

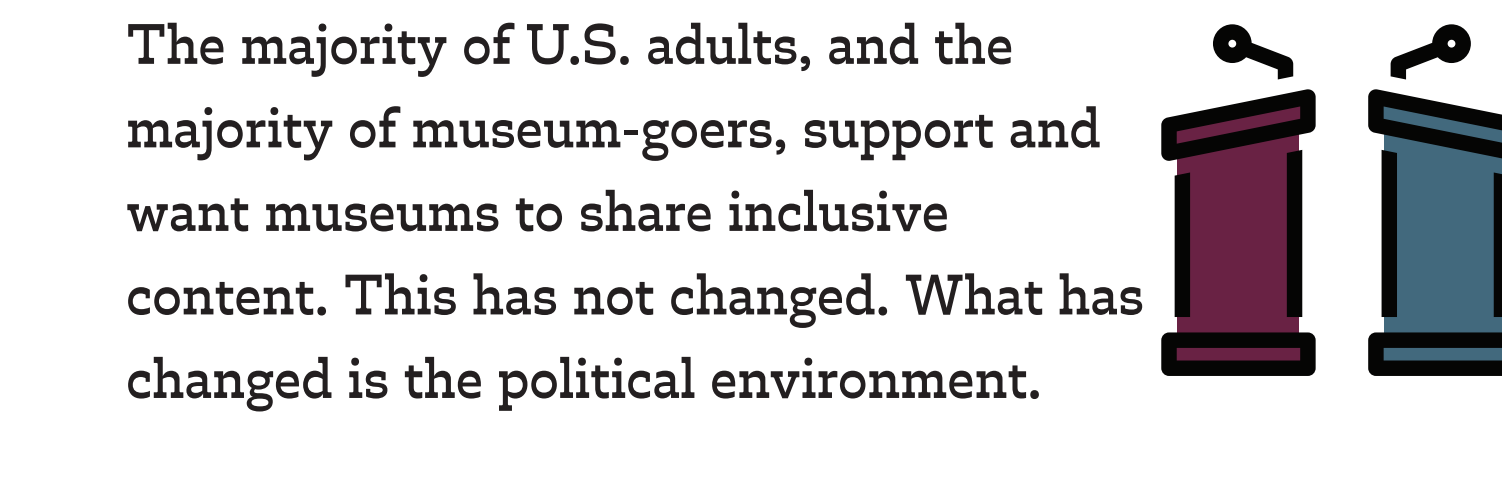
INCLUSIVE CONTENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

A 2026 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY

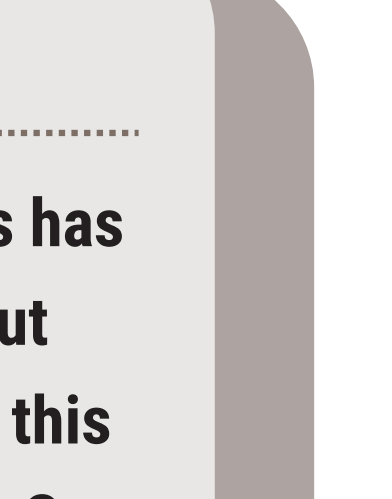
DEAI. It has continued to stay in the headlines for the past few years and the political discourse around the topic has remained heated.

Last year, we asked whether all that political pressure on DEAI reflects a shift in public opinion.

The short answer is still no.



The majority of U.S. adults, and the majority of museum-goers, support and want museums to share inclusive content. This has not changed. What has changed is the political environment.



The Annual Survey of Museum-Goers has been tracking public opinions about inclusive content since 2021. We do this through a battery of three questions. Our language deliberately uses the word "inclusive," and gives, as examples, content about "women, people of color, religious minorities, and LGBTQ+ people."

(You can learn more about our methodology in our Data Story "The Spectrum of Inclusive Attitudes: Methodology.")

WE'VE BEEN TRACKING RESULTS FROM TWO SAMPLES:

- ★ Frequent museum-goers (people who visit/engage with museums frequently and responded to a museum's request to take a survey on their behalf)
- ★ A demographically representative sample of U.S. adults

Since 2021, inclusive attitudes among frequent museum-goers really have not budged, though the anti-inclusive side has increased slightly.

2021 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS

ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
17%	8%	18%	6%	48%

2026 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS

ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
19%	9%	18%	6%	49%

But attitudes among our demographically-representative samples of U.S. adults indicate a significant overall shift towards inclusion.

2021 – U.S. ADULTS

ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
22%	13%	11%	10%	44%

2026 – U.S. ADULTS

ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
20%	9%	9%	11%	55%

There are definite differences when we examine U.S. adults by age and life stage, but the majority of each segment still falls on the inclusive side of the spectrum.

2026 – U.S. ADULTS BY AGE AND LIFE STAGE

	ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
Under 40, no minor children	16%	7%	9%	10%	60%
Parents/ guardians of minor children	16%	7%	8%	10%	62%
40 - 59, no minor children	20%	9%	9%	12%	52%
60 or older, no minor children	26%	11%	9%	10%	47%

So where is the pushback to inclusive content coming from? Well, it is, indeed, political. We can certainly see that when we compare the responses of conservatives and liberals, there are significant differences. But even then, **the majority of conservatives still fall on the side of inclusion.**



2026 – U.S. ADULTS BY POLITICAL VALUES

	ANTI-INCLUSIVE	LEANS LESS INCLUSIVE	STATUS QUO	LEANS MORE INCLUSIVE	INCLUSIVE
All Conservatives	33%	11%	7%	9%	42%
All Liberals	7%	4%	8%	13%	72%

While the larger segment of anti-inclusive conservatives are likely driving anti-inclusive rhetoric and initiatives politically, it bears remembering that they don't represent the majority of Americans, and they don't even represent the majority of conservatives.

Most Americans, regardless of political values, support inclusive content in museums. Period.



Navigating inclusion during the immediate future has, undoubtedly, become more fraught. We don't want to dismiss those challenges.

But neither do we want to dismiss the fact that inclusion helps all of us different perspectives and life experiences, helps us understand the world and its history more completely, and is what most people want from us.



In fact, the data indicates that **the biggest risk we face is losing our credibility with the public by not telling the truth ...** and for most people, that requires us to be inclusive of all humanity. We'll continue to monitor trust and credibility as part of our future sampling.

Until then, existing tools can help you navigate this period of uncertainty, including Audiences and Inclusion: A Primer for Cultivating More Inclusive Attitudes Among the Public and our Data Story "Beware! The False Consensus Effect."