CIVICS, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND MUSEUMS, PART 5: "DOING" CIVICS AT MUSEUMS A 2023 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY



"I struggle with the 'how' of it."



work toward promoting shared community ideals and civic involvement?

ways museums can integrate civics content. Their suggestions included everything from voter registration to community sports team participation. They even suggested that museums intrinsically embody and promote civic ideals!

Fortunately, respondents to the 2023 Annual Survey of

Museum-Goers from all demographic backgrounds and

spanning all political identities, suggested practical



The suggestions offered by

daily basis.

respondents break down into four

categories, each of which reference

ideals many museum professionals

already strive to exemplify on a



Facilitation: By hosting and promoting civics activities, museums can connect and

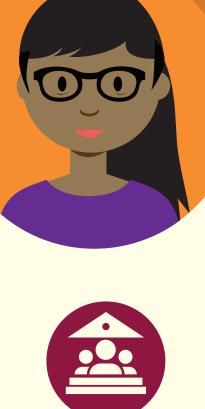
unify the community for good.

"Become a polling location. That

see the museum, and possibly

spark curiosity."

way people come and vote, they'd



opportunities, or even become a polling place Promote community volunteer opportunities to strengthen civic ties

and encourage neighborly cooperation

Be a part of community celebrations,

like parades, parties, and festivals

Offer voting information, registration

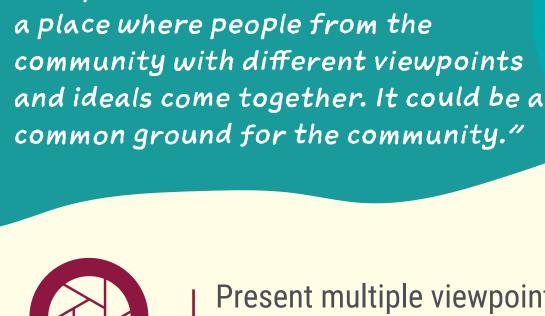


activities I can participate in that would further societal good like volunteering."

Discussion:







Present multiple viewpoints because

issues typically have more than two sides

Host in-person dialogues: in person we are

far more likely to be respectful, even when

Invite open-mindedness and empathy

by including discussants of varying

experience and knowledge



Illustrating and Contextualizing:

Every museum has abundant

opportunities for illustrating

context for how they impact and

potentially mirror our lives today.

important civil events and providing



and people overcame hardships Show how civic leaders of the past improved our civil society, and provide context for the ways these events affect us today "Wherever possible, show

Education:

Many respondents commented

curriculum in generations past,

that civics education was a

foundational part of school

but not so much today.



Provide examples of how these communications have been effective in the past Host in person educational programs,

events, and discussions to mitigate divisive

"Museums can partner with the local

otherwise seek it out. Knowledge and

education are a gateway to becoming

a productive member of society. One

could argue that museums have an

obligation to better humanity."

knowledge to those who might not

public institutions to bring

Inform people of all ages and viewpoints

how to contact political representatives if

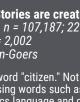
they think something needs to change



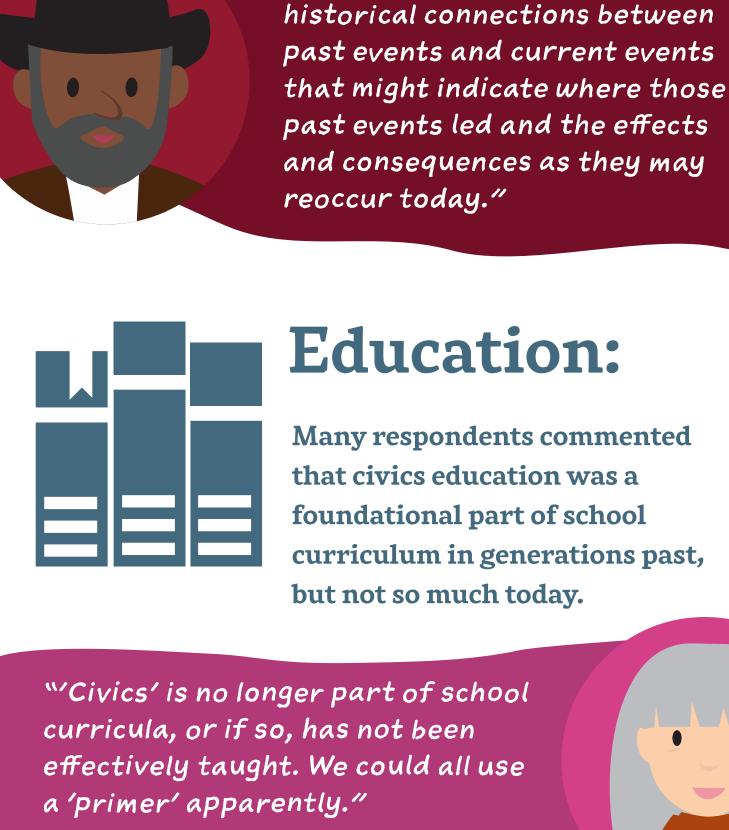
connectivity, education, and potentially inspire



museums might foster civic and personal







and misleading internet misinformation, reducing feelings of powerlessness while encouraging belonging

museums are poised to also be active and effective promoters of civics in our communities. With a bit of concerted effort.

community celebration as well.



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More Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.

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Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:

• 2023 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 107,187; 228 museums participating

• 2023 Broader Population Sampling, n = 2,002

• 2017 - 2022 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers