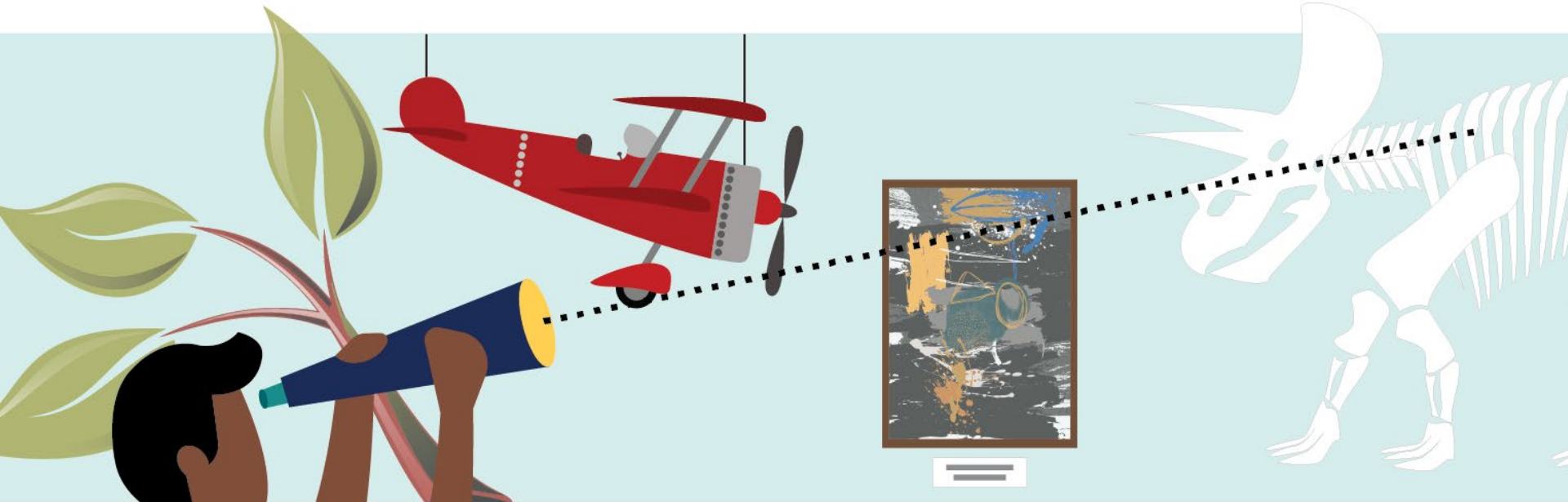


Connecticut – ALL Museums

2023 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS

Wilkening Consulting + American Alliance of Museums



Wilkening Consulting

audience research | knowledge curation



American
Alliance of
Museums



Annual Survey of Museum Goers: *Field-wide Research*

The Annual Survey of Museum-Goers typically seeks three types of information from museum-goers:

1

**An understanding
of *who* our audience is**

This includes their attitudes, values, motivations, and demographic characteristics.

2

**Their advice about
what they want from
museums writ large or your
museum specifically**

This can include how museums are/are not meeting needs, what exhibits or programs they are most interested in, etc.

3

The lay of the land

This can help us understand how different people may respond to content or initiatives that may challenge them or that, as a society, we don't have consensus on. This allows us to evaluate the best approaches to sharing that content.



Annual Survey of Museum Goers: *Field-wide Research*

Each year,
the Annual
Survey of
Museum-Goers
has three
main parts:

1

Key benchmark
questions on
attitudes and
visitation rates



These tend to stay the same from year to year so that individual museums can track their results over time.

2

Demographic
questions



3

New research
themes



These are different every year, and address current needs of the museum field.

New research themes for each year are chosen based on multiple sources, including:



- Input from the previous year's Annual Survey participants
- Trends and shifts impacting the museum field
- Questions arising from previous research
- Broader societal trends and events



2023 Research Themes:



**Connection to
Humanity**



**Civic
Participation**



**Rebuilding
Museum Visitation**

Aggregate data will be analyzed by Wilkening Consulting and shared with the museum field via *Data Stories* as well as the American Alliance of Museum's publications and website



Participating museums also receive a detailed spreadsheet which provides:



Additional quantitative comparisons, as appropriate



Written-in comments to all questions



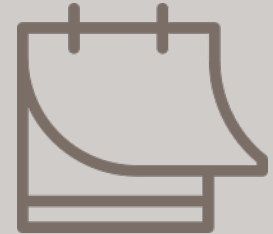
Overview of Survey Participants - 2023

210 museums participated

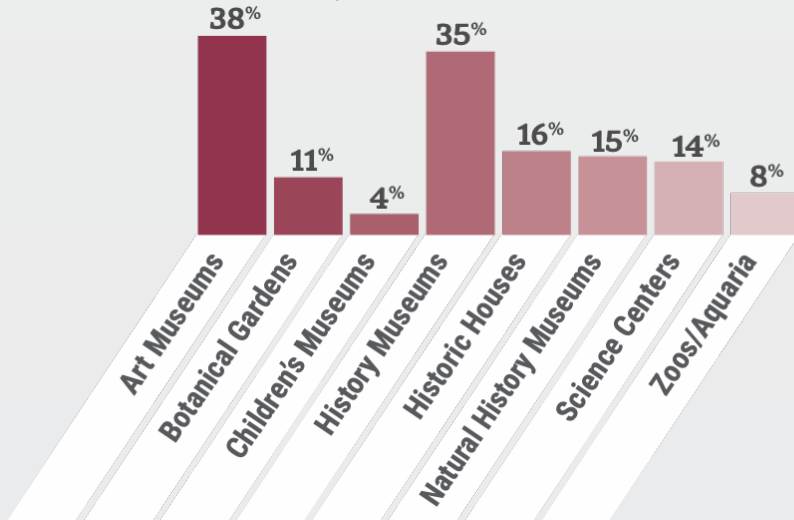


Including art museums, history museums and historic sites, science centers, children's museums, botanical gardens, zoos and aquaria, and special-interest museums

Fielded January 1
– March 23, 2023



As of March 23, 2023: N = 107,187 respondents



Participating museums disseminated their survey via:



Email list



Social media



And other methods based on each, individual museum's goals

*adds up to >100% as many museums include multiple disciplines



Broader Population Comparison Sample

A broader population sample was fielded concurrent with this sampling

The broader population sample included casual, sporadic, and non-visitors to museums

Results from that sample, when available, are included in this report

2,002
responses





About the Connecticut Sample

CThumanities



Department of Economic and
Community Development

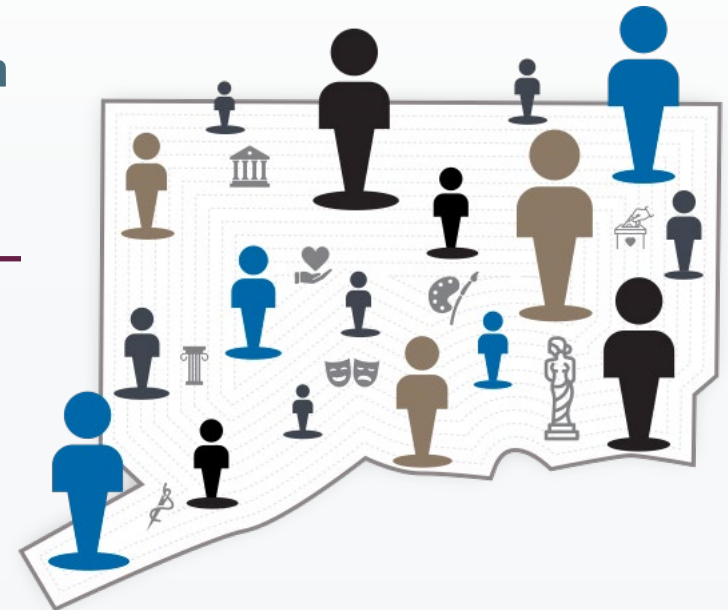
Office Of The Arts

To support the Connecticut museum field, as well as learn more about museum-goers in the state, CT Humanities provided funding that allowed 20 CT museums to participate in the Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

This sample included museum-goers from zoos, gardens, art museums, history museums, children's museums, and more

Upon examination of the data, it was determined that the mathematical average should be used for the 20 museums included in this set

5,455
responses

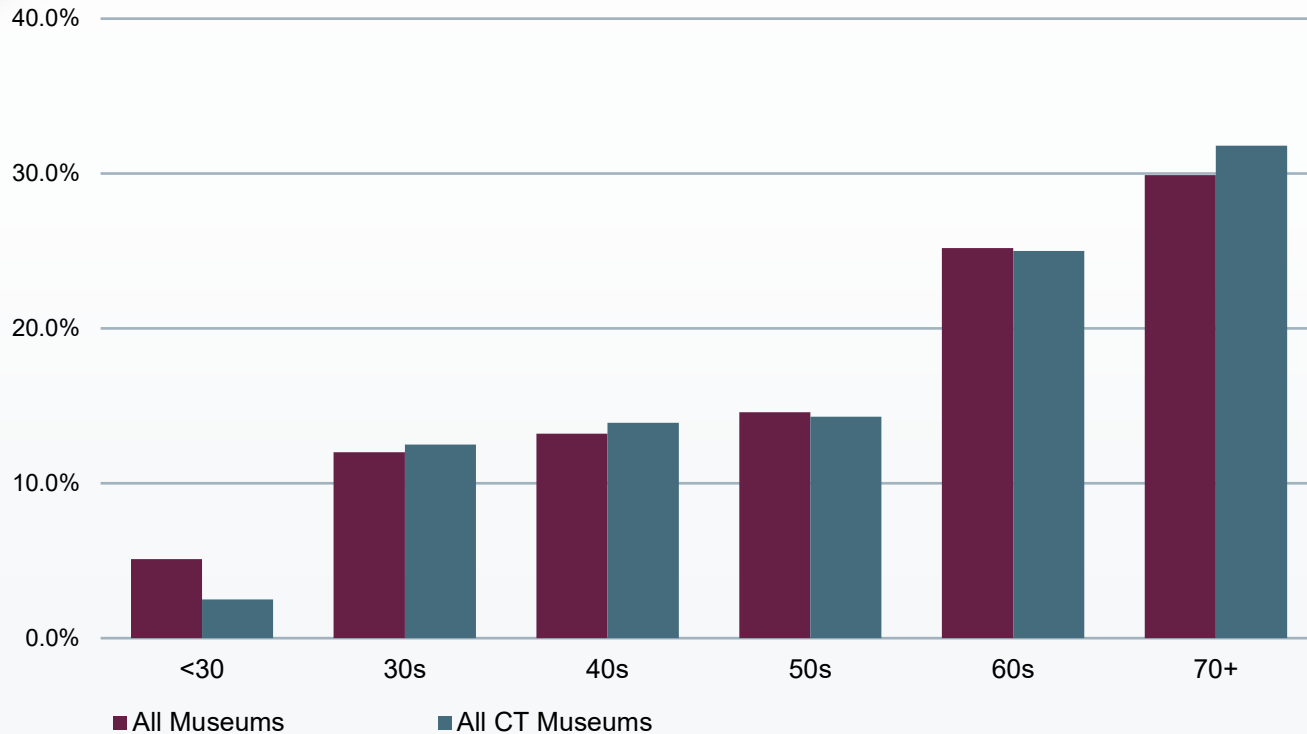




Demographic Analysis



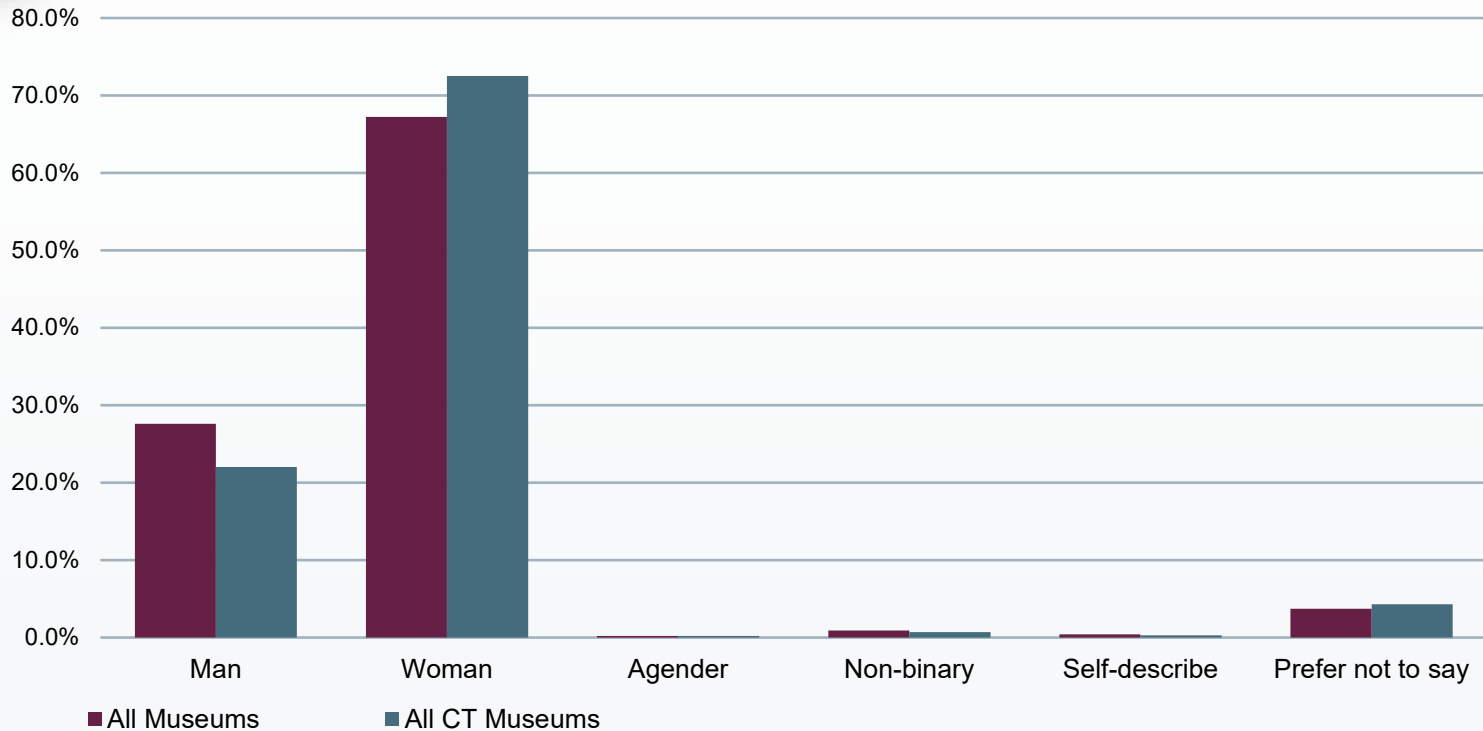
Age of Respondent



• Similar to the overall results, Connecticut respondents skewed older

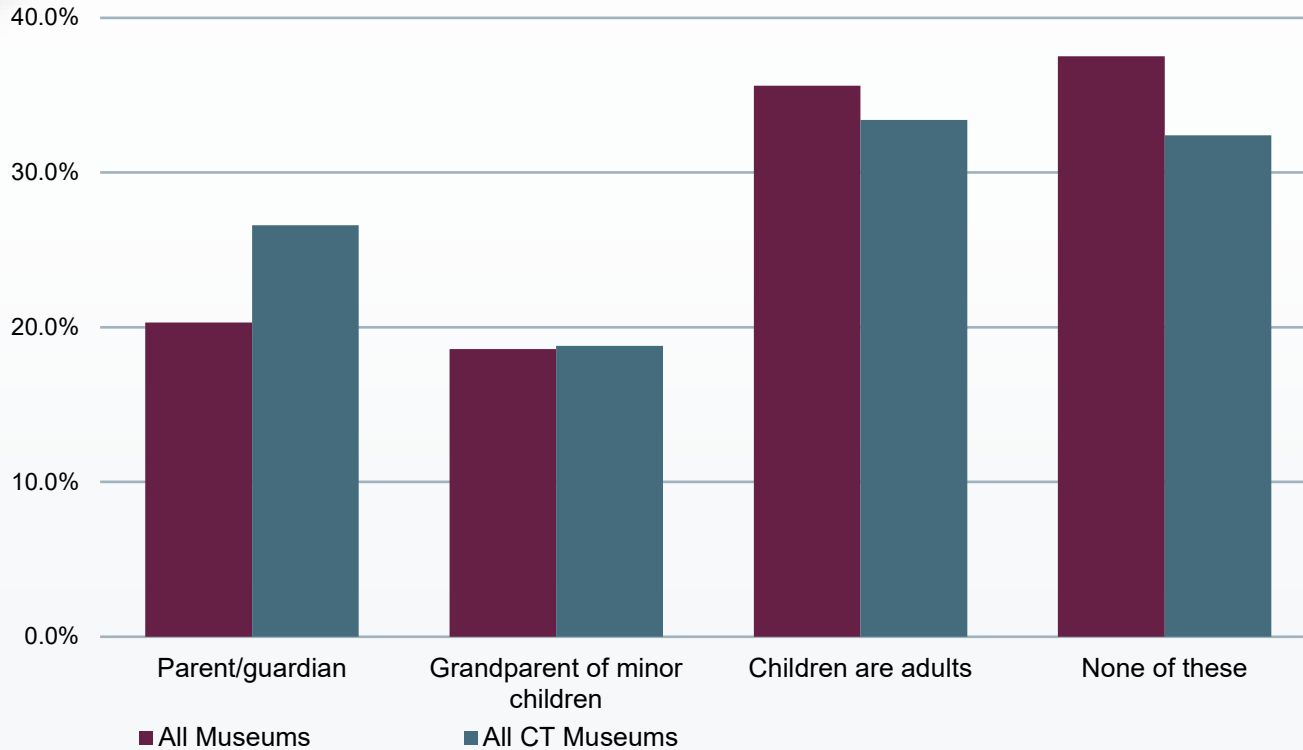


Gender



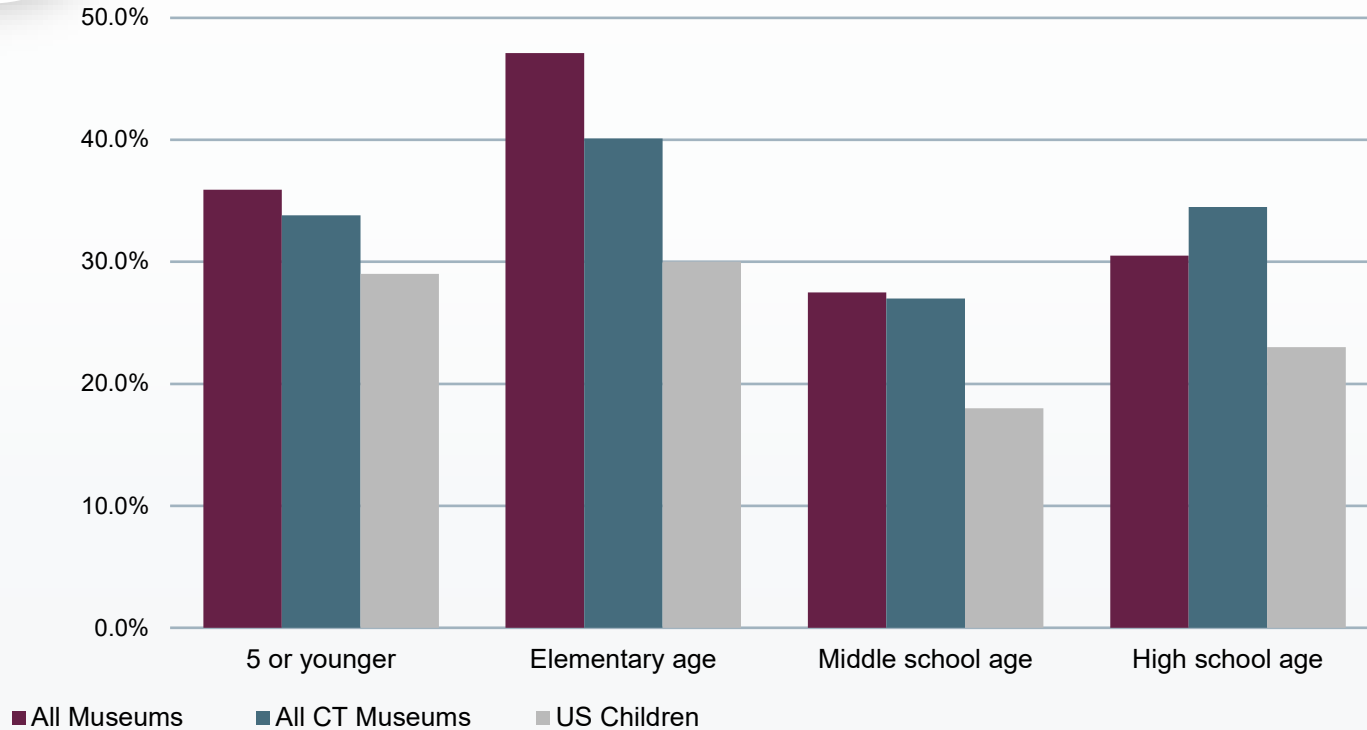
- Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly more likely to identify as women than those from the overall results
- Respondents to museum surveys are 2.4x more likely to identify as a woman than a man
- Though “agender” and “non-binary” are very small percentages of respondents, in the aggregate data set their results are stable and will be analyzed

Parental Status



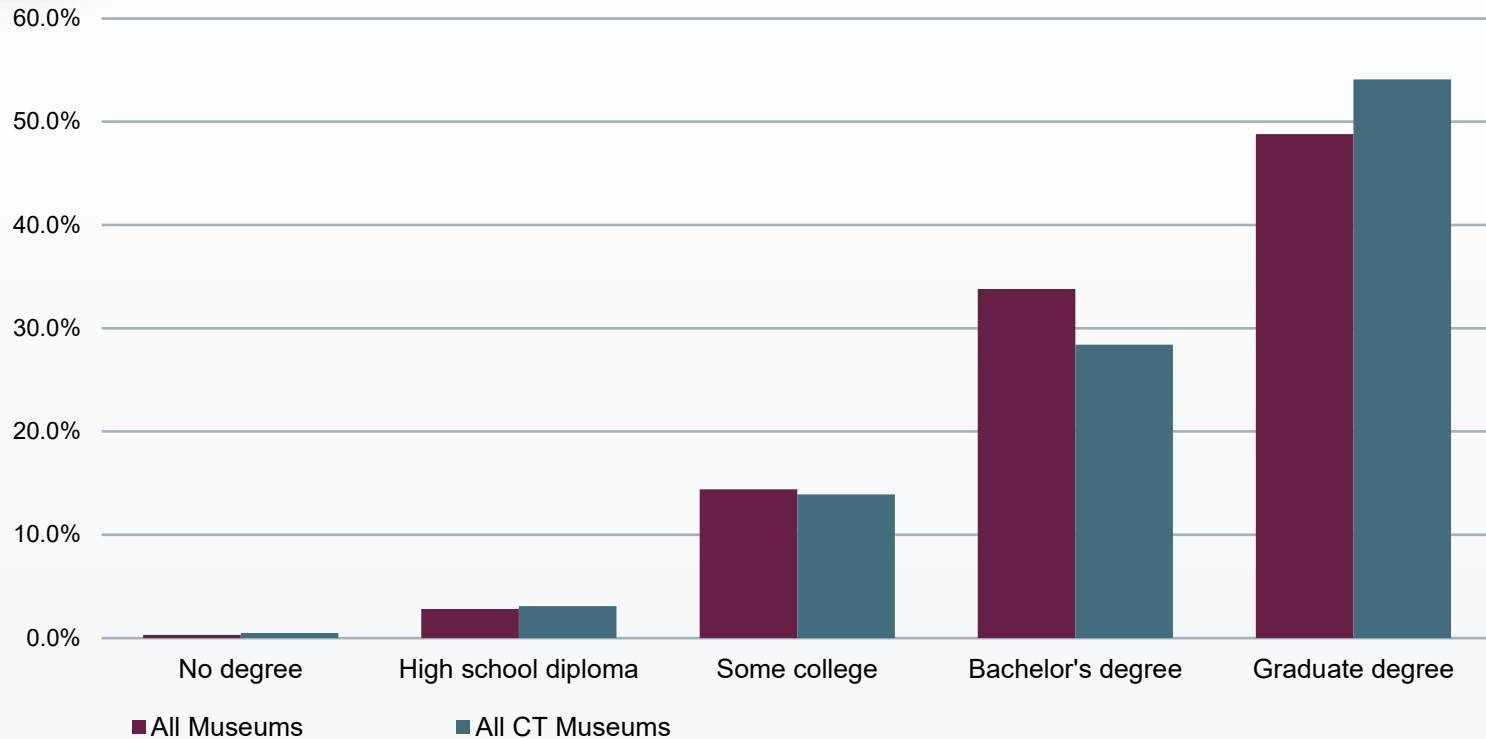
• Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly more likely to identify as parents or guardians of minor children than those from the overall results

Age of children (parents/guardians only)



- Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly less likely to identify as parents or guardians of elementary age children than those from the overall results
- “US Children” from US Census Bureau, and for comparison of what would be considered “representative” of children nationally

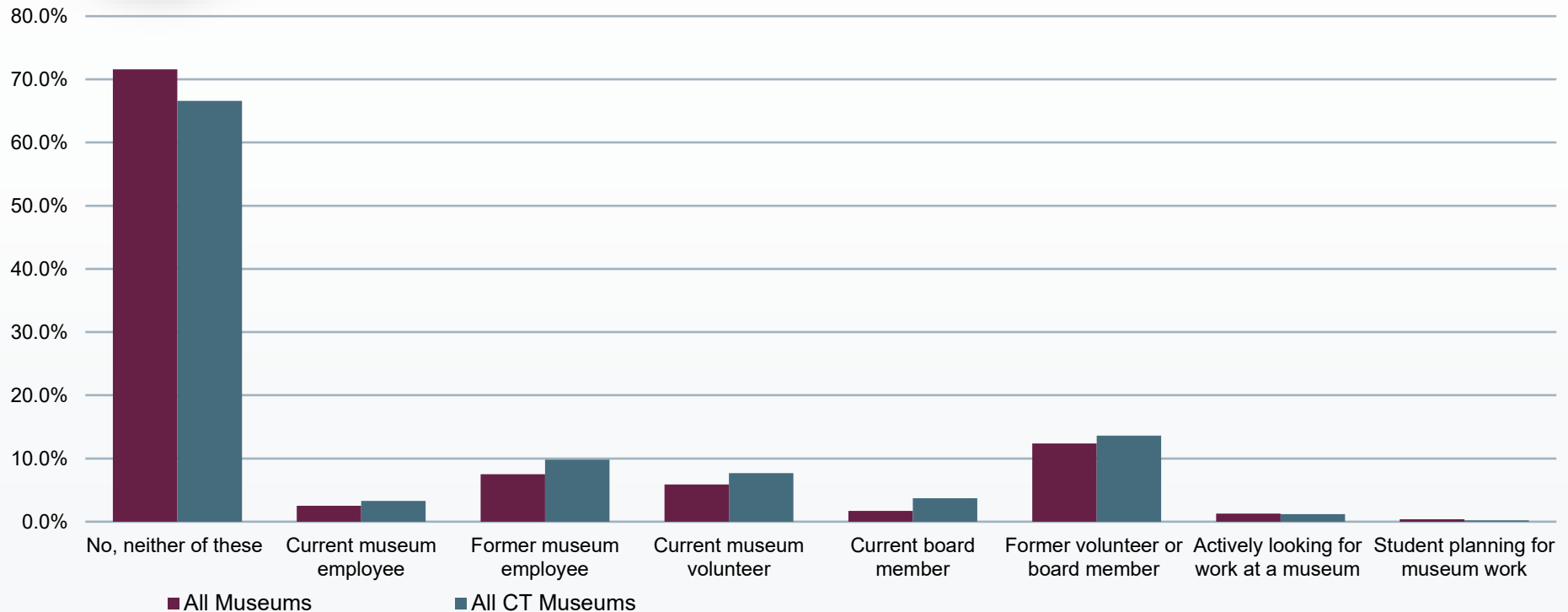
Educational Attainment



- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results
- Museum-goers tend to have higher levels of educational attainment than the broader public; they are 2.6x more likely to have a college degree (83% vs. 32% US adults)



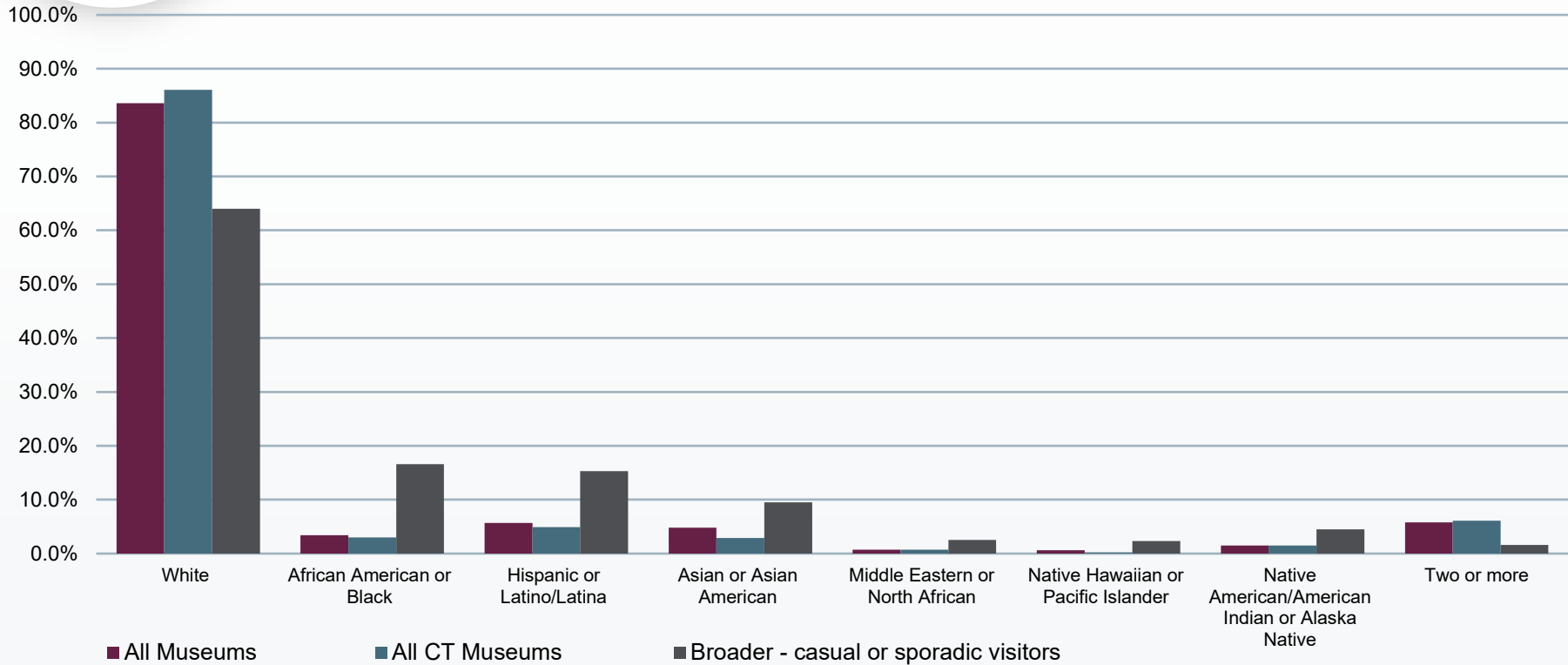
Museum Employment/Service



• The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results



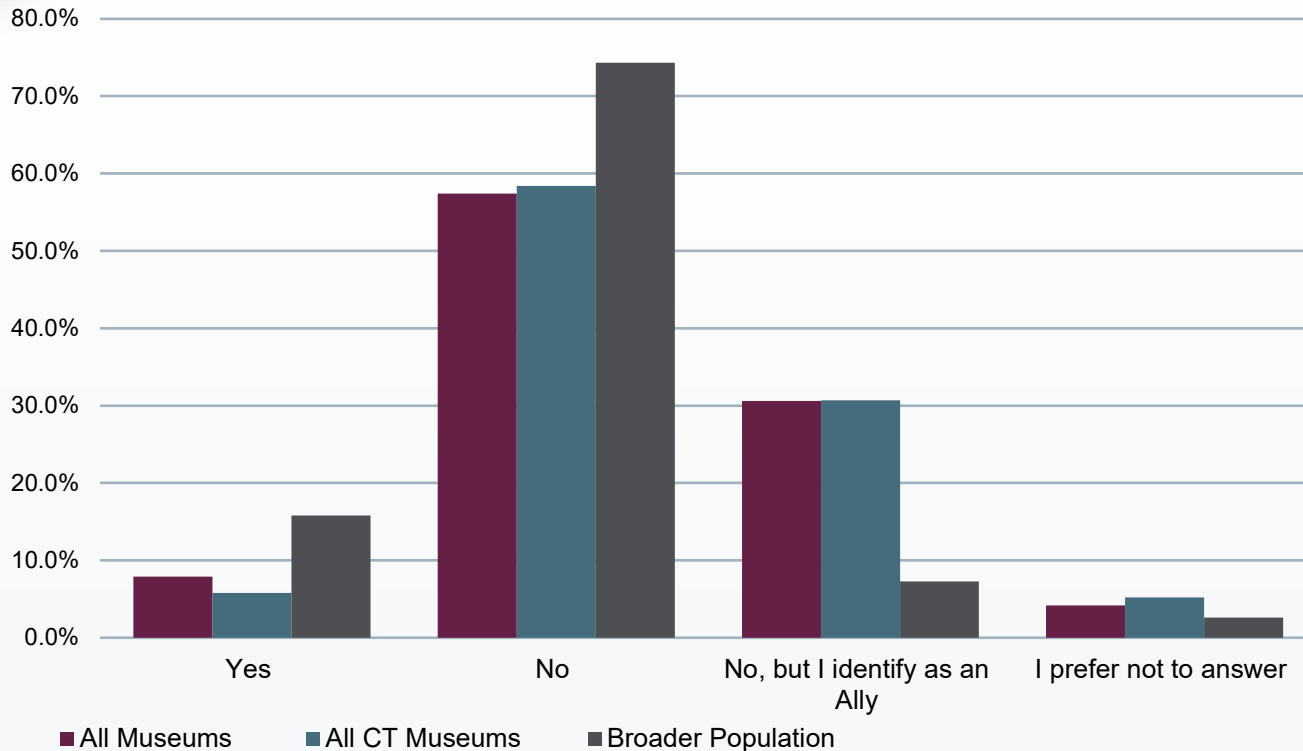
Household Race and/or Ethnicity



- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results
- While frequent museum-goers are more likely to identify as white than the US population, casual and sporadic museum visitors are much more representative of US adults



Member of LGBTQ+ Community



- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results
- US adults are nearly 2x more likely to identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community than frequent museum-goers
- Frequent museum-goers, however, are 4x more likely to identify as an Ally of the LGBTQ+ community than the broader population of US adults



Pre-Pandemic to Recovery Comparisons: 2020 - 2023

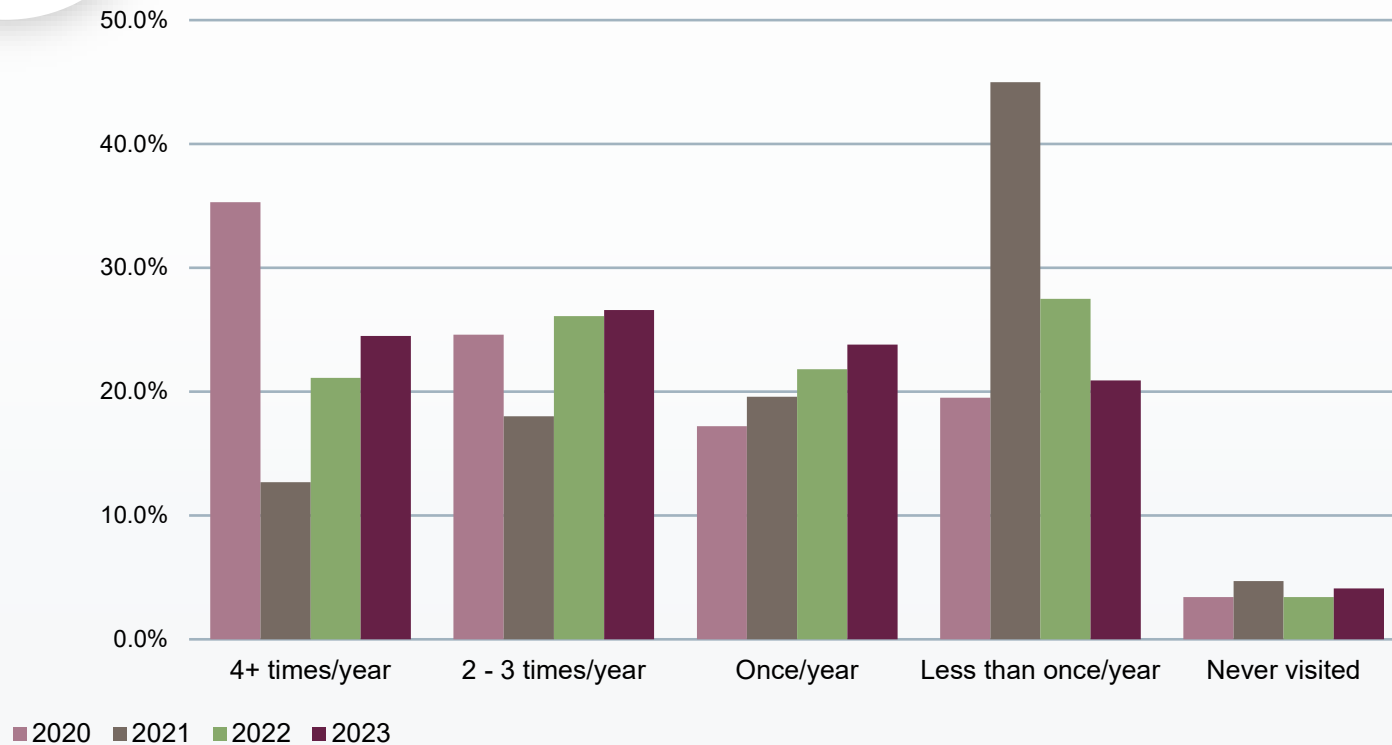
Visitation and Museums

Pre- and Mid-Pandemic Comparisons

- The COVID-19 pandemic devastated museum visitation, with visitation plummeting among our core audience
- To quantify how it has been playing out with our audiences, we maintained our benchmark visitation question, clarifying that respondents should report *in person visits*
- The following slides are intended to provide you context by illustrating in-person visitation across museums of all types from pre-pandemic (2020 results) to mid-pandemic (2021 results) to mid-recovery (2022 results) to generally post-pandemic behaviors (2023 results)

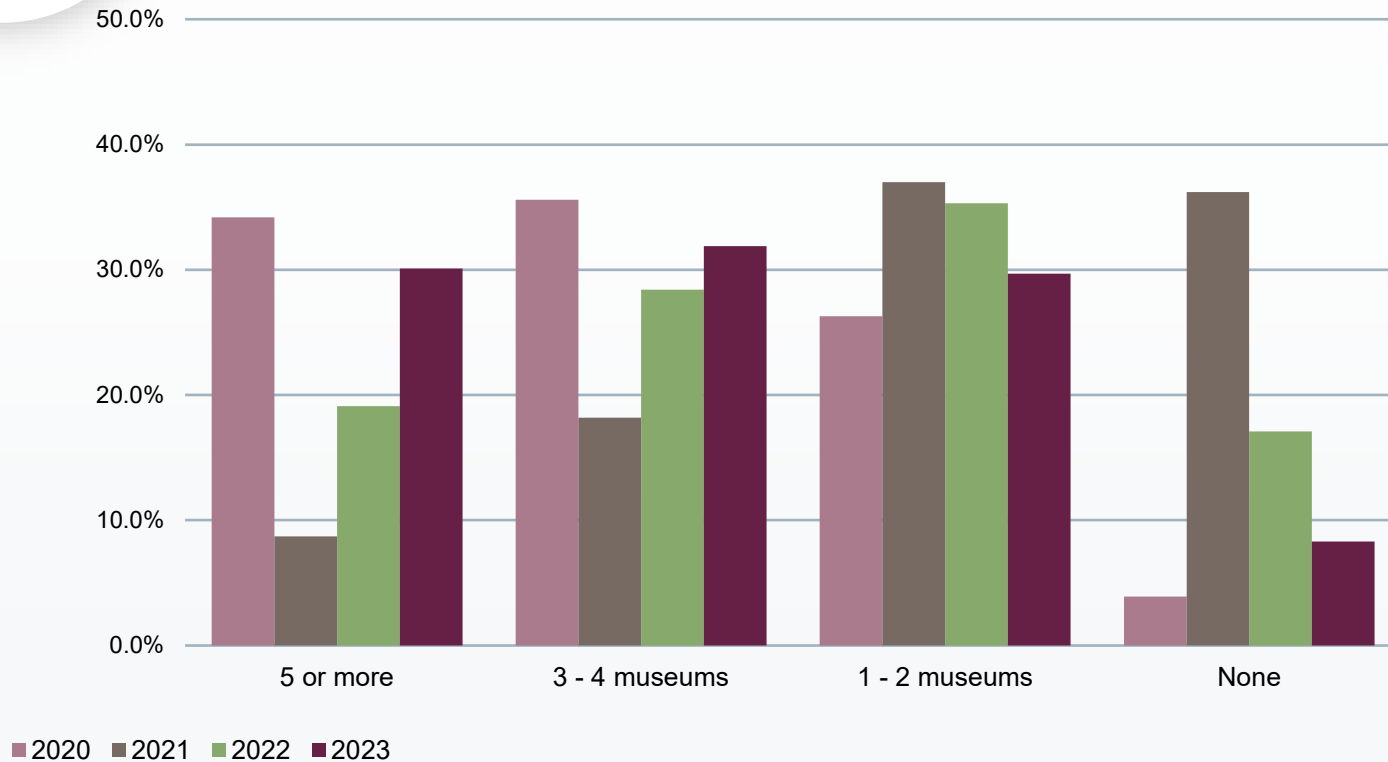


How Often They Visit “Their” Museum *in Person* – Previous Year Comps



- As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic devastated museum attendance from museum-goers
- In 2021, half of museum-goers (50%) had not visited “their” museum in the past year (or ever), and visitation of 4 or more times/year dropped by nearly two-thirds
- 2023 shows ongoing signs of recovery: a quarter had not visited in the past year, and repeat visitation had increased by two-thirds from 2021 (to 51% from 31%)
- Recovery, however, has slowed and is still not close to pre-pandemic attendance patterns

Number of Different Museums They Visited *in Person* in Previous Year

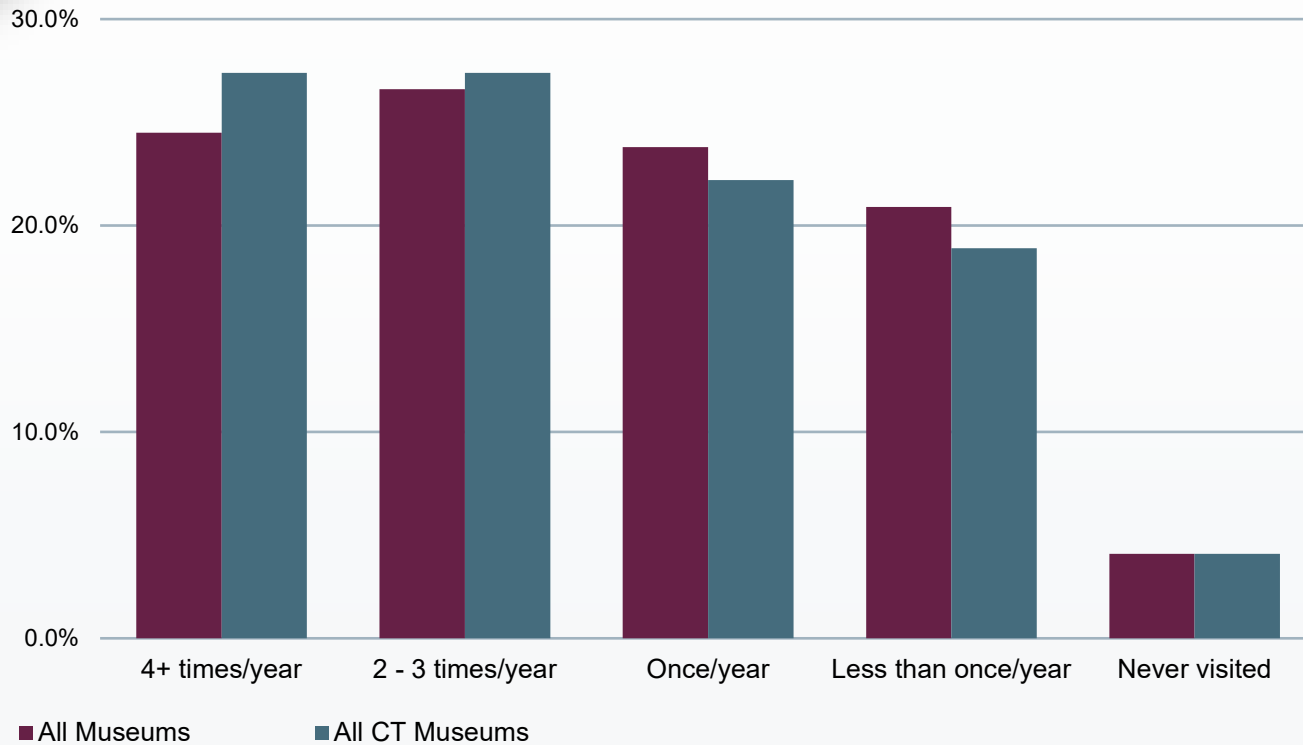


- There is much stronger recovery in visiting museums more broadly: over 90% of 2023 respondents had visited at least one museum in the past year, an increase from the 2021 low of 64%
- Similarly in 2023, less than one in 10 respondents had not visited *any* museums in the previous year, a significant drop from the third in 2021 (though still 2x higher than the mere 4% who said this in 2020)



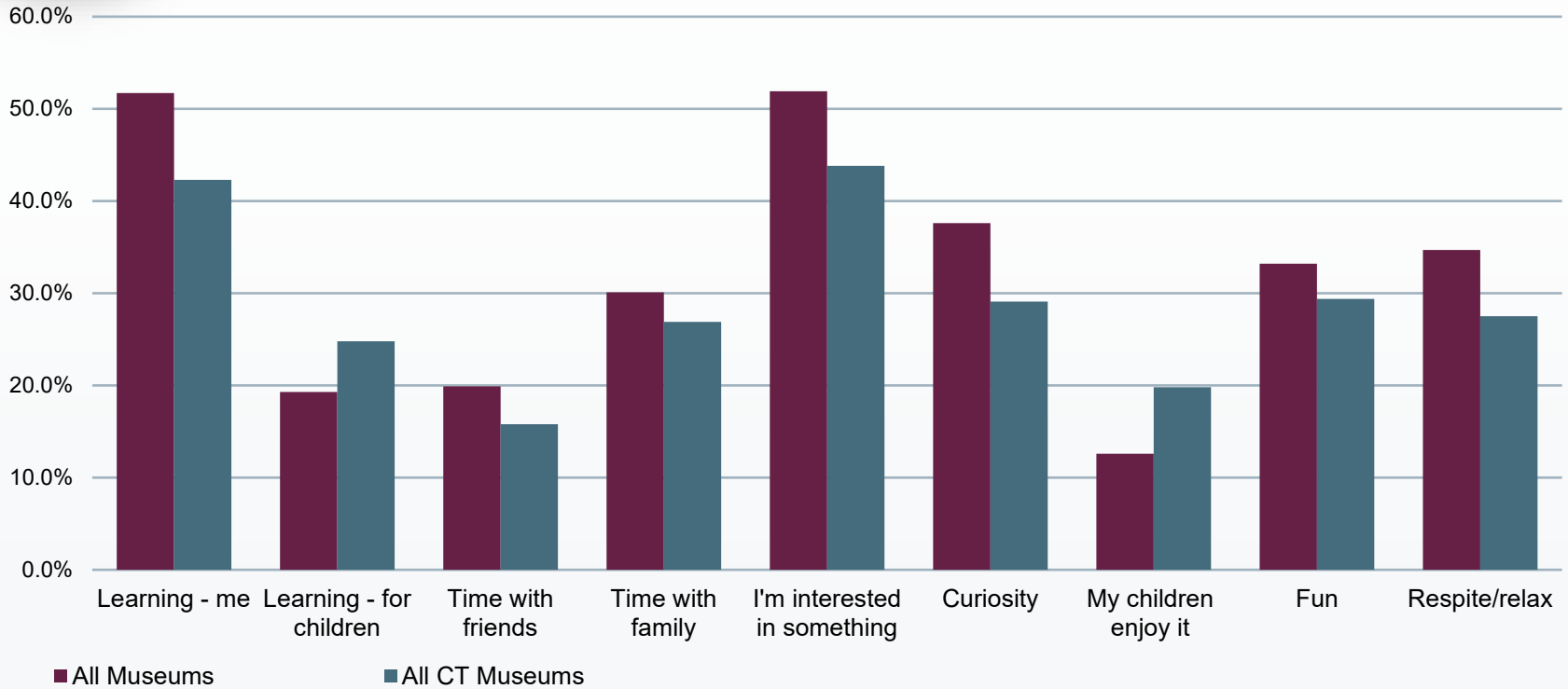
Benchmark Visitor Questions

How Often They Visited Your Museum *in Person* in the Past Year



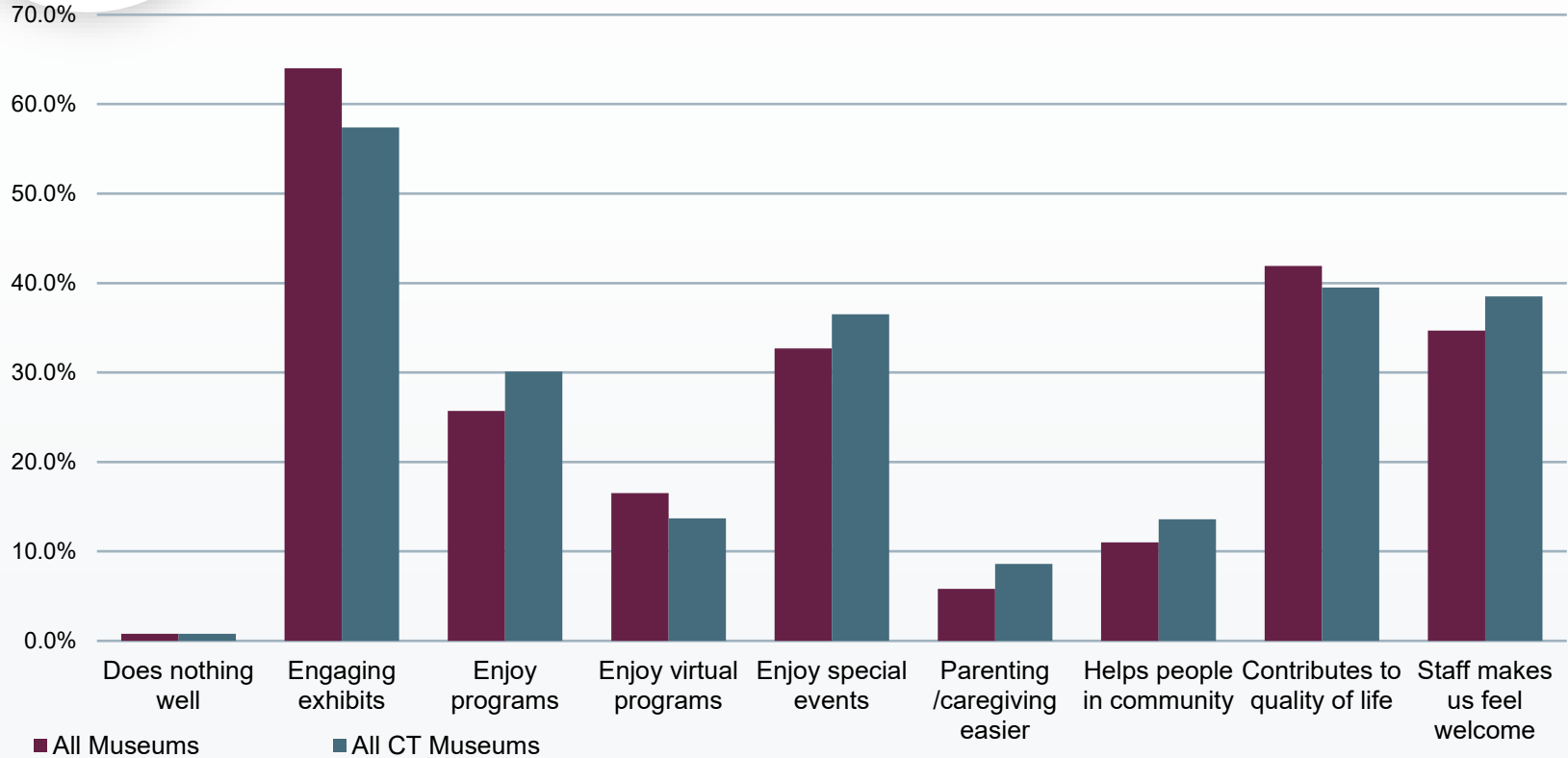
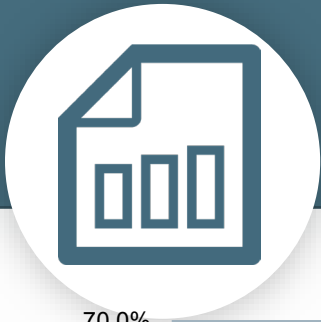
• The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results

Why They Visit



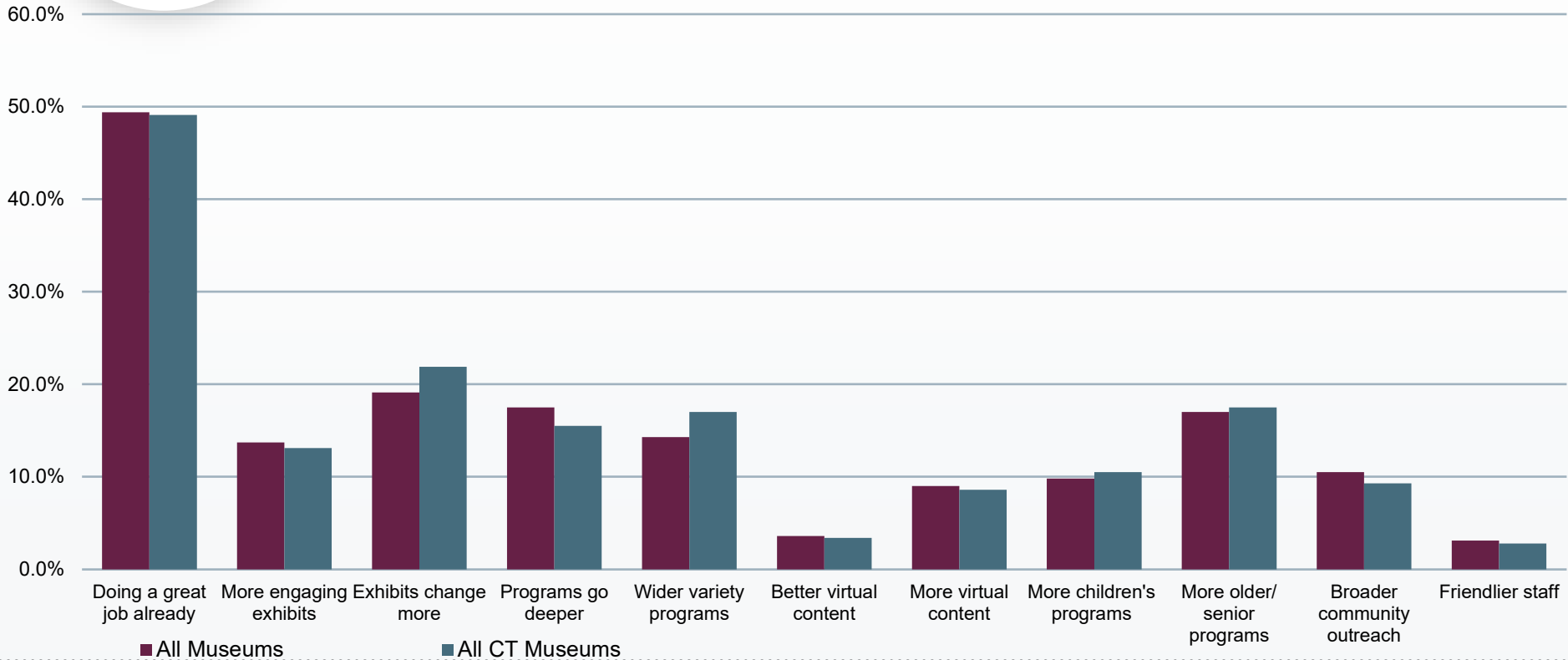
• Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly more likely to visit for their children’s learning or enjoyment and less likely for their own, personal interests, curiosity, or respite than those from the overall results

What the Museum Does Well



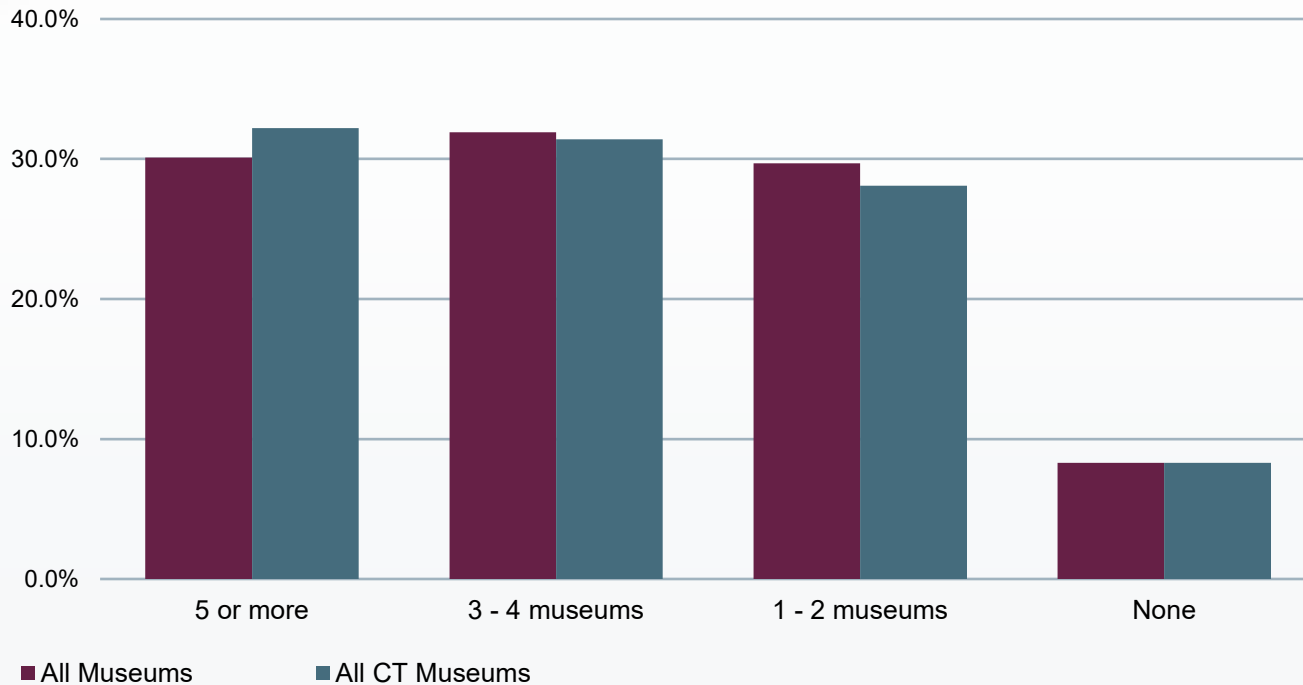
• Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly less likely to find the exhibits engaging than those from the overall results

How the Museum Can Improve: Desired Improvements



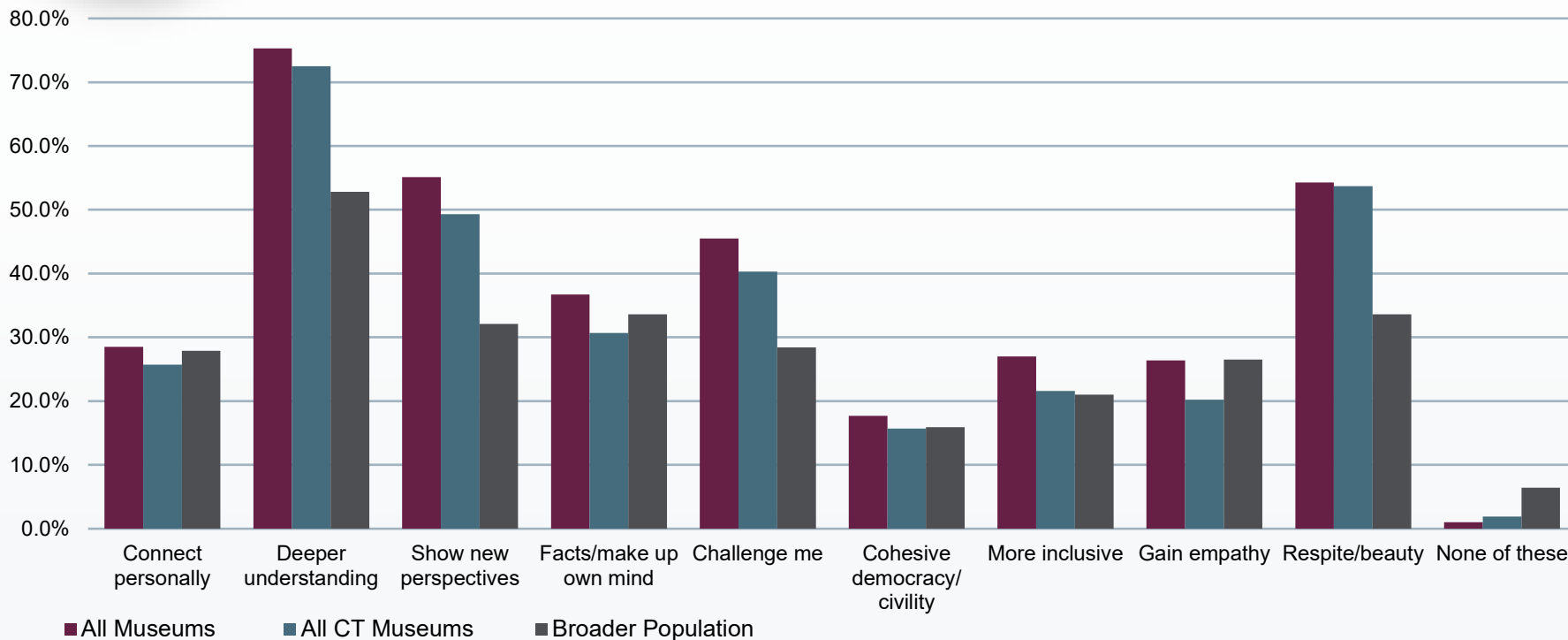
• The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results

Number of Different Museums They Visited *in Person* in Past Year



• Your results are similar to the overall results

How Museums Should Engage Visitors with Content



• Respondents from all Connecticut museums are generally less enthusiastic about most of these answer choices than those from the overall results

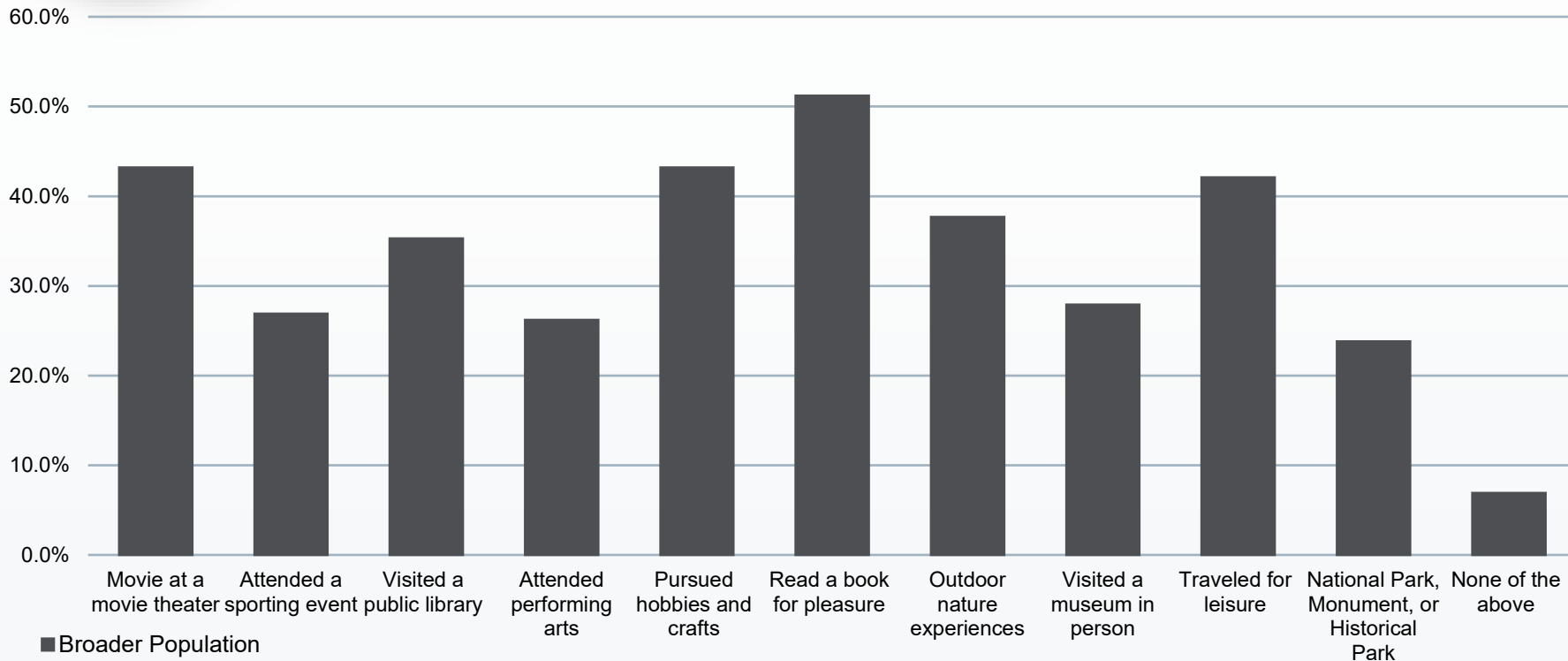


Broader Population Questions

Broader Population Questions

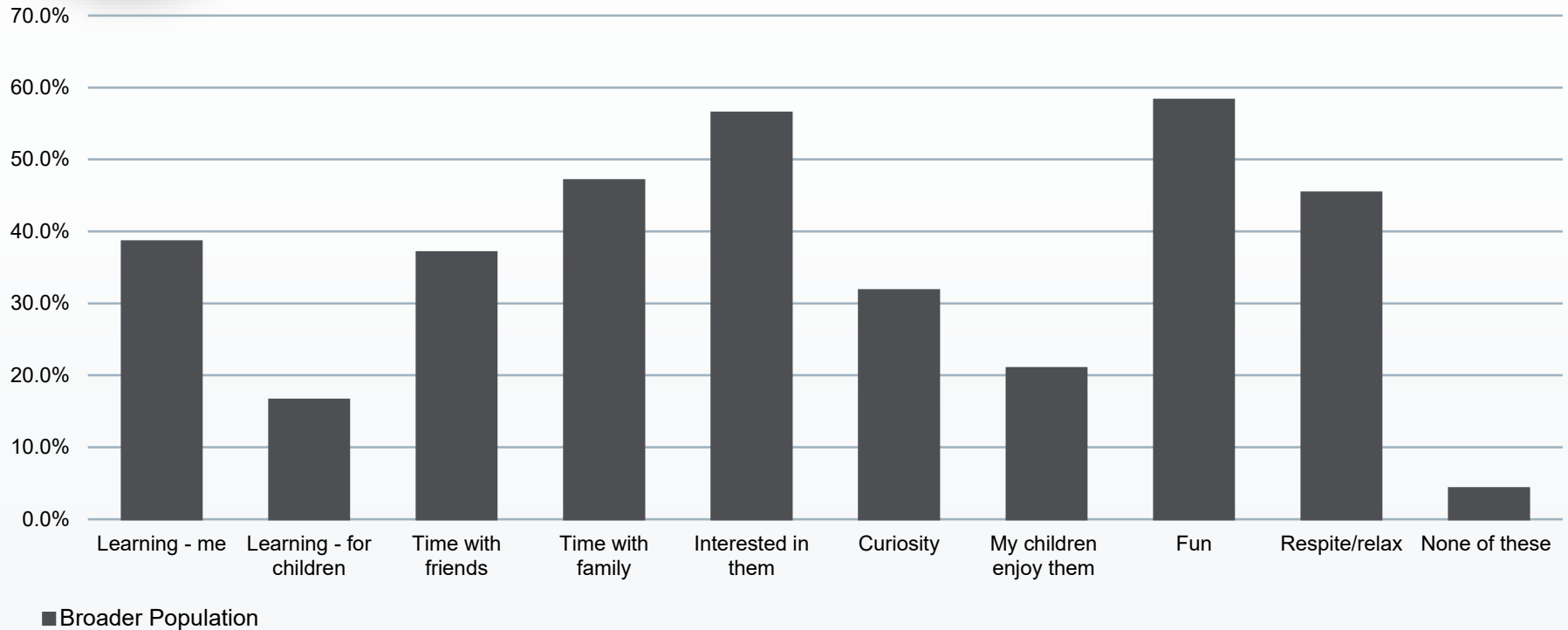
- The broader population comparison survey includes a small number of questions that do not appear in the survey for frequent museum-goers; the following slides share those results

Leisure Time Activities: Past Year



- Reading, pursuing hobbies, movies, and travel are the most popular activities
- 28% reported visiting a museum in the past year, fitting into previous norms (25 – 33%)

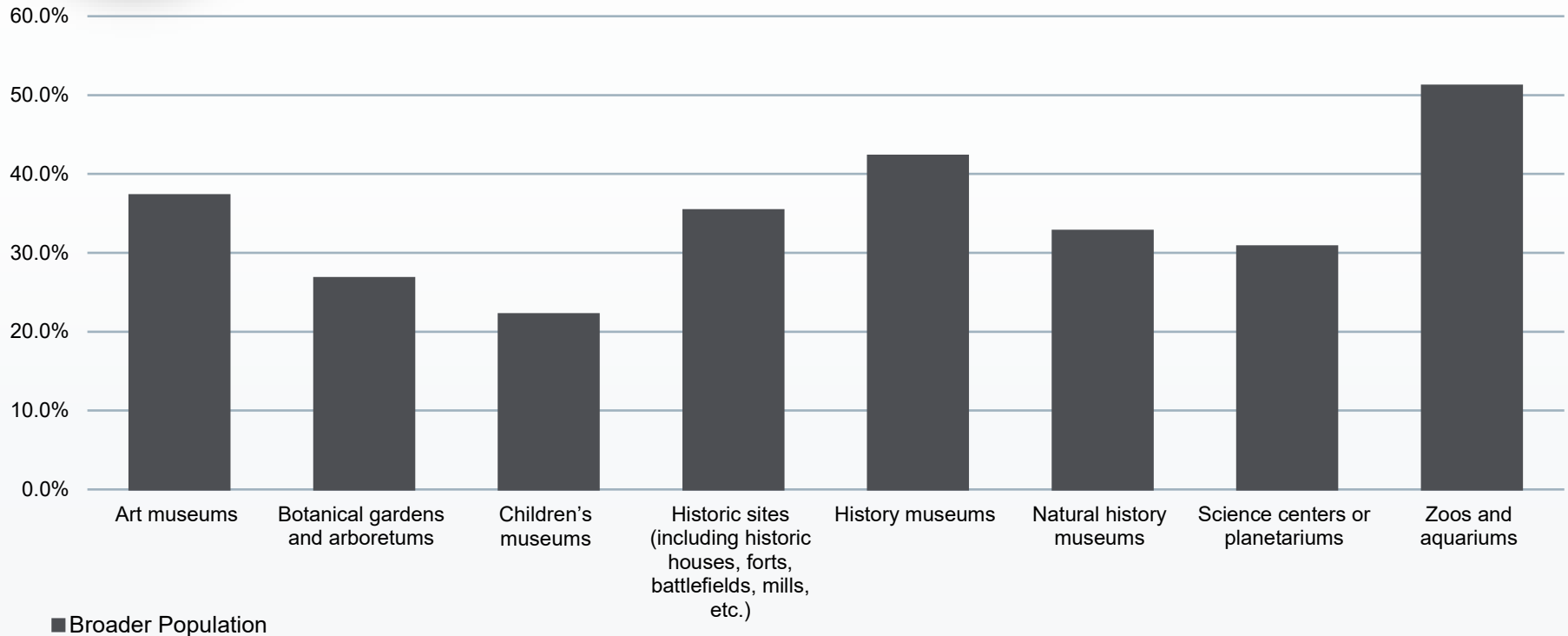
Why Participate in Leisure Time Activities



- This question is very similar to the one frequent museum-goers responded to about visiting “their” museum
- Please be mindful, however, that this question asks about motivations for leisure-time activities more generally

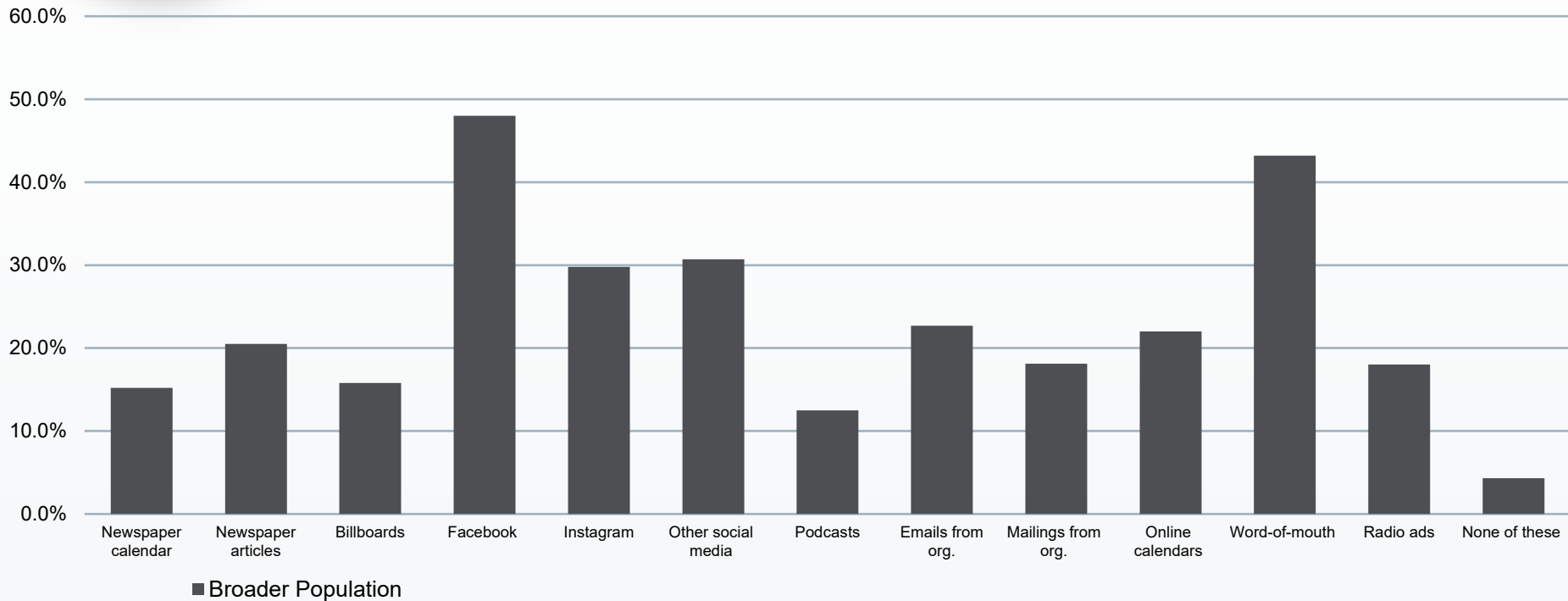


Types of Museums Enjoy Visiting (if they were to go to a museum)



• This question was only seen by respondents who visit museums at least sometimes (i.e., they didn't say they "don't really ever" visit museums)

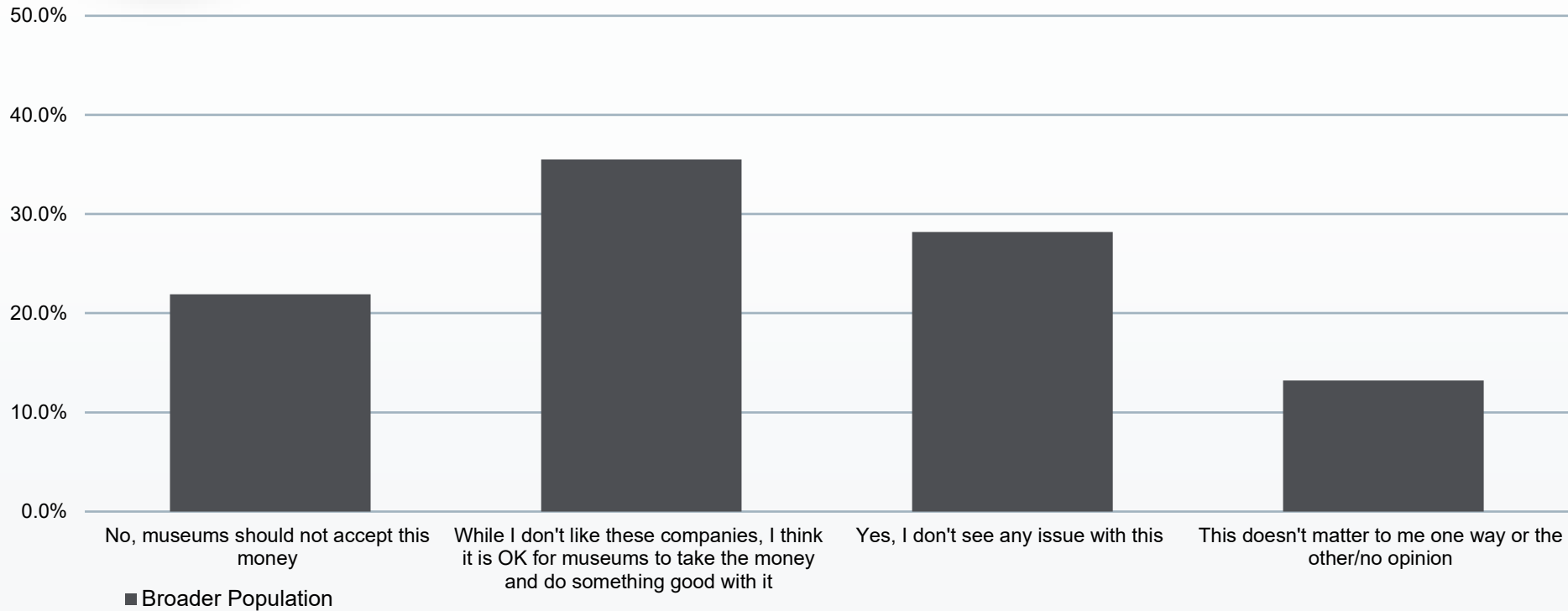
How They Hear About Community Events



• The broader population is most likely to hear about events from Facebook or word-of-mouth

“Tainted” Money

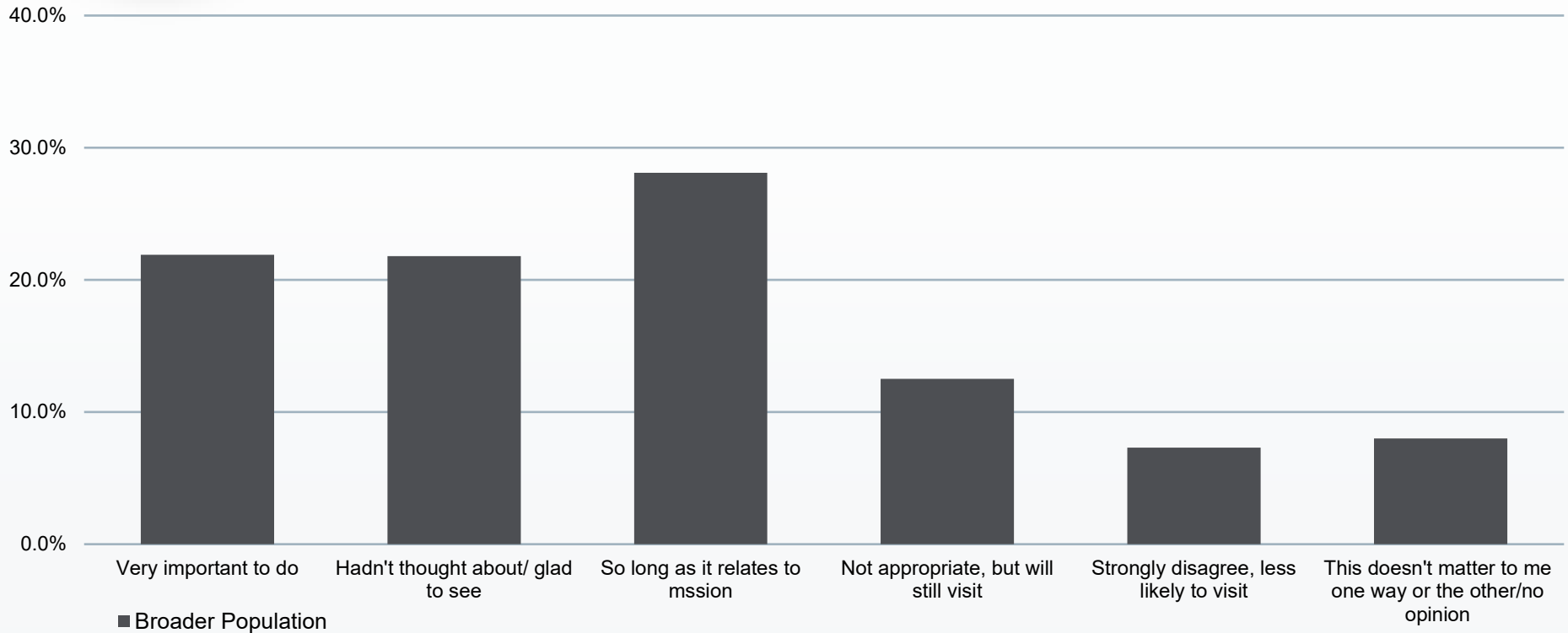
Most museums raise operating funds through private donations from individuals and businesses. Do you think museums should accept money from businesses (or individuals) that participate in industries that some people think are harmful? Examples could include donations from: oil companies, gun and/or ammunition manufacturers, companies relying on forced labor, etc.



• Most US adults think it is OK to accept this money

Issues Statements

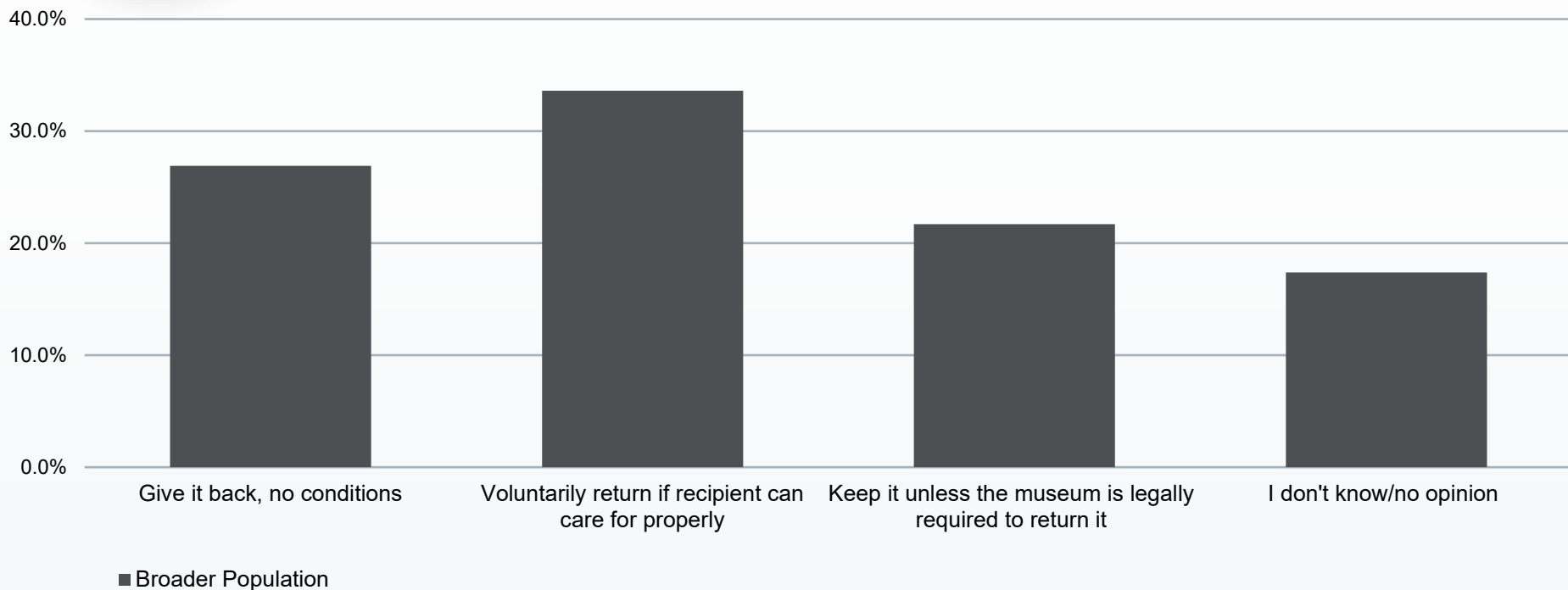
Some museums have made public statements on current issues they are concerned about. These can include commitments to anti-racism, Indigenous land acknowledgements, and/or condemnations of violence (such as for mass shootings). What do you think about these statements?



- About 40% of US adults support these statements, and an additional quarter *so long as it is mission-related*
- <10% feel so strongly against these statements that it would affect their museum visitation; this small percentage indicates the threat of “go woke, go broke” is meritless for the vast majority of US adults

Repatriation

Some material in museum collections was acquired by actions that, by current standards, are ethically questionable (though may have been legal at the time). For example: forcing vulnerable people to sell or give items, taking items by force (such as during military conflict), or collecting material without the approval/consent of local cultures or governments. What do you think museums should do with these materials?



- There is no consensus on this issue among US adults
- Additionally, there is little difference across political values on this question



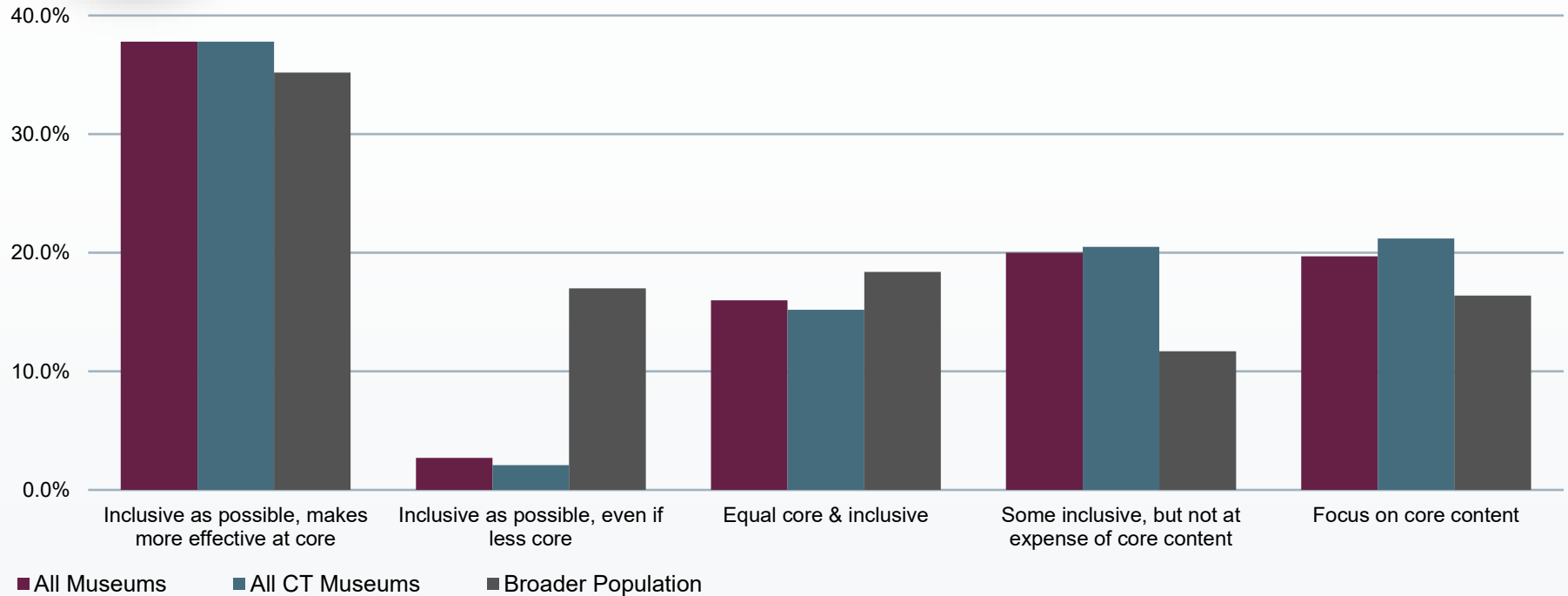
Inclusion

Attitudes Towards Inclusion

- Three questions are used to assess the attitudes towards inclusion among museum-goers:
 - Indirect assessment (how museums should engage visitors with content; a benchmark question)
 - Nuanced (thoughts on inclusive content)
 - Direct assessment (museums on forefront)
- Depending on how respondents answer all three questions, they are filtered into one of five segments comprising a spectrum
- Note: most participating museums used these inclusion questions; museums that used custom questions did not use the inclusion questions
 - Total number of respondents for the inclusion questions and spectrum = 53,689

Thoughts on Inclusive Content

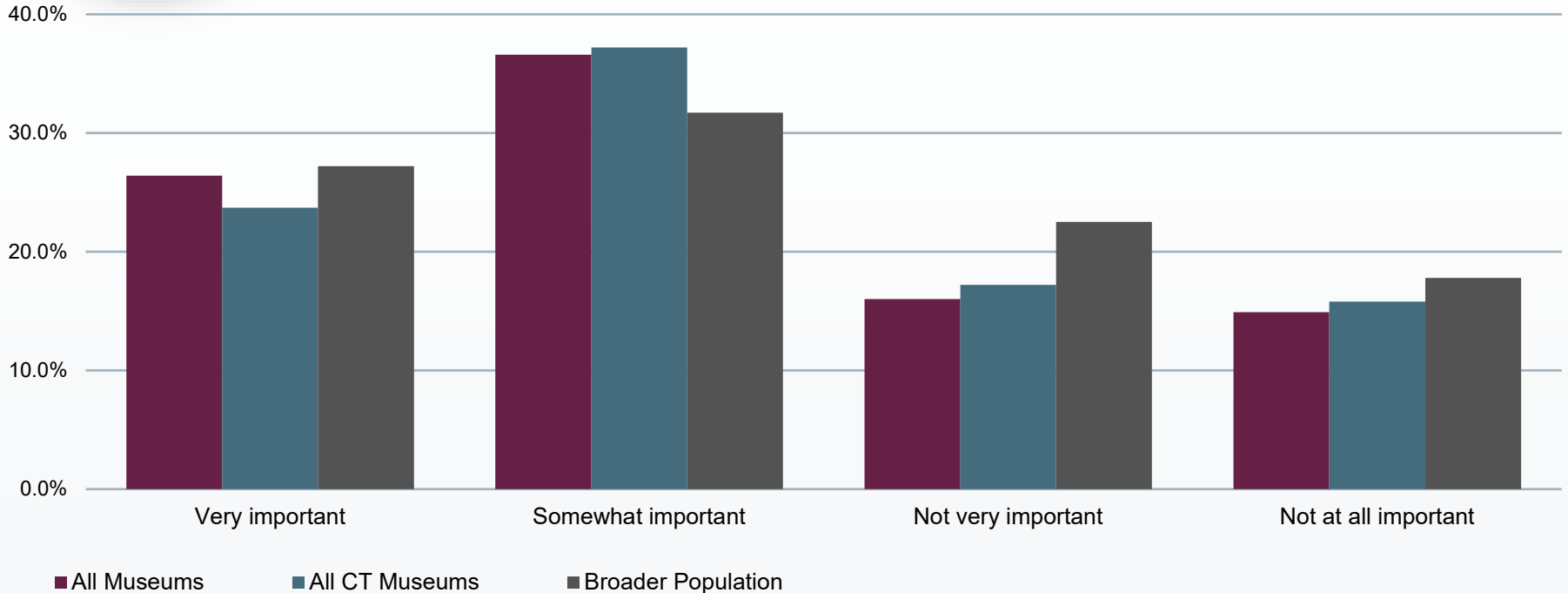
When it comes to museums sharing content inclusive of stories and perspectives of women, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ+, etc., which of the following best describes your opinion? (Choose one.) Note: When we say "core content" in the answer choices below, we mean the history, art, science, plants, or other subject matter that individual museums share.



- We learned from thousands of written-in responses that less inclusive people tend to view the inclusion of inclusive content in museums as coming at the expense of what they consider “core” content. This question was written to understand who thinks that way as well as those who don’t think it is a tradeoff at all
- Nearly 40% of frequent museum-goers are indicating non-inclusive attitudes towards content when presented in this “tradeoff” question; a quarter of the broader population agree
- About 40% of museum-goers, and about half of the broader population, chose the more inclusive responses
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results

Museums on Forefront of Inclusion

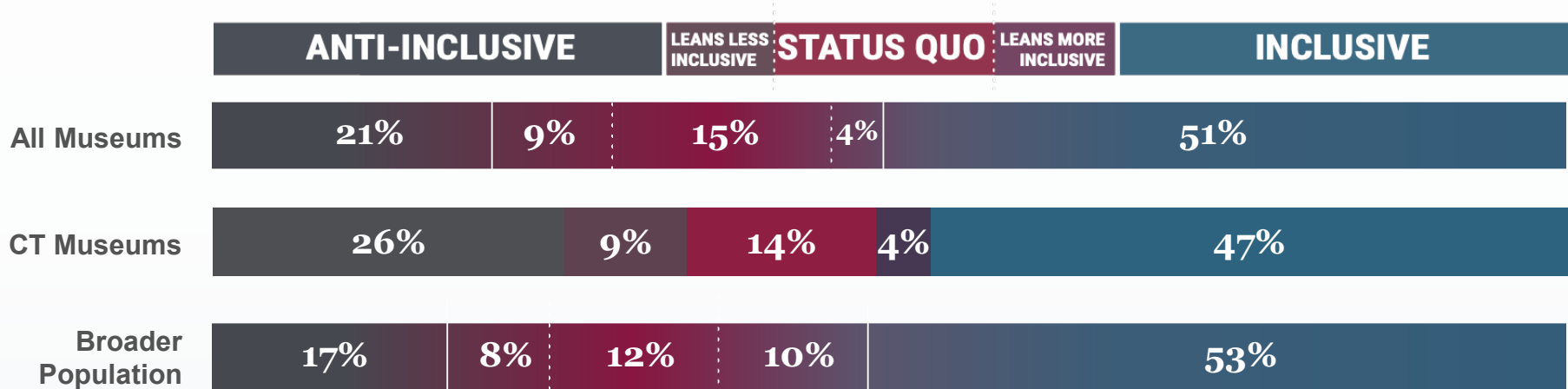
How important is it to you that museums be on the forefront of conversations around race, ethnicity, and equity?



- When asked directly, respondents among museum-goers and the broader population were much more likely to say that it was “very” or “somewhat” important for museums to be on the forefront of inclusive conversations
- Direct questions (like this one) often record “false positives” from respondents who know there is a “right” answer; the two other more indirect questions in this survey are likely more accurate results than these aspirational results; that said, this question helps us identify those who clearly have anti-inclusive attitudes
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results



Inclusive Attitudes (2023 estimates)



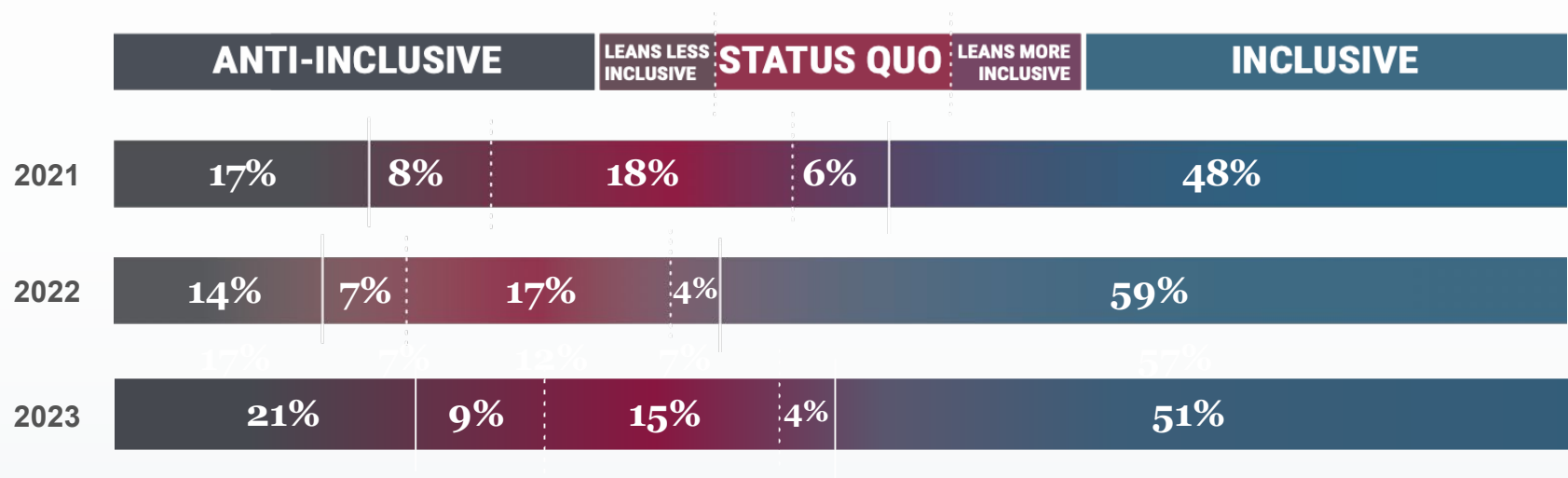
✘ **ANTI-INCLUSIVE:** Can range from extreme white nationalists to those who actively avoid any inclusive content.

📄 **STATUS QUO:** Neither seeks out nor avoids inclusive content; largely satisfied with long-standing presentations of history and art. Exposure to inclusive content can range from none to quite a bit.

🔄 **INCLUSIVE:** Actively seeks out inclusive content and/or explicitly wants museums to include inclusive stories of the past and artworks.



Inclusive Attitudes: Museum-Goers (historical estimates)



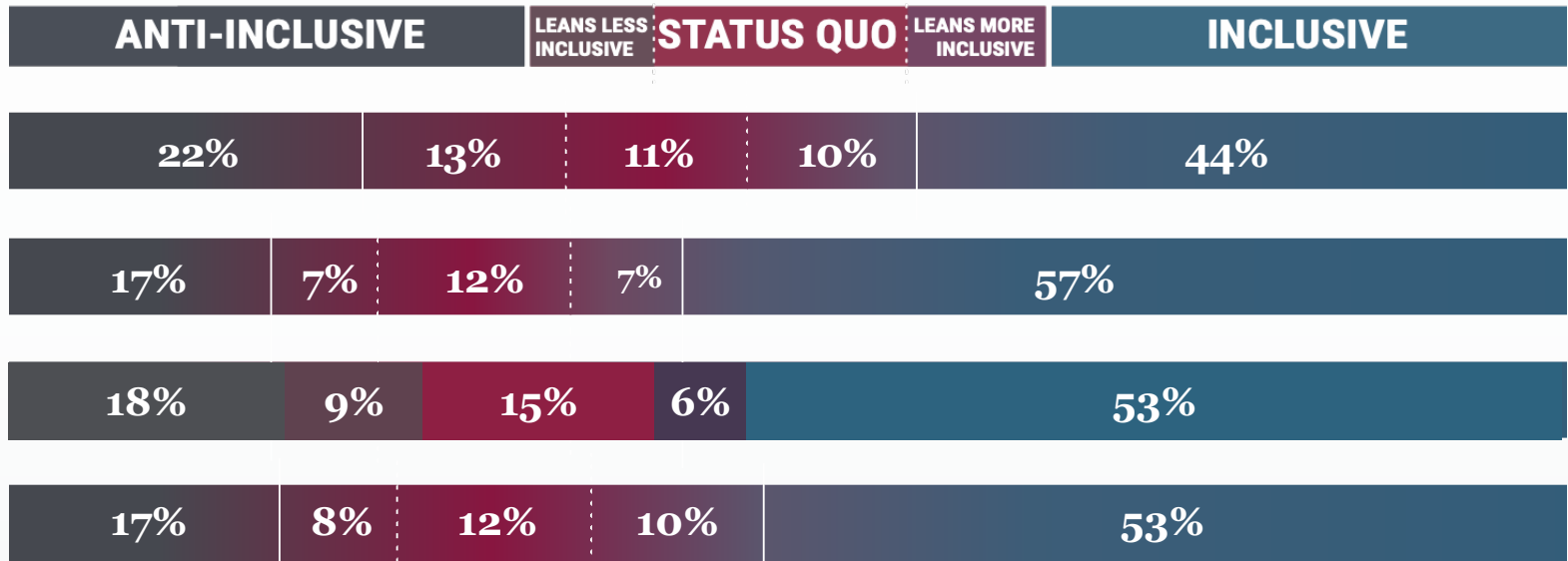
✘ **ANTI-INCLUSIVE:** Can range from extreme white nationalists to those who actively avoid any inclusive content.

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🌐 **INCLUSIVE:** Actively seeks out inclusive content and/or explicitly wants museums to include inclusive stories of the past and artworks.



Inclusive Attitudes: Broader Population (historical estimates)



ANTI-INCLUSIVE: Can range from extreme white nationalists to those who actively avoid any inclusive content.

STATUS QUO: Neither seeks out nor avoids inclusive content; largely satisfied with long-standing presentations of history and art. Exposure to inclusive content can range from none to quite a bit.

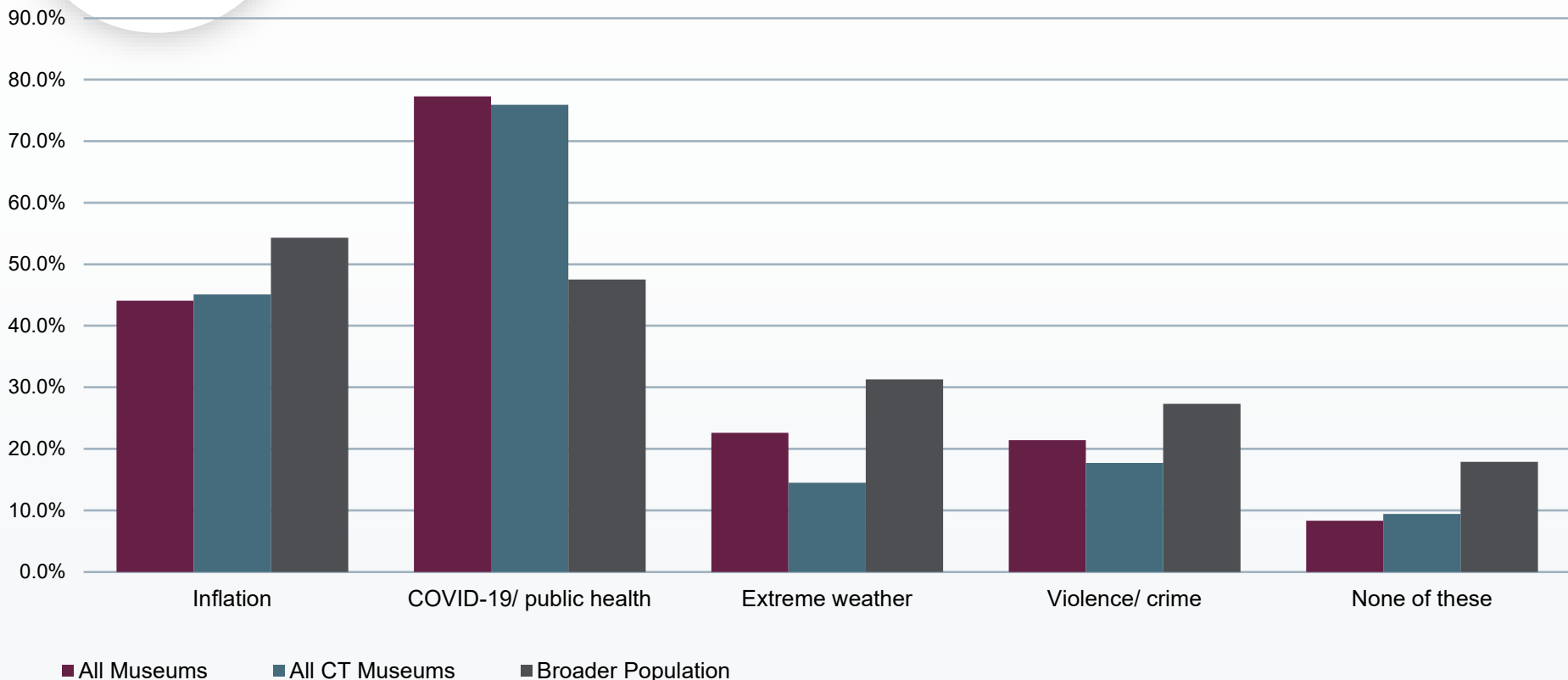
INCLUSIVE: Actively seeks out inclusive content and/or explicitly wants museums to include inclusive stories of the past and artworks.



Rebuilding Museum Visitation

Negative Visitation Pressures

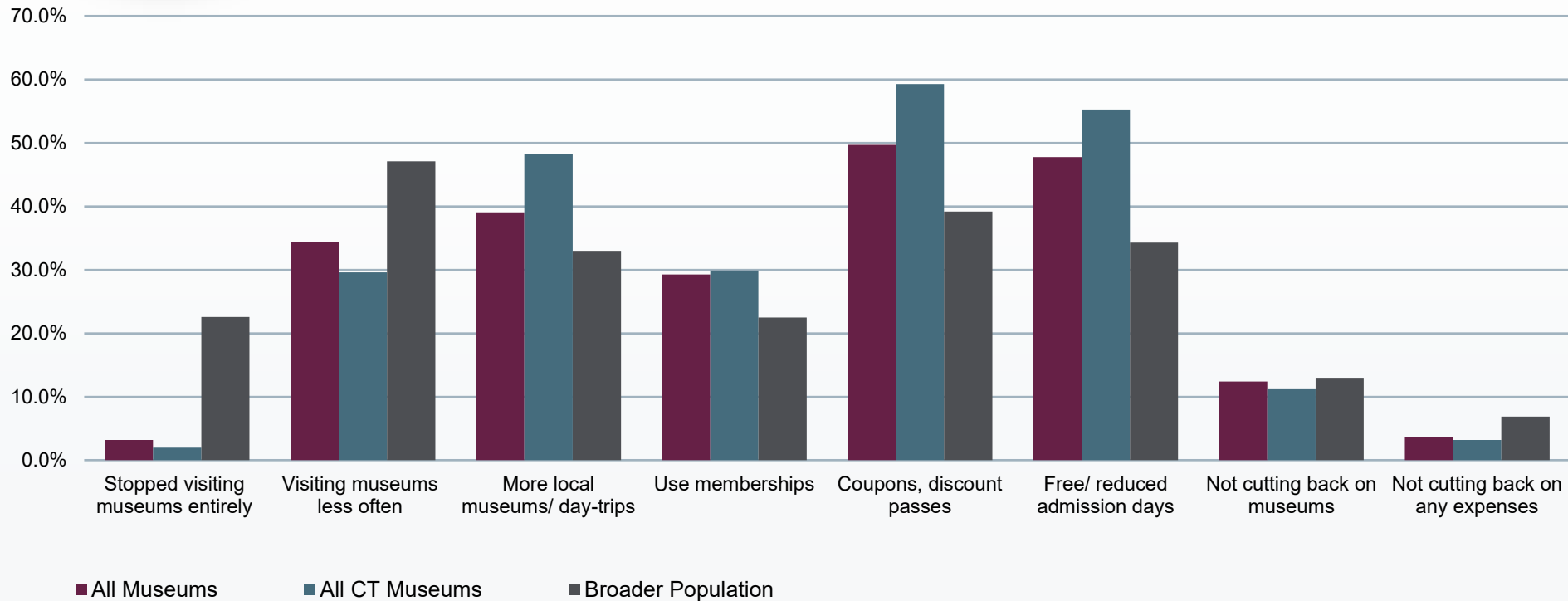
In the past few years, have any of the following negatively affected your leisure time activities or travel plans? (Choose all that apply.)



- The broader population appears to be more sensitive to inflationary concerns and extreme weather, while museum-goers are more sensitive to COVID-19 and other public health concerns
- Respondents from all Connecticut museums are somewhat less concerned about extreme weather than those from the overall results

Inflationary Effects on Visitation

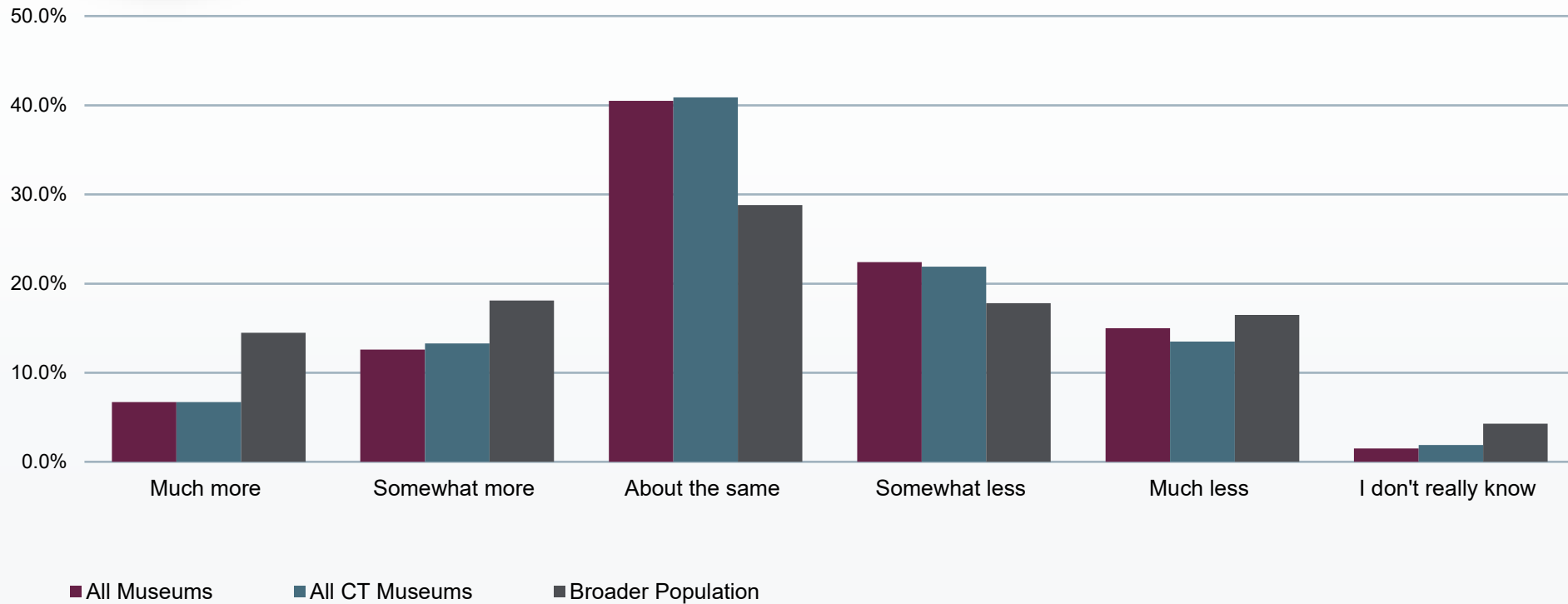
If you are cutting back on expenses due to inflation, how does that affect your museum-going? (Choose all that apply.)



- This question was only seen by respondents who indicated “inflation” on the previous question; in the broader population, also only seen by those who indicated they visit museums at least occasionally
- For those with inflationary concerns, the broader population appears to be pulling back from museums more, while museum-goers are more likely to be looking for ways to save on museum admissions
- Inflation-sensitive respondents from all Connecticut museums are somewhat more likely to visit local museums/day-trip, look for coupons/discounts, and visit on free/reduced admission days than those from the overall results

Perceived Museum Visitation Rates

Thinking back to before the pandemic, do you think you are visiting museums more or less now than before?



- In the broader population, this question was only seen by those who indicated they visit museums at least occasionally
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results

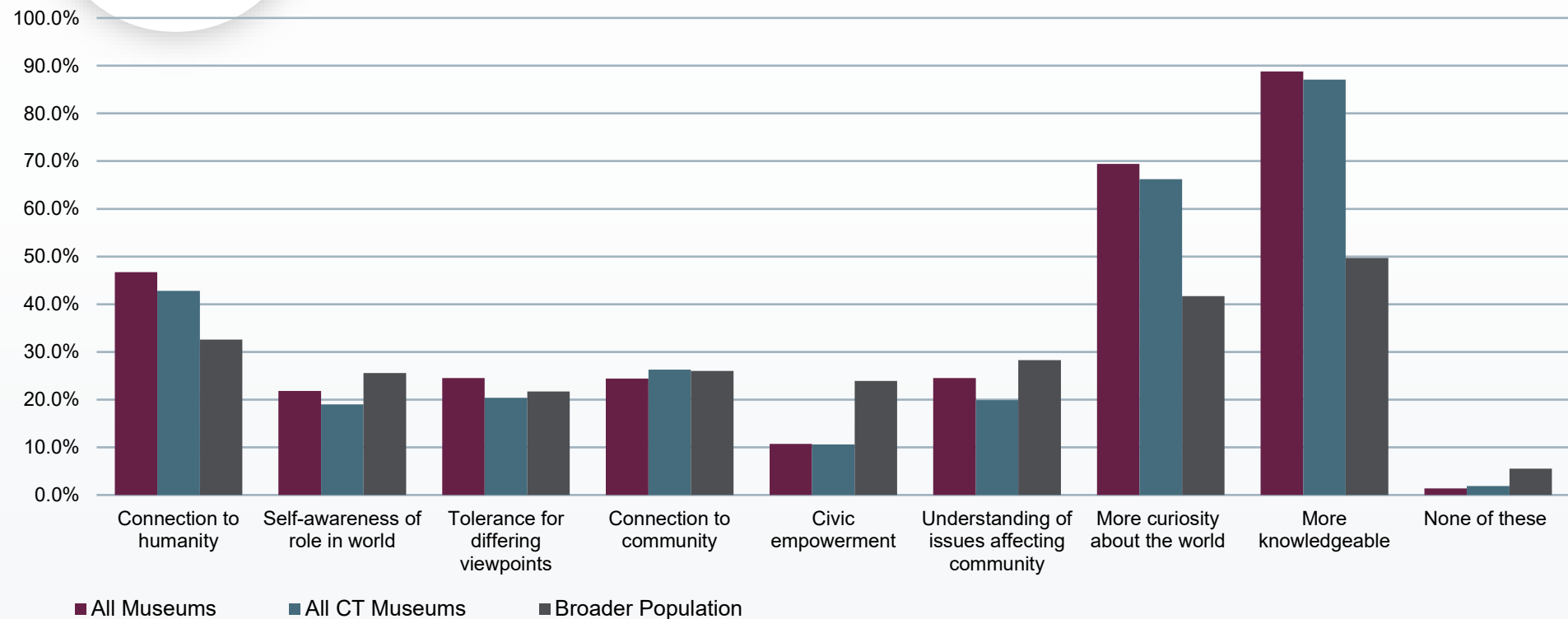


Impact of Museums

Impact of Museums

Museum-Goers: What kind of impact do you think museums have had in your life? (Choose those that are most important to you.)

Broader Population: What kind of impact do you think museums have in the lives of their visitors (including yours, if you visit museums)? (Choose those that are most important to you.)



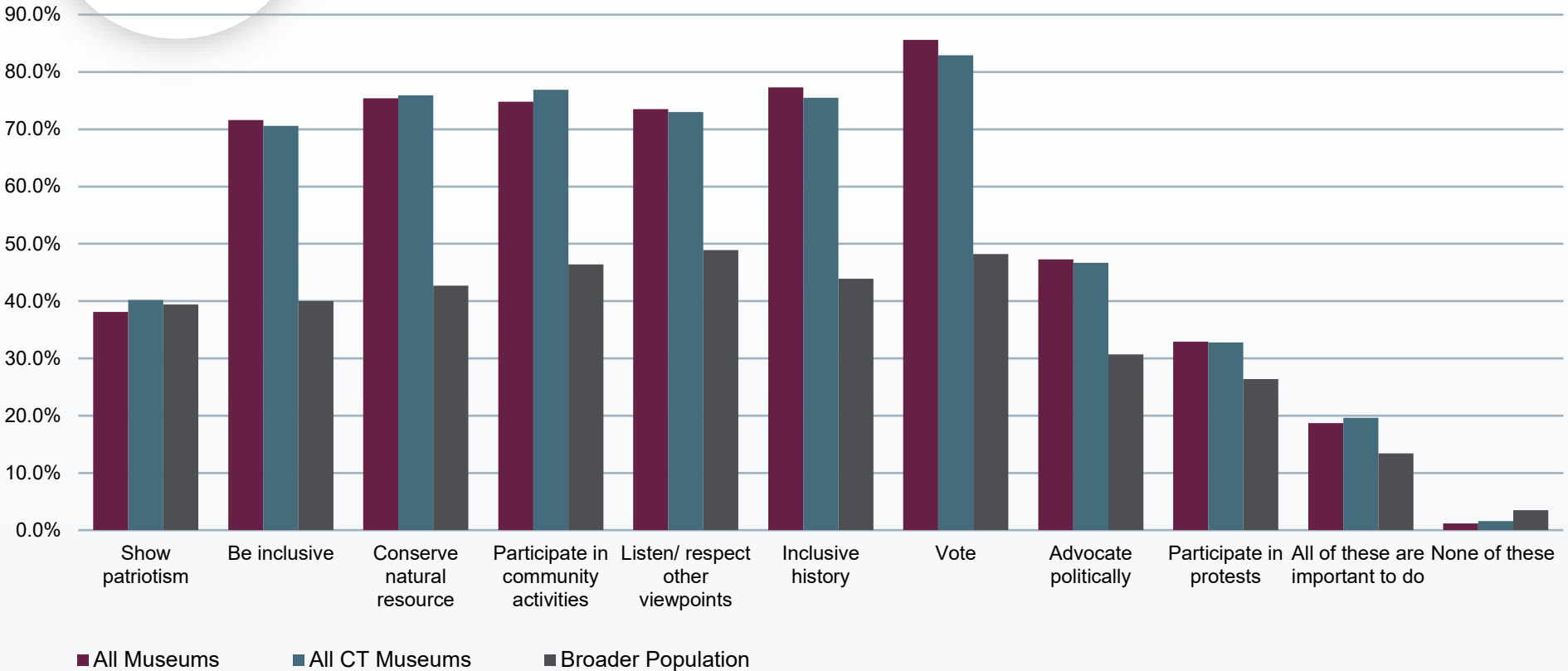
- Knowledge and greater curiosity appear to be the most broadly perceived impacts of museums
- The broader population, however, was over 2x more likely to choose civic empowerment than frequent museum-goers
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results



Civic Participation

Good Member of Society

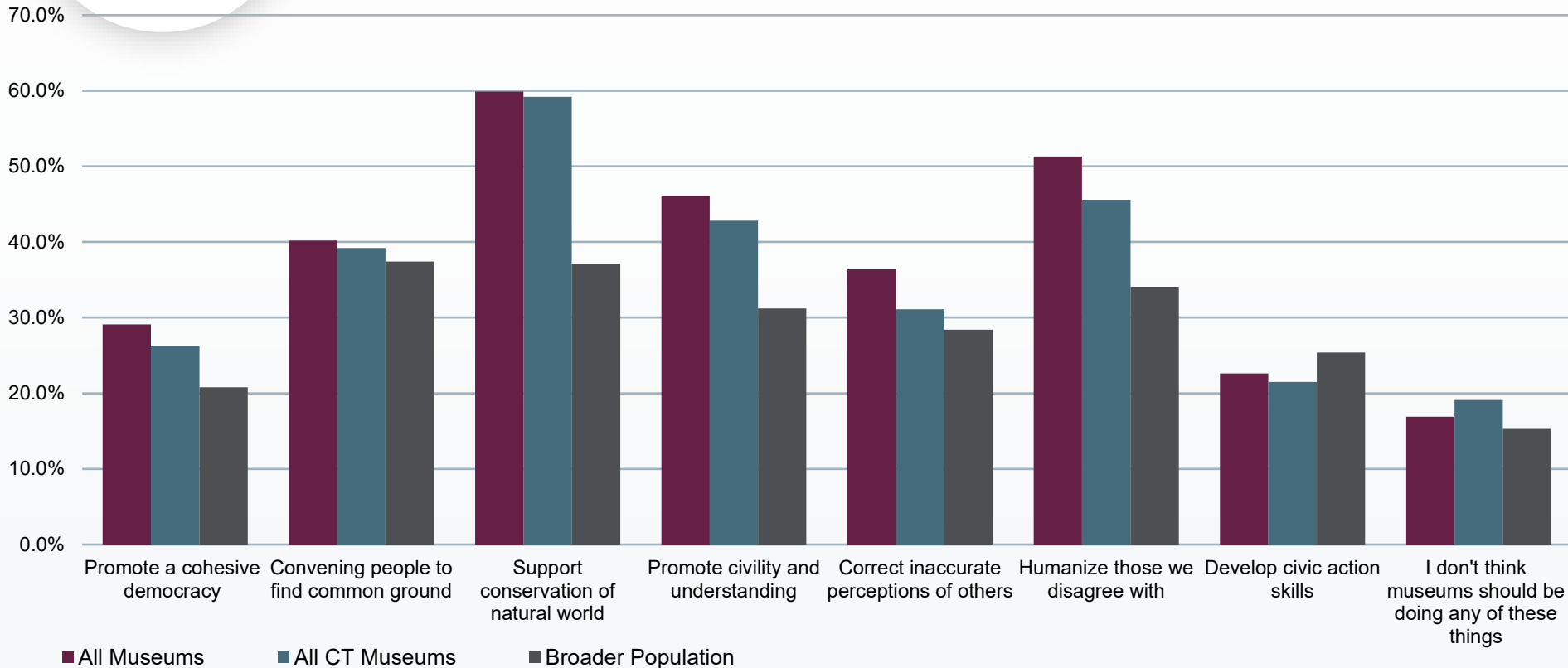
Which of the following do you think are important things people should do to be a good member of society? (Choose all that apply.)



- For those who said “all of these,” all responses were selected *except* “none of these”
- While many of these response choices performed well, voting was the strong leader among museum-goers; the less-popular responses of patriotism, advocacy, and protests had more partisan splits in their responses
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results

Museums and Civil Society

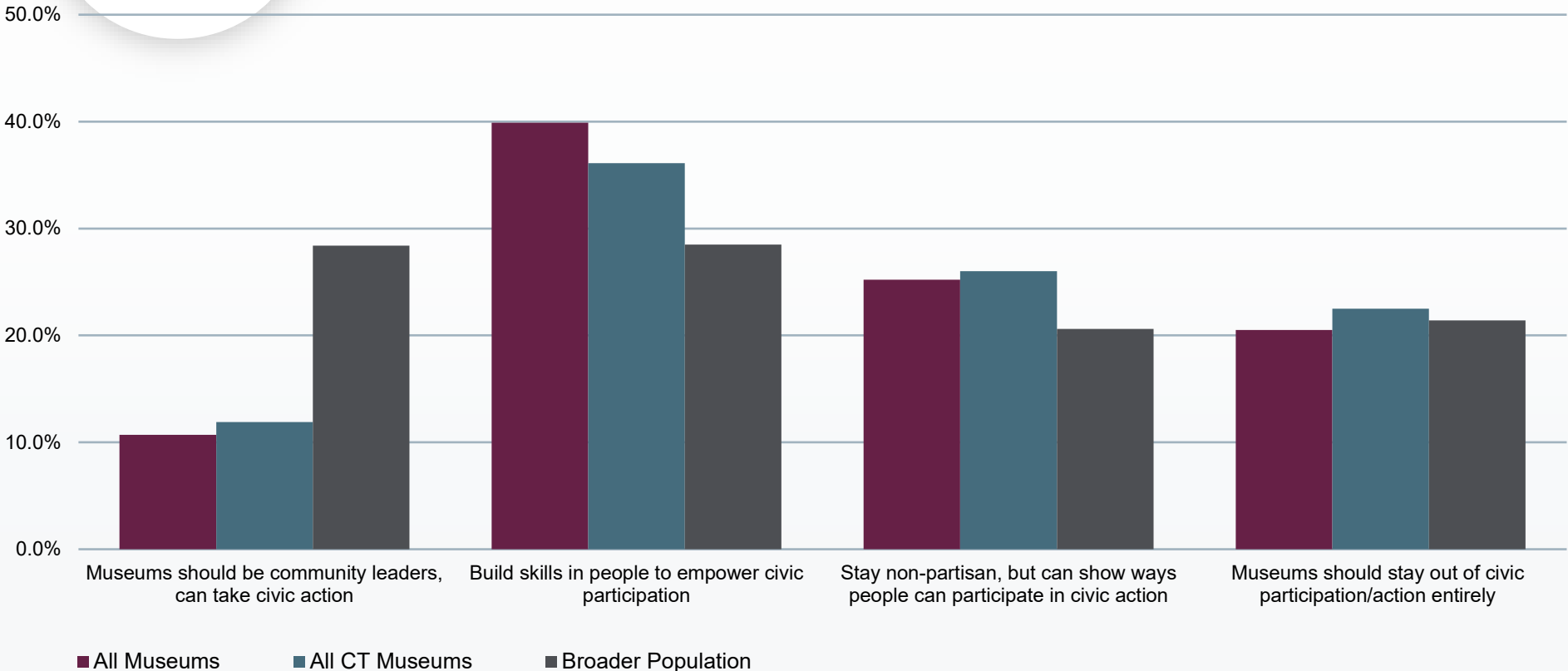
What role should museums play in building a civil society you want to be a part of? (Choose all that apply.)



- Conservation of the natural world performed well for museum-goers, as did humanizing others/shared sense of humanity; in contrast, the broader population's responses were more evenly spread out (and nothing reached 50%)
- Respondents from all Connecticut museums are slightly less likely to think museums should correct inaccurate perceptions of others or help people humanize those they disagree with, than those from the overall results

Museums and Civic Participation

Which of the following best describes how you think museums should, or should not, be places of civic participation? (Choose the one you most agree with.)



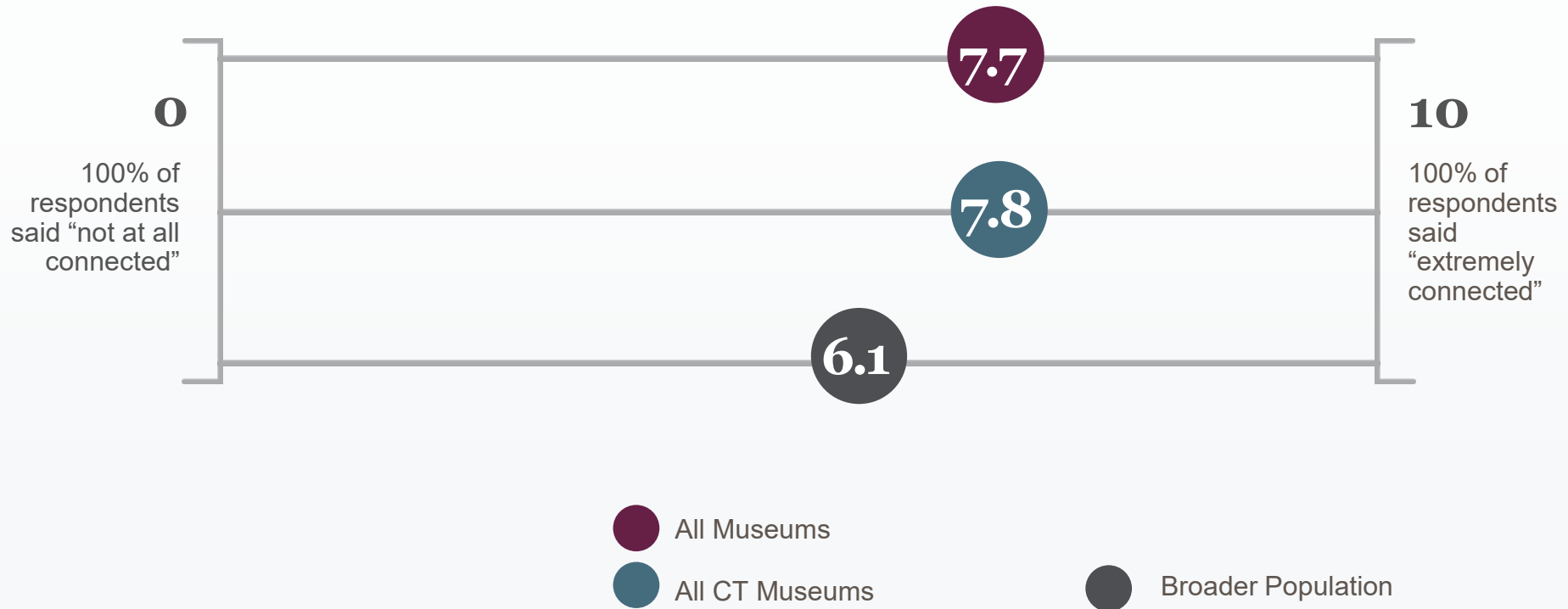
- Only about 10% of museum-goers think museums should be community leaders, while the broader population was nearly 3x more likely to think this was an appropriate role for museums
- For museum-goers, there isn't consensus on what role museums should take on civic participation
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results



Connection to Humanity

Connection to Humanity

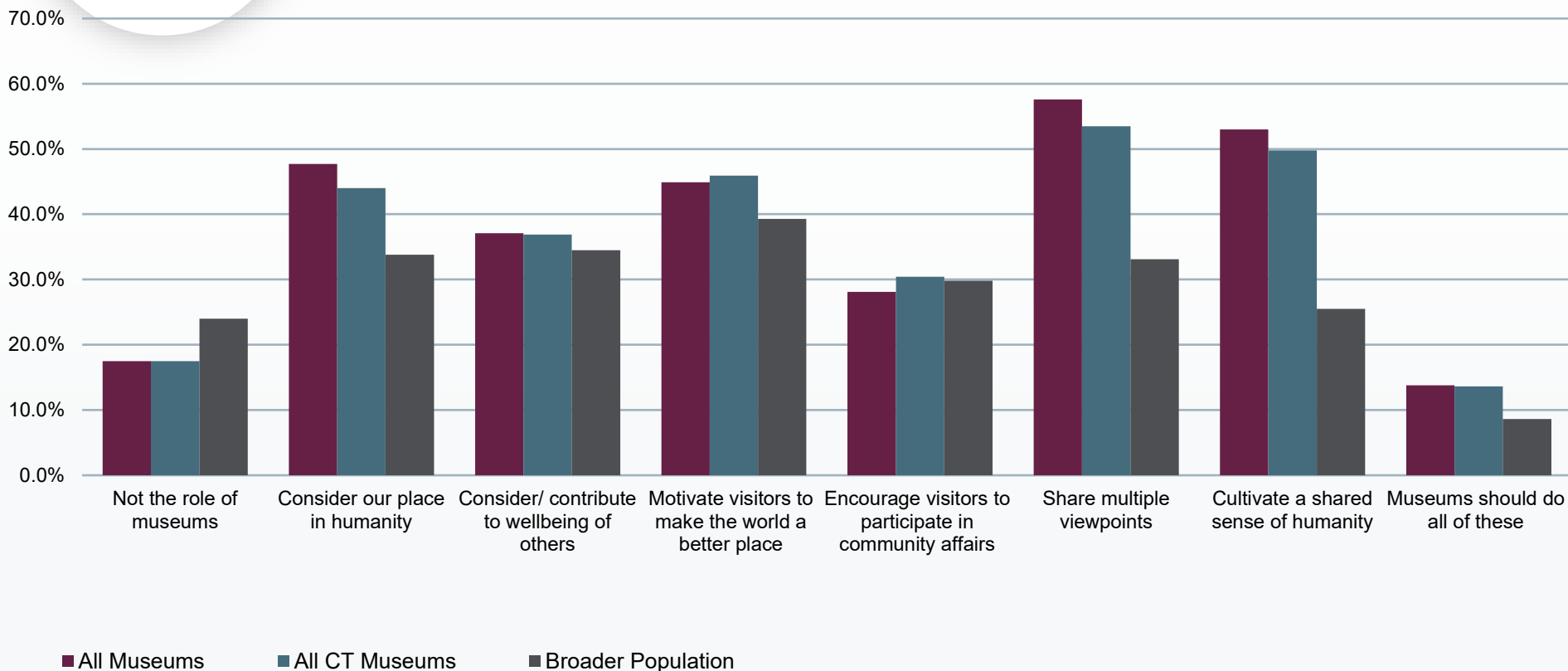
To help us understand your perspective, it would be helpful to know how connected you feel to humanity/humankind. Please use a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = "Not at all connected" and 10 = "Extremely connected."



- Museum-goers overall feel more connected to humanity/humankind than those from the broader population
- Your results are similar to those from other art museums

Developing Connection to Humanity

How should museums encourage visitors to consider and/or develop their connection to humanity? (Choose all that apply.)



- For those who said “all of these,” all responses were selected except “not the role of museums”
- Over 50% of museum-goers responded with sharing multiple viewpoints and cultivating a shared sense of humanity/care; in contrast, the broader population’s responses were more evenly spread out (and nothing reached 50%)
- The Connecticut results are similar to the overall results



Final Thoughts

Lines of Inquiry Commentary

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect museum visitation, primarily through reducing the *frequency* of visitation at local museums; breadth of museum-going has, for the most part, rebounded to close-to-pre-pandemic norms
- Inflationary concerns seem to be greater for casual and sporadic museum-goers from the broader population, who are more likely to cut museum visits entirely (while more frequent museum-goers are more likely to look for ways to save on admissions fees)

Lines of Inquiry Commentary

- **As our society continues to grapple with inclusion and equity, museum-goer and the broader population attitudes are fluctuating quite a bit**

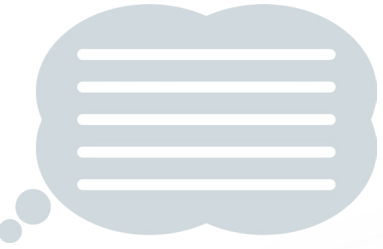
- Largely, gains in inclusion seen in 2022 have receded, and 2023's spectrum is closer to what we saw in 2021
- This pull back in inclusive attitudes *crossed the political spectrum*, with conservatives, moderates, and liberals all shifting towards somewhat less inclusive attitudes
- In better news, in the broader population we saw that the inclusive gains from 2021 to 2022 have largely held in 2023
 - And the anti-inclusive side maintained its 2022 decrease in anti-inclusive attitudes
- Future events may shift things more towards inclusion ... or away from inclusion
 - And we should continue to expect increasingly loud, public, and highly emotional responses from anti-inclusive individuals who feel threatened by inclusion

Lines of Inquiry Commentary

- **While virtually all museum-goers think civic engagement is important for a civil society, attitudes become much more complicated when it comes to the role of museums in civic engagement**
 - Some clearly make the connection that museums are a part of the civic fabric ... while others show more ambivalence or even concern that civic engagement = partisan action (especially partisan action they disagree with)
 - Political values have the strongest influence on whether respondents think museums have a role in building our civil society, in encouraging civic participation, or in cultivating greater connections to broader humanity ... or if these activities are perceived as partisan and inappropriate for museums
 - We'll be examining this complicated topography carefully in our analysis

Final Thoughts

- **Like for other museums across the country, Connecticut museum-goers generally welcome experiences that open their minds to different perspectives and humankind, providing you with opportunities to expand this kind of work to your audiences**
 - Yet how they answered the three inclusion questions resulted in a spectrum that skewed somewhat less inclusive, indicating that some Connecticut museum-goers may not be as comfortable with some of the ideas tested in this survey as the general civil participation and humanity questions suggest
 - In other words ... it's complicated
- **Calibration of content perceived to be political in nature (inclusion, climate change, vaccinations, etc.) is crucial**
 - Be cautious with your political findings
 - Consider all the political gaps -- between staff, board, core audience, and broader audience – and ways that your organization can promote productive conversations on issues that matter to your museum and your community



Appendix: Full Text of Questions



Demographic Questions

How old are you?

- 29 or younger
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 44
- 45 to 49
- 50 to 54
- 55 to 59
- 60 to 64
- 65 to 69
- 70 or older

What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Agender
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe _____
- I prefer not to answer

Are you the parent or guardian of minor children (age 17 or younger)? (Choose all that apply.)

- Parent or guardian to minor children
- Grandparent to minor children
- My children are adults (18 or older)
- No, none of the above

If a parent or guardian:

What are the general ages of your children? (Choose all that apply.)

- Infant, toddler, or preschool age (ages 0 - 5)
- Elementary-school age (ages 5 to 10)
- Middle-school age (ages 11 to 13)
- High-school age (ages 14 to 17)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school or less
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college/technical school degree/associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree



Demographic Questions

**Have you ever been employed at, or volunteered regularly, at a museum?
(Choose all that apply.)**

- No, neither of these
- Currently employed by a museum
- Have been employed by a museum in the past
- Currently volunteer at a museum on a regular basis
- Currently serve on a museum's board of trustees
- Former volunteer or board member
- Actively looking for work at a museum
- Current student planning to go into the museum field
- Other - please specify _____

Which of the following best describes you and the members of your household? (Choose all that apply.)

- African American or Black
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latine
- Asian or Asian American
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Native American/American Indian or Alaska Native
- White
- Two or more races or ethnicities
- I identify as: _____

Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

- Yes
- No
- No, but I identify as an Ally
- I prefer not to answer



Demographic Questions

As museums strive to share their content with visitors, we do so knowing that values vary among our visitors, including political values. Your response to this question will help us understand what types of responses to content, engagement, and motivations are shared widely, and which are not.

Do you consider yourself politically conservative, moderate, or liberal?

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Moderate
- Somewhat liberal
- Very liberal
- I don't care about politics
- I prefer not to answer / I don't live in the United States or Canada



Benchmark Visitor Questions

How many times have you visited this museum *in person* in the past year?

- 4 or more times
- 2 or 3 times
- Once
- It has been more than a year since I visited
- I have never visited this museum in person

Why do you visit? (Choose those most important to you. This can refer to when you have visited in person or virtually.)

- Learning experiences for me
- Learning experiences for my children
- To spend time with friends
- To spend time with family
- To see or learn about something I am already interested in
- To feed my/our curiosity
- My children enjoy it
- It is fun
- For respite, escape, or relaxation
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____

What does this museum do well? (Choose those most important to you.)

- To be honest, this museum doesn't do anything well
- The exhibits engage me or my family
- I/we enjoy the programs (e.g., classes, demonstrations, story times, lectures, etc.)
- I/we enjoy the virtual content the museum provides
- I/we enjoy the special events (e.g., holiday events, fairs and festivals, exhibit opening parties, etc.)
- It makes my job as a parent or caregiver easier
- The museum helps people in my community
- The museum contributes to the quality of life in my community
- Staff members always make me feel welcome
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____



Benchmark Visitor Questions

What would improve this museum? (Choose those most important to you.)

- I think they are doing a great job already
- Exhibits that are more engaging or meaningful to me/us
- Exhibits that change more often
- Programs that go deeper into the subject
- A wider variety of programs
- Improved quality of virtual content
- More virtual content
- More children's programs
- More programs intended for older/senior audiences
- More outreach to the broader community
- Friendlier/more welcoming staff
- Other - please specify _____

In the previous year, how many *different* museums did you visit *in person*?

- 5 or more different museums
- 3 or 4 different museums
- 1 or 2 different museums
- I did not visit any museums

What are the most important ways that museums should share and engage you with their content –e.g., the history, art, science, animals, plants, etc. based on museum type? (Choose those most important to you.)

- Connecting me with content in deep and personal ways
- Helping me gain deeper or new knowledge about the subjects presented
- Exposing me to different perspectives or customs
- Presenting the facts, and letting me make up my own mind
- Challenging me to think about things in new ways...even if it challenges my beliefs and views of the world
- Promoting cohesive democracy and civility in our communities
- Being more inclusive, including stories and perspectives of women, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ+, etc.
- Helping me gain more empathy or understanding for others
- Providing us a place of respite, escape, and/or beauty outside of our daily lives
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____



Broader Population Questions

(did not appear in museum-goers survey)

Which of the following have you done in the past year? (Choose all that apply.)

- Saw a movie at a movie theater
- Attended a sporting event in person
- Visited a public library
- Attended performing arts in person (concerts, plays, dance, etc.)
- Pursued hobbies and crafts
- Read a book for pleasure
- Participated in outdoor nature experiences (hiking, etc.)
- Visited a museum in person (including art, history, science centers, zoos and aquaria, etc.)
- Traveled for leisure
- Visited a National Park, Monument, or Historical Park
- None of the above
- Other - please specify _____

Thinking about the activities you just indicated you participate in, why do you do them? (Choose those that are most important to you.)

- Learning experiences for me
- Learning experiences for my children
- To spend time with friends
- To spend time with family
- I am interested in them
- To feed my/our curiosity
- My children enjoy them
- They are fun
- For respite, escape, or relaxation
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____



Broader Population Questions

(did not appear in museum-goers survey)

What types of museums do you visit most often? (Choose those that you are most likely to visit.)

- Art museums
- Botanical gardens and arboretums
- Children's museums
- Historic sites (including historic houses, forts, battlefields, mills, etc.)
- History museums
- Natural history museums
- Science centers or planetariums
- Zoos and aquariums
- Other - please specify _____
- I don't really visit any museums

How do you typically hear about events in your community? (Choose all that apply.)

- Newspaper calendar
- Newspaper articles
- Billboards or other signage
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Other social media
- Podcasts
- Emails from the organization sponsoring the event
- Mailings from the organization sponsoring the event
- Online calendars of events
- Word-of-Mouth
- Radio ads or underwriting
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____



Broader Population Questions

(did not appear in museum-goers survey)

Most museums raise operating funds through private donations from individuals and businesses. Do you think museums should accept money from businesses (or individuals) that participate in industries that some people think are harmful? Examples could include donations from: oil companies, gun and/or ammunition manufacturers, companies relying on forced labor, etc.

- No, museums should not accept this money
- While I don't like these companies, I think it is OK for museums to take the money and do something good with it
- Yes, I don't see any issue with this
- This doesn't matter to me one way or the other/no opinion
- Other - please specify _____

Some museums have made public statements on current issues they are concerned about. These can include commitments to anti-racism, Indigenous land acknowledgements, and/or condemnations of violence (such as for mass shootings). What do you think about these statements?

- I think these are very important for museums to do
- I hadn't thought about it, but I'm glad to see museums do this
- If the issue directly relates to the museum's work and mission, it is OK; otherwise, they should not make a statement
- I don't think these are appropriate for museums to do, but it wouldn't affect my visiting
- I strongly disagree with museums making these statements, and if I know a museum has done so, I would be less likely to visit
- This doesn't matter to me one way or the other/no opinion
- Other - please specify _____



Broader Population Questions

(did not appear in museum-goers survey)

Some material in museum collections was acquired by actions that, by current standards, are ethically questionable (though may have been legal at the time). For example: forcing vulnerable people to sell or give items, taking items by force (such as during military conflict), or collecting material without the approval/consent of local cultures or governments. What do you think museums should do with these materials?

- Give it back, and not make judgements about how the rightful owners can/should care for the material
- Voluntarily return the material, but only if the recipient (country, community) is able to care for it properly
- Keep it unless the museum is legally required to return it
- I don't know/no opinion
- Other - please specify _____



Inclusion Questions

Museums serve a variety of people with different values and beliefs. The following two questions will help us gain more understanding of those perspectives, so there will likely be answer choices that you strongly agree with and those you strongly disagree with. We appreciate your willingness to answer these questions honestly, and you will always be given an option to share a more nuanced response if you prefer.

When it comes to museums sharing content inclusive of stories and perspectives of women, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ+, etc., which of the following best describes your opinion? (Choose one.)

Note: When we say "core content" in the answer choices below, we mean the history, art, science, plants, or other subject matter that individual museums share.

- Museums should be as inclusive as possible in everything they do, and that actually makes them even more effective at sharing their core content
- It is crucial that museums be as inclusive as possible in the content they share, even if it means less emphasis on their core content
- While it is important for museums to share their core content, it is equally important for the museums to share inclusive content as well
- Museums should make some effort to be inclusive in the content they share, but not at the expense of their core content
- Museums should focus on their core content, and only include inclusive content if it is important and directly relevant
- Other - please specify _____

How important is it to you that museums be on the forefront of conversations around race, ethnicity, and equity? (Choose one.)

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Other - please specify _____



Rebuilding Museum Visitation

In the past few years, have any of the following negatively affected your leisure time activities or travel plans? (Choose all that apply.)

- Inflation: everything costs more, so cost is an increasing concern
- Covid or other public health concerns
- Extreme weather (including heat waves, storms, wildfires and/or wildfire smoke, flooding, etc.)
- Concerns about violence/crime
- None of these have affected my leisure time activities or travel plans
- Other - please specify _____

If the respondent indicated "inflation"

If you are cutting back on expenses due to inflation, how does that affect your museum-going? (Choose all that apply.)

- Stopped visiting museums entirely
- Visiting museums less often
- More likely to visit local museums/day trip instead of taking an overnight trip
- More likely to use memberships to save money
- More likely to look for ways to save money on admissions fees (such as coupons or discount passes)
- More likely to visit on free/reduced admission days
- I/we are cutting back on other things, but not museums or other cultural attractions
- I/we are not really cutting back on expenses
- Other - please specify _____



Rebuilding Museum Visitation

Thinking back to before the pandemic, do you think you are visiting museums more or less now than before? (Choose one.)

- Much more
- Somewhat more
- About the same
- Somewhat less
- Much less
- I don't really know
- Other - please specify _____

Some museums have returned to pre-pandemic visitation levels, but many museums are still struggling to attract visitors at the same rate as in the past.

If you have any additional thoughts about how your museum visitation (or other leisure time activities) has changed over the past few years, they would be very helpful. This could include:

- The activities you are doing more of, and why
- The activities you are not doing as much of (or at all), and why
- Other concerns you have about visiting museums
- And anything else you want to share about visiting museums

(Feel free to skip if nothing comes to mind.)

Open-ended responses provided in results spreadsheet



Museum Impact

What kind of impact do you think museums have had in your life? (Choose those that are most important to you.)

- Feeling of connection to humanity/what it means to be human
- Greater self-awareness about my role in my community and/or in the world
- Increased tolerance for differing viewpoints
- Greater connection to my community
- Feeling that I can make a difference in my community (civic empowerment)
- Greater understanding about issues that are affecting people in my community
- More curiosity about the world
- More knowledgeable about history, science, art, nature, etc.
- None of these
- Other - please specify _____

Civic Participation



While museums are not political organizations, we are in communities across the US that are struggling with partisanship and political divides. We'd like to understand your thoughts about how museums could contribute positively to our civil discourse and encourage civic participation.

Which of the following do you think are important things people should do to be a good member of society? (Choose all that apply.)

- Show patriotism by reciting the pledge, honoring the flag, celebrating Independence Day, etc.
- Be inclusive of others, including women, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ+, etc.
- Conserve natural resources and make choices to reduce the effects of climate change
- Participate in community activities, such as volunteering, attending community events or meetings
- Seek out, listen, and respect the viewpoints of others, even when we disagree
- Learn more about our shared history, including the histories of those whose stories have been omitted in the past
- Vote in local, state, and/or national elections
- Advocate politically by contacting government leaders and/or participating in activist organizations
- Participate in protests and demonstrations
- All of these are important to do [automatically chooses all of the above]
- None of these



Civic Participation

What role should museums play in building a civil society you want to be a part of? (Choose all that apply.)

- Promote a cohesive democracy
- Encourage people to come together to solve societal issues/find common ground (which could include making recommendations to civic leaders)
- Support conservation of our natural world, including reducing the effects of climate change
- Promote civility and understanding towards those with whom we disagree, as a way of reducing partisanship
- Correct inaccurate perceptions people have of those with whom they disagree politically
- Help people humanize those with whom they disagree, encouraging more connection and a shared sense of humanity
- Help people develop the tools to take civic action themselves
- I don't think museums should be doing any of these things

Which of the following best describes how you think museums should, or should not, be places of civic participation? (Choose the one you most agree with.)

- Museums should be community leaders, taking civic action themselves on issues (especially those related to their mission) and helping others take action
- Museums should help people think critically and build skills to empower civic participation
- Museums can illustrate the ways that people participate in civic action, but in a strictly non-partisan way
- Museums should stay out of civic participation/action entirely
- Other - please specify _____



Civic Participation

Appeared to respondents who indicated museums should not be places of civic participation or the rebuilding of our civil society

In the last two questions, you indicated either you thought museums should stay out of civic participation/action entirely, or that museums should not be focusing on rebuilding our civil society. (You may have said one or both.)

We'd like to understand your viewpoint, including:

- **Do you want this work to take place, even if you don't think museums should be doing it? Why or why not?**
- **If so, what types of institutions or organizations should be doing this work?**
- **Why do you think this work is more appropriate at these organizations rather than museums? (Or, why not museums?)**

(Feel free to skip if nothing comes to mind.)

Appeared to all other respondents

Thinking about the challenges we are facing in our society, how do you think museums could be particularly effective in encouraging civic learning and/or participation? And why should they do so?

And if you disagree with this question, we'd like to hear more about that as well.

(Feel free to skip if nothing comes to mind.)

Open-ended responses provided in results spreadsheet



Connection to Humanity

To help us understand your perspective, it would be helpful to know how connected you feel to humanity/humankind.

Please use a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = "Not at all connected" and 10 = "Extremely connected."

Scale of 0 to 10 provided

How should museums encourage visitors to consider and/or develop their connection to humanity? (Choose all that apply.)

- To be honest, I don't think this is the role of museums
- Help visitors consider who they are as individuals, and their place in greater humanity
- Encourage visitors to consider and/or contribute to the wellbeing of others
- Motivate visitors to make the world a better place
- Encourage visitors to participate in community affairs
- Share multiple viewpoints so visitors can consider perspectives other than their own
- Cultivate a shared sense of humanity and care for others
- Museums should do all of these [automatically chooses all of the above except not the role of museums]

Museum Impact

(final survey question)



This survey asked you to consider the role of museums in our civil discourse and participation, as well as our connections to others.

Now, imagine your community without museums (or, alternatively, the world without museums).

Would it be different? If so, how?

And would you be different without museums in your life? If so, why?

We'd be delighted to hear whatever comes to mind.

Open-ended responses provided in results spreadsheet

2024 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

- Enrollment open at wilkeningconsulting.com in summer 2023
- Fees will likely begin at \$1000 with additional services available at additional cost*
- Lines of inquiry to be determined fall 2023

*Museums must launch their survey by March 8, 2024 for the lowest fee; the base fee of \$1000 is subject to change but will be finalized by the time enrollment opens



Audiences and Inclusion:

A Primer for Cultivating More Inclusive Attitudes Among the Public



**American
Alliance of
Museums**

WilkeningConsulting
audience research | knowledge curation

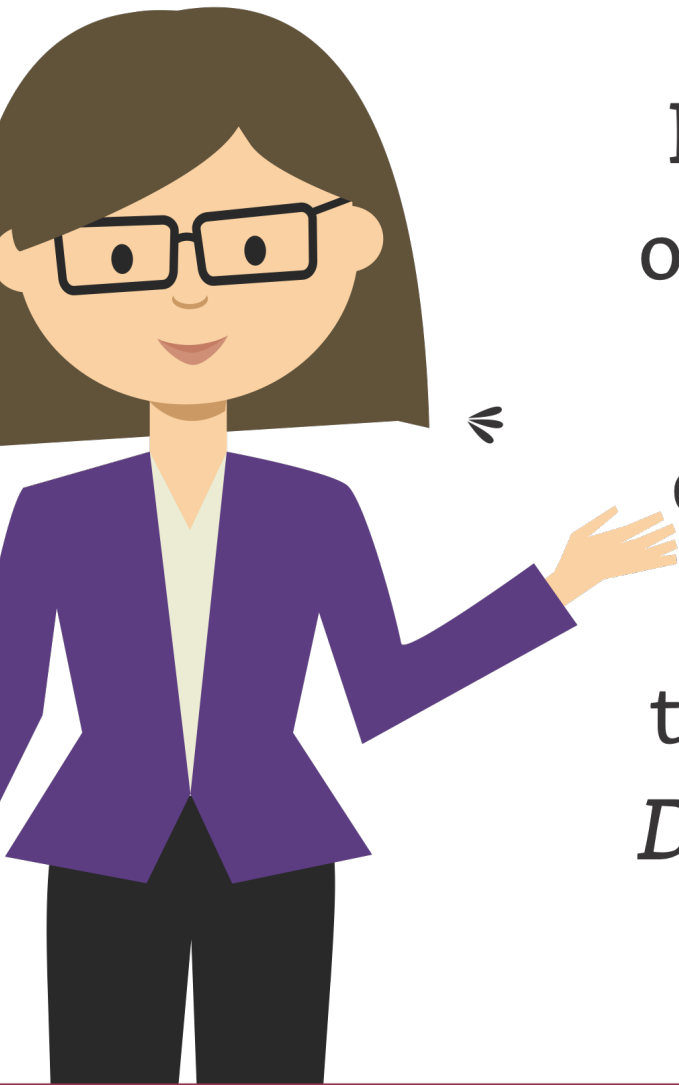
Discover the survey findings
and the stories they tell:

museumgoers.aam-us.org

ANNUAL SURVEY *of*
MUSEUM-GOERS


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Experience
our research
in a
compelling
format
through our
Data Stories!

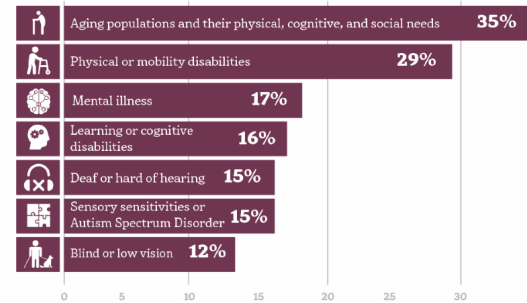
VISIT

www.wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.html
to view the collection.



Over half of museum-goers indicated an access need. **53%**, to be exact!

And their responses represented a variety of needs:



Interestingly, age was not a significant factor in the responses. In fact, respondents under 30 and those over 70 averaged the same number of additional support needs:

1.5

The evidence also suggests that respondents thought broadly about the term "family," often including extended family in their answers.

"Not 'core family,' but for Grandpa - cognitive and mobile impairments - we take him on adventures."



There were, of course, some support needs that skewed older, including:

- Aging populations and their physical, cognitive, and social needs
- Physical or mobility disabilities
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Blind or low vision



Young adults under 30, however, were significantly more likely to indicate mental illness ... which can likely be attributed to a higher diagnosis rate of mental illness among younger adults than older adults.¹



Wilkening Consulting

audience research | knowledge curation

wilkeningconsulting.com

Susie Wilkening

susie@wilkeningconsulting.com | **Direct:** 206 283 0098 | **Cell:** 518 281 0887

Jessica Strube

jessica@wilkeningconsulting.com