

# Museums and Inclusion: Understanding Visitors' Sense of Belonging in Science and Natural History Museums | 2005773

PIs: Marjorie Bequette, [mbequette@smm.org](mailto:mbequette@smm.org)  
and Amy Grack Nelson ([agnelson@smm.org](mailto:agnelson@smm.org)),  
Science Museum of Minnesota  
<https://new.smm.org/belonging>

## Project Description

We developed a visitor-centered model of belonging from the reflections of 72 participant groups in 4 museums using a photovoice protocol.

## Key Achievements

- Visitors report belonging at both a group and individual level – individual belonging is negatively impacted if a member of the group has a diminished sense of belonging.
- Visitors feel belonging when the museum experience was designed with their physical needs, the representation of their identities, etc. in mind.
- Visitors like to see their local surroundings, feel connected to place and the world!
- We have broadly shared this belonging model and associated practitioner guide.

## Audience & Settings

**Audience:** Museum visitors; museum practitioners and researchers

**Disciplinary area:** STEM fields included in museums

**Learning environment:** science and natural history museums

## Access and Inclusion

We used maximum variation sampling to purposefully include in our sample visitors with a wide range of identities, including dis/ability, LGBTQ+ status, income, race/ethnicity, and more.

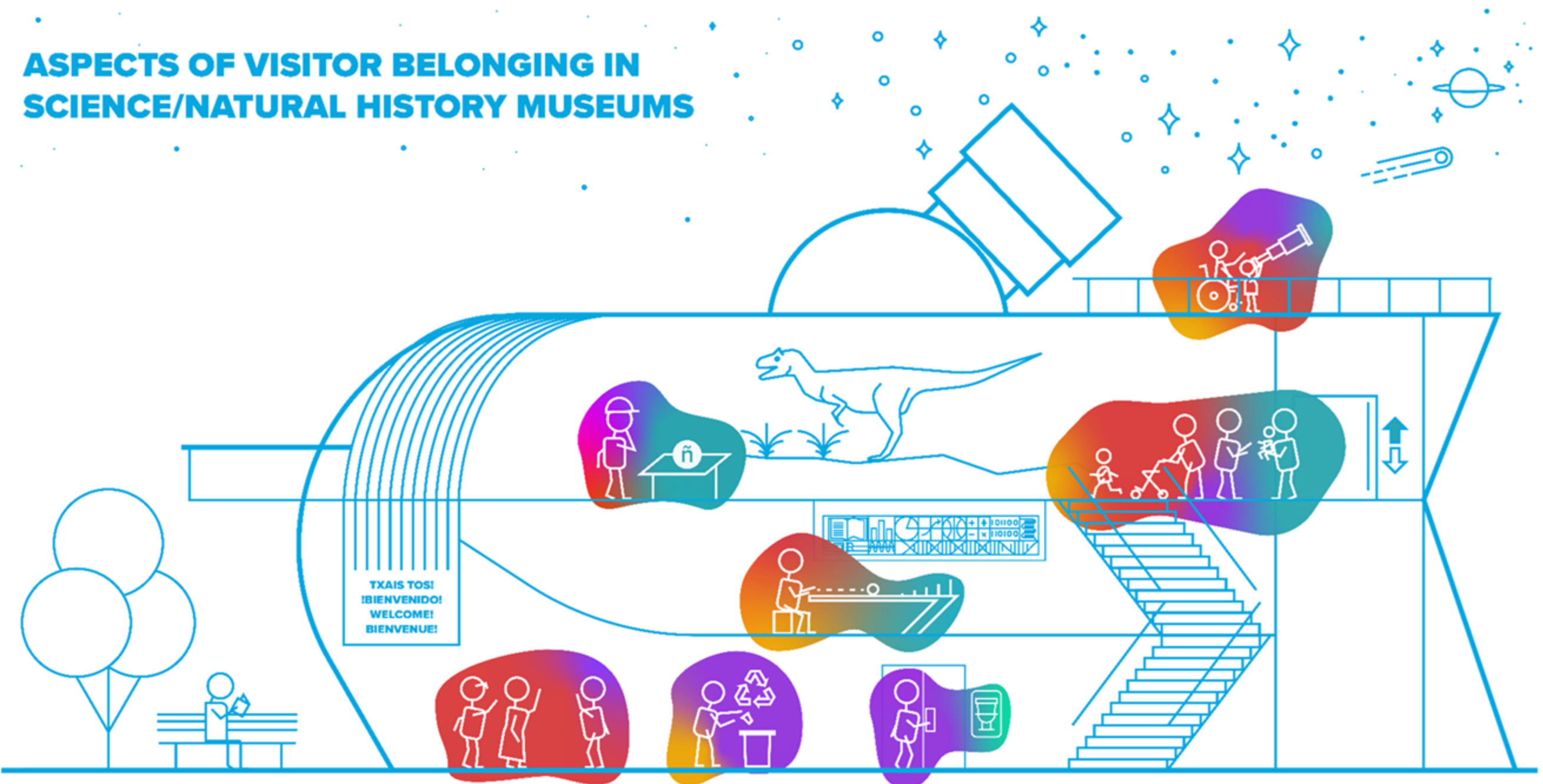
Visitors' definitions of belonging often responded to museums' equity, access, and inclusion efforts and messaging in their feedback.



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## ASPECTS OF VISITOR BELONGING IN SCIENCE/NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS



People feel belonging as a group and as individuals, including:

### Connection to Experience

- Social Connections
- Engagement

### Connection to Self/Group

- Representation
- Identity
- Values
- Interest

### Connection to Place

- Region
- Location
- Museum
- Earth

### Comfort in the Physical Space

- Comfort
- Messaging
- Affordability
- Physical Access
- Language Access
- Developmental Access
- Aesthetics

For more information visit: [new.smm.org/belonging](http://new.smm.org/belonging)