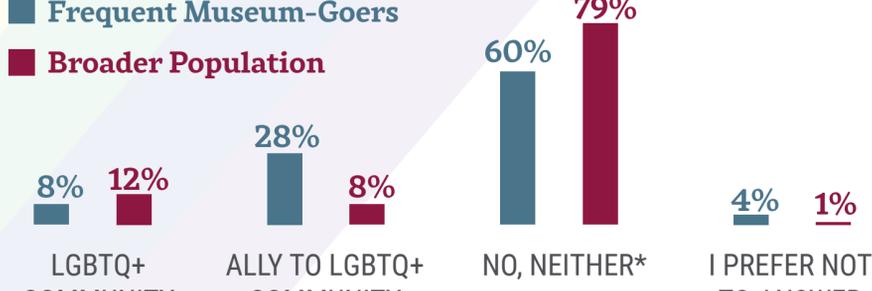


# MUSEUMS AND THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY : A 2022 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY



In 2022, for the first time, the Annual Survey of Museum-Goers asked respondents if they identified as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The text for this question was borrowed from the Human Rights Campaign<sup>1</sup>, and it also appeared in our concurrent broader population sampling.

Since this was our first time asking this question, we looked closely at each response segment to find attitudinal and visitation patterns and themes.



\*Individuals in the "no, neither" segment represent a wide variety of attitudes about the LGBTQ+ community, from anti-inclusive to agnostic to inclusive (but not recognizing the "Ally" term).<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that the LGBTQ+ community is slightly undercounted, as some respondents may not want to reveal this information about themselves in a survey.

Overall, museum-goers were somewhat less likely to identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, but much more likely to identify as an Ally, than the broader population of US adults.

Does that mean museums under-serve the LGBTQ+ community? Not necessarily.

First, let's look at the broader population sample. This sample represents US adults nationwide, and includes non-visitors and visitors to museums (regardless of frequency).

Overall, we found that Allies were only *very slightly* more likely to visit museums than the LGBTQ+ community. The bigger incidence gap<sup>3</sup> was actually with respondents who said "No, neither," (we'll call them the "Neither" segment).

## Museum Admission



When we examined these three segments more closely, other patterns emerged:

## BROADER POPULATION



### LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

- Have visited museums more frequently in the last two years
- More likely to say museums help them feel more connected to others



Similar patterns emerge when we examine frequent museum-goers.



### ALLIES

- Participate in more informal learning activities (and provide more motivations for those activities)
- More likely to credit museums with health and wellbeing outcomes



### NEITHER

In fact, if anything, the "Neither" group is the segment that is less engaged with museums, informal learning, and humanity in general; they are:

- The least likely to participate in informal learning
- Most likely to say they "never" visit museums
- A third less likely than others to say museums are for people like them
- Less than half as likely to hold inclusive attitudes
- Less likely to want museums to share climate change content
- Feel less connected to humanity/humankind

## FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS



### LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

- Visit the widest variety of museums
- Most likely to want museums to be inclusive
- Most likely to feel seen in museums by having perspectives and/or the history of people like them represented
- Slightly less likely to trust museums to do the right thing for visitors and their communities
- Skew significantly younger: nearly half are under the age of 40



### ALLIES

- Seek the widest variety of activities at museums
- Most likely to seek both challenge and respite in museums (typically perceived as a tradeoff)<sup>4</sup>
- Most likely to credit museums with health and wellbeing outcomes
- Most likely to want museums to educate the public about climate change



### NEITHER

Meanwhile, the "neither" segment lagged behind in their engagement. They were:

- Least likely to have visited 3 or more museums in the past year
- Gave fewer motivations for visiting museums; in particular, they were significantly less likely to identify as curious than the LGBTQ+ and Allies segments
- Far less likely to want museums to be inclusive: about 1 in 5 versus the majority of LGBTQ+ and Allies segments
- Least likely to credit museums with health and wellbeing outcomes
- Significantly less likely to feel connected to humanity/humankind
- Skew much older; half were 65 or older

## Anti-inclusive intolerance of the LGBTQ+ community

As part of our analysis of the Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, we review a lot of written-in comments. And there is a small sliver of the population that feels it is appropriate to share intolerant and hateful thoughts.



While these harms are capable of great harm, we also don't want to over-amplify them in ways that do even more harm. Those respondents are extreme outliers, and do not represent mainstream opinion (which tends to be more inclusive or agnostic.)<sup>2</sup>

But we mention this because you need to be prepared for the same thing. If we know in advance about the capacity of to express that hate, it helps us to deal more effectively with those moments when they inevitably arise.<sup>5</sup>

Overall, these findings conclude that the LGBTQ+ community and their Allies are rather engaged with museums. If anything, engagement issues arise with that "neither" group of individuals who are neither part of the LGBTQ+ community nor an Ally, especially those within the "neither" group that are anti-inclusive in their attitudes. And that fits in with broader patterns showing that less inclusive people tend to be less curious, less engaged with informal learning, and less likely to be engaged with museums as frequently (or at all) as more inclusive individuals.<sup>6</sup>

Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:  
 • 2022 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 90,747; 186 museums participating  
 • 2022 Broader Population Sampling, n = 1,017  
 • 2017 - 2021 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers  
 • U.S. demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>1</sup>Human Rights Campaign LGBTQ+ Self-Identification sample questions, <https://bit.ly/3RSLBJU>  
<sup>2</sup>Gallup, LGBT Rights, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx>  
<sup>3</sup>See Museum Visitation: Frequency vs Incidence Gaps Data Story, released September 27, 2022  
<sup>4</sup>A Data Story on this tradeoff will be published in Fall 2022  
<sup>5</sup>See "Museum Best Practices for Managing Controversy" for some additional advice, <https://bit.ly/3SNdaj3>  
<sup>6</sup>See Audiences and Inclusion: A Primer for Cultivating More Inclusive Attitudes Among the Public, [bit.ly/inclusion-primer](https://bit.ly/inclusion-primer)

\*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums). See the Purpose and Methodology (Update) Data Story from September 13, 2022 for more information on methodology.

More Data Stories can be found at [wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories](https://www.wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories).



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