifies opportunities to build relationships with non-visitors to help them feel welcome in museums.

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

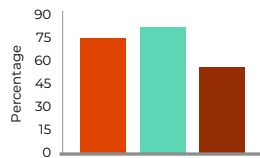
Museums make me feel welcome



I trust museums to keep me safe



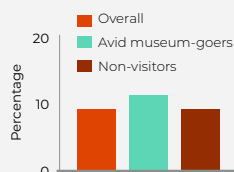
I think museums are a very important part of Canadian society



54% of non-visitors don't know if museums make them feel welcome

Most Canadians value museums as safe and welcoming environments, which aligns with the fact that most Canadians no longer see museums as being only for elites. Interestingly, non-visitors are less likely than avid museum-goers to think museums are elitist. This raises the question: if non-visitors are unlikely to see museum as only for elites, why do they not visit more?

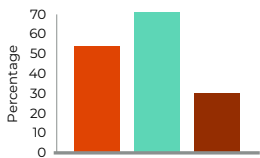
Museums are only for elites



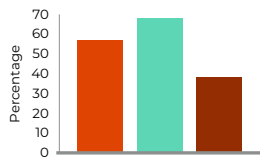
The barrier to increased visitation is that many non-visitors do not feel the museum represents them. Many people do not see themselves, their interests, their communities, or their histories represented in museum exhibits, collections, and programs. There is a perception among non-visitors that museums are not for them. Representation is clearly a barrier to visitation.

Overall Avid museum-goers Non-visitors

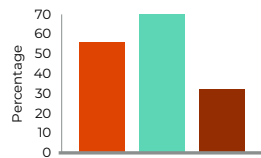
Museums reflect my interests in their exhibits, collections, and programs



Museums tell stories that reflect my values and those of the community I live in



Museums fulfill my cultural needs in their exhibits, collections, and programs



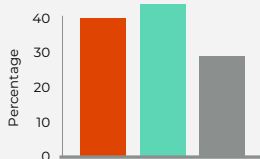
MUSEUMS WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT IN MY LIFE, IF...

Rural and low-income respondents are more likely to be occasional or non-visitors, but there is more to the story than geographical and financial barriers to access. When Canadians were asked what would make them visit museums more, factors like geographic proximity, free programming, and lower cost of entry were secondary. The number one factor that would make people visit museums more is relevance and representation.

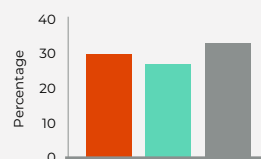
...museums told stories that are important to me...



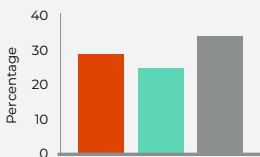
...museums told stories that are important to different communities...



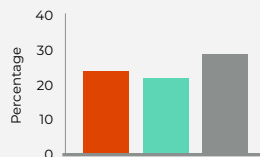
...there were more museums near me...



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



...museums cost less...



Overall Avid museum-goers Occasional museum-goers**
**Occasional museum-goers visit museums 2 or less times a year. This includes non-visitors.

It is not enough for museums to be safe and welcoming. Museums must give community members a reason to visit. To do this, museums need to better represent their diverse communities in their exhibits, collections, and programs. Museum-goers want to feel that they, and the communities they care about, are reflected in the content of the museum. Representation, paired with accessibility (physical, financial, cultural, and more), can lead to increased community relevance and increased visitation.

“Partner with communities to give them space to share the stories they feel need sharing in their way. Don't partner with them to 'help' share 'their' stories. You aren't above 'us.' You aren't separate.”

– SURVEY RESPONDENT

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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