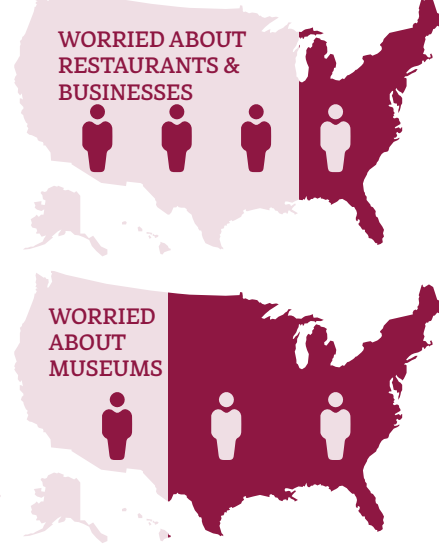


Q: MUSEUMS ARE STRUGGLING FINANCIALLY. DO PEOPLE KNOW? WILL THEY SUPPORT US?

A: NOT REALLY



First, some not-so-great news. In our broader population sampling, 3/4 of Americans are "somewhat" or "extremely" worried about local restaurants and businesses.



But only a third felt similarly about museums.

What about museum-goers specifically?*

Most of the museum-goers in our panel were *unaware museums were facing challenges.*

"... at this point I have not heard about the impact on museums."

And a few dismissed the challenges, noting museums were government-run, could get donations, or receive grants ... not realizing those revenue streams are also impacted (or that most museums are not government entities).



So we asked museum-goers how they felt the loss of museums would affect them, either through closures or dramatically reduced services. Most said something similar to this:

THERE WERE FIVE THEMES THAT EMERGED:



"Personally, I would be devastated to lose museums."

- 1 COMMUNITY IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND MEMORY (MOST COMMONLY CITED)
- 2 LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 ECONOMIC IMPACT AND TOURISM
- 4 INCLUSION
- 5 WELLBEING (LEAST COMMONLY CITED)

"Our museums help keep our collective memory alive. If we lost even one of these important institutions, it would be like someone had blown out a candle or turned out the lights on a vital piece of our society."



"A huge blow to children's education. These trips help spark curiosity."



"Without these organizations telling the stories of marginalized communities, many of those stories won't be widely shared at all."



And all of these losses added to the grief that we are all experiencing

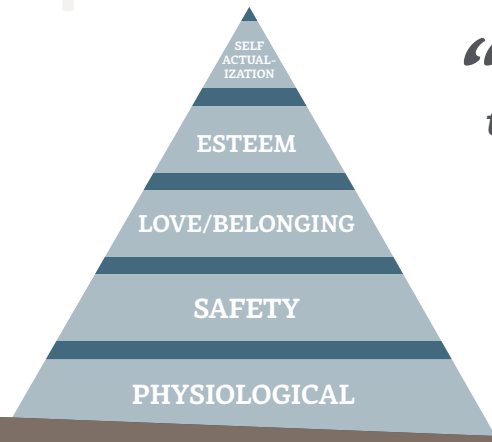


"My mind isn't sure where to begin grieving."

"I find myself getting more and more depressed as I continue writing, so I think I'm going to stop."



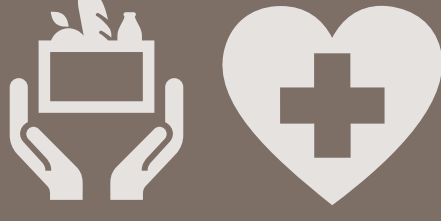
Despite the grief museum-goers expressed at the potential loss of museums and programming, there was little indication that it would translate into financial support.



"Feeding people and tending to their emotional and social needs is more important because of basic survival. Culture is a luxury for those with adequate food, clothing and housing."



Repeatedly, museum-goers expressed concern for museums, and then turned around and shared that they were planning on contributing money to food banks and other organizations that provide basic needs.



Some, however, expressed long-term concern for what our communities and society would look like if museums were allowed to fail. They said they would continue to support museums and that government should step in.



"If the government is willing to finance \$3 trillion to help businesses and families then they can earmark some of that money for museums. Museums give us culture. With so many unemployed with layoffs continuing to stack up it is irresponsible for the government to think that people will step in for donations. They can't donate enough to keep all the museums open ... The government should help in some way."

What all of this boils down to is that no matter how beloved we are, at this time we are not seen as vital. If we are to make a case for being necessary to individuals, communities, and our society, we'll have adapt and become vital ... or risk obsolescence.



"... if they cannot adapt to this climate and ride it though, and then return and open to the public, they may not be serving the community or be that valuable. Not all museums are important and I truly believe that those that are will be just fine and live to open to the public again."



What is the role of museums in providing hope and healing to anxious and grieving audiences? Our next *Pandemic Data Story* will share what museum-goers think.

Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:
 • Spring 2020 Online Panel of Museum-Goers
 • Spring 2020 Broader Population Sampling
 • 2020 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

*Data Stories share research about both museum-goers (who visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

