



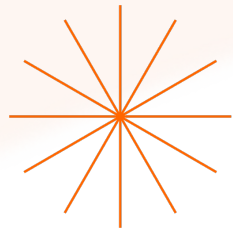
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For all inquiries, please contact Michelle Sills at msills@impacts-experience.com.

LOOKING AHEAD

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS AT HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS

Heritage Chocolate Society Annual Meeting | 18 February 2026



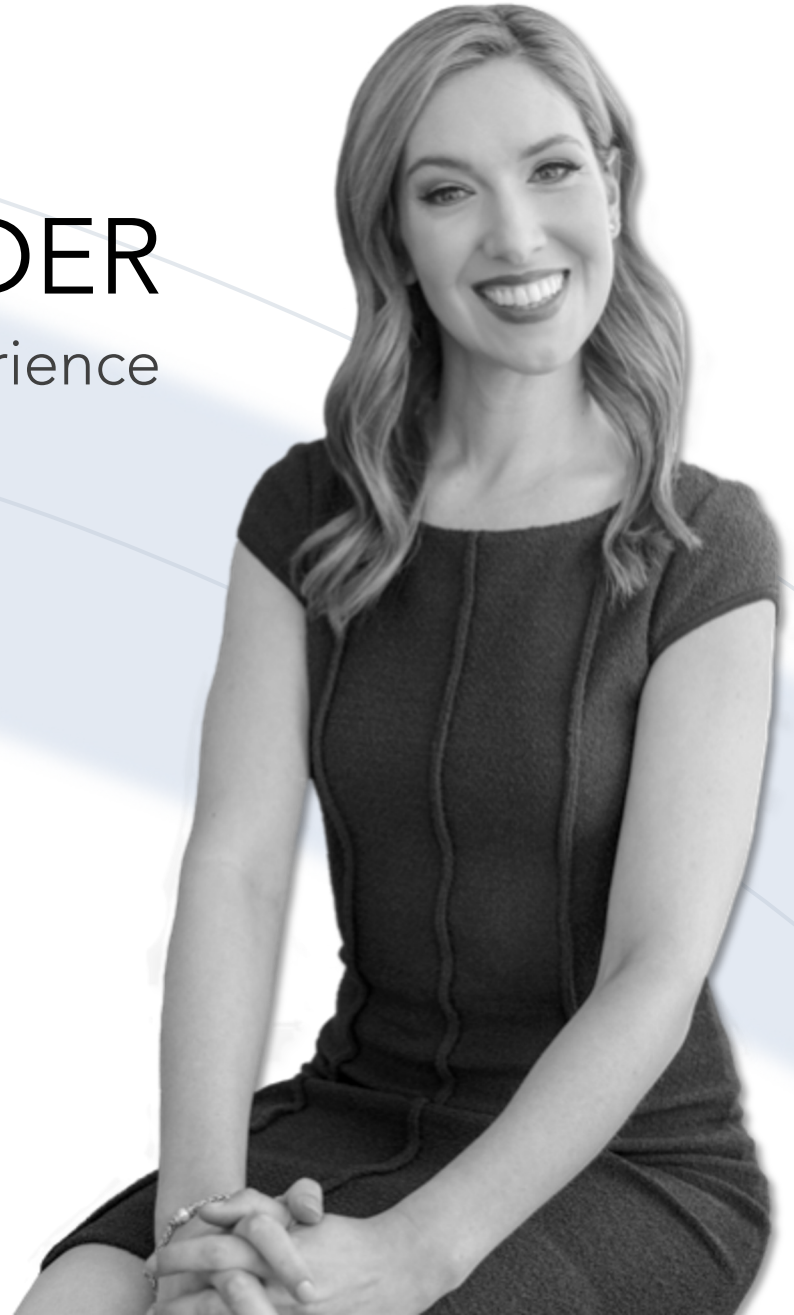
impacts
experience

COLLEEN DILENSCHNEIDER

Co-Founder, IMPACTS Experience

“Do what you love. **Know your own bone;** gnaw at it, bury it, unearth it, and gnaw at it still.”

- *Henry David Thoreau*



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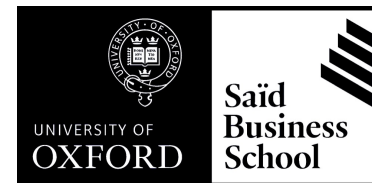
Google Caltech



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ADVANCED STUDY



There's so much happening in the United States right now.

Why are we discussing membership?

Because data show that 2026
may represent a tipping point
for history organizations.



What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations, EOY 2025, top five

RANK	BENEFIT	INDEX VALUE
1	Free admission	240.3
2	Priority access	132.7
3	Exclusive access	122.9
4	Reduced / free admission for member guests	94.5
5	Supporting the organization	94.2

Look at where things
are **changing**.



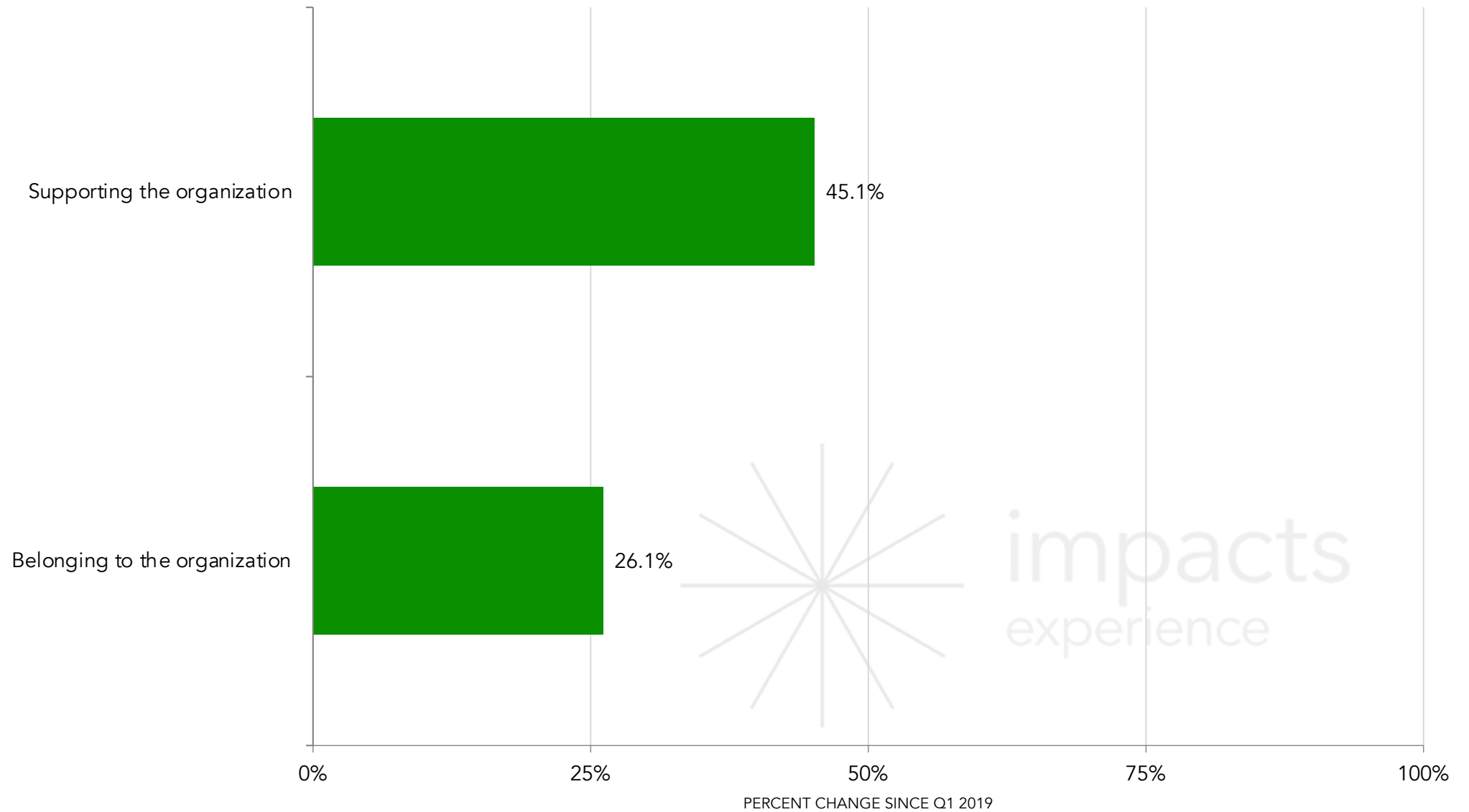
CONNECTION to your mission



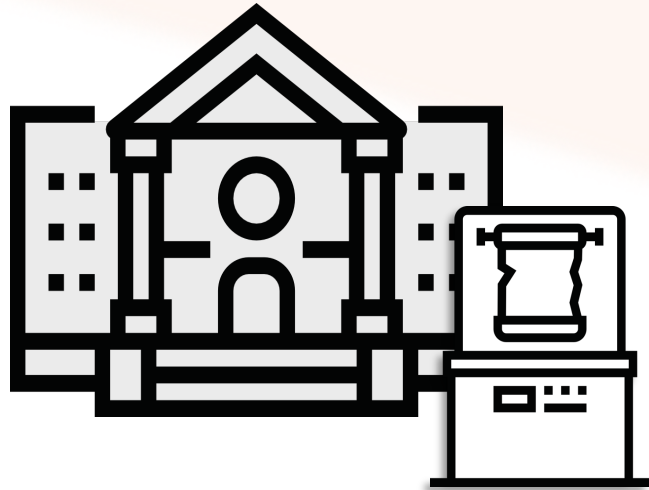
- Supporting the organization
- Belonging to the organization

What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations, Percent change between EOY 2019 and EOY 2025



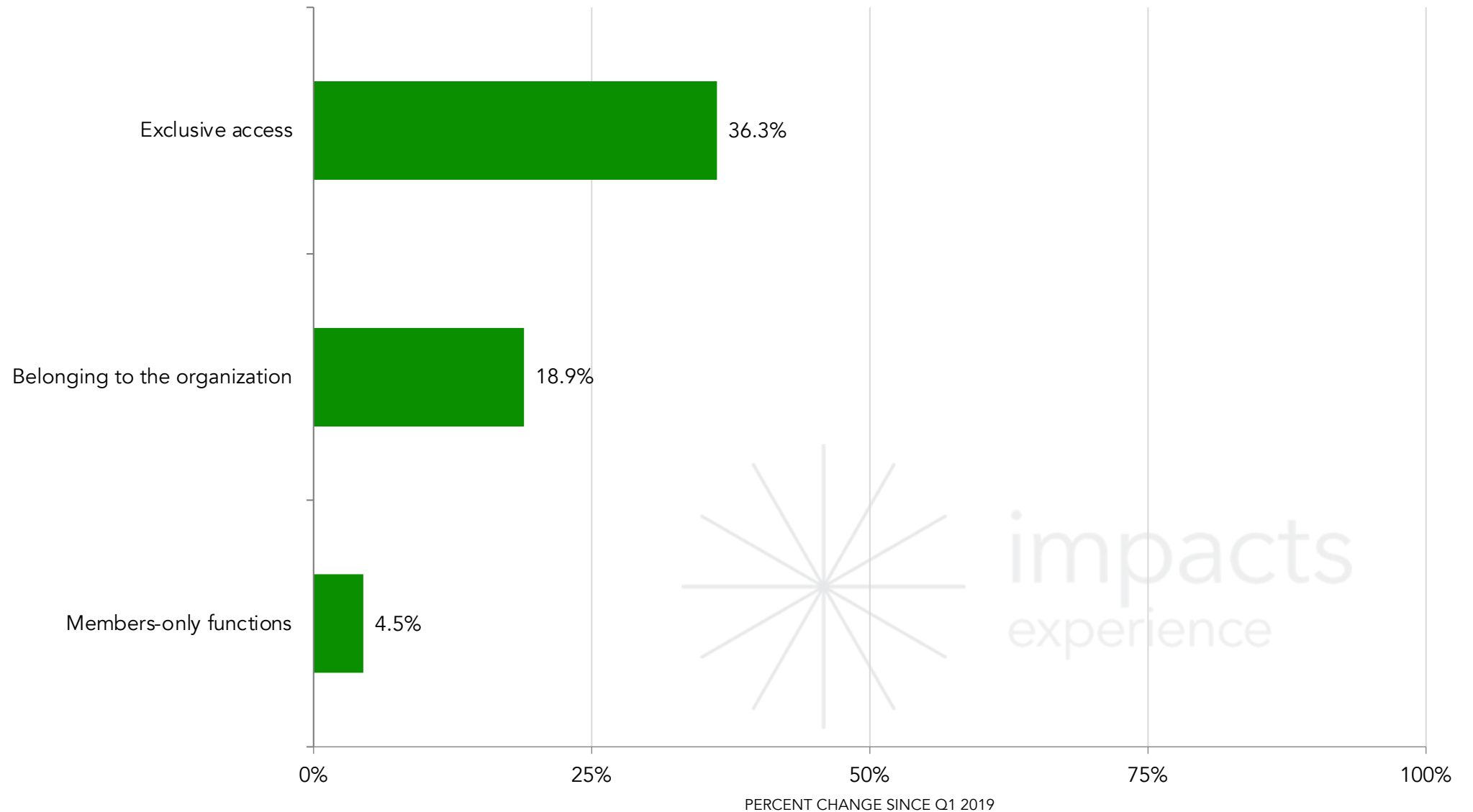
CONNECTION to your unique experiences



- **Exclusive access**
- **Priority access**
- **Members-only functions**

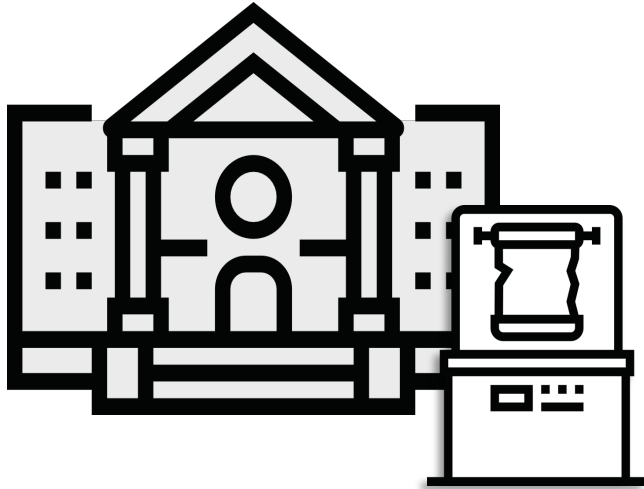
What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations, Percent change between EOY 2019 and EOY 2025



Membership benefit areas of growth

Connection to your history organization's...



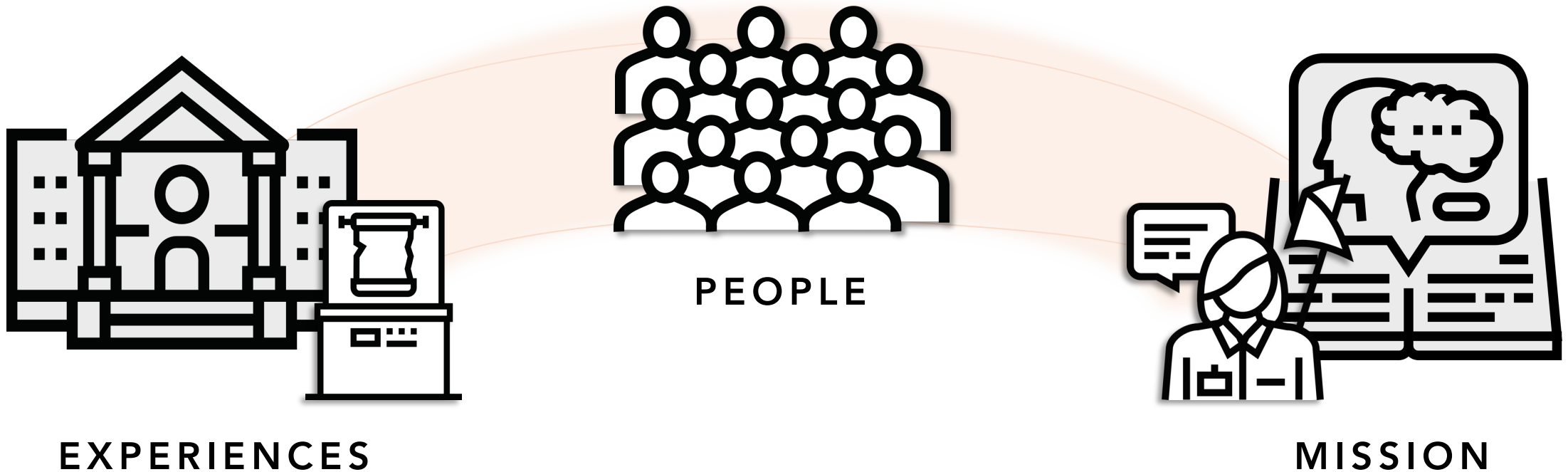
EXPERIENCES



MISSION

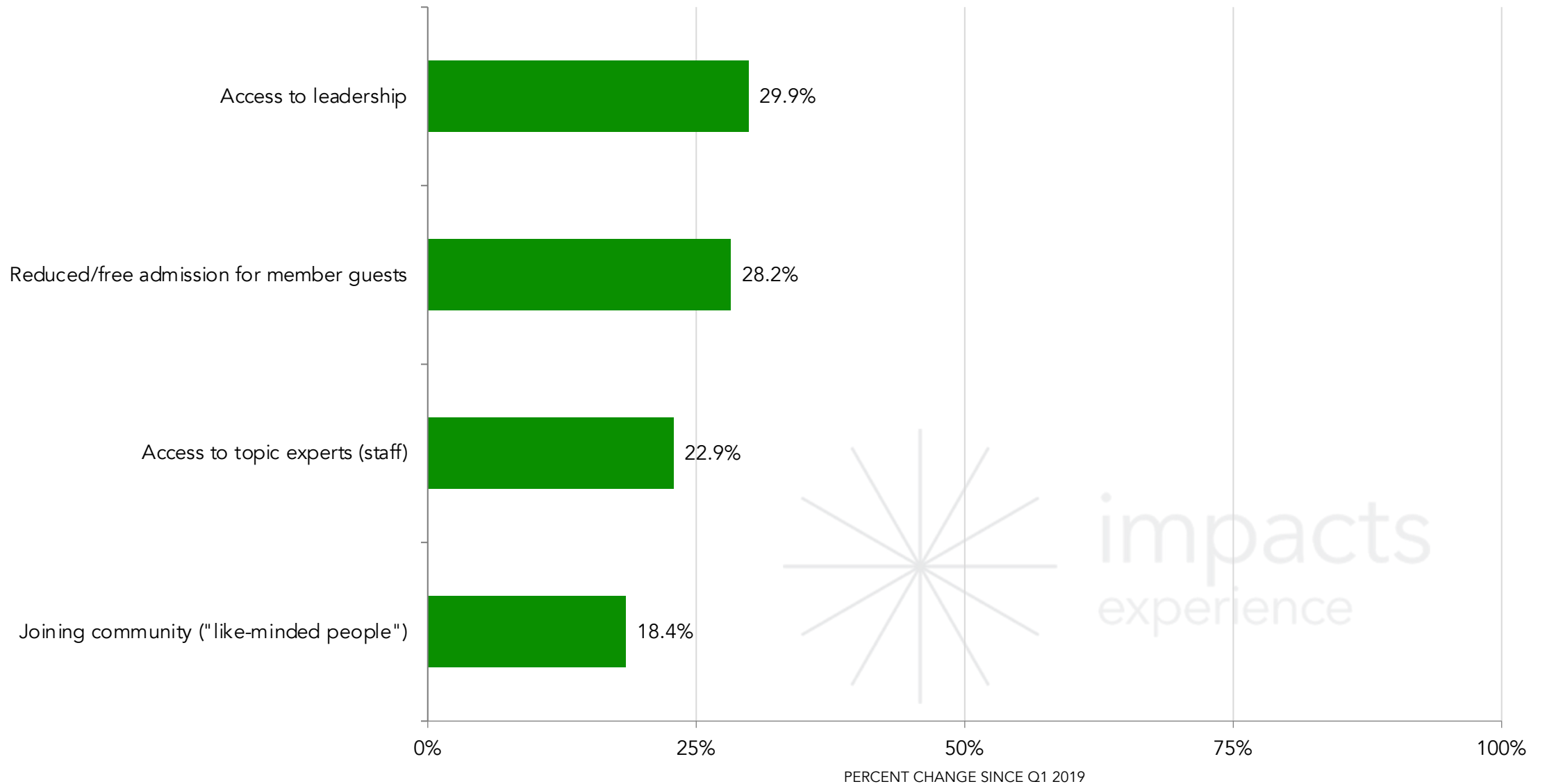
Membership benefit areas of growth

Connection to your history organization's...



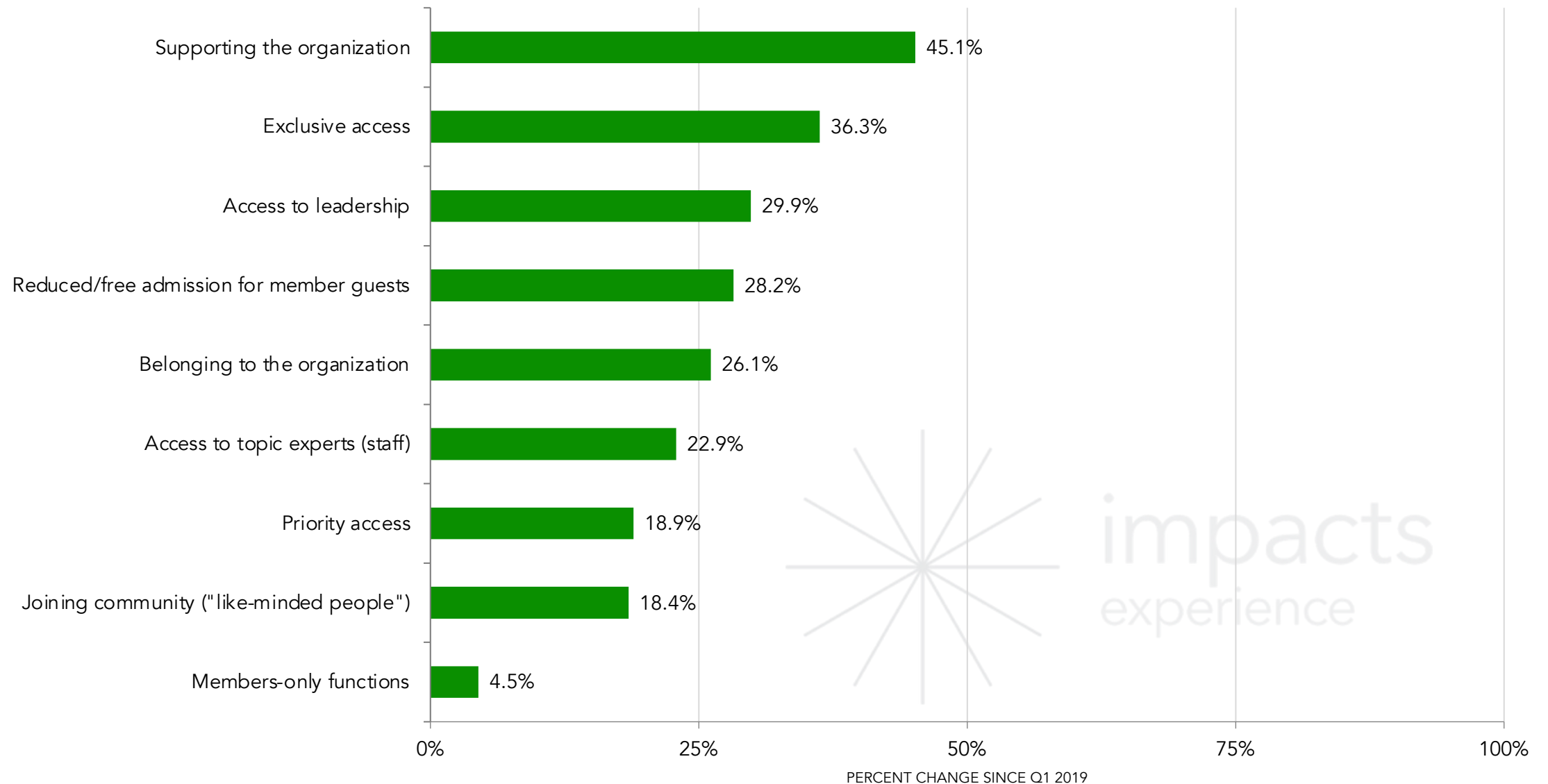
What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations, Percent change between EOY 2019 and EOY 2025



What is the primary benefit of your membership?

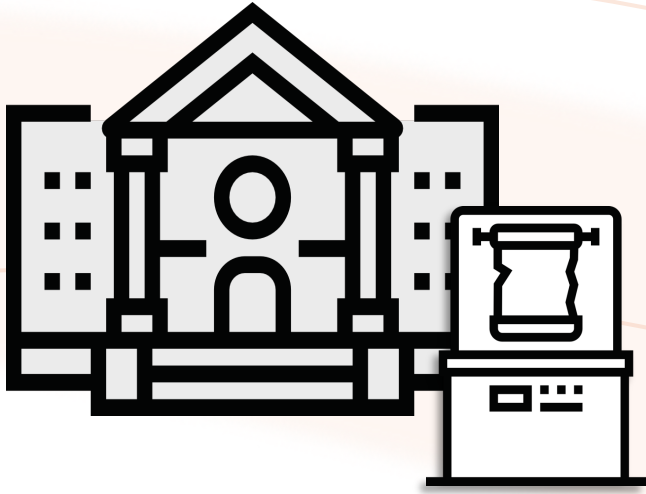
Self-identified members to US history organizations, Percent change between EOY 2019 and EOY 2025



For history organizations, the future of membership is not only **transactional**.

Your future is based in
CONNECTION.





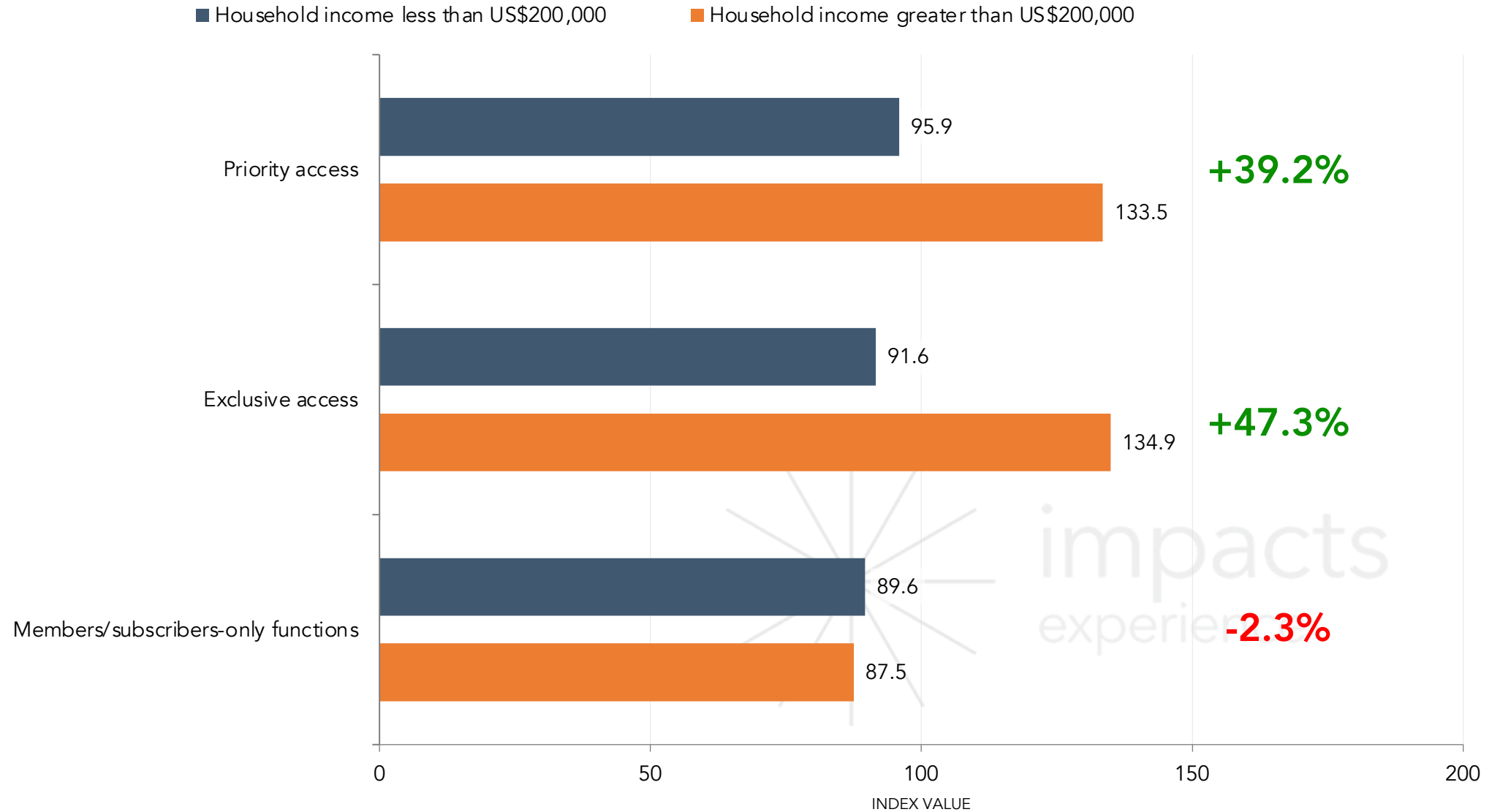
- **Exclusive access**
- **Priority access**

Experience-based
benefits

These benefits are
particularly important to a
VALUABLE SUBSET
of members.

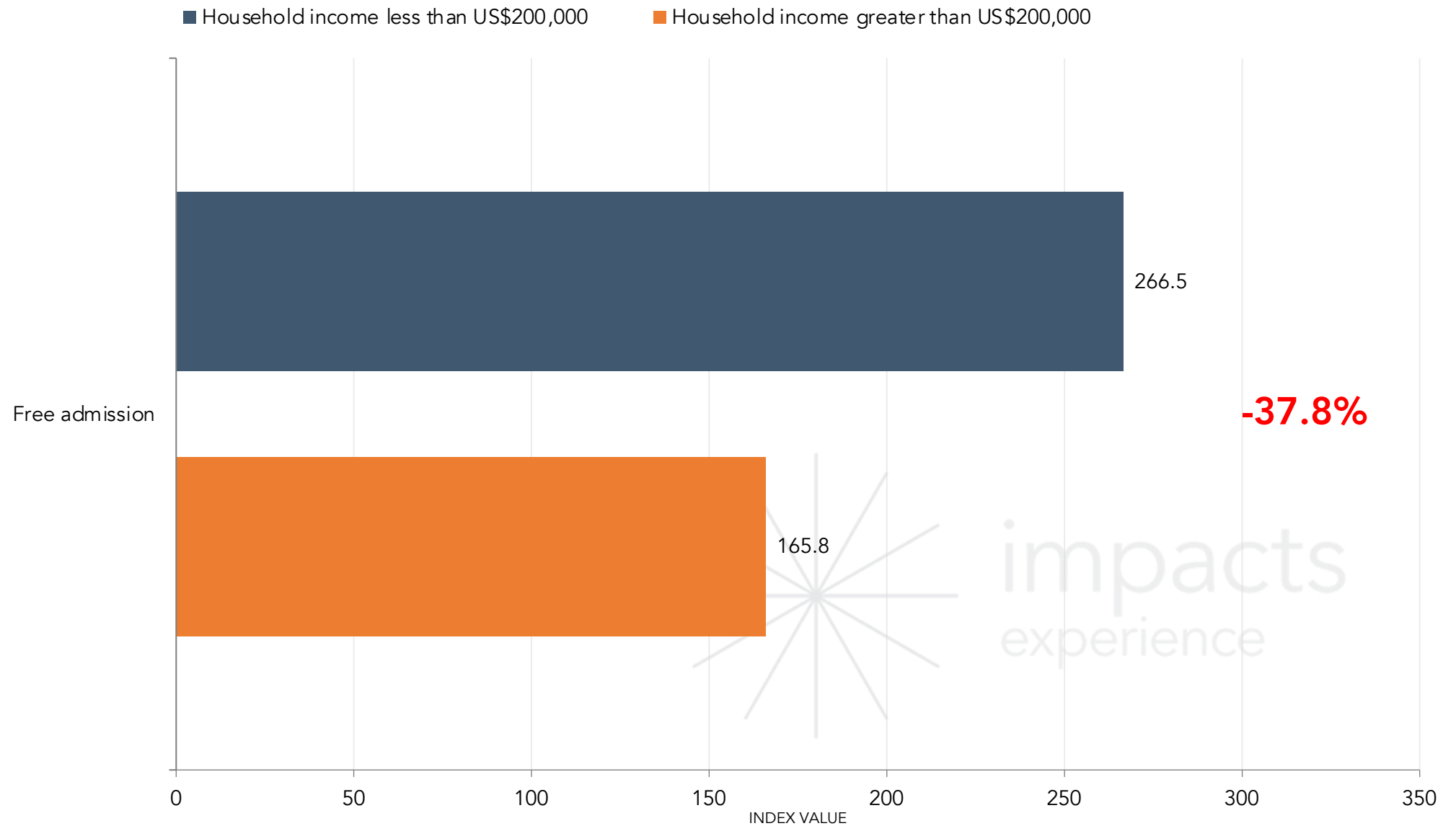
What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations by annual household income, EOY 2025

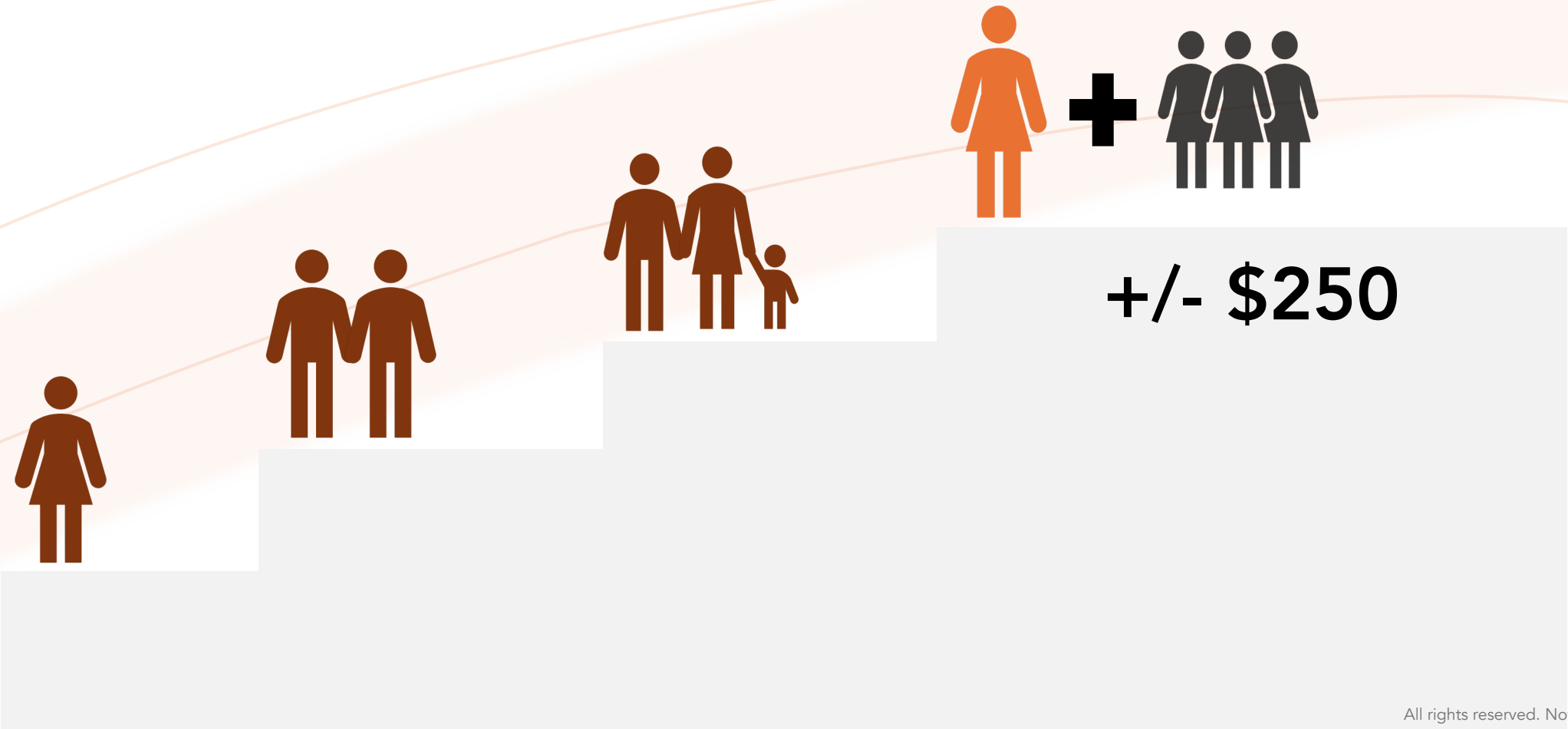


What is the primary benefit of your membership?

Self-identified members to US history organizations by annual household income, EOY 2025



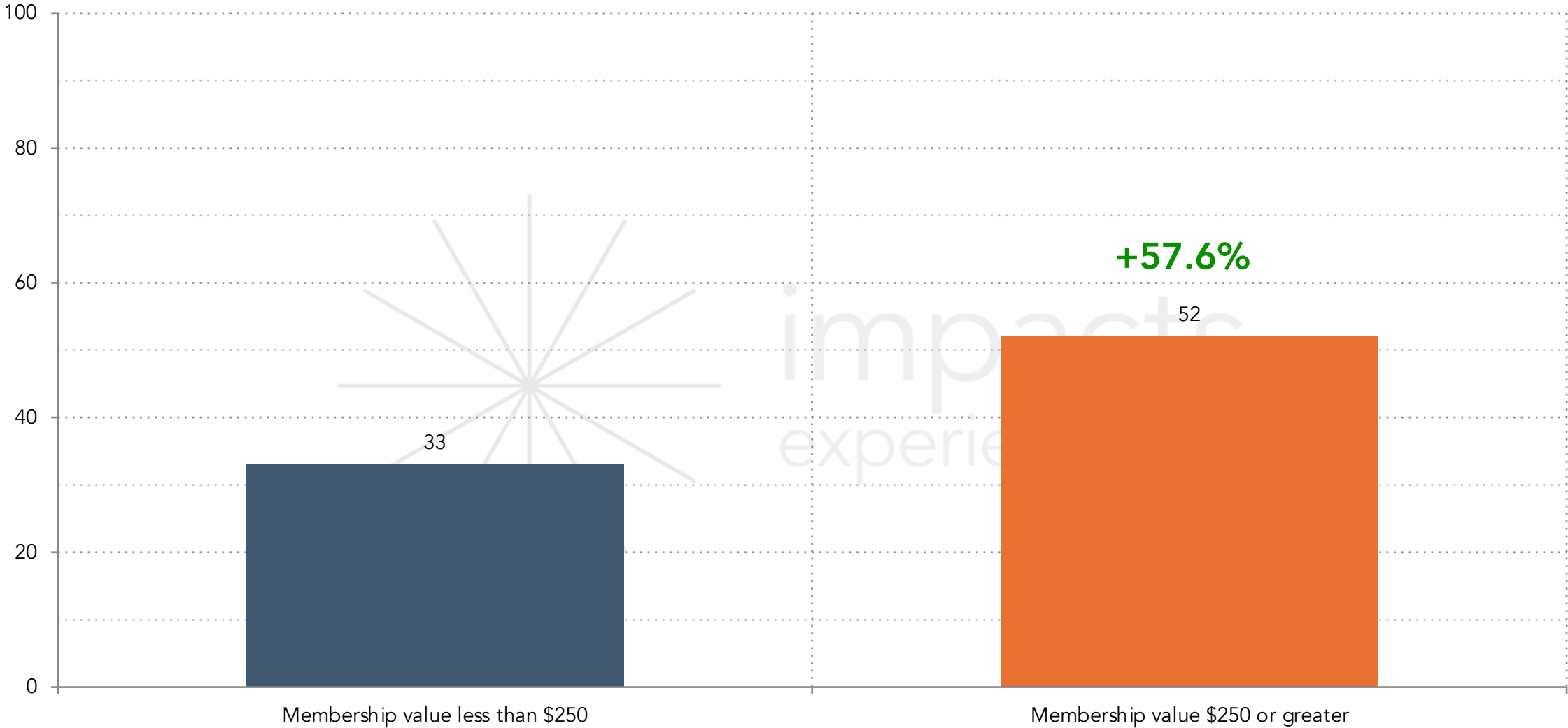
At what level does a **member** consider themselves to be primarily a **donor**?



Why are these members so
NOTEWORTHY?

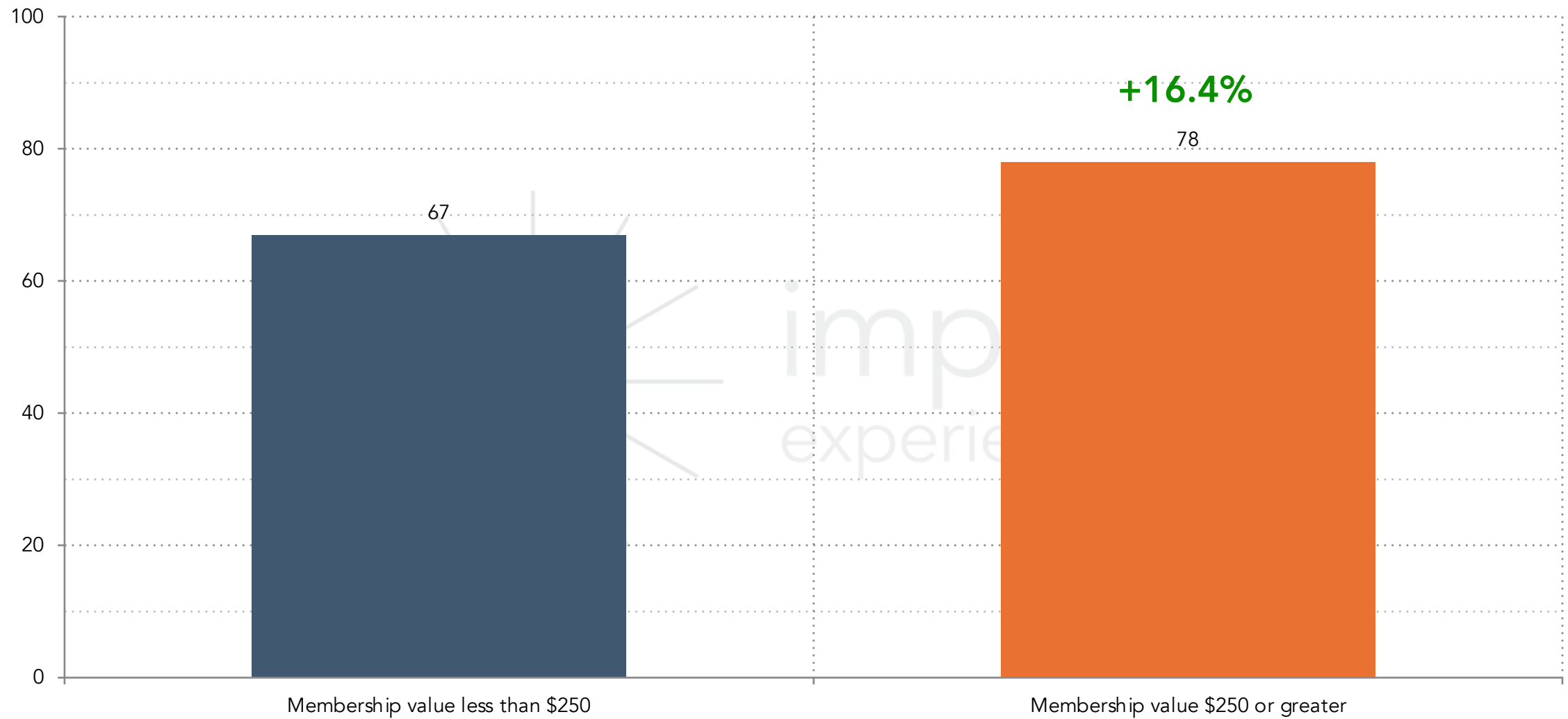
Propensity to **renew** by annual membership value

Self-identified US history member, EOY 2025



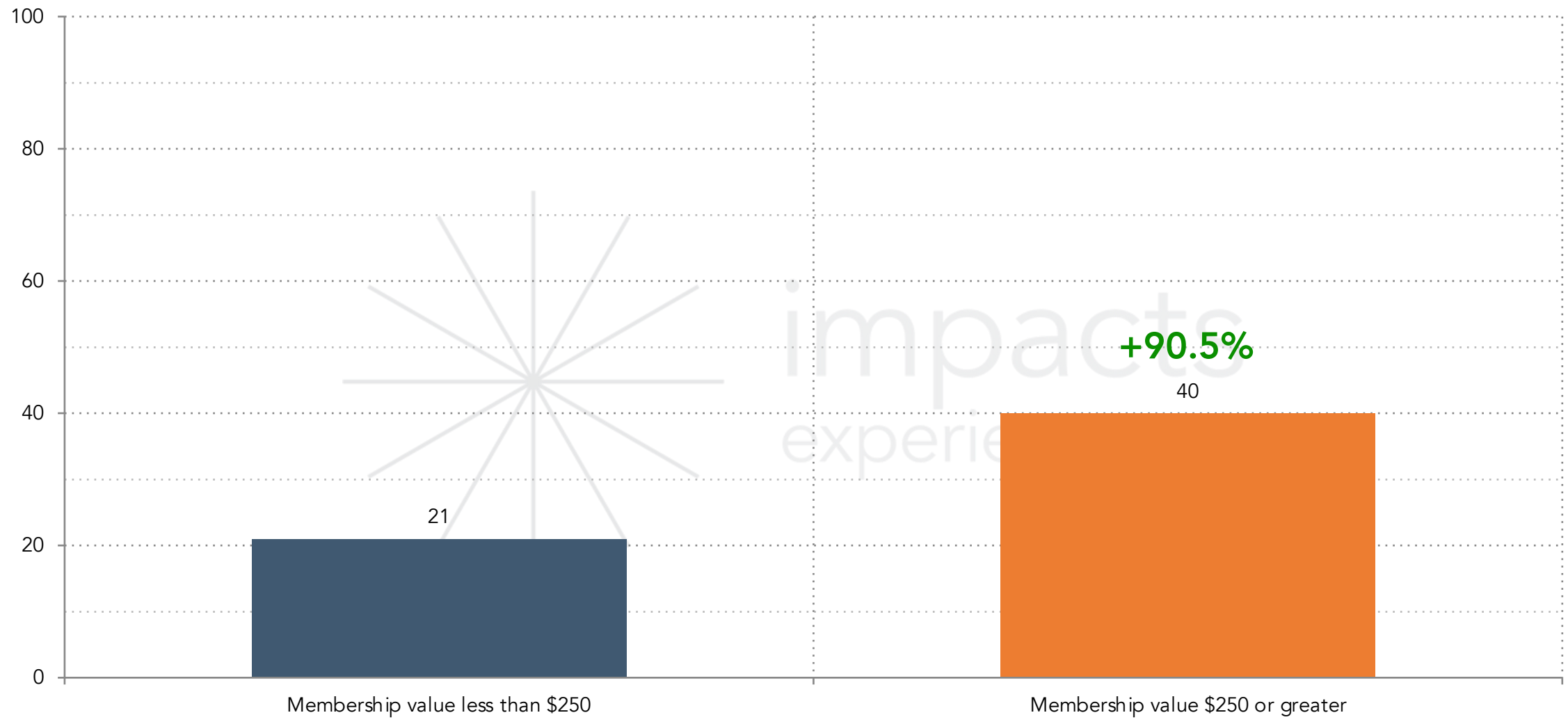
Propensity to **endorse the museum** by annual membership value

Self-identified US history member, EOY 2025



Propensity to **make an additional donation within one year** by annual membership value

Self-identified US history member, EOY 2025



TAKING DATA-INFORMED ACTION

Exclusive & priority access

- 1) Recognize that not all members/levels have the same motivations or level of expectations
- 2) Ease the pathway to philanthropic support
- 3) Are there enough benefits to encourage growth of your high-level membership base?
 - *Members-only hours, member lounges, etc. (exclusive access)*
 - *Member entrances, first access to tickets, etc. (priority access)*



- Belonging to the organization
- Supporting the organization

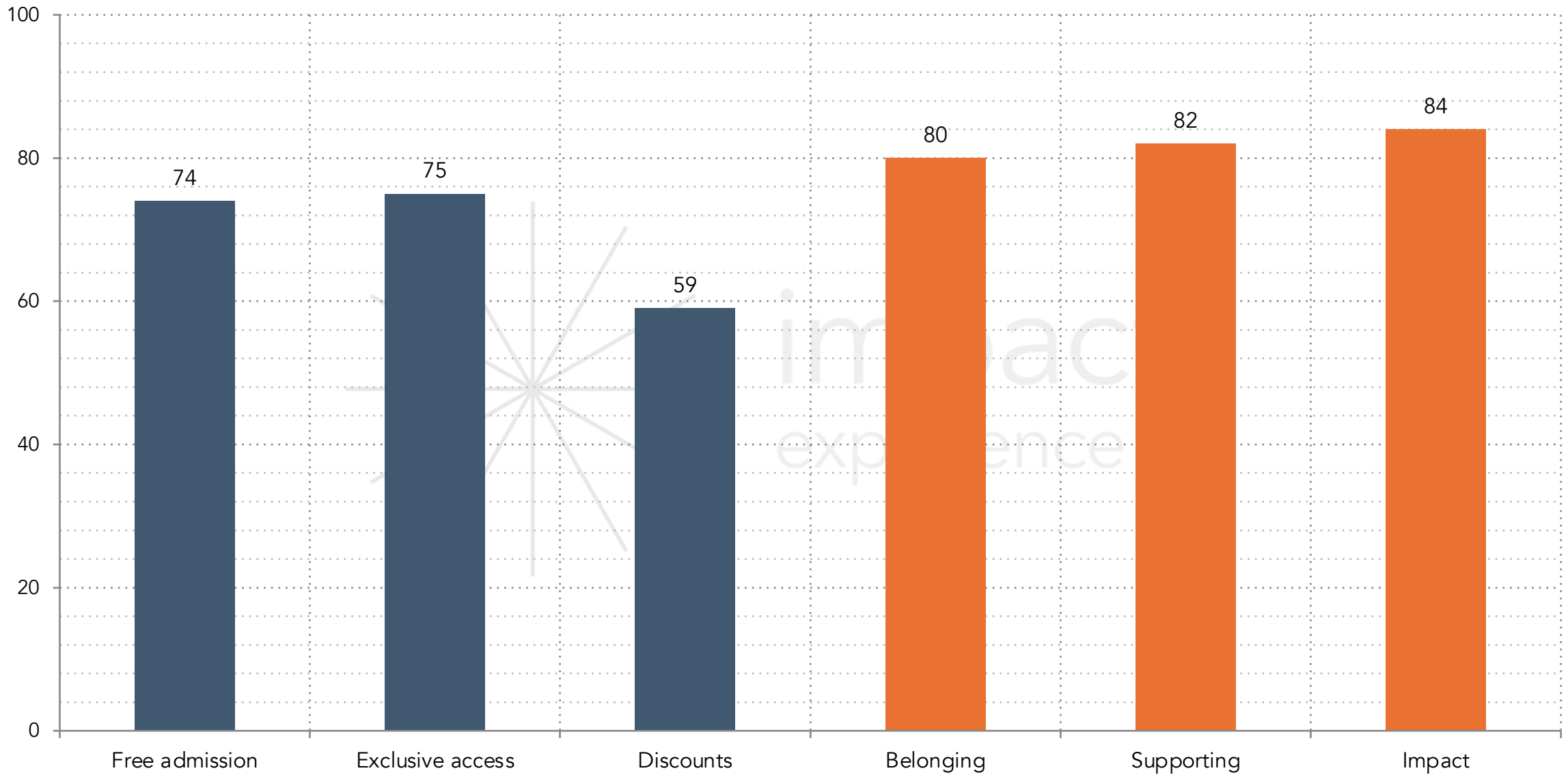
Mission-based benefits

MISSION-MOTIVATED MEMBERS
are among our most valuable.

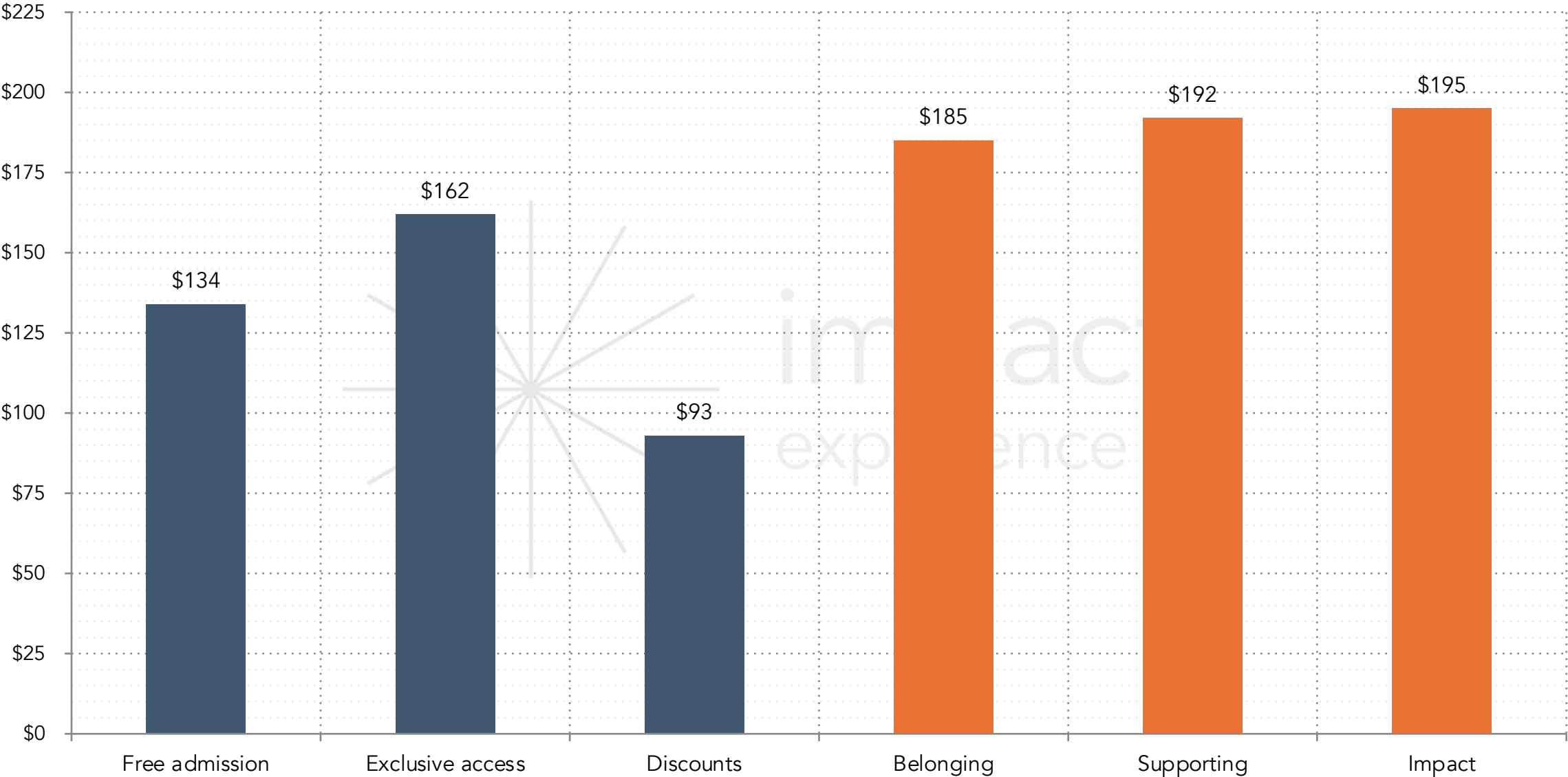
Here's why.

Value for membership cost by primary member benefit

Self-identified US history organization member, EOY 2025

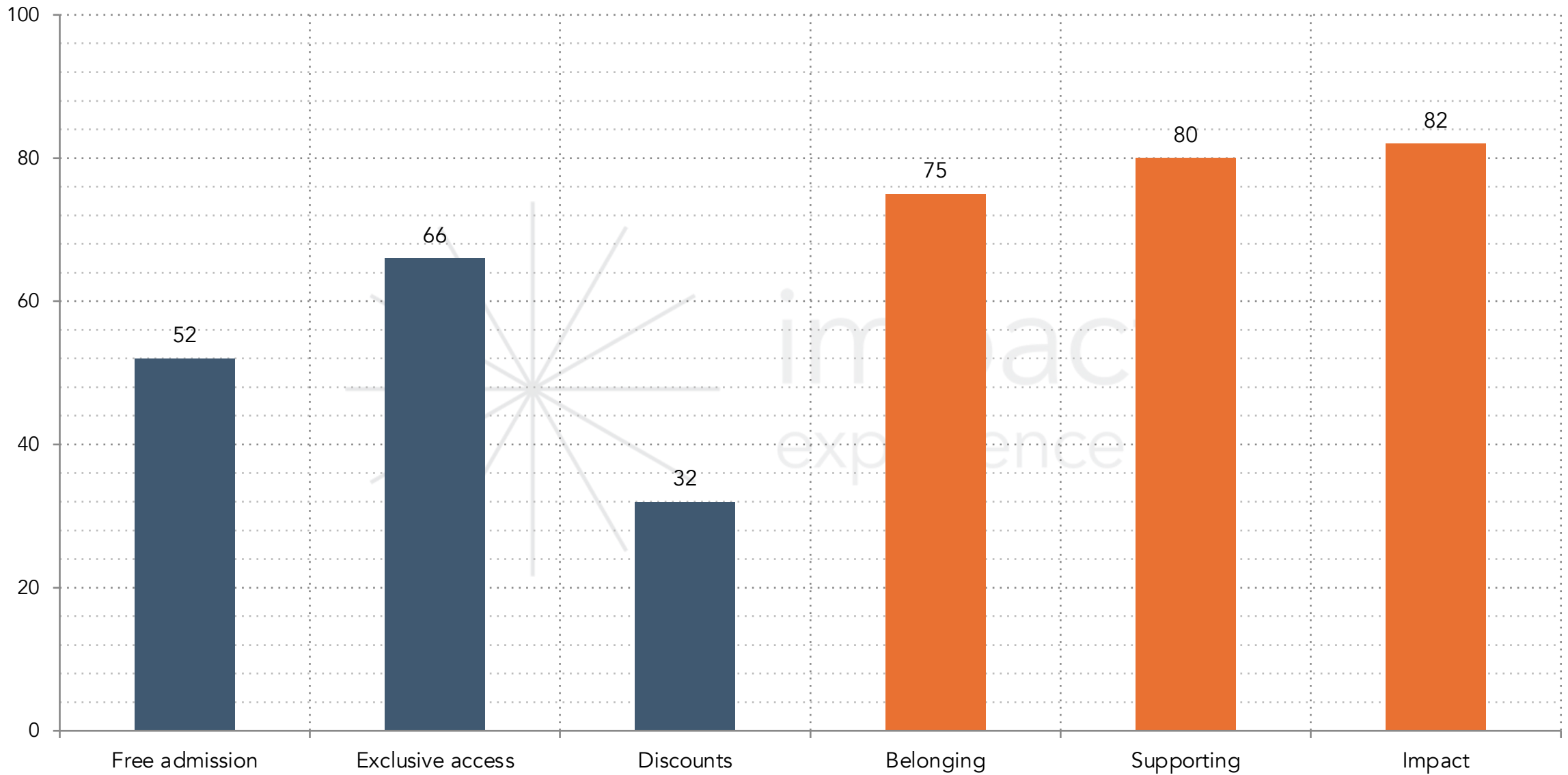


Average **annual membership cost** by primary member benefit
Self-identified US history organization member, EOY 2025



Propensity to renew by primary member benefit

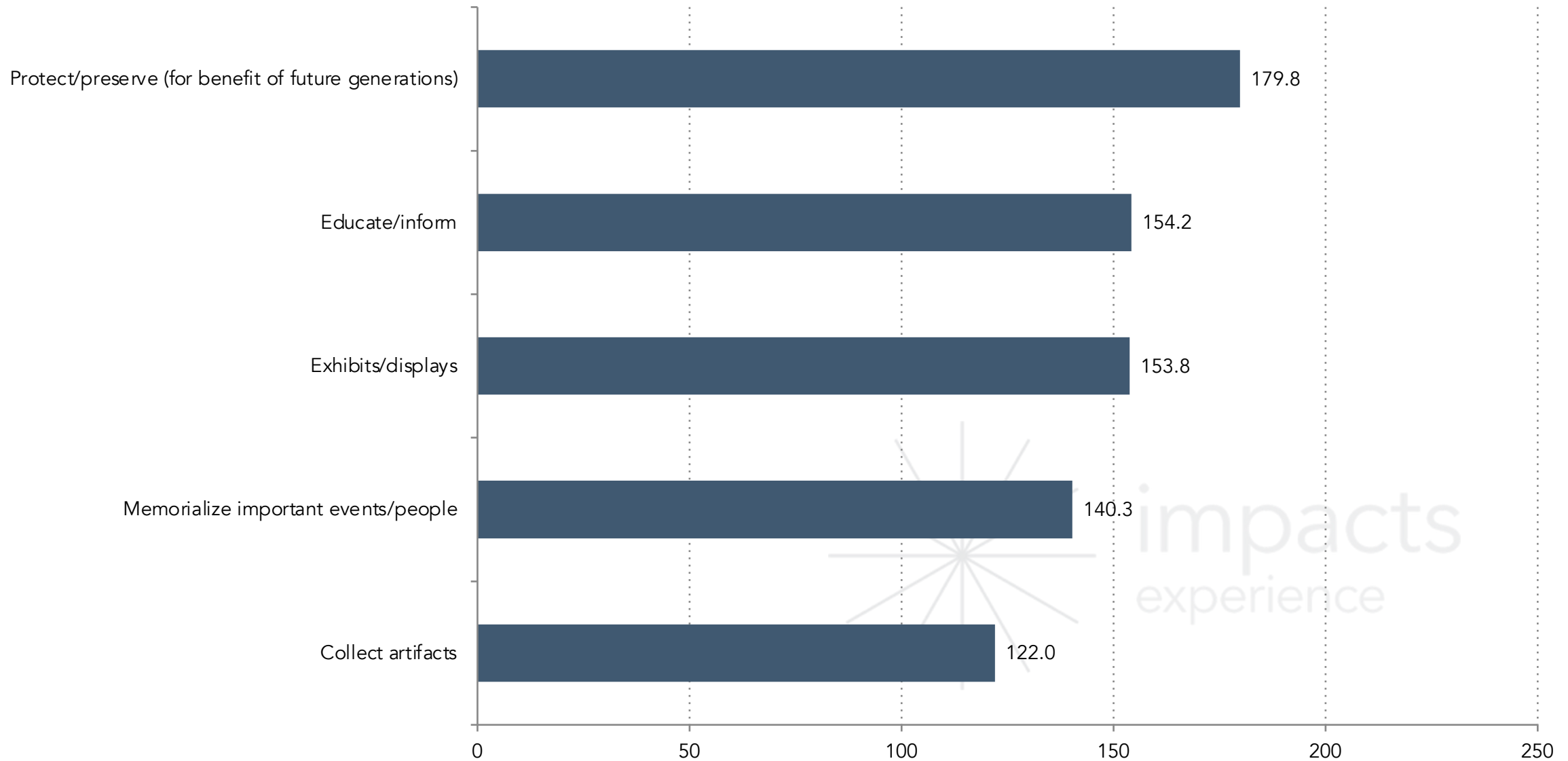
Self-identified US history organization member, EOY 2025



What **MEANINGFUL ACHIEVEMENTS**
do people associate with history organizations?

What meaningful actions or achievements do you associate with the [HISTORY ORGANIZATION]?

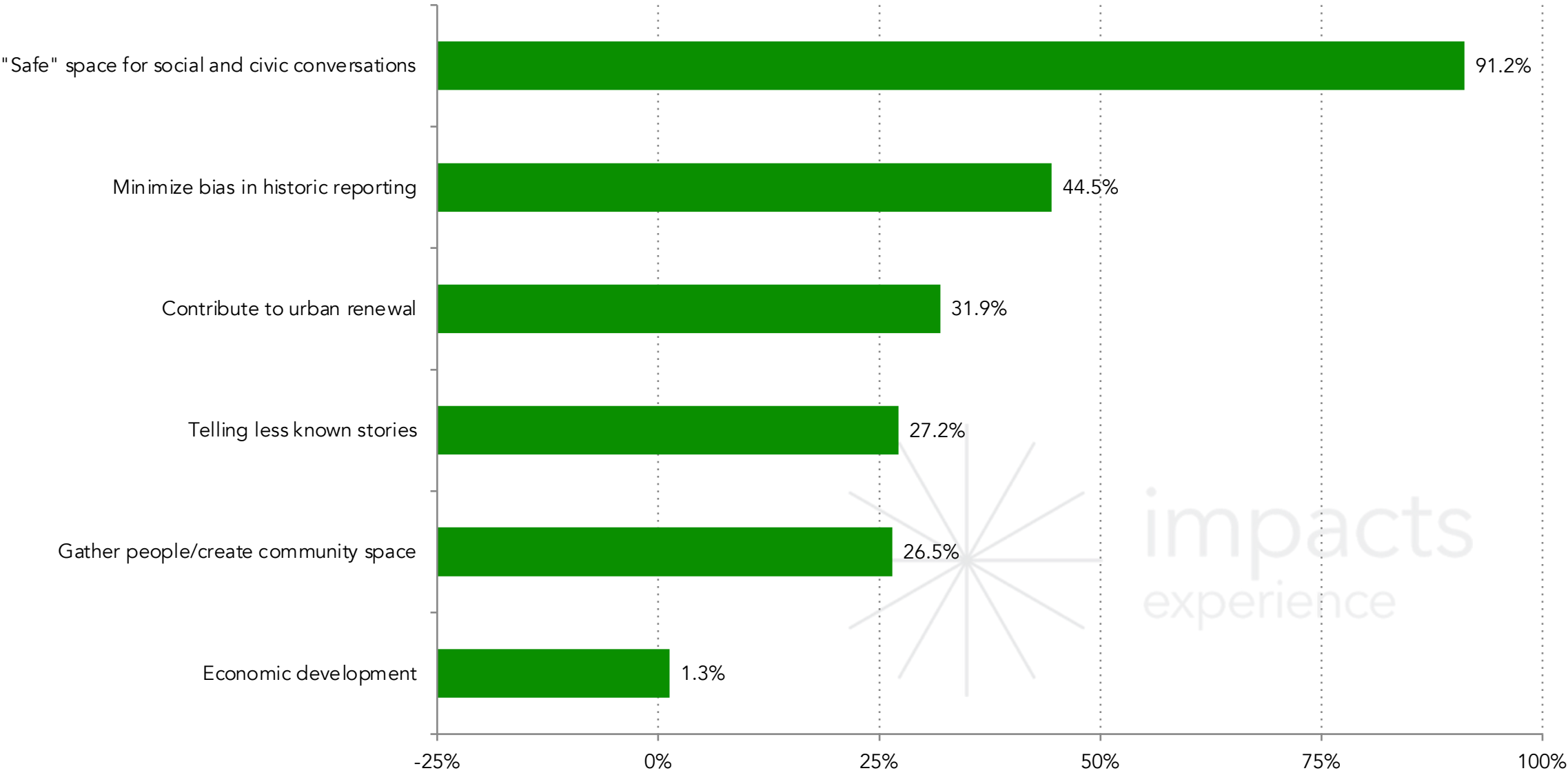
EOY 2025



Which **MEANINGFUL ACHIEVEMENTS**
have grown the most over the last three years?

What meaningful actions or achievements do you associate with the [HISTORY ORGANIZATION]?

Percent growth since 2023



SAFE SPACE FOR SOCIAL AND CIVIC CONVERSATIONS:

Creating a **trusted place** to engage in **difficult topics respectfully** using civil discourse with clear norms (respectful, fact-based), and the ability to **hear multiple perspectives** without pressure or judgement.

What are the three best things that you can do to support the mission of the ... ?

US exhibit-based organization high-propensity visitors, Lexical analysis by descending frequency of mention

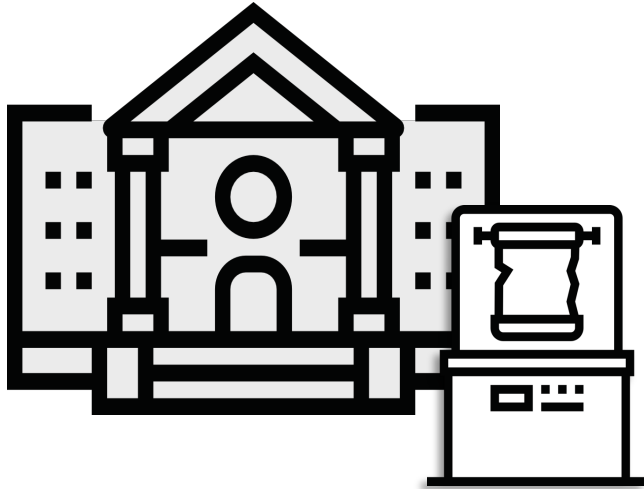
RANK	DESCRIPTION	EOY 2019 VALUE	EOY 2025 VALUE	PERCENT CHANGE
1	Join the organization/become a member	147.5	176.9	+19.9%
2	Donate to the organization	147.1	148.7	+1.1%
3	Buy a ticket to the organization	142.8	134.3	-6.0%

TAKING DATA-INFORMED ACTION

Belonging and supporting the organization's mission

- 1) Get clear on how you “show up” for your mission.
- 2) Highlight your mission as a top benefit of membership.
- 3) Thank members for supporting your mission and remind them of your *(and their)* ongoing impact.

Connection to your history organization's...



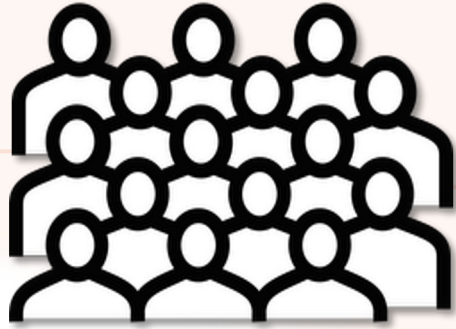
EXPERIENCES

How can we
connect these?



MISSION





- Reduced/free admission for member guests
- Joining a community (like-minded people)
- Access to leadership
- Access to topic experts (staff)

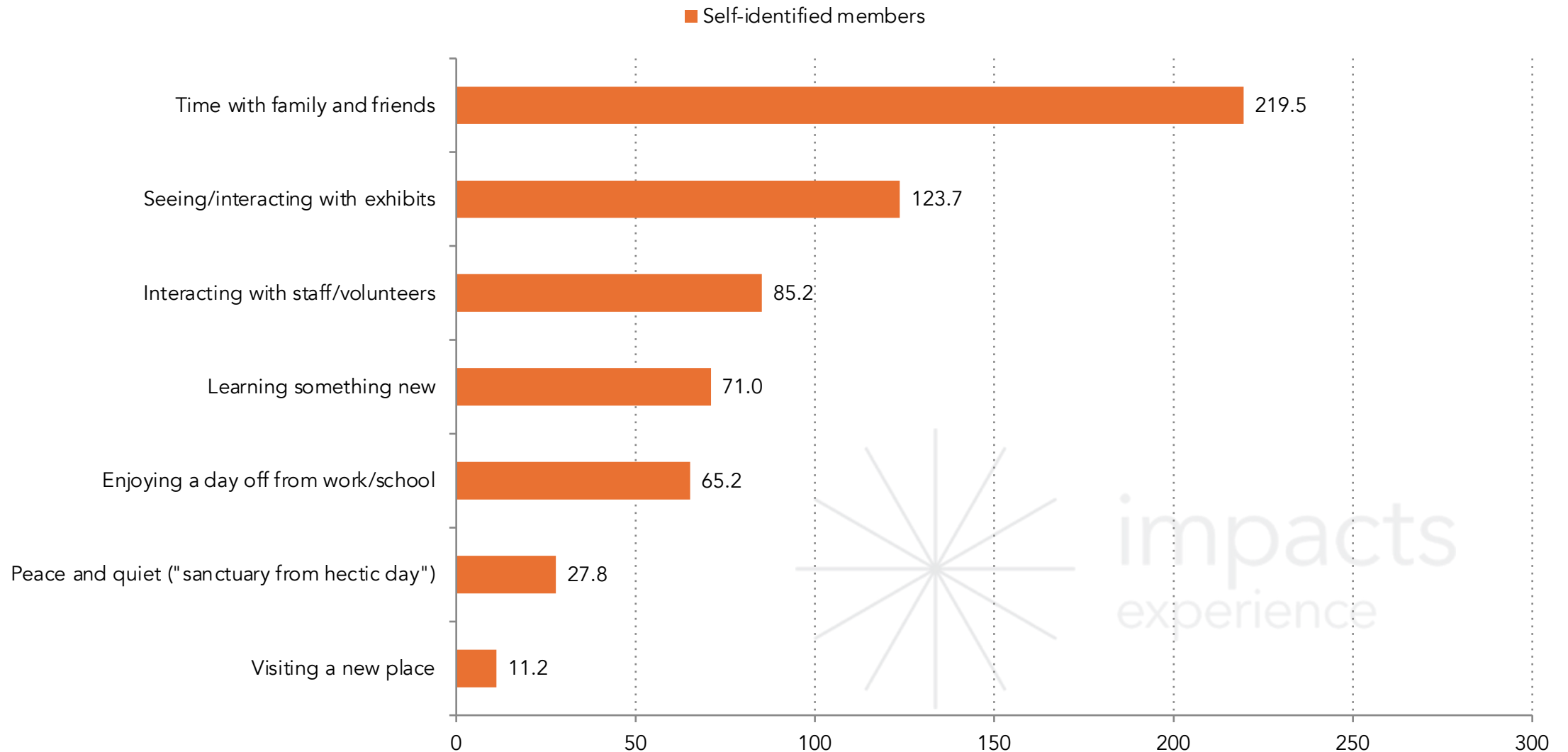
These benefits
are about
CONNECTING
to **EACH OTHER.**





What is the best thing about a visit to the museum?

Recent adult visitors to a history organization, EOY 2025, Members vs. non-members

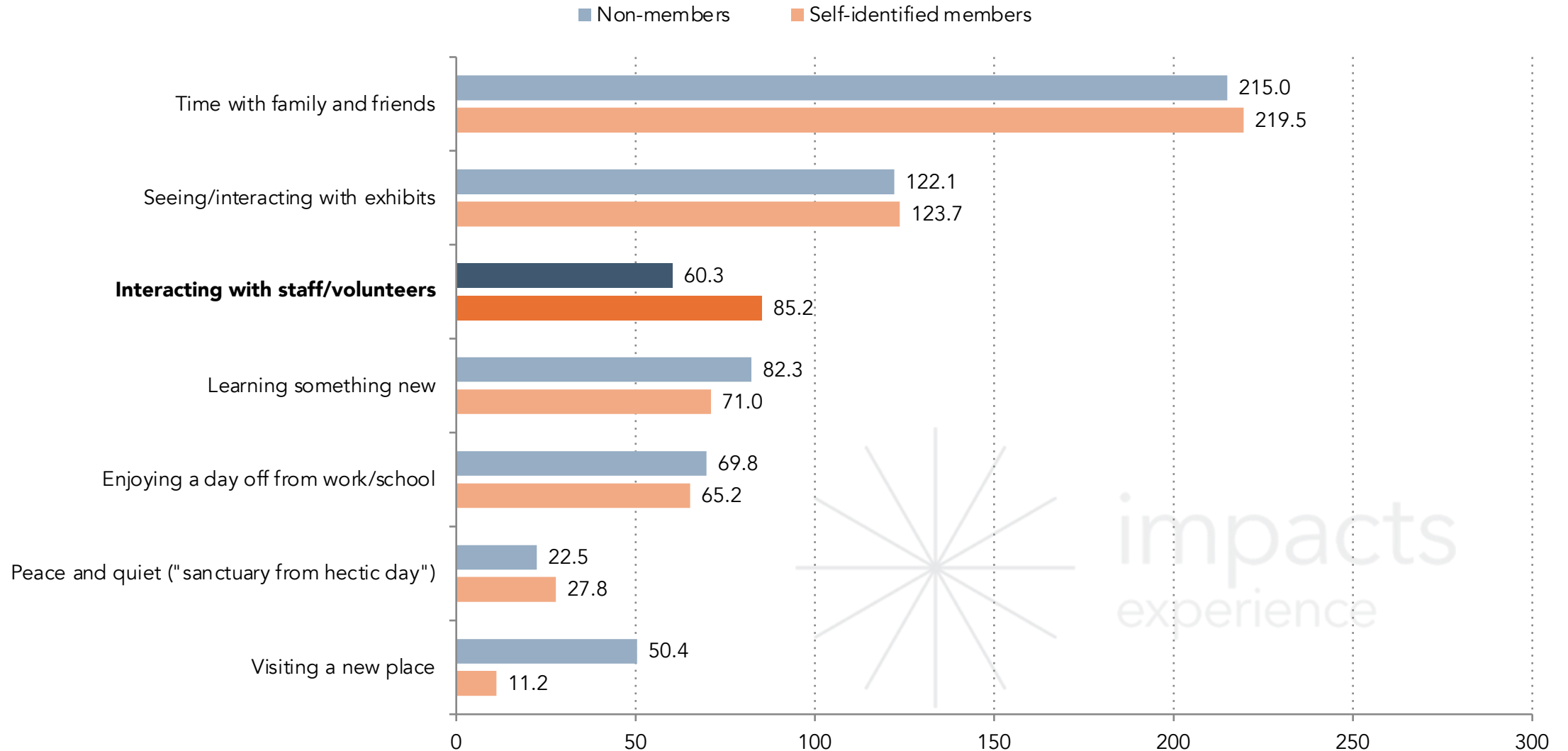


You are facilitators of
SHARED EXPERIENCES.



What is the best thing about a visit to the museum?

Recent adult visitors to a history organization, EOY 2025, Members vs. non-members

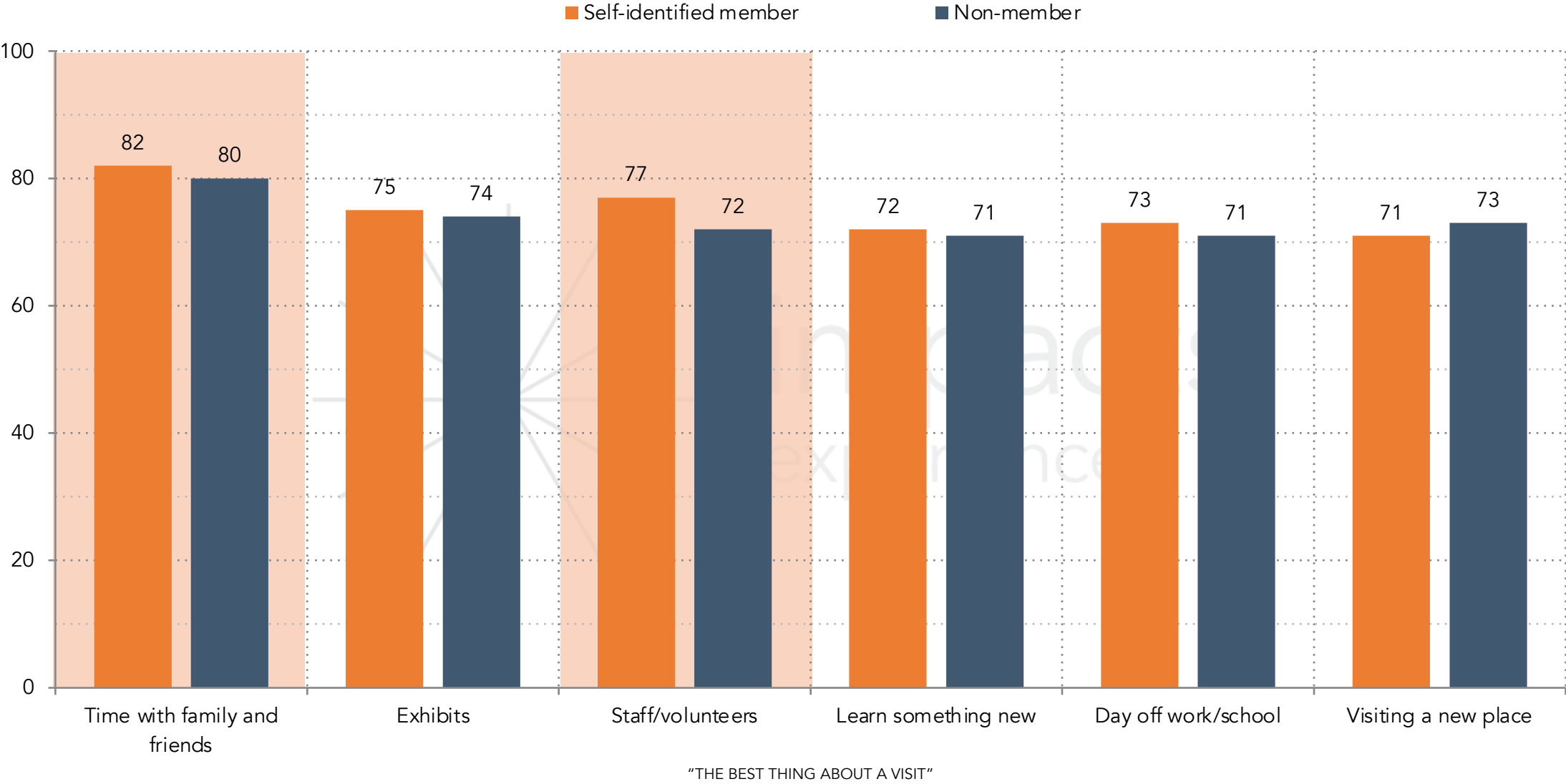


It's not only interactions between
friends and family that matter.

It's also
INTERACTIONS WITH YOU.

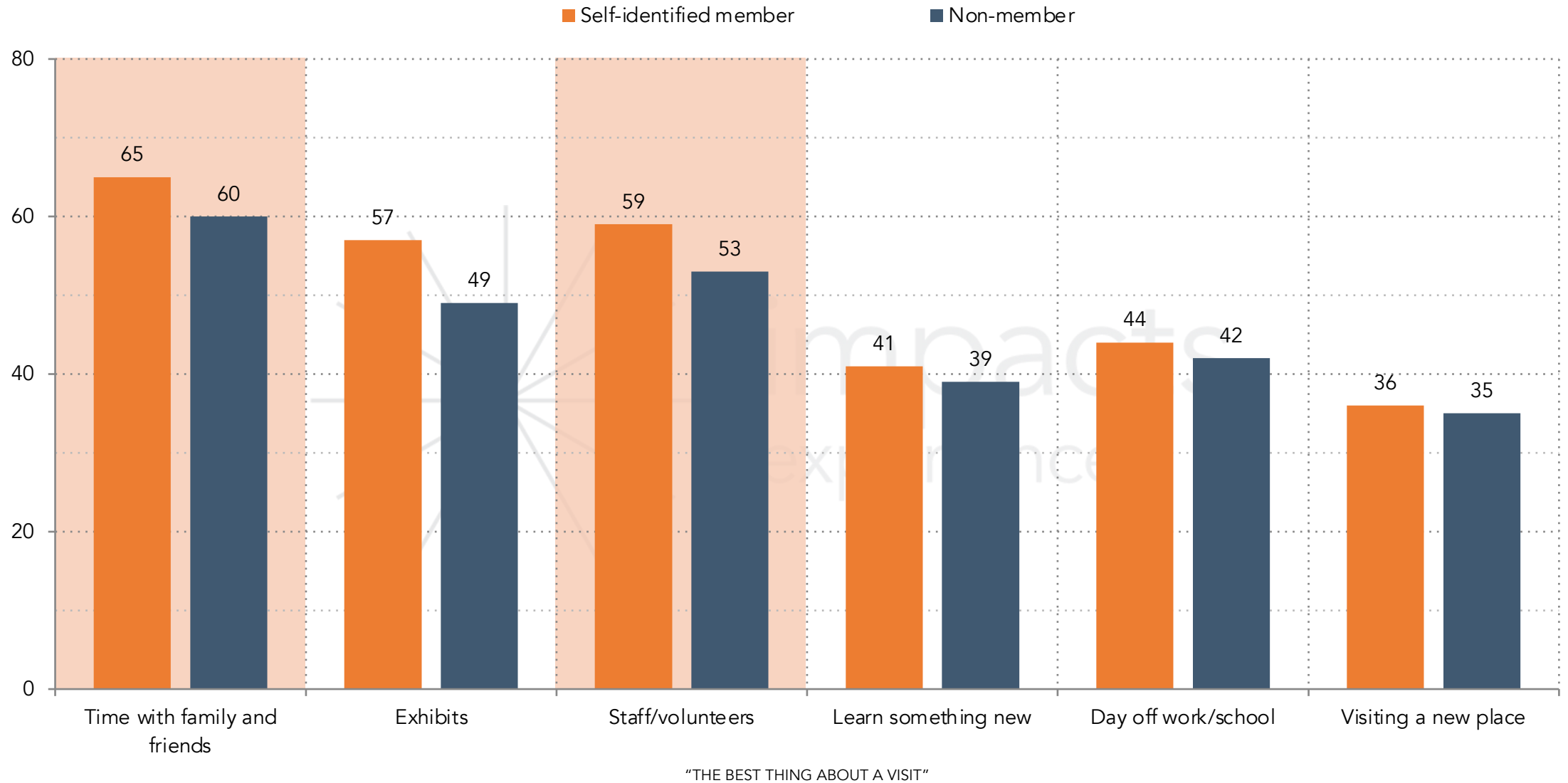
Overall **satisfaction** by best visit attribute

Recent adult visitors to a US history organization, EOY 2025



Intent to revisit within one year by best visit attribute

Recent adult visitors to a US history organization, EOY 2025



You don't only tell stories.

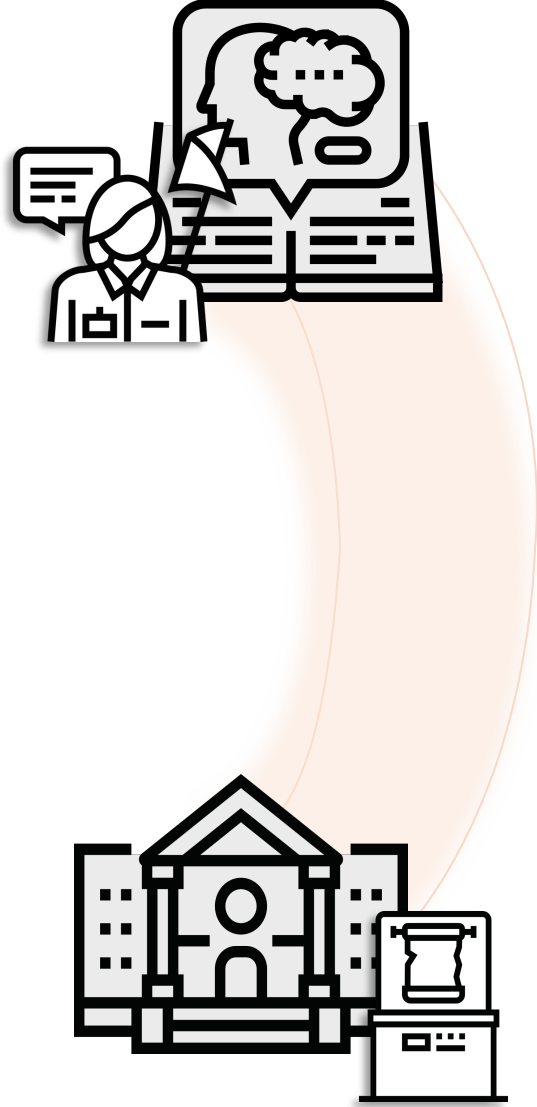
YOU MAKE STORIES.



You are facilitators of
SHARED EXPERIENCES.

And members want you to help
them **CONNECT** with others
around your important work.





The top growing membership
benefits center around
CONNECTION
and **BELONGING.**

TAKING DATA-INFORMED ACTION

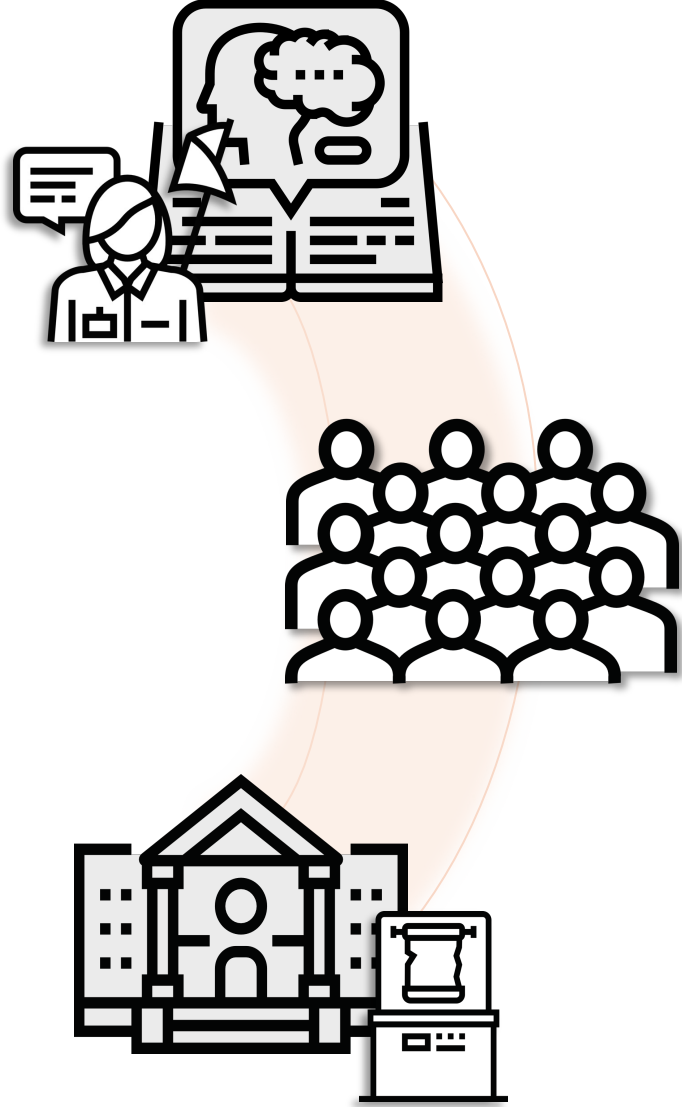
Access to leadership / topic experts; admission for member guests; joining community

- 1) Facilitate shared experiences.
 - Provide connection opportunities in exhibits and programs.
 - Assess when to stand back and when to interact.
- 2) Train **everyone** to be an advocate for your mission and onsite connection.
- 3) Highlight staff expertise.
- 4) Know your superpower: making stories.



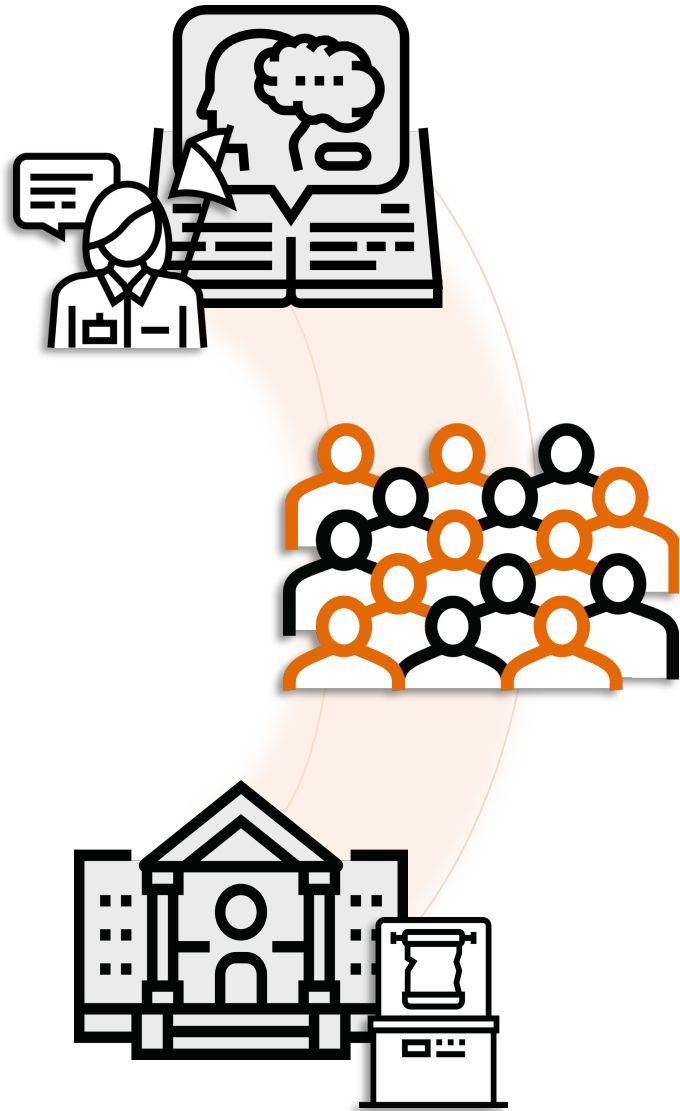




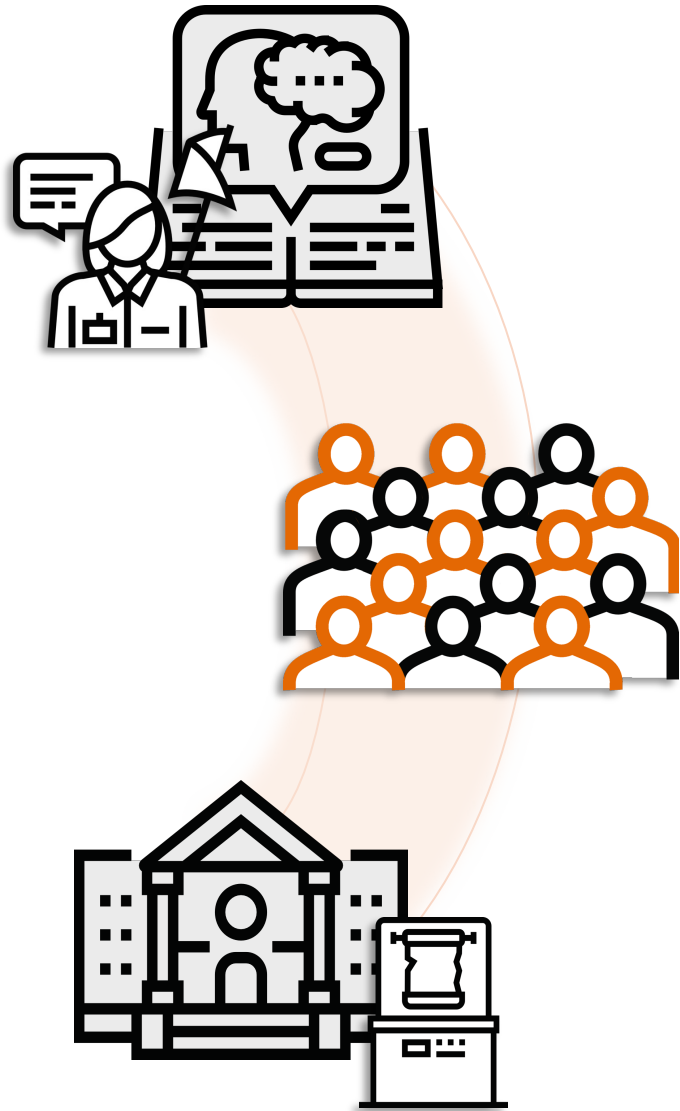


You are MAKING HISTORY and writing it.

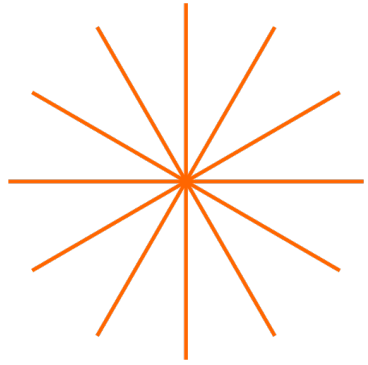
And **PEOPLE** are at
the center of this.



MEMBERS are at
the center of this.



YOU are at
the center of this.



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Connect with us!

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