Diversity and Inclusion Practices in Nonprofit Associations

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Acknowledgements

The Diversity and Inclusion Research Team wishes to thank the following people for their support of the work done to complete this project:

Bethany Steiner for supporting our team in exploring diversity and inclusion. Thank you for advocating and guiding for us along the way.

Ben Clark for the data, analysis, and visualization tutorials when we were too far in the weeds.

Mari Watanabe and Sara Curiel Paez for providing valuable insights from extensive practitioner experience that we would never uncover during our 20-week time limit.

Overview of Project

The aim of this mixed methods study is to explore and contribute to the literature by describing how associations develop and support diversity and inclusion (D&I) practices. The study was conducted using an online survey, focus groups, and interviews with practitioners.

The report is designed to assist organizations in developing practices and hopefully improve the inequalities facing the nation. This report does so by examining individual association's leadership and their attempts, challenges, and successes, implementing D&I practices. Readers will probably identify the location of their organization and their professional field or trade along the path towards successful implementation. Understanding their own location compared with other associations, may uncover key waypoints to assist their movement towards successful D&I implementation.

Associations and Their Historic Purpose

Associations are the focus of this research because they have a long and recognized history of leading change within their professions and industries. Professional associations hold critical roles in "theorizing" change (Greenwood et al., 2002), being thought leaders, supporting innovation and assisting in the spread of those innovations across an industry, and new innovations in policy (Balla, 2001). Others argue that the knowledge "work" of professional associations is more valuable now than ever because of a globalized workforce (Nerland & Karseth, 2015). In other words, associations can directly impact the implementation of policies, practices, and programs across their members and in their field[1] more generally.

Associations can support different types of members. Sometimes those members are individuals. For example, a medical association may support individual physicians in their personal development, certification, and advocacy. Other associations focus on institutional members, like the American Association of Universities. Some associations support both. For

[1]Field was defined in the survey as the profession, trade, and/or industry the association represents.

example, a medical association might include both individual physicians and schools that train physicians. All of these variations of associations are included in this study.

Also included are associations representing different major groups defined by the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) (2018). For example, survey respondents represented the NTEE major groups of health, education, mutual/membership benefit organization, and many others. This study attempts to understand how D&I practices are being disseminated through these different groups of associations and their fields.

Executive Summary

In this study, a national survey of association executives sought to gather data on the best diversity and inclusion practices utilized within nonprofit associations and their fields. The qualitative portion of the study – interviews and focus groups – examined examples of the most effective best practices and collaborations. While there is a host of literature and toolkits on D&I available to executive directors and leadership, this study finds trends that highlight the power of best practice in D&I as well as collaboration to bring about quality experiences specifically among associations, their membership, and their fields.

Associations report in this study that they embrace D&I policies to attempt to build an organization that reflects the communities they serve and the nation at large. However, the survey finds that only 51% of associations are using such policies or including D&I values in their mission statement. They find quality outcomes arising from partnerships with other nonprofits both in their field or in their communities. That does not mean that building capacity for D&I work is as simple as collaborating more often. Organizations that are engaged in this work report a higher rate of conflict and resistance in terms of lack of support from leadership, membership and staff. Those engaged associations also report difficulties in securing funding or staffing for D&I initiatives. These challenges demonstrate the need to utilize readily available strategies and resources that are geared towards best practices of D&I among associations.

Based on the key findings within this report, the D&I Research Team recommends the following best practices:

Best Practices in Diversity and Inclusion

- Prioritize a diversity and inclusion agenda among leadership.
- Designate a staff member responsible for diversity and inclusion goals and implementation – preferably the Executive Director, CEO, or VP.

- Create a diversity and inclusion statement and make it readily apparent and easy to reference on the organization's website, in all annual reports, and employment postings.

National professional associations, dominant among the respondents in this study, also disseminate awareness of best D&I practices in their field by setting agendas among conveners – meetings of fellow leaders or national conferences in the field. The interview portion of the study illustrated that leadership at the regional or national level develops any D&I agenda at these conferences and sets the tone for implementation and education. Whether that field is law or medicine, the trades, or commerce-based, when nearly half of respondents identify as having D&I policies, activities and programs, and only 40% of responding organizations integrate D&I in their mission or values, there is much room for further organizational self-examination, planning and collaboration to implement best practices.

Based on the key findings gathered within this report, the D&I Research Team recommends the following ways to use collaboration to enhance processes:

Collaborative Practices to Improve Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes

- Associations should partner with nonprofits and educational entities to improve D&I and recruitment.
- Associations should collaborate to implement D&I efforts in their field.
- Associations should collaborate with other organizations to select speakers, and events, to improve their outreach.
- Associations should seek out collaboration to fulfill the goals of recruitment, hiring, or training of their leadership, employees, members, or volunteers.
- Before initiating a collaboration, associations should meet with their potential partners and identify a clear purpose, roles, and metrics of success.

Methodology

This research project was conducted over four phases, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to solicit data and inputs from associations.

Focus groups with association executives. The first phase of this study consisted of two focus groups with a convenience sample of eleven association leaders in October 2017. Executives from a variety of geographic locations and fields were asked to come to common definitions of diversity and inclusion. (n=2)

National survey of association executives. Using data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics, 1,713 nonprofits holding 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status were invited to participate in an online survey. Participants answered questions about their D&I practices, their collaborative efforts with membership or other nonprofits, and the challenges they face in advancing their D&I work. 278 association representatives took the survey for a response rate of 16%.

Interviews with association staff and executives. Survey respondents indicated a willingness to provide further assistance for phone interviews. Interviewees shared more in-depth perspectives about the survey topics on the phone. Interviewers invited them to participate in group interviews (n=10).

Group interviews with associations. Organizations that were willing to participate even further joined the research team for group interviews that focused on D&I best practices, challenges, collaborations, and needed resources. Participants shared artifacts such as policies, collaborative strategies, and metrics for D&I (n=4).

Survey Respondents

Most survey respondents were either executive directors (52%) or board chairs (27%) of associations. If unable to get access to the executive director or board chair, the research team contacted the highest ranking member of the association staff or board that could be contacted. A majority of survey respondents were white (83%), non-hispanic (94%) individuals. There was a fairly even split between male (49%) and female (47%) respondents, as well as 501(c)(3) (41%) and 501(c)(6) (41%). More than half (51%) represented professional associations. For a full list of survey respondent demographics see Appendix A.

Diversity and Inclusion Practices

Associations have different approaches to advance D&I in their organizations. In the survey, diversity was defined as "any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another," (Kreitz, 2008, p. 102) (i.e. race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). Inclusion was defined as "an employees' ability to participate and contribute fully to the association" (Roberson, 2006). Creating a diverse workforce, for example, may focus primarily on screening and hiring practices within the organization, while creating an inclusive workplace requires attention to intergroup relationships, opportunities for advancement, and collaborative partnerships within and across sectors, organizations, and communities.

Associations' Definitions of Diversity and Inclusion

Survey respondents reported definitions of D&I that varied. Race, gender, and ethnicity ranked highest as the most important dimensions of diversity within organizations. Some associations echoed the survey findings during the interviews. One interviewee said, "we define diversity within the association as a mixture of geographic, gender, race and age". During the interview they frequently referenced race and gender, omitting other forms of diversity. Others had clear definitions aligned to metrics reviewed by leadership that incorporated all protected classes and sometimes more groups (Appendix B). Often associations with zero to one employee indicated they feel D&I is not an issue their association needs to face. One interviewee said they have not been active in D&I efforts, but "we try to be an open community, and anybody who shows up is welcome". Sharing an understanding of these terms before attempting D&I work is an imperative first step for all association leaders (Roberson, 2006). Understanding a shared definition of D&I will also assist readers understand the findings presented below. The definitions used in the survey and in this report are found in Appendix C. Associations should adopt a definition of D&I that is appropriate for their context.

Association's Vision, Mission and Strategic Plans

Leadership involvement is important for the advancement of D&I in associations. Literature suggests when organizational leaders commit to D&I efforts, their organization's support for diversity improves (Roberson, 2006). Sometimes this is evidenced by an organization's policy documents or practices. Fifty-one percent of association leaders reported taking some form of action with respect to D&I. Associations focused D&I policies, activities, or programs on efforts with:

- The board of directors (23%)
- Individual members; and (21%)
- Workforce development (22%)
- With their staff (15%)

Few reported focusing on D&I efforts with their staff, leaving room for internal improvements. Doing so may allow for associations to better translate D&I efforts to their field. One association in our study said they support staff by partnering with training organizations specializing in specific issues. They said, "if we're doing a gender identity workshop, we partner with an organization that specializes in teaching about gender identity" (**American Camp Association**). Focusing on D&I in the field, associations may better disseminate D&I policies, activities, or programs.

The 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices, clearly articulated the importance of incorporating elements of D&I into the organization's mission or value statement. The report indicated this practices is important for recruitment of a diverse board and workforce (BoardSource, 2017). One interviewee noted that the presence of diversity values in the organisation statements "reflects the country's interests on the importance of diversity. You just have a better organization, (…) when it is diverse"(**ABOTA**). Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported having a clear understanding of how diversity is linked to bottom-line performance in their organization, and 32% reported in their field (Figure 1). Only 24% of

respondents indicated having an internal D&I committee or council, while 54% do not. Among the survey respondents, 40% indicated diversity is not included in their organization's mission or value statement. Survey respondents reported their fields are doing better at having internal diversity/inclusiveness committees (29%) compared to their own organization (24%). Fifty four percent reported not to have D&I committee or council in their organizations (Figure 2). One organization in our study (**American Camp Association**) implemented "measurable outcomes around diversity and inclusion" for their institutional members. Literature states associations influence their field in implementation of best practices (Balla, 2001). But in this case, these low percentages indicate many associations are not prioritizing the implementation of D&I best practices. One of our interviewee said that trying to advance their D&I on their own has been their downfall. They added, they are "looking forward to some other types of collaborations with other institutions, educational institutions, government entities, et cetera to figure out the best practices for diversity and inclusion" (**BPA, check if permission or leave anonymized**). Association should consider placing D&I within their governance and/or business strategy.

Figure 1: Associations with a clear understanding of how diversity is linked to bottom-line performance

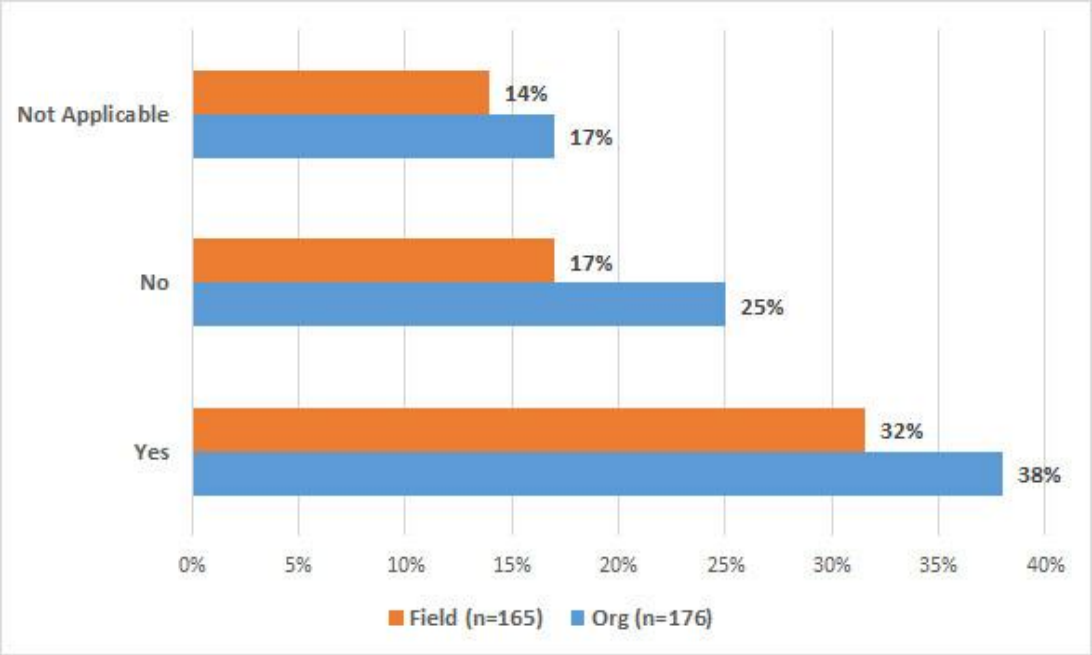
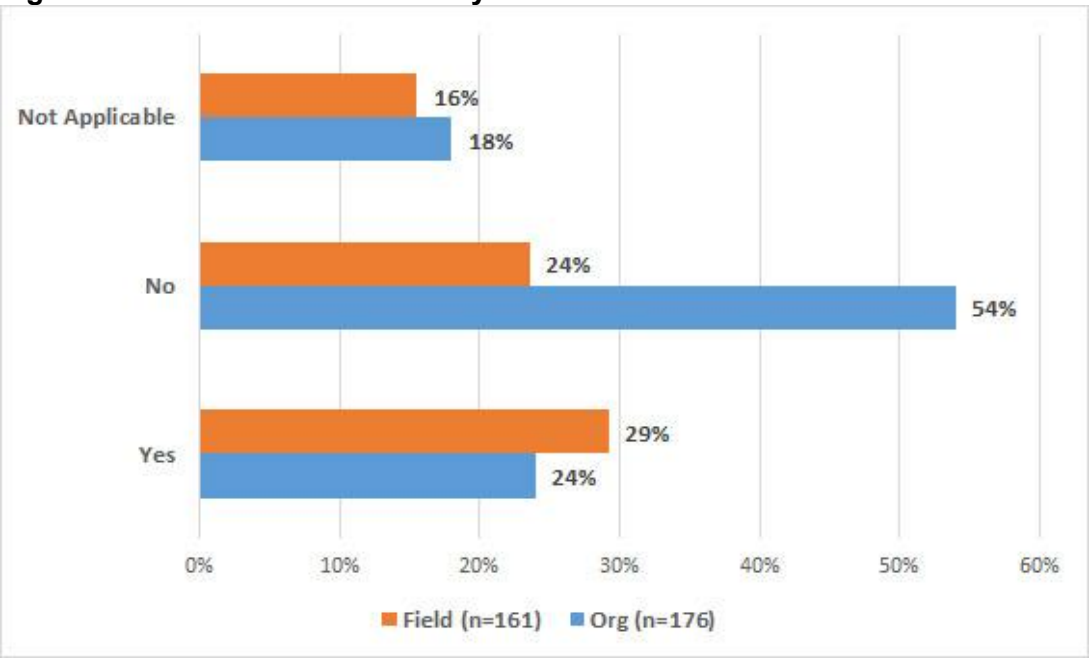


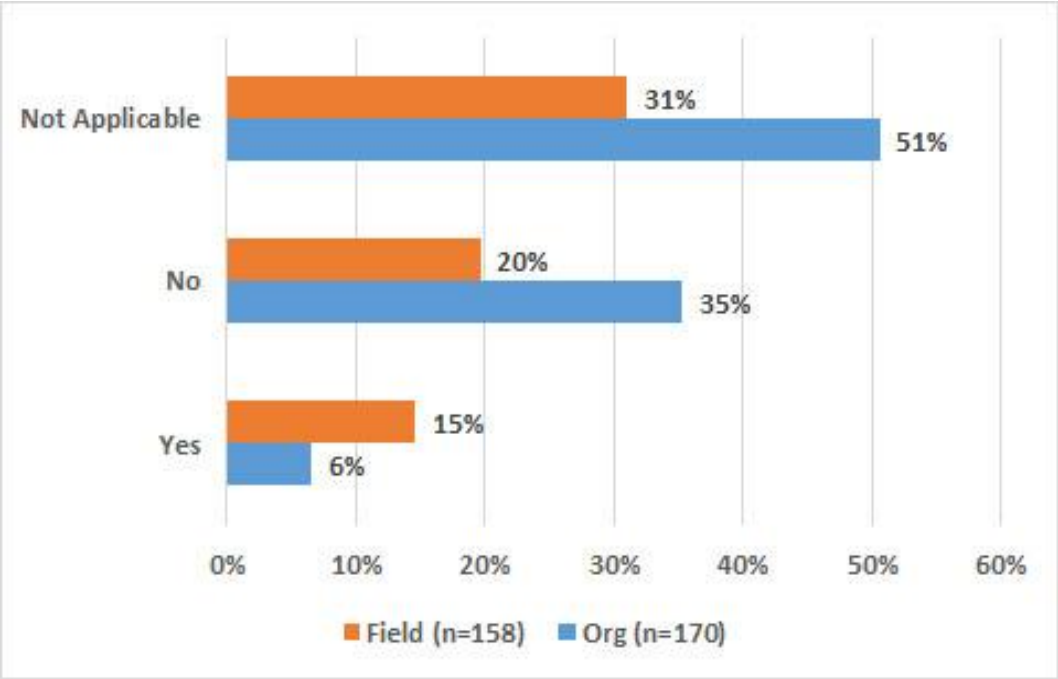
Figure 2: Have an internal diversity/inclusiveness committee or council



Recruitment and Hiring

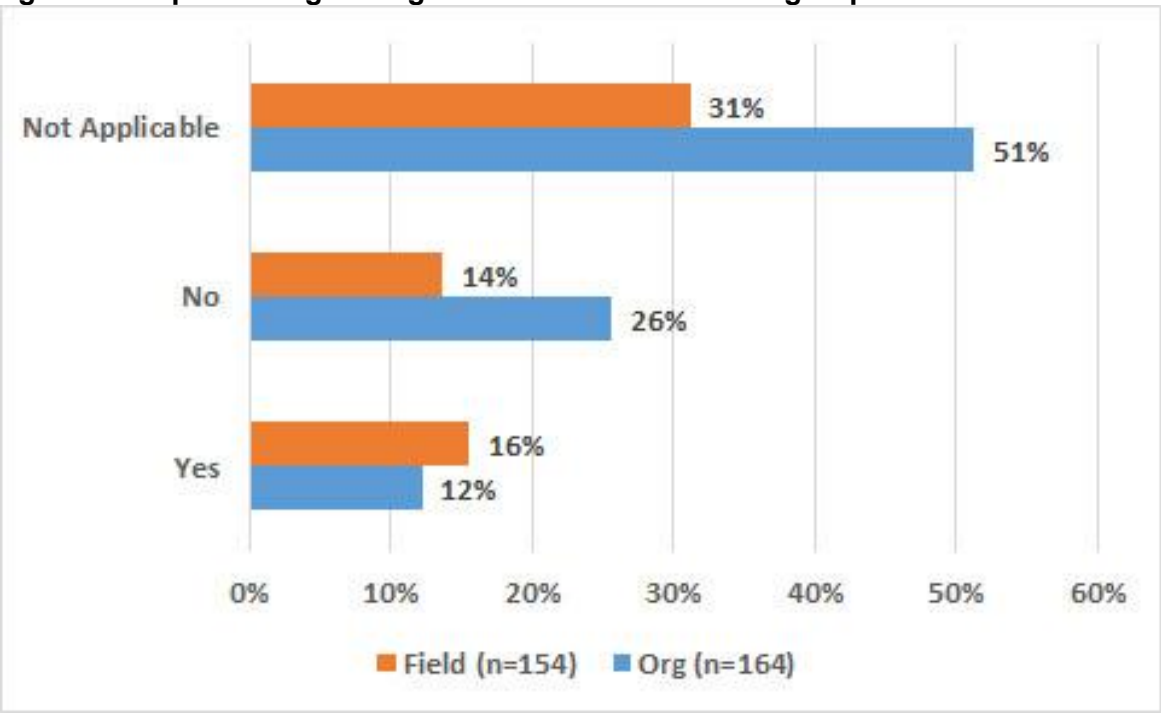
The field of associations relies on new members to grow and it is becoming harder to do so. IBISWorld reports growing membership will be a challenge for associations: As the baby boomer generation retires, economic reliance on new members increases (IBIS, 2018), and the diversity of the U.S. population increases (Cohn & Caumont, 2016), associations need to attract and retain young professionals. Understanding what associations current use to recruit their staff and members will help improve practice. About half of the associations surveyed recruited diverse candidates through feeder pools. Thirty-nine percent designed materials aimed at attracting diverse groups, and only 6% in the organization and 15% in the field utilized search firms to deliver diverse qualified candidates (**Figure 3**). These low rates and the growing diversity in the U.S. population (Cohn & Caumont, 2016) suggest associations should encourage, support, or require hiring managers to seek diverse candidates. To get a diverse workforce, associations need to be vigilant and utilize methods beyond traditional means and consider utilizing search firms, especially for leadership positions (BoardSource, 2017).

Figure 3: Utilize search firms or employment agencies specializing in finding a diverse set of qualified candidates



Even if organizations engage in successful recruitment efforts, the hiring and retention processes are also key elements of D&I work. Forty-five percent of respondents reported utilizing structured interview processes and 36% looked for different ways for candidates to demonstrate job qualifications beyond traditional experiences. Thirty-two percent of respondents use a diverse team to interview candidates. However, 26% described not requiring hiring managers to interview diverse candidates. Respondents perceived their fields are performing better than their organization in finding and interviewing diverse candidates (Figure 3 and Figure 4 respectively). Although the implications of these response rates for the field appear positive, their growth may be stifled. Literature suggests associations that support D&I at the organizational level improve their ability to expand the work to their field. For example, ASAE suggests “Associations that focused on recruiting and selecting diverse boards had the greatest success in enacting the same mission across their volunteer structure, programs, and membership as a whole” (ASAE, 2016).

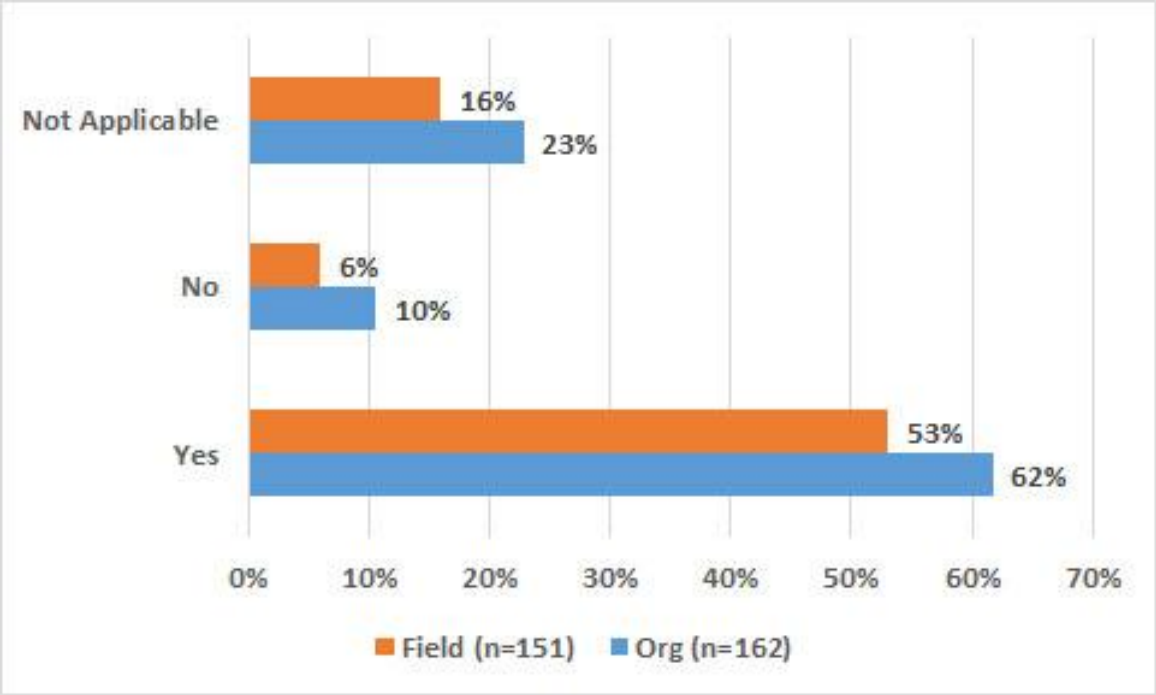
Figure 4: Require hiring managers to interview a diverse group of candidates



Training, Developing and Inclusive Practices

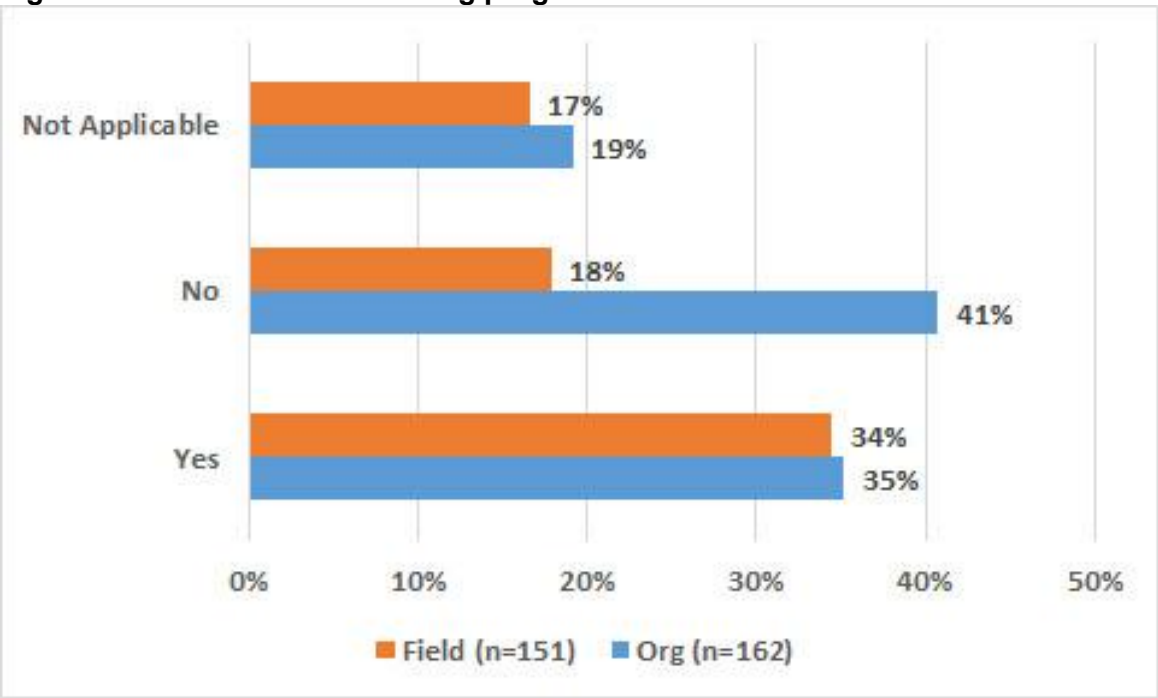
The respondents reported higher percentages supporting employee participation in professional associations targeting diverse group at 62% in organizations and 52% in the field (Figure 5). One interviewee said to advance D&I, "...education is the best. We actually, in 2016 we had an event, we coined a discussion on diversity where we had members fly into Dallas", (**ABOTA**) to attend D&I seminars and conferences. The respondents also reported higher internal leadership training at 54% in the organization and 45% in the field.

Figure 5: Support employee participation in professional associations targeting diverse groups?



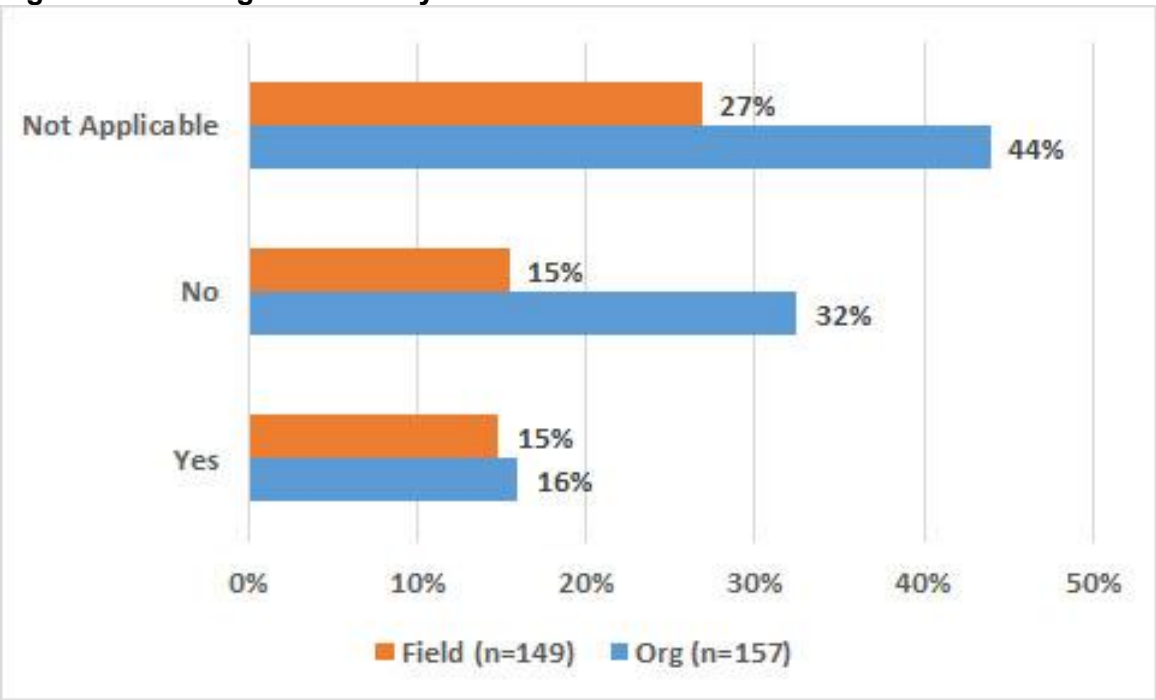
The respondents reported having a formal mentoring program at 35% in their organization and 34% in their field (Figure 6). A number of interviewee provide scholarships for new members and college students to attend seminars and conferences. One noted, “They provide scholarships and mentoring and other efforts to assist minority students, Native Americans in particular” (**ALABAMA Archaeology**). The other said they “actually (do) a mentorship program, where they take new and young attorneys and basically take them under their wings” (**ABOTA Phase IV**). Associations should have mentorship programs in the form of sponsorship or scholarship for students and other potential new members.

Figure 6: Have a formal mentoring program?



One can not address an issue that is not monitored, tracked, or evaluated. ASAE encourages associations to start with an assessment of D&I in their organization (ASAE, 2018). Not many associations tracked or monitored the diversity candidates or hires. Sixteen percent of respondents in their organization and 15% in their field reported attempting to do some assessment by tracking the diversity of new hires (Figure 7). A dismal 6% in the organization and 9% in their field reported tracking the diversity of employees receiving promotions. Efforts should be made to measure the progress so that they can be added to the list of action items for association leadership. Associations should consider adding D&I assessment metrics in their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Figure 7: Tracking the diversity of new hires?



Many associations do not see D&I as an important aspect of their work or indicated by the high percentages rates of those responding "Not Applicable" to many D&I practices. A 2011 ASAE report found similar results (Leiter, Solebello, & Tschirhart, 2011, p. 13). This lack of priority is a concern. Training for associations and its members will be needed to emphasize the importance of D&I to reflect the society and the communities they serve.

Recommendations to Support Implementation of Practices

The analysis of survey and interview responses regarding D&I practices in nonprofit associations led to the following list of recommendations:

- Associations should adopt a definition of D&I that is appropriate for their context.
- Association should consider placing D&I within their governance and/or business strategy.

- Associations should consider adding assessment metrics to measure D&I in their key performance indicators.
- Associations should provide more training and mentors for individual members, staff, and leadership:
    - Focusing on diversity and inclusion practices with staff members in conjunction with the board of directors,
    - Disseminating diversity and inclusion practices beyond internal efforts to support the practices of your field as a whole, and
    - Including leadership in the diversity and inclusion discussion and implementation.

Challenges in Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Association face a number of challenges that hinder their D&I efforts, programming and policies. Chief among the challenges, according to the survey, are a lack of financial resources (75%) (Figure 8). The second most frequent obstacle indicated on the survey was the lack of a full-time staffer to address D&I (58%). Respondents also report difficulty in reaching diverse audiences (51%) and not knowing where to access best practices (46%). Just over a third of respondents indicated that implementation of D&I practices was not a priority (36%). Other challenges within the organizational level identified included a lack of time (31%) and a lack of support among members (26%) and leadership (22%), with a small group indicating active opposition among leadership (7%). While lack of support was of greater concern and a more frequent obstacle, active opposition among staff (13%), membership (12%) or their board (7%) was of lesser concern to implementing new or ongoing efforts in D&I.

Figure 8: Obstacles and Challenges to D&I Efforts in the Organization

When asked to identify resources that "would help you develop and implement new or ongoing D&I efforts in your organization " (Figure 9), survey respondents prioritized financial resources more than all other options (88%). Of all respondents, 77% identified D&I training as a desired resource. Just over half of respondents saw "a staff person dedicated to D&I programming" as a missing resource. Respondents saw an "Organization climate assessment" and "Buy-in from membership" as nearly equally important resources for moving forward, (42% and 41% respectively). Thirty percent of respondents saw buy-in from leadership as an important resource to move D&I implementation forward (n=91).

Figure 9: Resources Needed to Help D&I Implementation

Organizations that discuss D&I and that have D&I policies report higher levels of conflict and struggle in most of the challenges surveyed. Those organizations engaged in D&I report higher than expected lack of support from leadership, membership and staff, more frequent struggles with financial resources for D&I, and difficulty finding best practices. It makes sense that those associations engaged in D&I efforts might see higher rates of conflict and respondents would observe more resistance at varying levels of the organization. These conflicts are a testament to the difficulty of D&I work, and they speak to the value of engaging the most effective best practices.

Overcoming Challenges to Advance Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Based upon the most frequent challenges and organizational needs, a great resource would be a toolkit geared towards improving D&I training and strategies for individual associations and their fields. Best practices would be the most useful topic in training materials for a D&I toolkit. The best D&I toolkit would have the broadest impact by guiding organizational

strategies with proven methods that deliver best outcomes. Since a slight majority of organizational leaders would like to have a staff member or additional staff dedicated to these efforts - or more resources to fund them - associations should also identify grant making entities that fund diversity, equity, and inclusion practices among associations.

Both the literature and D&I professionals frequently indicate that outcomes are often positively affected by buy-in from organizational leadership - either at the executive director or board level (Roberson, 2006). According to one association staff leader for D&I, "It's consistently an unwritten rule that the leadership wishes to always push forth and make steps towards diversity and inclusion." The CEO from the same association said, "Now, we're in 2018, and the diversity efforts that we are doing now, while we are still experiencing incredible challenges, it's much easier in a lot of ways to do these things...We have complete buy-in from our executive committee, from the leadership."

Identifying champions for D&I among membership, leadership, and board may seem like a lesser need based upon the survey results, but according to the interviews, in terms of driving organizational change in practice, leadership is often paramount.

Recommendations to Overcome Challenges, Lack of Resources:

- Use proven strategies and best practices within toolkits for diversity and inclusion efforts and trainings.
- Identify and apply for grants to fund and improve diversity and inclusion capacity.
- Appoint or hire a staff person responsible for diversity and inclusion efforts and monitoring.
- Champion diversity and inclusion from leadership of the board, staff, or members; then disseminate efforts across the organization and/or the field.

Collaboration in Associations

Amidst the practices listed above, collaboration arose as a promising tactic when implementing D&I practices. Of those who collaborate, a greater percentage reported high quality[2] experiences in their partnerships. Evidence from the survey responses suggests a larger percentage of professional associations are collaborating for D&I efforts than trade associations or chambers of commerce, but the number of respondents in this analysis is too small to generalize. Although the survey data are not statistically significant, and thus should not be generalized to the field of associations, the data from the survey suggest collaborations for D&I efforts experience better quality than those collaborating for other purposes. The differences appear small, but more research should be done to understand these phenomena.

Benefits of Collaboration

Literature suggests organizations can benefit from collaboration (Stollberger, West, & Sacramento, 2017) especially when trying to improve inclusion of diverse groups (Fujimoto et al., 2014). Associations who identified collaborating in the survey rated their experiences positively. Of those who identified as partnering in any form of collaboration, the majority rated the quality of their relationships with their partner as above average (89%).

Quality interactions, resource sharing, information sharing, and finding win-win solutions appear to be reasons for the high-quality rating. Of those who collaborate a majority reported positive outcomes with their partners (76%), potentially from the sharing of resources (72%) and sharing information (81%). Collaborating organizations also reported working through differences to arrive at win-win solutions (72%) and feeling their work is appreciated by their partners (81%). Starting a collaboration may use organizational capacity, but associations

[2] High quality is defined using a combination of four likert items from the survey. More detailed description of this definition is presented in the “Benefits of Collaboration” Unfortunately, the survey tool excluded those who reported as not collaborating from this question causing systematic measurement error and nonresponse bias. Further research should be done to better understand how associations rate the quality of their collaborations.

doing so seem to be reaping benefits and extending their capacity. Associations should scrutinize their current operations and reconsider collaboration as a way to accomplish their goals.

Collaboration Partners and Characteristics

To better understand how associations collaborate, the survey asked associations to share details about their different partners. Association staff reported collaborating with:

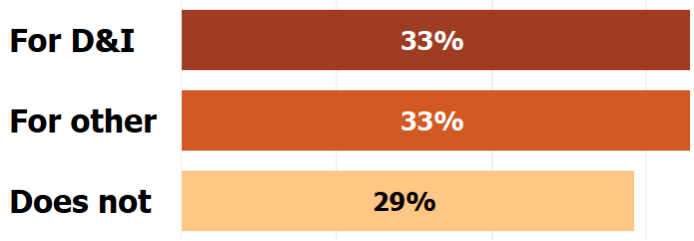
- Their members (77%)
- Other associations (74%)
- Their board of directors (73%)
- Other nonprofits (68%)
- Other institutional members (58%) (See full list of the reported types of stakeholders in collaboration in Appendix D)

Some respondents highlighted partnering with nonprofits as a way to initiate D&I practices. Some reported they are collaborating with higher education institutions (51%), high schools (32%), and trade schools (20%). Collaborating with educational entities and nonprofits may increase awareness of D&I in their field as well as better recruit members. Associations should partner with nonprofits and educational entities to improve D&I and recruitment.

Collaboration as a Catalyst for Diversity and Inclusion

A greater percentage of associations reported participation in collaborations (67%) than reported maintaining diversity practices (51%). As seen in Figure 10, of 192 respondents, 33% reported collaborating to support D&I efforts and 33% reported collaborating for other reasons.

Figure 10: Percentage of representatives indicating their organization collaborates with other organizations or individuals (n=192)[3]



Of those collaborating, a similar percentage of 501(c)(3)'s report collaborating for D&I efforts than 501(c)(6)[4][5]. There was not a noticeable difference between the type of organization represented. For example, more of the respondents from professional associations reported collaborating (72%) than the general sample (66%). Trade association respondents reported similarly higher percentages of organizations collaborating for D&I than the general sample (35% compared to 33%), but much lower percentages of those collaborating in general (20% compared to 33%). Unfortunately, this analysis relied on self-report data using the survey responses thus bias may be impacting these differences. Further analysis using 990 IRS data with survey responses needs to occur to understand more about these differences.

Perhaps collaboration may ease the journey towards the administration of D&I efforts. Of those associations reporting diversity or inclusion included in their mission statement, a greater percentage collaborated when compared to the general sample (**Figure 11)**. It shows all of respondents who identified having diversity or inclusion informing their mission or vision statements and how they characterize their collaborations. Forty-four percent reported collaborating to fulfill D&I efforts. That is 11% higher than the general sample. Collaborating for

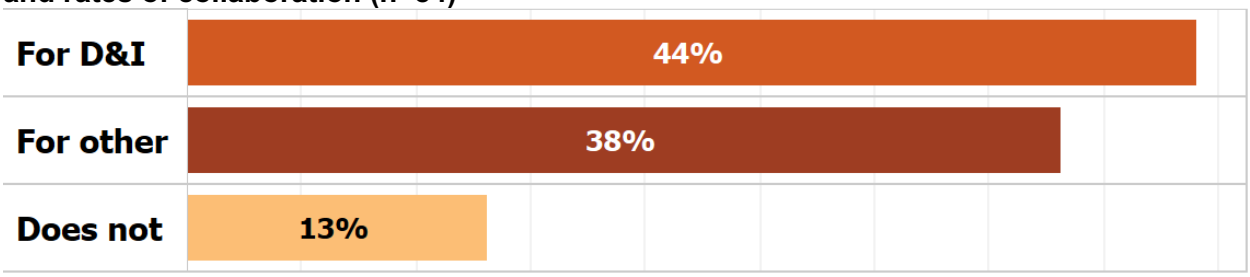
[3] Actual survey item text: Q23 - Do you collaborate with other organizations or individuals in your field on diversity and inclusion efforts or other projects? "Collaboration" refers to the processes in which individuals or groups "interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions." Collaboration can be both internal to the organization (staff, board and volunteer leaders) or external to the organization (members and potential members, other organizations). (Select all that apply)

[4] When compared to IRS 990 form responses, the survey respondents reported different tax status than provided in their 990 forms. This should be reevaluated in future research.

[5] The distribution of the frequencies of this crosstab was found to be statistically significant in Qualtrics ($p<0.01$).

other reasons was also higher (+5%), while not collaborating was a lower percentage than the general sample (-16%). These alignments suggest associations are using collaboration when implementing D&I efforts. Associations should collaborate to implement D&I efforts in their field.

Figure 11: Cross Tabulation of those with D&I incorporated in mission/vision statement and rates of collaboration (n=84)[6]



Interviews found similar relationship between collaboration and D&I efforts. **The American Camp Association New York & New Jersey,** for example, collaborates with other nonprofits providing workplace D&I trainings. The association contracts these nonprofits to provide trainings for their individual and institutional members. They identified that collaborating increases their ability to implement D&I throughout their field. A survey respondent a different organization shared a similar example of the benefits of collaboration: "We provided our members with an opportunity to receive training in an area our organization wouldn't have provided on our own."

As mentioned above, two-thirds of respondents indicated their associations collaborate in some way. Networks and collaborations can create opportunities for building relationships and increasing of inclusion with diverse groups (Fujimoto et al., 2014; Gordon & Rosenblum, 2001; Vaisey, 2007). Associations leverage collaborations to accomplish many different tasks. The following list, generated by survey respondents, presents the five most reported programs/goals accomplished through collaboration[7]:

[6] Distribution of responses in cross tab was found statistically significant in qualtrics ($p<0.01$). Actual survey item text: Q10 - Does your association have diversity and inclusion policies, programs, activities or initiatives in either your organization or field?

[7] Each line item was reported as a percentage of only those respondents identifying they collaborate (n=80).

- Organizing events and conferences (76%),
- Co-sponsoring workshops or trainings (71%),
- Developing leadership in their field (55%),
- Developing leadership in their organization (47%), and
- Implementing best practices from the field (40%) (See the full list of reasons associations report collaborating (Appendix D).

Associations interviewed provided some context regarding how they use collaboration for events, webinars, and conferences. Some associations already have substantial attendance at these events. The APMP hosts 500 to 1,000 people in their webinars (**APMP)**. One organization noted that they select, appoint, and/or contract external or internal partners with diversity or inclusion expertise as speakers for conferences. Some use collaborations at conferences to increase diversity of opinions and expertise. Others share that these event collaborations help attract new membership from diverse backgrounds. Some, like the Alabama Association of Archaeologists **(CHECK PERMISSION)**, shared that attending community events in diverse settings helps introduce youth from diverse backgrounds to their field of archeology, but that it requires many volunteers and member hours to accomplish. As stated earlier, association need to focus on changing recruitment practices given the future of the U.S. employee population is becoming diverse (IBISWorld, 2018; Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Associations should collaborate with other organizations to select speakers, and events, to improve their outreach.

The least reported activities accomplished through collaboration included job training (21%), recruitment (19%), and hiring (7%). If higher percentages of associations begin to collaborate to accomplish these three goals, it may lead to improved member recruitment, while decreasing staff and volunteer resources. As noted above, organizations are using external conferences and events with volunteers to recruit diverse candidates. ABOTA (**NEED**

PERMISSION) uses collaboration to find potential members from diverse communities that are more captive. This practice may save time and resources spent attending events without captive and diverse potential members. Adopting these goals for future collaborations may also support those organizations suggesting in their survey comments that "diversity is not our issue because our membership is not diverse." Through collaboration with organizations supporting diverse communities, they may begin to learn how to increase the diversity of their membership. Associations should seek out collaboration to fulfill the goals of recruitment, hiring, or training of their leadership, employees, members, or volunteers.

Successes and Challenges Reported when Collaborating

For those associations considering collaborating for the first time, some survey respondents and interviewees provided descriptions of successful practices, and challenges to prepare to overcome. Survey respondents who collaborate indicated the following aspects as key to their success:

- Define and share clear roles
- Align collaboration to mission
- Maintain open communication
- Establish measures of success before beginning

One group captured these keys with their statement describing their successful collaboration, "There was a clear agreement among collaborators and they each fulfilled their obligations in a timely manner. Reporting out on the result of the collaboration has also been beneficial."

Some organizations face challenges advocating for themselves when beginning and facilitating their collaborations. One wrote "Our organization has not been very nimble, and we often enter into collaborative relationships without advocating for ourselves as well as we could have." Others reported managing many priorities became challenging. For example, another

respondent wrote “The collaboration is between the state association and the state license agency...When the state doesn't have the resources they tend to throw road blocks which make it difficult for the Association to move their agenda ahead.” Some associations established key performance indicators as waypoints to measure their collaboration halfway through the partnership. Although collaborations can bring beneficial outcomes, these practices can help bring clarity to the partnership. Before initiating a collaboration, associations should meet with their potential partners and identify a clear purpose, roles, and metrics of success. And, if necessary, be prepared to either go back to the drawing board, or walk away from the proposed collaboration.

Collaboration Recommendations

The analysis of survey and interview responses regarding collaboration efforts in nonprofit associations led to the following list of recommendations:

- **Associations should partner with nonprofits and educational entities to improve D&I and recruitment.**
- **Associations should collaborate to implement D&I efforts in their field.**
- **Associations should collaborate with other organizations to select speakers, and events, to improve their outreach.**
- **Associations should seek out collaboration to fulfill the goals of recruitment, hiring, or training of their leadership, employees, members, or volunteers.**
- **Before initiating a collaboration, associations should meet with their potential partners and identify a clear purpose, roles, and metrics of success.**

Limitations and Future Research

Much of the statistical analysis may be limited in its generalizability across associations in the nation because of the survey response rate. The survey analysis also relied on self-report indicators. The analysis of the “field” is most likely impacted by self-report bias and should be scrutinized. Future researchers may revisit these survey methods with more aggressive recruiting techniques to increase participation and find more generalizable results.

Conclusion

With 66% of associations collaborating in some form or another, this shows that there is still room for associations to utilize this beneficial practice. Collaboration may prove to be one of the most powerful tools for associations looking to advance D&I practices (Only 33 % of association collaborating directly with D&I efforts). Collaboration in conjunction with an engaged leadership has the ability to affect great change in U.S. workforce as a whole.

The reality is that the workforce is changing and associations must learn to adapt to this fact and work toward a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Associations have the ability to enact change not only in their own association, but also their fields as well as the workforce as a whole. Associations should look toward utilizing this powerful tool of collaboration in order to affect change not only in their associations, but their field as well.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Respondent Demographics

- Association Tax Status
  - 41% 501c6
  - 41% 501c3
  - 18% Unsure/Don't know

- Association Primarily Serves
  - 49% Individual members of a particular profession (e.g. nurses)
  - 23% Neither
  - 20 % Both
  - 8% Institutional members (e.g. hospitals)

- Association Characterization
  - 52% Professional Association
  - 11% Trade Association
  - 9% Chamber of Commerce
  - 9% Other
  - 9% Philanthropic/Non-Profit/Charitable/Foundation
  - 8%Combined Trade & Professional Association
  - 1% Association Foundation
  - 1% Federation of Associations

- Hispanic or Latino
  - 93.9% Not
  - 4.1% Prefer not to answer
  - 2.0% Hispanic or Latino

- Race
  - 83% White
  - 5.9% Black or African American
  - 3.9% Prefer not to answer
  - 3.3% Other
  - 2.6% Asian
  - 1.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - 0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- Gender
  - 48.7% Male
  - 47.3% Female
  - 3.3% Prefer not to Answer
  - 0.7% Gender non-conforming
  - 0% Transgender

- Position in organizations
  - 52% Executive Director/CEO
  - 27% Board President
  - 6% Other Director

    - 6% Other
    - 4% Employee (non-manager)
    - 3% Other Manager
    - 1% D&I Manager or Director
    - 1% Executive Team/VP

- Age
    - 0% Under 18
    - 0% 18-24, 6% 25-34
    - 21% 35-44
    - 30% 45-54
    - 28% 55-64
    - 13% 65-74
    - 1% 75-84
    - 1% 85 or older

Appendix B: Exemplar Organizational Definition of Diversity and Inclusion

The Association of Fundraising Professionals' Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I.D.E.A) Definitions

Inclusion
The ability of AFP to attract, retain, accommodate, and involve a range of diverse people who are valued, accepted, and comfortable at the international, national, regional or local chapter level.

Diversity
AFP defines diversity as a core value. It is an inclusive concept encompassing, without limitation, race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or identity; religion, nationality, age, economic class, educational level, language, physical, mobility and ability, geography, and marital and parental status. The state of being diverse means having the broadest possible representation of individuals, experiences, and perspectives in all-encompassing terms.

Equity
Creating a level playing field for individuals or groups according to their respective needs, which may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Access
The commitment to foster attitudes, behaviors, and procedures to facilitate access that promotes equity and diversity, fosters inclusion and allows people to maximize their contribution to our association and communities that our members serve.

Example of definitions tied to organizational principals here.

Example of definitions tied to board governance here.

Appendix C: Definitions of Key Terms

Diversity

- Any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another," (Kreitz, 2008, p. 102) (i.e. race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).
- Creating a diverse workforce, for example, may focus primarily on screening and hiring practices within the organization.

Inclusion

- Inclusion was defined as "an employees' ability to participate and contribute fully to the association" (Roberson, 2006).
- Creating an inclusive workplace requires attention to intergroup relationships, opportunities for advancement, and collaborative partnerships within and across sectors, organizations, and communities.

Field

- Field was defined in the survey as the profession, trade, and/or industry the association represents.

Collaboration

- "A process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact and through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions."[8]
- Practically speaking, collaboration is the way that organizations work in either formal or informal ways with other partners and stakeholders.

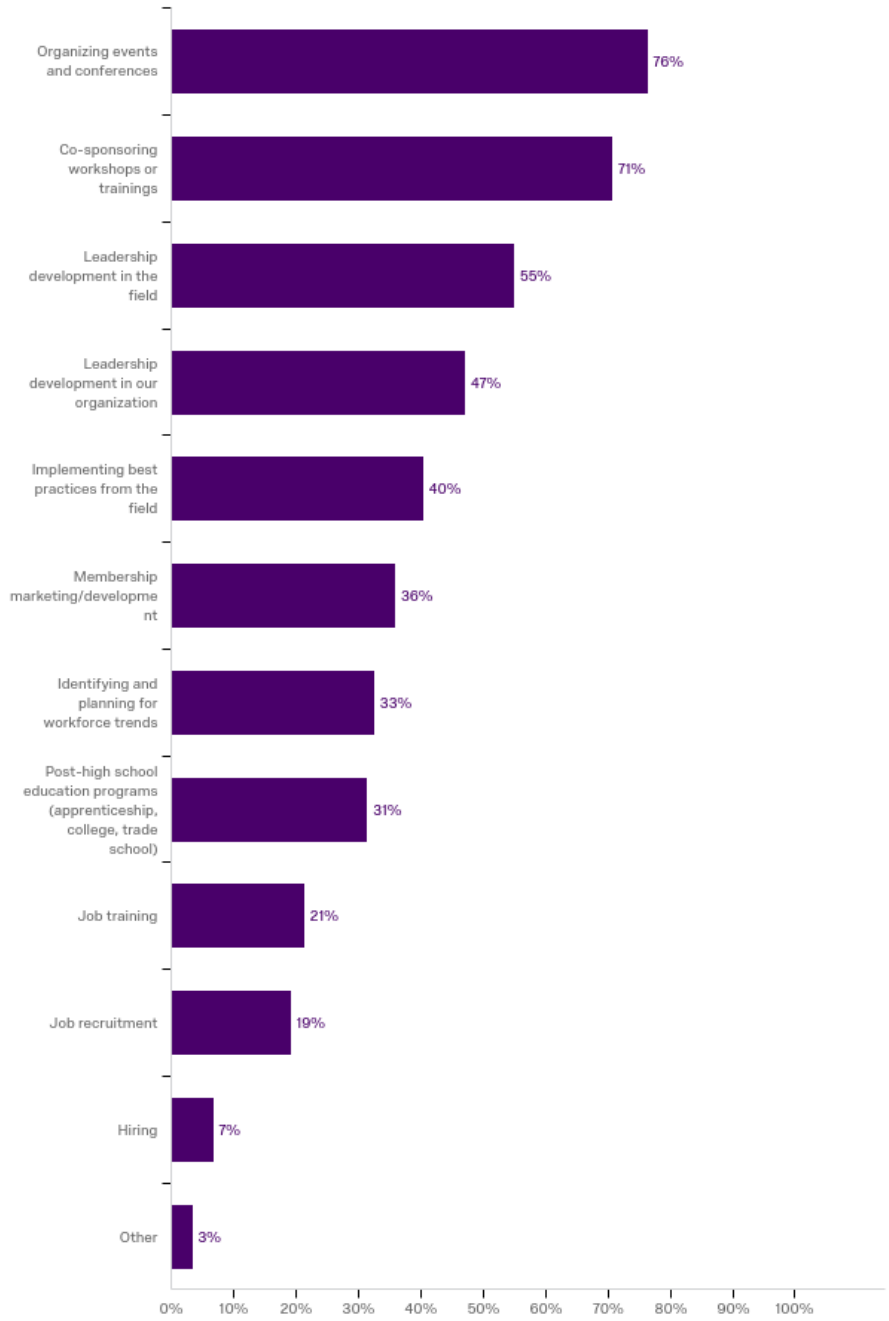
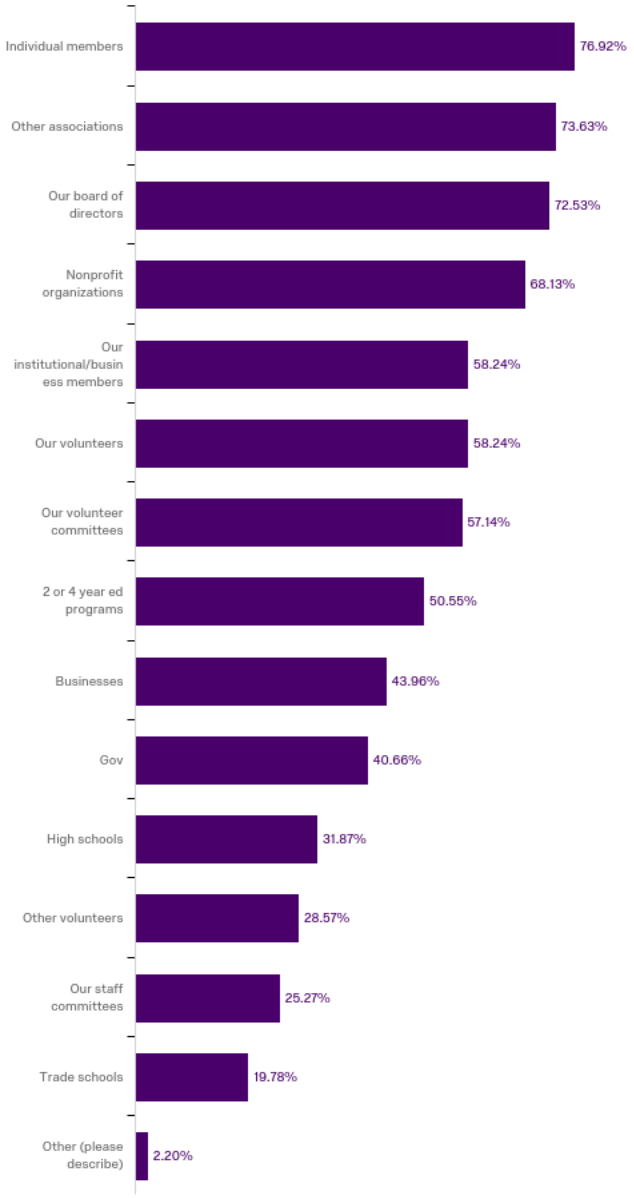
Quality Experience Collaborating

[8] Ann Marie Thomson, James L. Perry, and Theodore K. Miller, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Collaboration," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 23–56, https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum036.

- High quality is defined using a combination of four likert items from the survey.
- More detailed description of this definition is presented in the “Benefits of Collaboration”

Appendix D: Types of Collaboration

What type of program goals do you work on in collaboration? Check all that apply (n=126)



Overall, who does your association collaborate with? Check all that apply (n=126)