

Better Understanding Visitors Through Data

COVES



Museum of Science®





Session Overview

We will:

- Discuss what COVES is, how it works, why it came to be
- Provide a case study example from Discovery Museum
- Share high-level data and examples of applications

We want to:

- Hear from you / Q&A
- Share resources & opportunities to get involved
- Breakout into small groups to discuss your situations (if you want)



Evaluator Card



ANXIOUS



OVERWHELMED

Type I

Museum professionals who designate themselves as Type I evaluators are often new to evaluation, overwhelmed or confused by advice they may have received about evaluation, or perhaps are tasked to do evaluation with little/no institutional support.



SUSPICIOUS



HOPEFUL

Type II

Type II evaluators may have some prior experience conducting evaluation, but are only moderately confident in their work. Professionals in this category may know “just enough to be dangerous”...



CONFIDENT



ECSTATIC

Type III

Museum professionals who designate themselves as Type III evaluators typically engage in research or evaluation projects regularly, have a background in evaluation theory and practice, or are just super gung-ho about using data for decision-making!



“If I knew more about my visitors, I could...”

If you DO collect visitor data at your institution...

- What do you collect (and how)?
- How do you use the information?

And if you don't...

- What *would* you collect?
- How would you use that information?



Collaboration for Ongoing Visitor
Experience Studies



IMLS support



2012 National Forum Grant

2014 National Leadership Grant

2020 National Leadership Grant – Art museums

COVES is designed to unite museums in systematically collecting audience-level data, with a focus on institutional and field-wide improvement.

COVES provides a common language through data to help with decision-making.



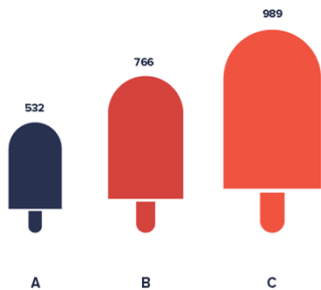
How do we collect visitor data?



Onsite, electronic survey, with exit intercept



Systematic random sampling



Sample size proportional to institution size and visitation patterns



COVES believes that by:

better **understanding** visitors' experiences...



we can **improve** the experience overall (i.e., the rising tide lifts all boats),



which will in turn encourage repeat visitation.



COVES believes that by:

continued attention to **improving** experiences...



can increase the likelihood of **belonging** (e.g., memberships, donations, etc.),

Hey, have you been to the Discovery Museum yet? It's SO COOL!

Great suggestion!

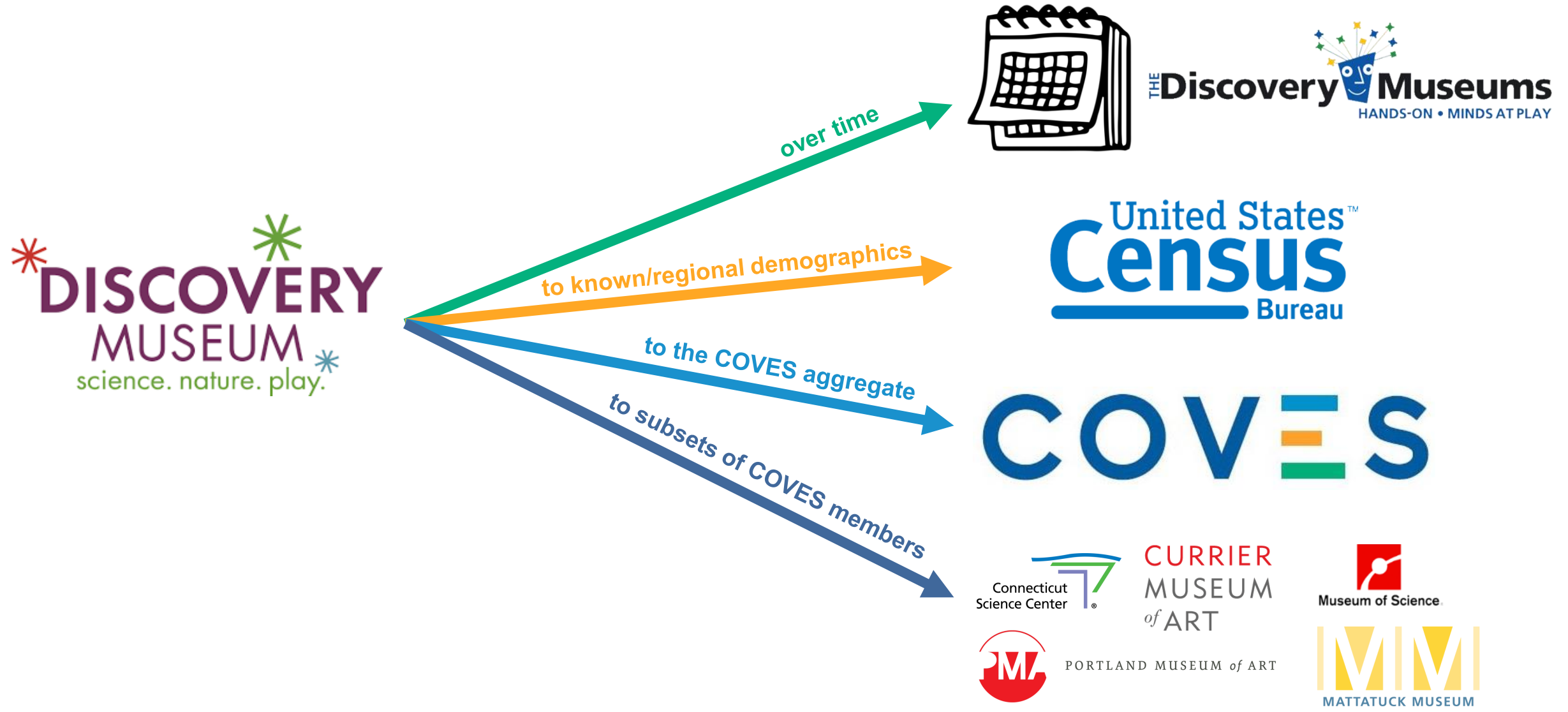


What should I check out while I'm there?

and lead to more **positive word of mouth promotion** (i.e., NPS).



COVES believes in the value of *comparison*





What do we need to know?

Who visits



Why they visit



What they see & do

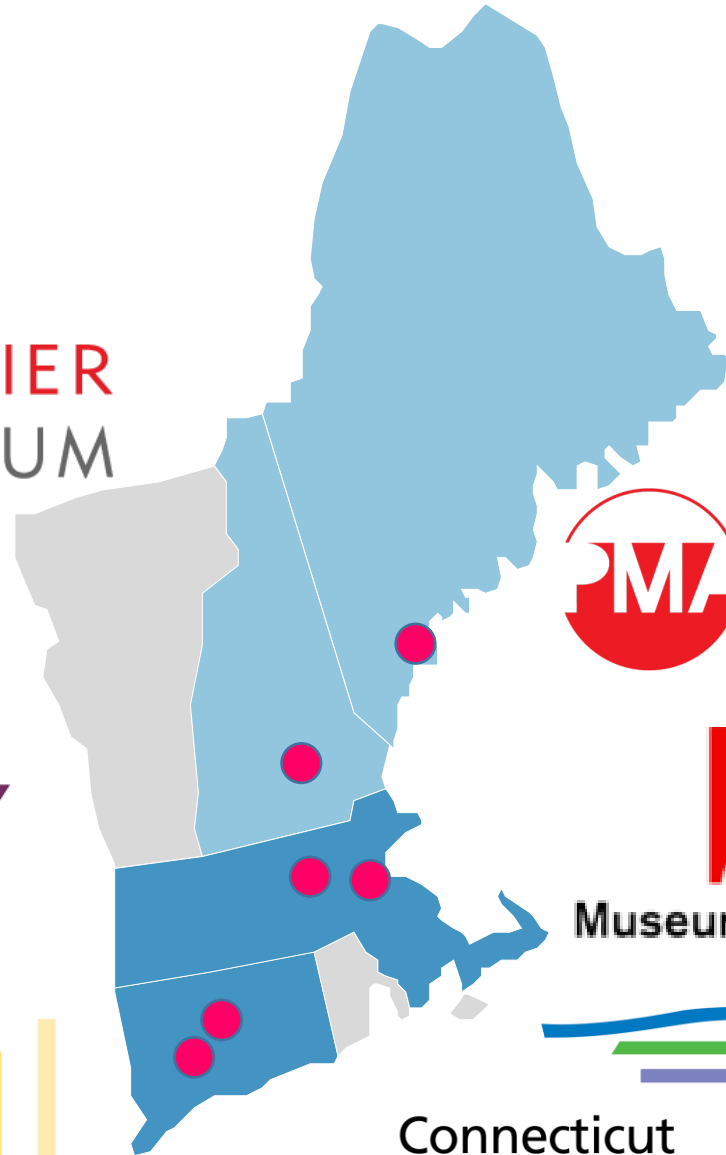


COVES is *by* museums,
for museums



CURRIER
MUSEUM
of ART

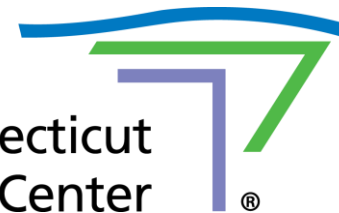
*
DISCOVERY
MUSEUM
science. nature. play.*



PORTLAND MUSEUM *of* ART



Museum of Science.



Connecticut
Science Center



Dynamic Dashboard

Filters

Finished?: 1

Museum Type: Science

Date: Last 180 Days

Method: QR, Staffed

Institution Size: All

AAM Region: All

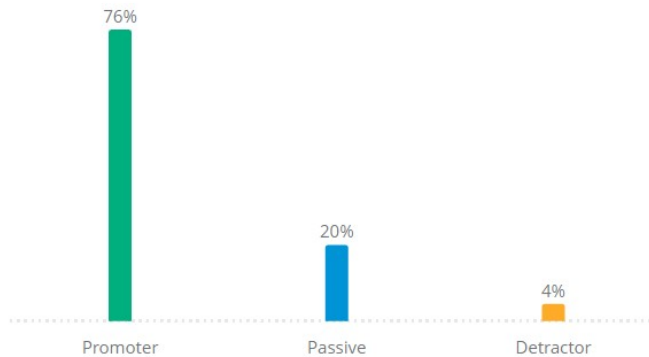
[Reset to Default](#)

Experience Ratings

Net Promoter Score 86,315

71.4

Net Promoter Score Breakdown 86,315



What is the primary reason for your rating? (NPS) 17,468

NPS Follow up

Promoter • 3 hours ago

It's a wonderful place to learn and play for all ages

Promoter • 3 hours ago

Artifacts are from area and the items are really interesting. Really quite unique that there is no entry fee. Speaks to the entire feeling of this area of the country. I hope it doesn't change. Gentleman that runs the place and greeted us is super friendly and knowledgeable.

Overall Experience Rating 72,345



OER Follow-up Combined 15,206

3 minutes ago

What aspect(s) of today's visit could be improved?

Renew broken parts

16 minutes ago

What was particularly outstanding about your visit today?

The ball pump with water and ball pump with air



COP Member Webinars



COVES

@coves1083 · 28 subscribers · 55 videos

The Collaboration for Ongoing Visitor Experience Studies (COVES) is designed to unite mu... >

🔔 Subscribed ▾

Home Videos Playlists Community Channels 🔍

Latest

Popular

Oldest

Comparing Data - Group Type

Group Type	Decline Log (N=1,289)	COVES Data (N=1,223)
Adults only	37%	42%
Family groups	63%	58%

39:22

COVES Webinar [October 2023]:
Checking for response bias using...

SCIENCE CENTER census Comparisons

- Demographic comparisons:
 - Educational attainment
 - Household income
 - Racial identity
- Comparisons made using only data from local respondents.
- "Local" = residents in:
 - St. Louis City
 - St. Louis County
 - 14 surrounding counties in MO & IL

46:55

COVES Webinar [September 2023]:
Comparisons to Census Data

53:55

COVES Webinar [JulAugust 2023]:
Scheduling Data Collection

New structure
• Effective January 1, 2024

	Decline Log	Science's Annual Operating Budget	Act Annual Operating Budget	Decline Log	Science's Annual Operating Budget	Act Annual Operating Budget
V	\$1,200	<\$1M	<\$1M	\$1,000	<\$500K	<\$1M
S	\$2,000	\$1-10M	\$1-10M	\$1,200	\$0.5-1M	\$3-10M
M	\$5,500	\$1-10M	\$10-20M	\$2,200	\$2-3M	\$7-10M
I	\$9,000	>\$10M	>\$10M	\$5,500	\$3-5M	\$10-15M
				\$6,000	\$5-10M	\$15-20M
				\$9,000	\$10-20M	\$20-30M
				\$8,500	<\$1M	<\$1M

53:35

COVES Webinar [June 2023]:
Updates! Updates!

COVES in action, in Acton





COVERES at Discovery Museum:



Brindha
Muniappan
Senior Director of the
Museum Experience





About Discovery Museum

- Traditional lands of the Nipmuc, Massachusetts, Pawtucket, and Agawam tribes
- Science | Nature | Play
- 240,000 visitors annually
- ~75 staff; 16,000 sq. ft.; 4.5 acres
- Joined COVES Jan 2022 (though technically...)





COVES at Discovery Museum

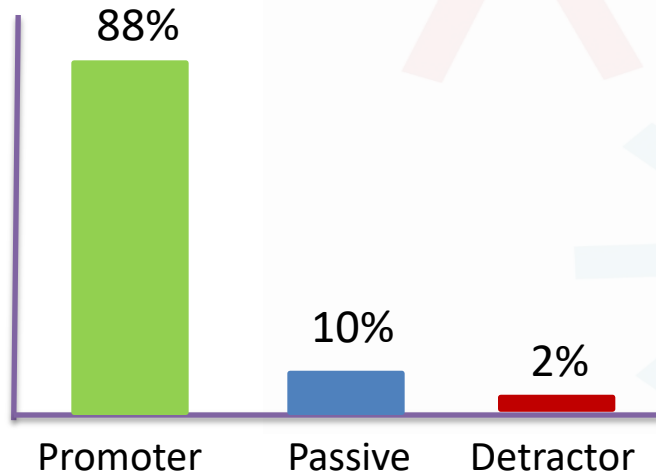
- Survey target: 525/year (35-70/month)
- 7-10 frontline staff
 - Human subjects training
 - Shadow veteran surveyor
- 60 minute shifts
 - ~11am-4pm
 - & free evenings, holidays





Net Promoter Score

86.3
n=1,030



- 10 I think it's a great way for kids to learn and play simultaneously
- 10 According to my 6 yo: there's cool stuff there
- 9 Customer service. The most friendly staff!
- 8 We enjoyed exhibits and parking was easy
- 6 Almost no room for eating, which is important when dealing with toddlers
- 6 Kiddo always has fun



COVES comparisons

Discovery Museum



Science Museums
Aggregate



Art Museums
Aggregate



Overall Experience Rating



Good

It was too crowded and as result kind of overwhelming

Excellent

- Sensory friendly
- We enjoyed exhibits and parking was easy

Outstanding

- Kids loved it, everything is easy and accessible – parking, bathrooms, service
- Extremely fun. Fun for many ages and enjoyable for adults too.



Additional feedback

Educational Quality



Entertainment Quality



Value for the Cost



Gift Shop Experience



Exhibits in Working Order



Staff Helpfulness





Deeper insight about visitors

- Zip code
- Date, time of visit
- Membership status
- Visitor ages
- Gender
- LGBTQ+
- Disability
- Race/ethnicity
- Education
- Income level



Deeper insight about visitors

- **Zip code**
- Date, time of visit
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- Visitor ages
- Gender
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- Disability
- **Race/ethnicity**
- Education
- **Income level**



Deeper insight about visitors

- Zip code
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Delving in

- How do demographics compare for Free Friday Nights and general visitation times?
- Are BIPOC visitors as satisfied with their experience as others?
- Do general visitors feel crowded when school groups are on site?





Specific Questions

Stopped:

- COVID-related questions in mid-2023



Kept:

- What is your relationship to the child(ren) you visited the Museum with today?
- For today's visit, how did you pay for your admission?



COVES helps us...

- ...understand demographics of our visitors, overall and more specifically
- ...quantitatively learn how our amenities, accommodations, staff are doing
- ...see our data in one place
- ...compare Discovery Museum with peers



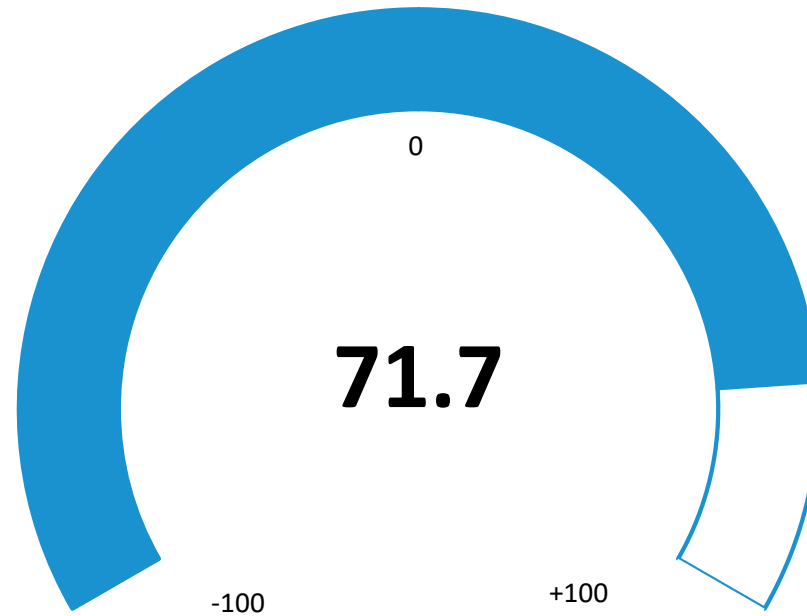
COVES Aggregate





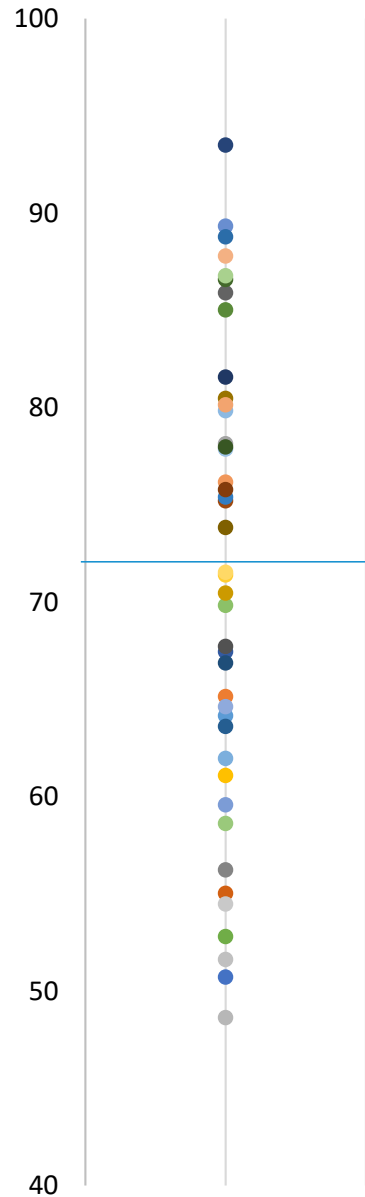
Net Promoter Score® - FY23

Aggregate NPS

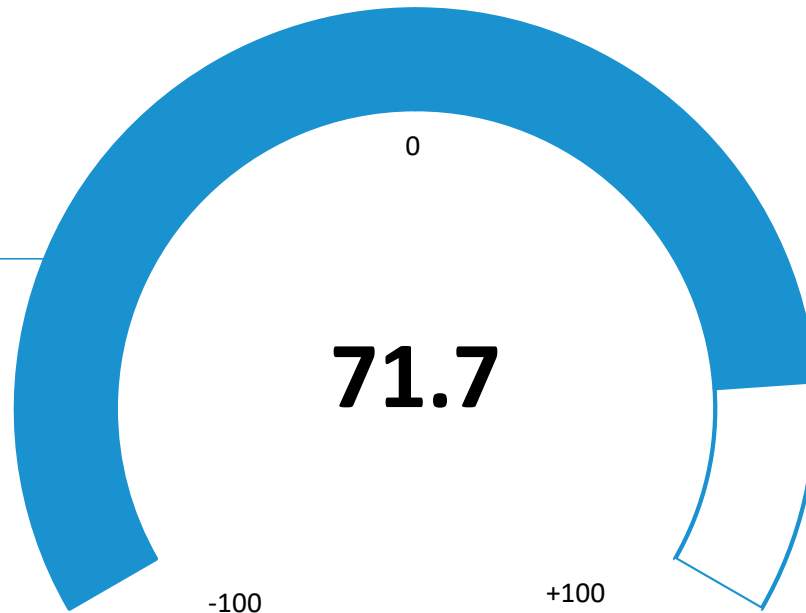




Net Promoter Score[®] - FY23



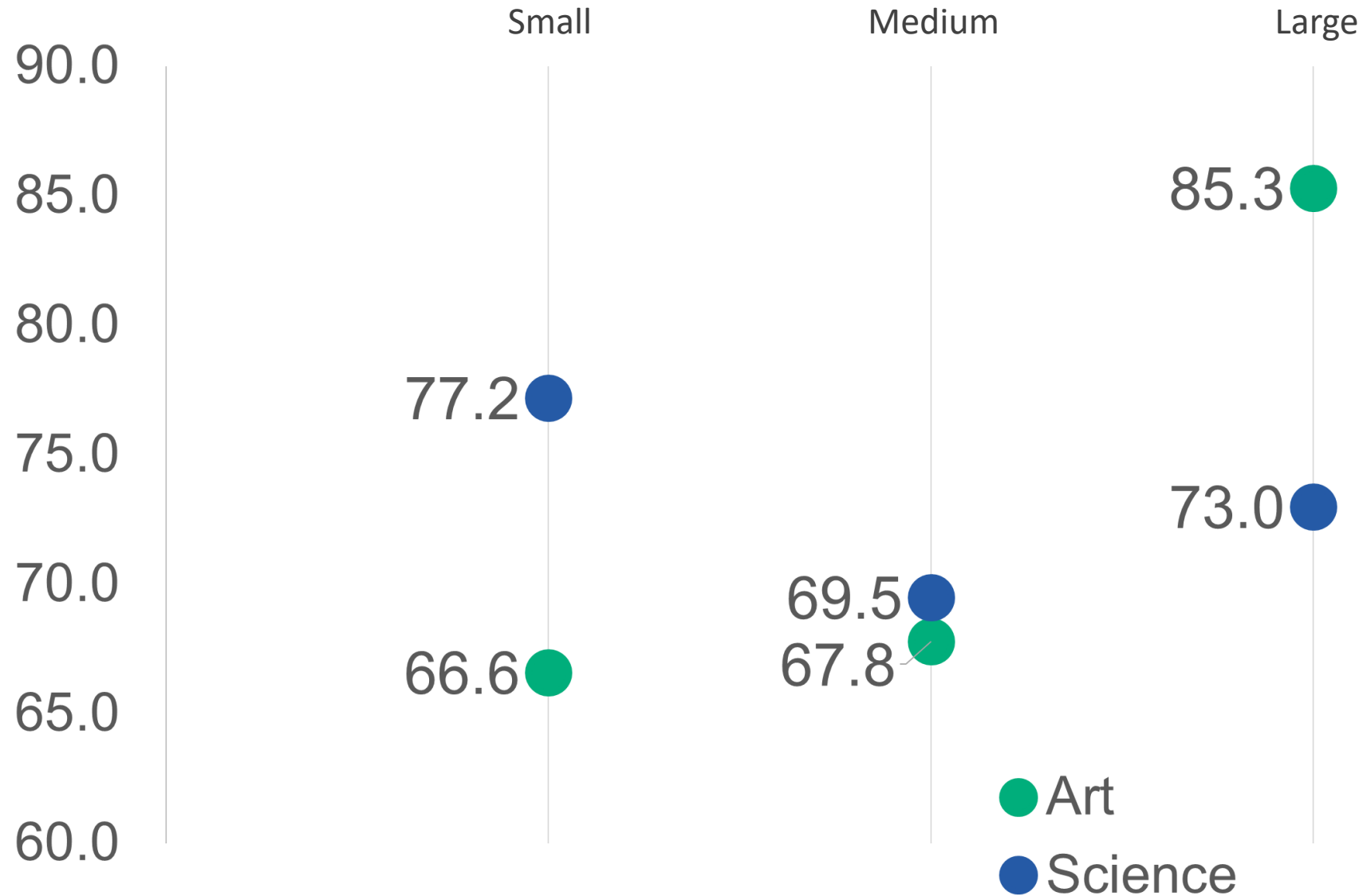
Aggregate NPS



MIN: 48.6 / MAX: 93.5 → RANGE: 44.9

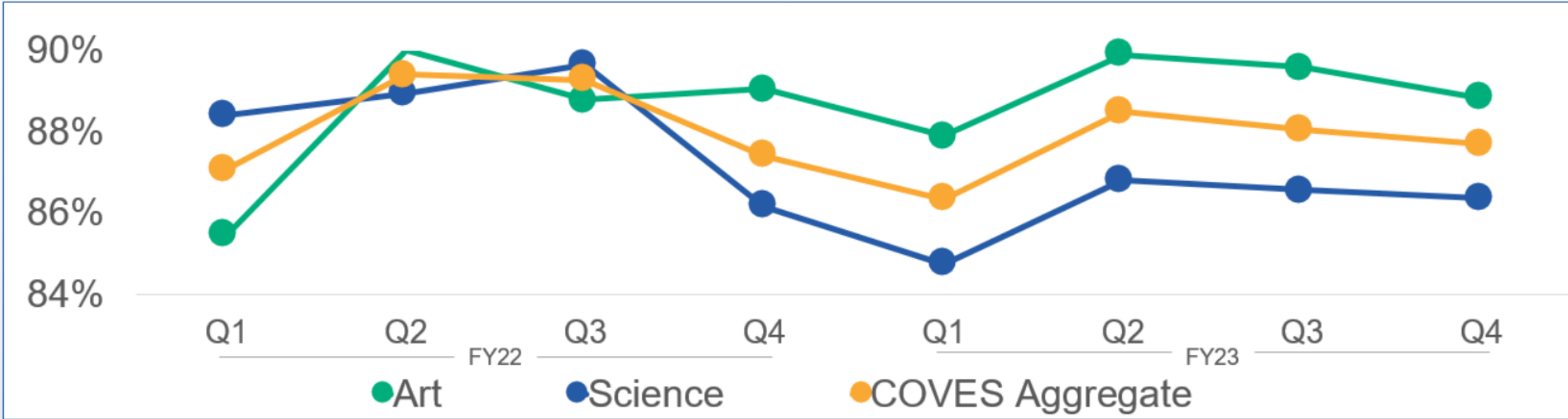


NPS – by institutional size (FY22-23)





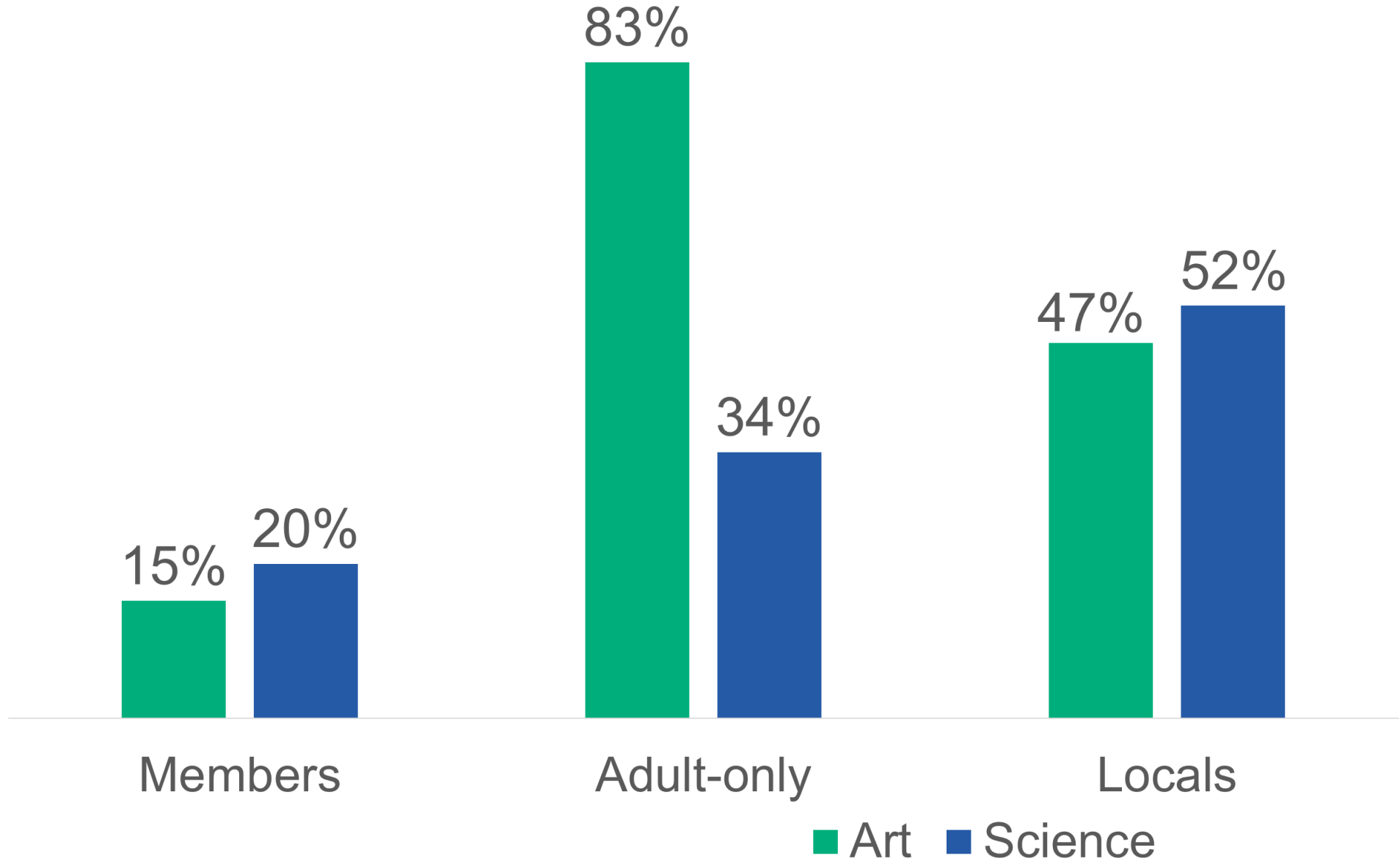
OER* – by museum type



* % Excellent + % Outstanding

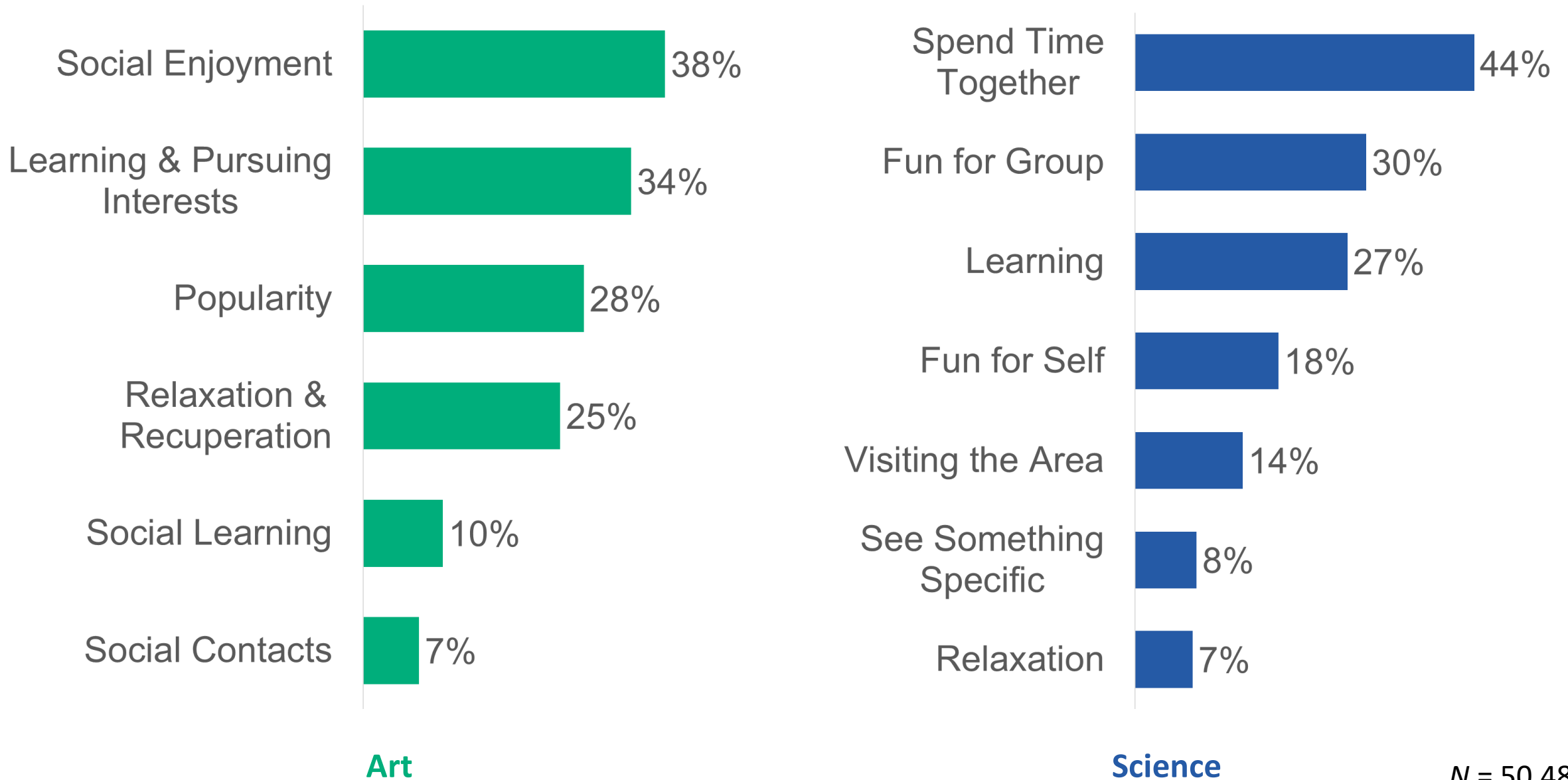


Group composition





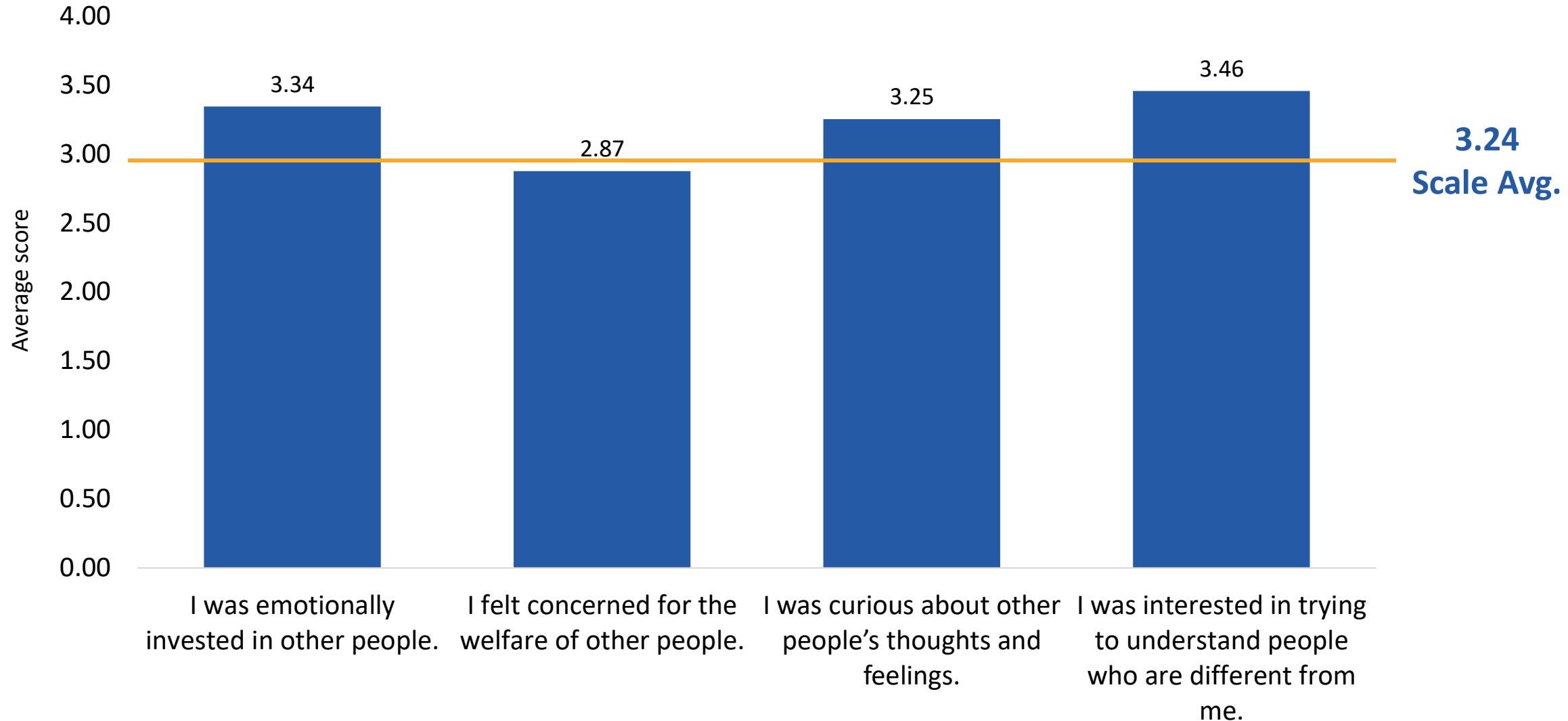
Motivations for visiting



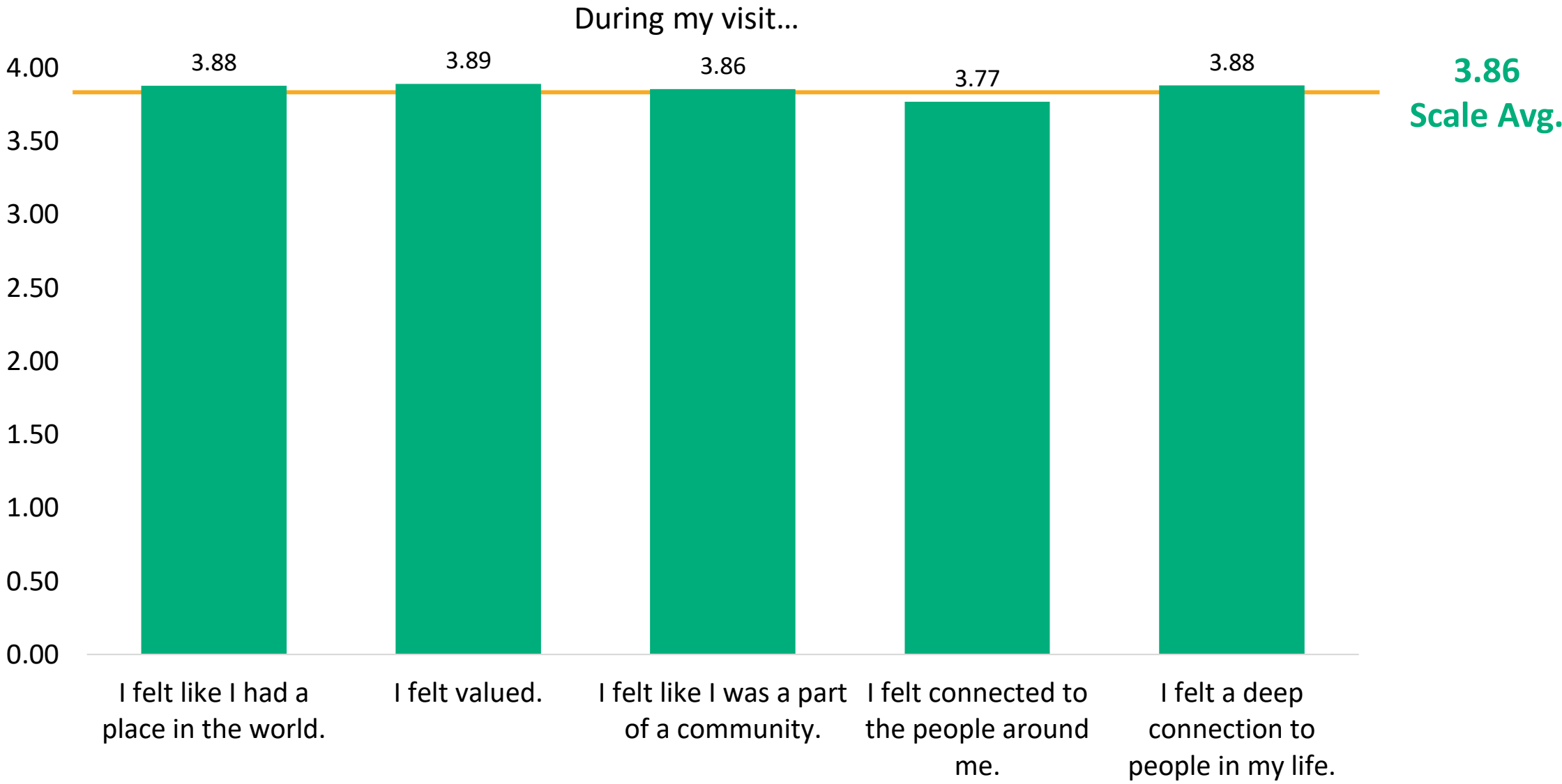


Empathy

During my visit...



Social Connectedness





Welcoming / Belonging / Inclusion

- I felt welcomed [at *museum*] = 9.52
(*n*=563)
- I felt like I belonged [at *museum*] = 8.66
(*n*=1348)
- I felt included [at *museum*] = 9.27
(*n*=567)

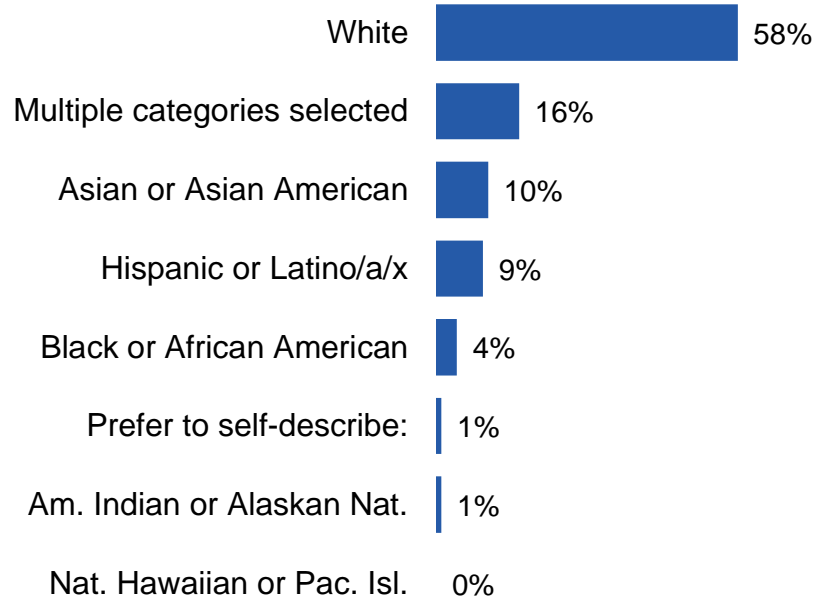
COVES at MOS



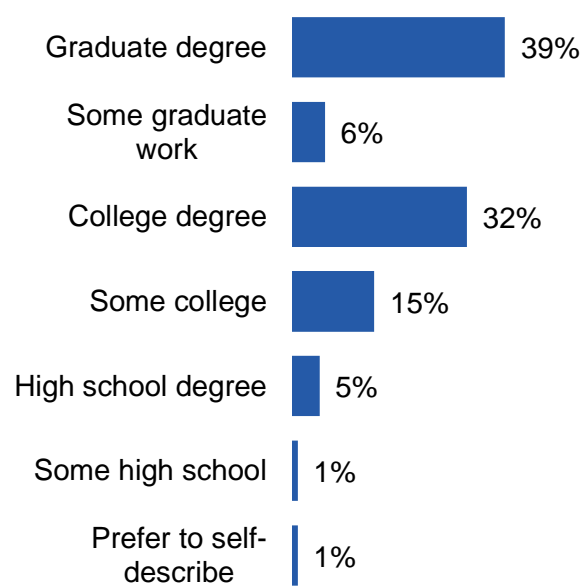


Who visits?

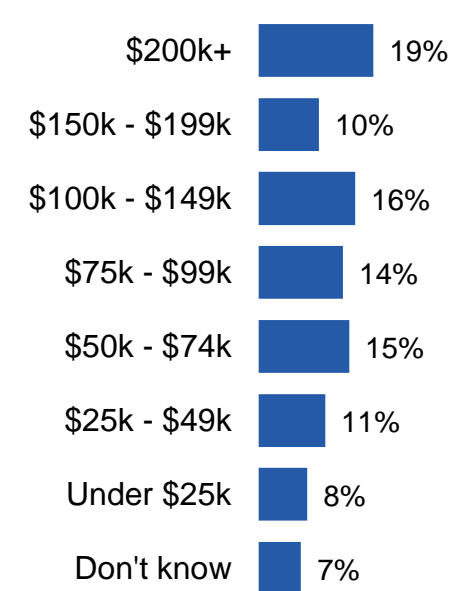
Race/Ethnicity (n=1,099)



Education Level (n=1,110)



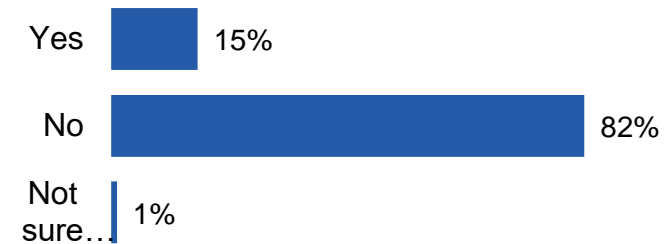
Household Income (n=862)



Disability Status in Group (n=1,041)



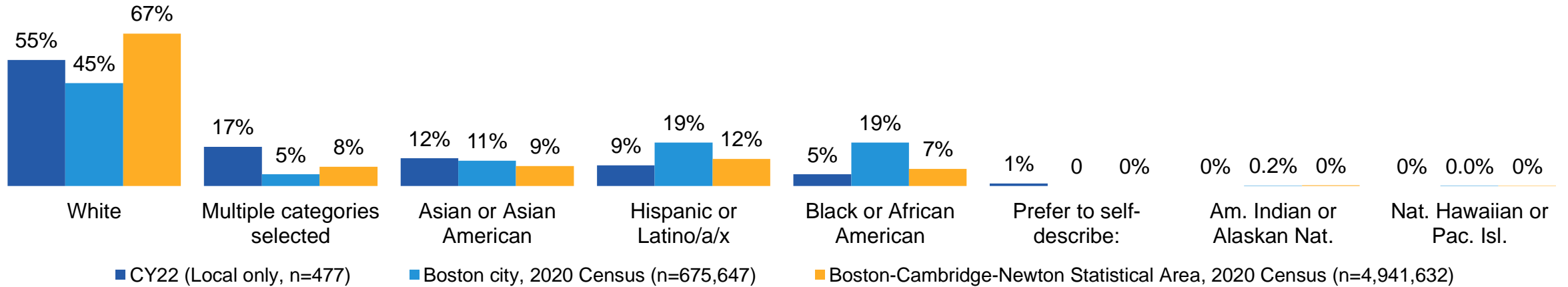
LGBTQ+ Status (n=1,084)



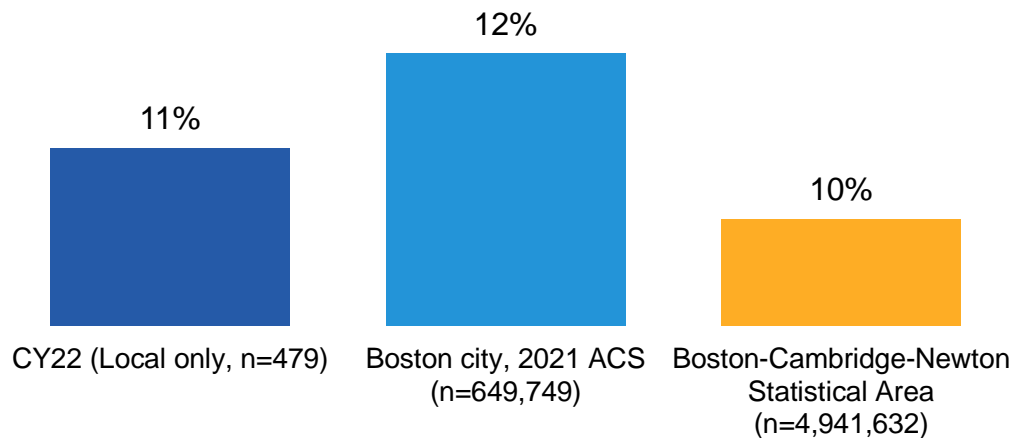


How well do we represent our community?

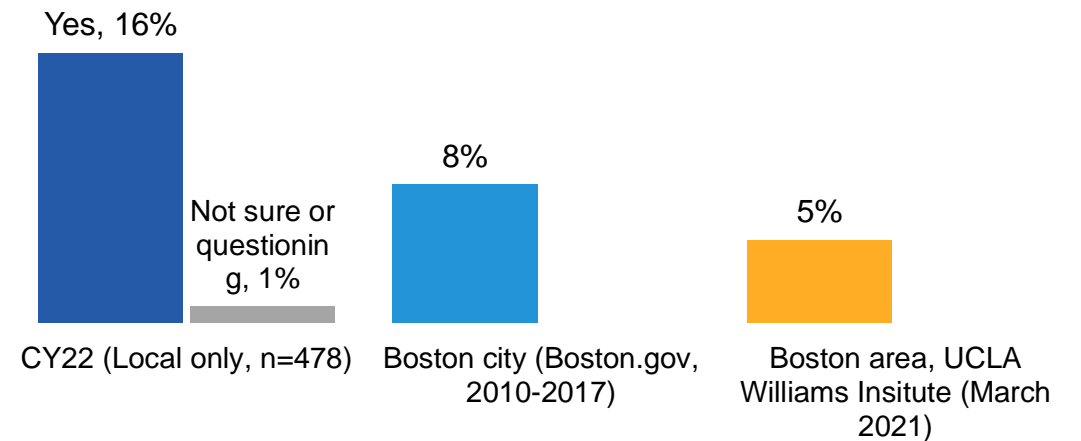
Race/Ethnicity



Disability (n=1,041)

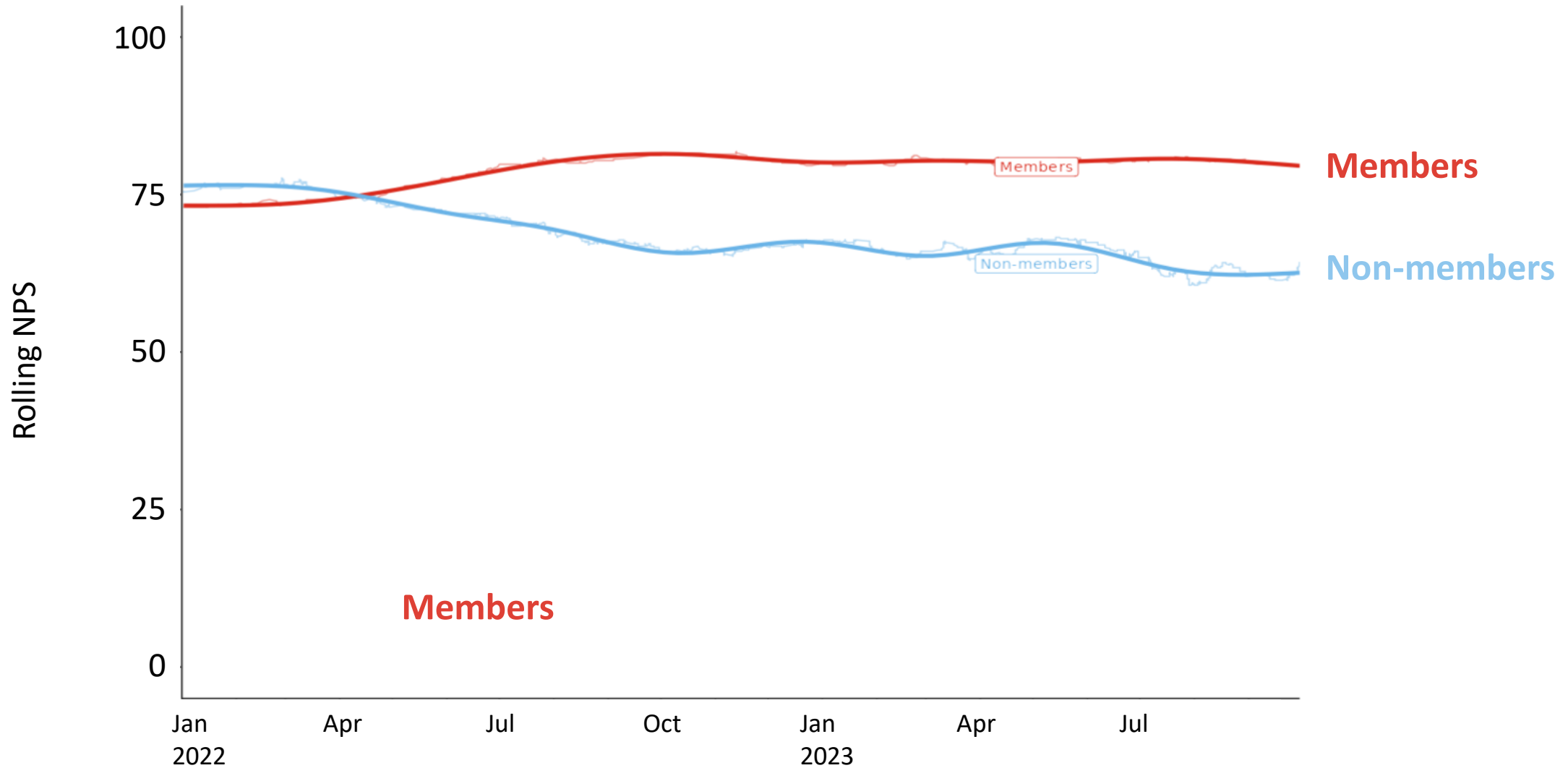


LGBTQ+ Status



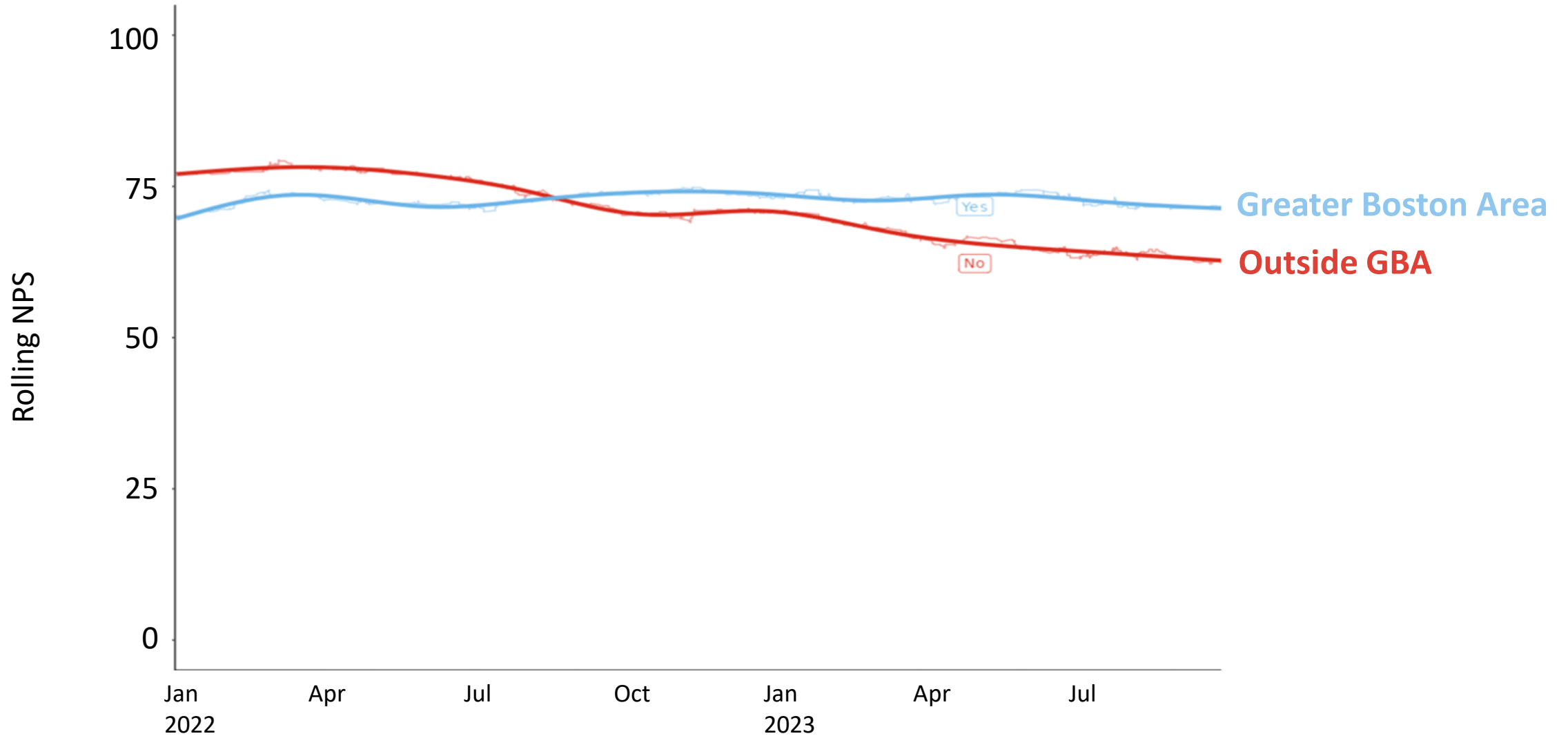


Rolling NPS (500 surveys) - members





Rolling NPS (500 surveys) - locals



Got questions?

We (probably!) have answers:

- Brindha Muniappan, Discovery Museum
bmuniappan@discoveryacton.org
- Ryan Auster, Museum of Science / COVES
rauster@mos.org

<https://login.qualtrics.com/>

- Username: `coves@mos.org`
- Password: `cove$DEMO`



linktr.ee/understandingvisitors



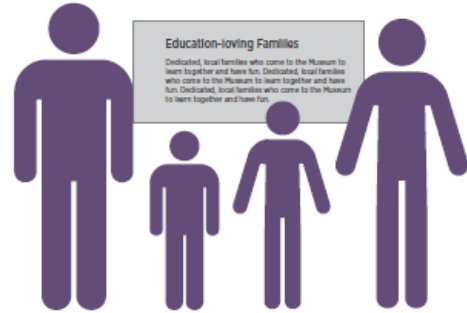
Previous MOS audience segments

Togetherness-oriented families



Mostly-local visitors who come to the Museum to spend time together as a family.

Enrichment oriented families



Dedicated, local families who come to the Museum so that group members/children can have fun and learn.

Experience-driven adult duos



Pairs of adults who visit the Museum largely to spend time together or to see a specific exhibit, program, or show.

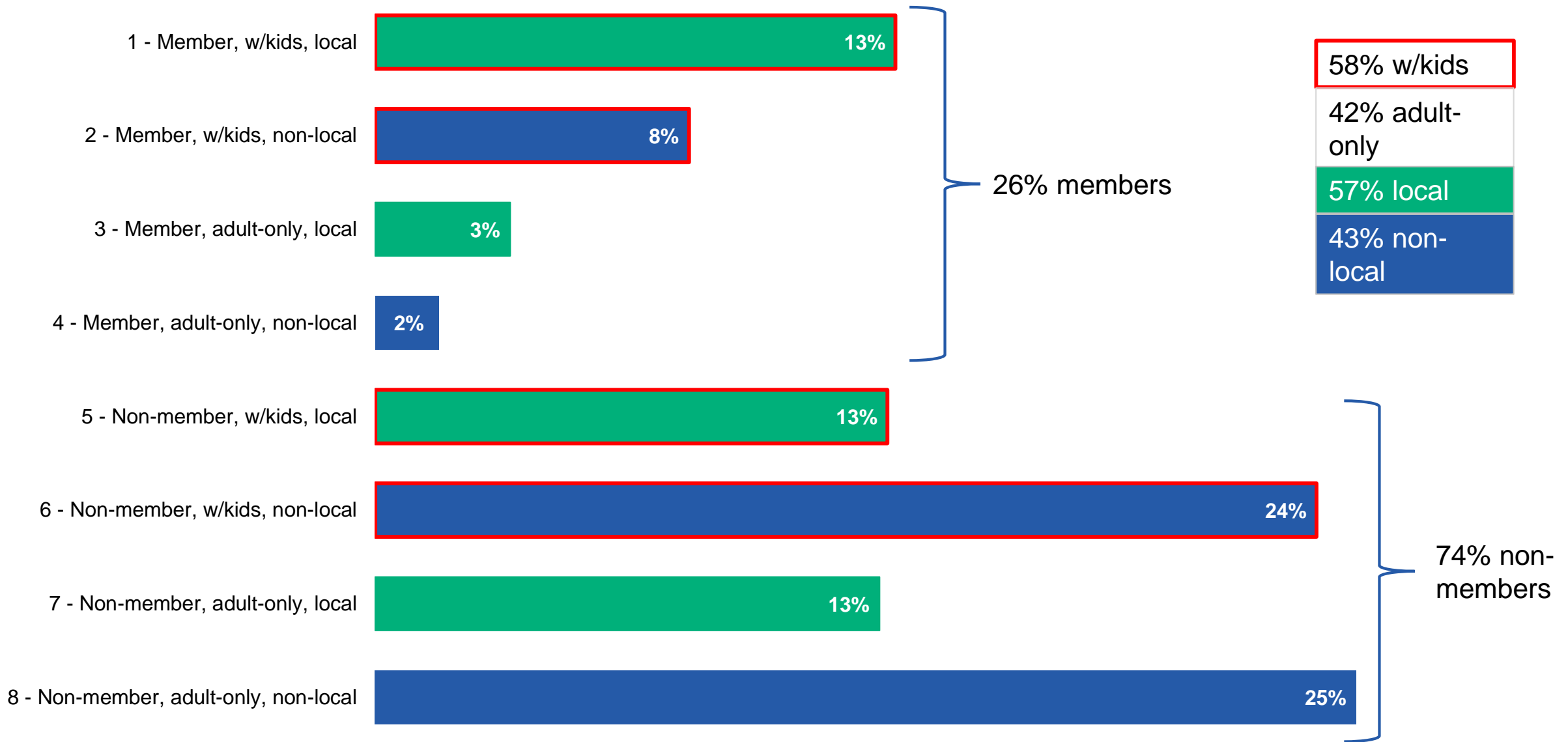
Sightseeing groups



Non-local groups who spend time together at the Museum while visiting Boston.



Current MOS audience segments





MOS Audience Segments - NPS

