DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

CORE VALUES AMONG ASSOCIATIONS

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Foreword

French diplomat and historian Alexis de Tocqueville in his best-known work, *Democracy in America*, first recognized the power of association. He travelled across America and was impressed with the country and its people. In particular, de Tocqueville was one of the first to recognize how associations can positively impact the nation. He wrote:

> *"In America I encountered sorts of associations of which, I confess, I had no idea, and I often admired the infinite art with which the inhabitants of the United States managed to fix a common goal to the efforts of many men and to get them to advance to it freely."* [1]

This research is a reflection of Americans fixing a common goal through the association sector. Associations have long recognized the benefit of greater diversity and inclusion, reflecting changes in the 63,866 trade and professional associations, and 1,237,094 charitable and philanthropic organizations. [2] These organizations represent all demographics and literally every aspect of American life. They understand the variety of benefits associated with diversity and inclusion, including better decision-making and greater insights with a diversity of ideas and backgrounds.

This research started as a conversation with James Zaniello, President of Vetted Solutions, based on his firm's work with association boards and CEOs in recruiting and retaining top talent in the community. We focused on the important role associations play in American life, and how associations often take a leadership role in moving the country forward. We quickly realized that the results and challenges of association activity with respect to diversity and inclusion needed more study and a qualitative view. The Vetted Solutions team has been extremely supportive of this effort and should be thanked for their resource commitment.

Individuals with diversity and inclusion expertise reviewed the initial survey. We distributed it to more than 3,000 individuals working in the association sector; 227 completed the survey, so the research has sufficient numbers to give us statistical significance and point to directional trends. The margin of error is 6.25 percent. I believe many of the conclusions reflect results from other research on this topic.

I hope this research helps those in the association sector implement new initiatives, hold conversations, and model diversity and inclusion programs based on what is being done or where more work needs to take place.

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[1] De Tocqueville, Alexis, *Democracy in America*, (University of Chicago Press) 2000, excerpted from pages 489-92
[2] IRS Data Book 2016, Table 25.

Summary

This report, "*Diversity and Inclusion: Core Values Among Associations*," started as a conversation between James Zaniello, President and Founder of Vetted Solutions and Dr. David Rehr. Recognizing that associations represent all demographics and literally every aspect of American life, we believed that diversity and inclusion in the association sector needed more study and a qualitative view to provide a benchmark and practical steps associations currently are, and can take, to continue to advance these efforts.

We asked several experts on diversity and inclusion to review the initial survey, which we later distributed to more than 3,000 association executives in the first quarter of 2017. With 227 completed surveys the research has sufficient numbers to give us statistical significance and point to directional trends. This report reflects not only the results of our research, but the findings from other leading industry surveys on this topic.

The research indicates that while association leaders recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, many associations have not yet fully realized the value and benefits of diversity and inclusion.

- 81% of respondents view diversity and inclusion as part of their association's core values, yet 45% said they do not yet have an action plan for implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- 73% have comprehensive diversity and inclusion policies within their association yet 70% do not believe they have effective benchmarks or measures to evaluate the impact of their efforts.
- 84% focus on diversity and inclusion because it is "the right thing to do," yet 55% said that finding a diverse pool of qualified job candidates remains a challenge.

Overview of Recommendations

The survey responses showcase the steps that association executives must take on the diversity and inclusion pathway in order to achieve success and demonstrate real progress in this area, including:

- Establish goals and metrics;
- Measure impact and effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs;
- Map out a plan to achieve specific and targeted goals;
- Systematically cultivate the talent pipeline; and
- Thoroughly incorporate diversity and inclusion practices throughout the association's work, including onboarding, retention, and promotion.

Associations continue to navigate a complex and ever-changing landscape. Each evaluates its current operations, its ability to maintain current and attract new members, and its future survival while navigating demographic disparities, a variable political climate, and increasing competition for scarce resources — volunteers, contributions, staff, etc. But how do associations plot their courses? How do they understand what members need? Whose voices are helping to make the decisions?

The good news is associations have become adept at leading through uncertainty. Often times they are more nimble than their corporate counterparts, so they are better able to be the change they want to see in the world. There is a real opportunity for the association community to exhibit true diversity and inclusiveness and become the standard bearers.

Associations may be uniquely suited to steer these endeavors to their greatest possible success. Their reach is global, touching on a wide-range of cultures and varied collectives of industries and members. To increase their relevance to their members and within their spheres of influence, they have already made concerted efforts to expand their worldviews through their internal practices.

The research helps to quantify the current state of the diversity and inclusion initiatives underway across the association community. It also, through the insight and guidance of the study participants, showcases practical next steps that will support our progress along the path to greater diversity and inclusion. Acknowledging the importance of a variety of opinions among all levels of an organization was the first step. Next comes the systematic cultivation of the talent pipeline and a thoughtful and thorough incorporation of diversity and inclusion practices throughout the association's mission, work, and its member or staff lifecycles. Diversity and inclusion do not start or end with the hiring or the appointment, but must continue through the entire channel — pipeline cultivation, onboarding, retention, and promotion. Those participating in the research also have ideas to guide those efforts and offer avenues for future research in this area.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Association Sector

It will come as no shock that the respondents' definitions of diversity and inclusion[3] include ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age among the top four characteristics. In addition, religious viewpoints, socioeconomic background, and geographic background were often incorporated into respondents' views on diversity and inclusion.

Nearly all respondents believe diversity and inclusion efforts definitely or probably make an association more successful. In this instance, diversity is not limited to the characteristics listed above, but also includes differing viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Inclusion is the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity. Intentionality and ongoing engagement seem to be the cornerstones to successful efforts and meaningful, long-term change and development.

The conversation around diversity and inclusion efforts and their impact on business success continues to thrive.

While it is unsurprising the respondents listed mission as the top of their priorities, D&I efforts ranked very close behind meeting or exceeding the annual revenue targets. This seems to indicate a greater awareness of the importance of these efforts, especially as they contribute to the business goals of the organization, and could be an area for further study.

[3] For ease of reading, we will occasionally shorten "diversity and inclusion" to "D&I".

Figure 1 — **Please rank the importance of each action to your organization.**

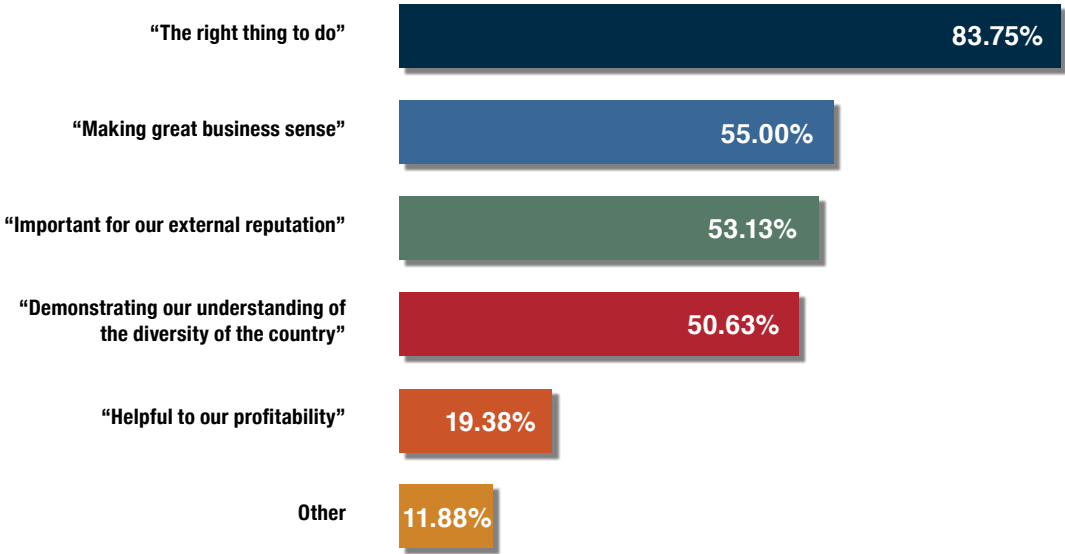| Action	Percentage
Deliver on the organization's mission	92.66%
Meeting/exceeding the annual revenue target of the organization	77.46%
Creating an inclusive, diverse workforce	76.02%
Meeting/exceeding the expectations of the Board of Directors	84.13%
Meeting/exceeding the programmatic short- and long-term goals of the strategic plan	81.62%
Ensuring the leadership and staff represents the diversity of members/supporters	75.11%

RESPONDENT FEEDBACK

"
Know the diversity goals and vision of your organization and its connection to the overall business objectives. Commit to the process by understanding how diversity impacts your role, and how your role impacts the success of the diversity initiative.
"

When asked how diversity and inclusion are viewed within the respondent's association, most said they were "the right thing to do." Slightly more than half indicated they made "great business sense," but only a small number said these efforts are helpful to the association's profitability. That seems to indicate the connection between D&I efforts to the profitability or success of the organization may not be readily evident to all. But, the trend is moving in that direction.

Figure 2 — **In your association, diversity and inclusion are viewed as…**(Choose all that apply)

Category	Percentage
"The right thing to do"	83.75%
"Making great business sense"	55.00%
"Important for our external reputation"	53.13%
"Demonstrating our understanding of the diversity of the country"	50.63%
"Helpful to our profitability"	19.38%
Other	11.88%

"Take to heart the axiom that your job is to derive satisfaction from empowering your staff's success, and that success is completely dependent on building a safe climate for a full range of perspectives. If you are not having serious conversations on a regular basis that challenge whether the perspectives you are hearing represent a full range of what's possible, you are not inclusive enough.

The world view is shifting from diversity to inclusion.

The conversation cannot stop with just increasing the diversity within an association's board, membership, and staff. The organization must also cultivate and maintain an environment that welcomes and fosters diverse persons, thoughts, and opinions. Associations need to pay attention to creating open lines of communication, so everyone trusts they can express a comment or concern that will be heard and respected. A recent article in The Washington Post makes the case that unless and until someone expresses such a qualm, we have no way to know that we are behaving in an unwelcome manner.[4]

Associations can take a leadership role in their industries.

Increasing diversity among association leadership and staff may help their industries become more diverse. It can broaden the scope of what is possible and help shift the community culture. It helps potential members recognize the association is capable of appreciating their goals and concerns. It helps those considering the industry understand they won't be alone. Observing those similarities in lower- or middle-management helps them identify one possible path to getting where they want to go.

[4] "We've gotten better at diversity. Now the challenge is inclusion," by Nitin Nohria. This article can be found at https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/19/weve-gotten-better-at-diversity-now-the-challenge-is-inclusion/?utm _term=.df5585a0baab

What do staff diversity policies cover?

The majority of respondents said their association has a diversity policy that covers:

- Race (78%)
- Disability (77.4%)
- Gender (75.5%)
- Sexual Orientation (75.5%)
- Religion (74%)
- Age (72.7%)

The natural corollary to that is that around one-quarter of those who responded said either their association's diversity policy does not cover each of the above or they do not know if their association's policy covered them. Some associations may have more work or more education to do to instill the fundamentals of diversity and inclusion in their organization.

A handful of respondents said their association has a general non-discrimination policy. Some association diversity statements are even broader — covering tribes, country of origin, and/or veteran status. It is encouraging that some organizations are already thinking broader than the "traditional" realms of what diversity means.

How Associations Cultivate Diversity and Inclusion

How are associations set up to cultivate diversity and inclusion? First, take comfort if you do not have someone with the title or function of Chief Diversity Officer, as only 10 percent of the participants said their organization does. This is not an association-only consideration. Apple only recently created its first vice president of inclusion and diversity.[5] Some of the advice provided by respondents indicates that a Chief Diversity Officer is unlikely to be the cure-all. A commitment to diversity and inclusion must be central to the organization itself and not the responsibility of one clarion voice.

The research indicates that the keys to success are held by the board and the executive team, demonstrating leadership. About one-third of respondents indicated the Board of Directors (or its equivalent) of their association has a D&I committee or subcommittee. Similarly, fewer than one-third of respondents said their organization or staff has a D&I committee or subcommittee. That being said, the infusion of diversity and inclusion principles and practices likely compensates for the lack of formal committees. This seems to indicate that champions are required, but a formal structure may not be.

Moving toward expressed commitments of diversity and inclusion.

There is still a certain amount of osmosis through which the respondents absorb their association's commitment to diversity and inclusion. More than 85 percent said their association leadership demonstrates a commitment to D&I by managing by example and more than two-thirds of participants said their leadership empowers and mentors them in such endeavors. Improvements could be made to increase the number of organizations who dedicate resources or regularly include diversity topics at meetings.

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[5] "Apple has hired its first head of diversity." This article can be found at http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/23/technology/apple-vp-diversity-denise-young-smith/index.html

> **Recognizing and embracing the value and advancement of creating a diverse and inclusionary workforce will not necessarily come from a Chief Diversity Officer. It has to come from the developing culture of the organization and the chief staff executive, as well as the Board.**

> **Diversity, and especially the inclusion of underrepresented people, does not just happen. People without opportunities cannot demonstrate or develop experience.**

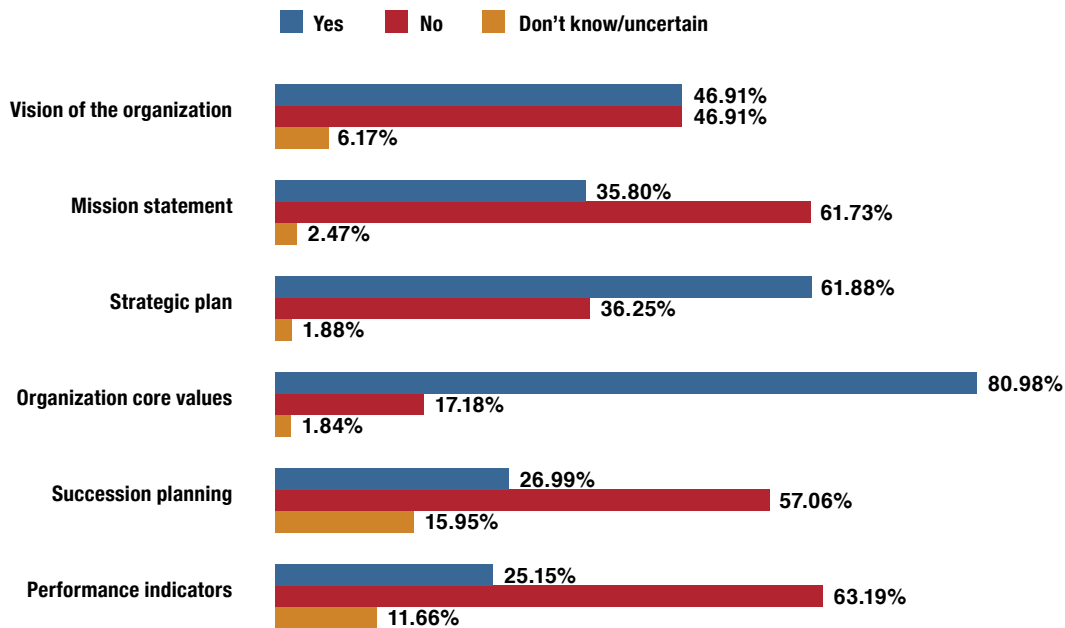**Figure 3 —** **Do you and/or your leadership currently demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion by…**

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/uncertain

Regular inclusion of diversity topics at meetings
- Yes: 53.16%
- No: 44.94%
- Don't know/uncertain: 1.90%

Mentoring
- Yes: 64.97%
- No: 29.30%
- Don't know/uncertain: 5.73%

Personal involvement in diversity training
- Yes: 52.87%
- No: 43.95%
- Don't know/uncertain: 3.18%

Managing by example
- Yes: 86.16%
- No: 9.43%
- Don't know/uncertain: 4.40%

Dedicating resources
- Yes: 59.62%
- No: 38.46%
- Don't know/uncertain: 1.92%

Recognition of diversity champions
- Yes: 39.24%
- No: 57.59%
- Don't know/uncertain: 3.16%

Empowerment
- Yes: 67.31%
- No: 23.08%
- Don't know/uncertain: 9.62%

Community involvement and outreach
- Yes: 61.78%
- No: 34.39%
- Don't know/uncertain: 3.82%

Other
- Yes: 25%
- No: 43.75%
- Don't know/uncertain: 31.25%

This commitment is finding its way into clear, articulated expressions against which the association can measure accountability as well. More than 80 percent of respondents said their organization's core values have an expressed commitment to diversity and inclusion, while more than 60 percent said the express commitment is part of the association's strategic plan.

Figure 4 — **Which of the following includes an expressed commitment to diversity and inclusion for your organization?**

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/uncertain

Vision of the organization
- Yes: 46.91%
- No: 46.91%
- Don't know/uncertain: 6.17%

Mission statement
- Yes: 35.80%
- No: 61.73%
- Don't know/uncertain: 2.47%

Strategic plan
- Yes: 61.88%
- No: 36.25%
- Don't know/uncertain: 1.88%

Organization core values
- Yes: 80.98%
- No: 17.18%
- Don't know/uncertain: 1.84%

Succession planning
- Yes: 26.99%
- No: 57.06%
- Don't know/uncertain: 15.95%

Performance indicators
- Yes: 25.15%
- No: 63.19%
- Don't know/uncertain: 11.66%

Moreover, this commitment also is working its way into the more routine aspects of work. Twenty-five percent of the respondents said their organizations have diversity and inclusion initiatives as part of their performance indicators and as a consideration for succession planning.
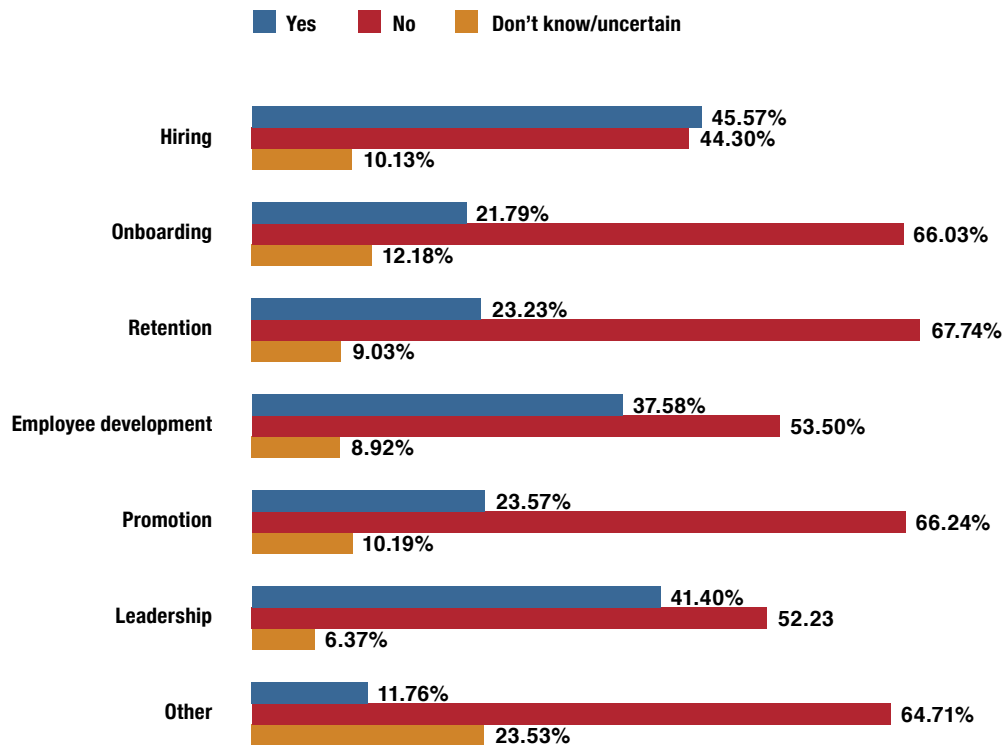
Organizations should be mindful of the continuum.

Although associations are implementing committed expressions to diversity and inclusion, there seems to be a disconnect between that commitment and the development of a comprehensive diversity strategy. Fewer than half of the respondents said their organization has a diversity strategy for hiring or leadership. Fewer than 25 percent said there is a diversity strategy for promotion, retention, or onboarding.

"Make a public commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion and make sure the CEO, Board, and senior leadership engage in activities with diverse individuals and organizations."

> **Assure that the organizational culture is aligned with the expectations of a diverse and inclusive workforce. If those aren't aligned, recruitment and retention remains a challenge.**

Figure 5 — **Do you currently have a diversity strategy for?**

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/uncertain

Hiring
- Yes: 45.57%
- No: 44.30%
- Don't know/uncertain: 10.13%

Onboarding
- Yes: 21.79%
- No: 66.03%
- Don't know/uncertain: 12.18%

Retention
- Yes: 23.23%
- No: 67.74%
- Don't know/uncertain: 9.03%

Employee development
- Yes: 37.58%
- No: 53.50%
- Don't know/uncertain: 8.92%

Promotion
- Yes: 23.57%
- No: 66.24%
- Don't know/uncertain: 10.19%

Leadership
- Yes: 41.40%
- No: 52.23
- Don't know/uncertain: 6.37%

Other
- Yes: 11.76%
- No: 64.71%
- Don't know/uncertain: 23.53%

Interestingly, when asked if their organization had action plans in place to support its diversity and inclusion strategy, the yes/no split was very close — 46.8 percent versus 45.5 percent, respectively. This may indicate that the respondents were focused on a particular aspect of their organization's diversity strategy, such as hiring, but this would also be an area for additional study. For some associations, this may bring to light a necessary but attainable objective — to not only develop and enact plans to support diversity and inclusion efforts, but also ensure association board members, staff, and membership are aware of those efforts and their implementation.

When asked whether D&I is discussed as part of the orientation process, slightly more than 55 percent said it was a part of the orientation of new staff and new board members. Fewer than one-third of the associations said it was part of volunteer orientation and only about 10 percent discuss it as part of the orientation of vendors.

Figure 6 — **As part of your onboarding process, do you discuss diversity and inclusion during orientation of new…**
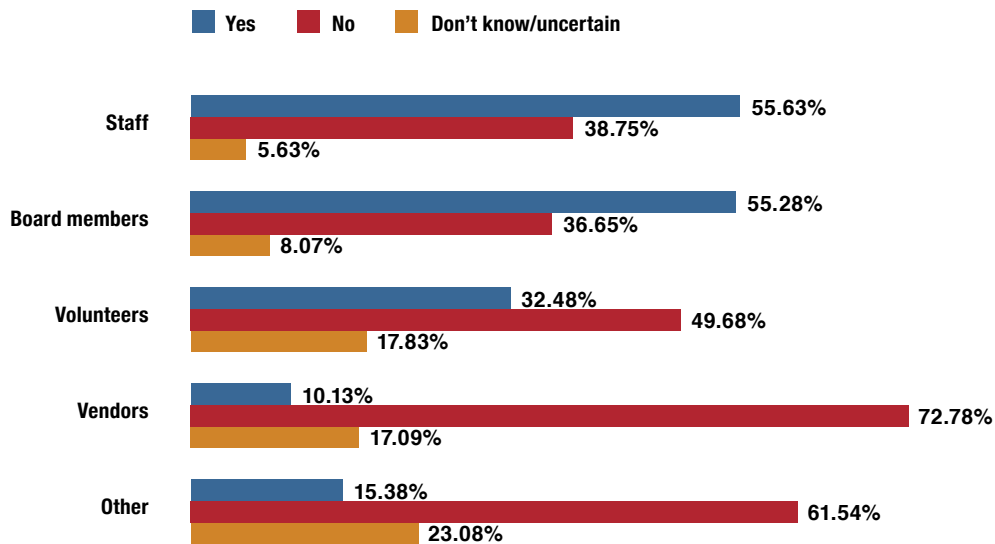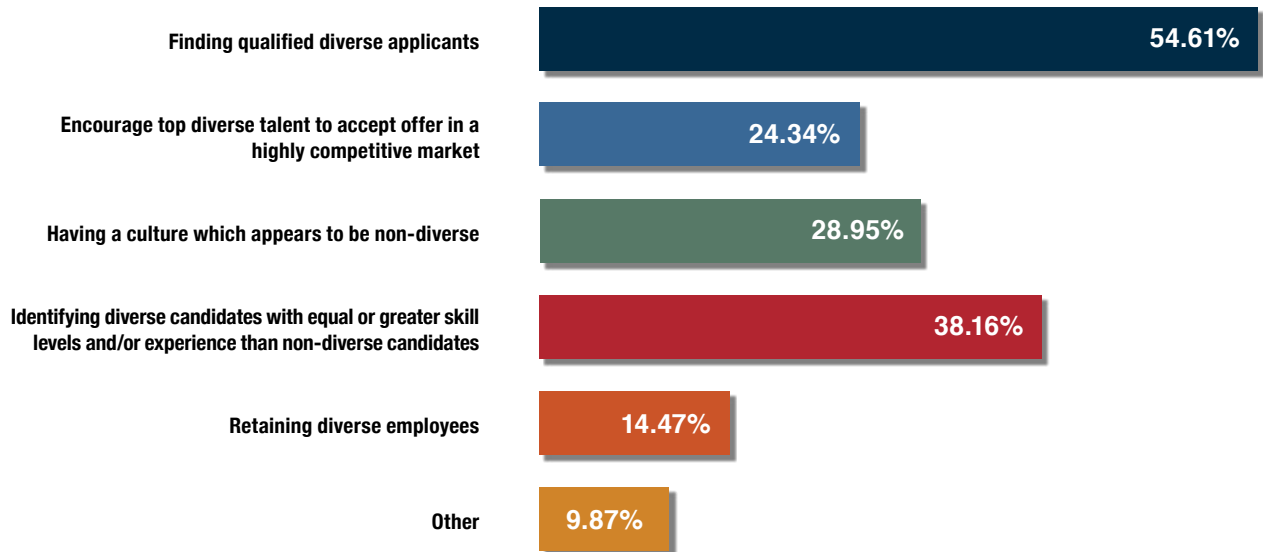

For many associations, these efforts include looking to diverse pipelines for board members, staff, and volunteers. However, encouraging diversity within a vendor's staff continues to be a distant secondary consideration. Try to view the pipeline through the widest possible lens. It is likely that many associations do not think of diversity and inclusion in relation to those they do business with or those who provide goods and services. This may be an area of immense opportunity. Every place an organization can develop diversity increases not only its options and opportunities, but others' as well.

Overcoming the top challenges to creating a more diverse organization requires deliberate cultivation.

According to the research, finding qualified diverse applicants remains the greatest challenge to creating a more diverse workforce. Yes, it is a great challenge but the research also demonstrated finding diverse applicants is not insurmountable. Associations need to look beyond their traditional processes and sources. The respondents said the next most pressing challenge was identifying diverse candidates with equal or greater skill levels and/or experience than non-diverse candidates.

Figure 7 — **What is your greatest challenge to creating a more diverse workforce?**
(Please check all that apply)

Category	Percentage
Finding qualified diverse applicants	54.61%
Encourage top diverse talent to accept offer in a highly competitive market	24.34%
Having a culture which appears to be non-diverse	28.95%
Identifying diverse candidates with equal or greater skill levels and/or experience than non-diverse candidates	38.16%
Retaining diverse employees	14.47%
Other	9.87%

The most successful associations cultivate a diverse talent pipeline from the moment they develop a recruiting strategy. These associations cultivate those with talent, regardless of where in the organization they currently sit. The chapter volunteer with strong leadership skills may be a valuable voice on the board. The zealous member may have the experience to be a CFO. The vendor account manager may be able to provide insight on how to improve relevance to members. Everyone — board, staff, members, partners, and vendors — needs to keep an eye out for these gems. They will have the industry knowledge; and the specific, required skills can be developed.

This perspective should encourage associations to widen their focus. Most management- or executive-level job skills are not industry specific. Avoid the assumption that the only people who can work in an association are the ones currently within the relevant sphere or the association world itself. The management/executive skills are valuable in their own right, and the industry can be learned. The right candidate will be eager to acquire information about and from the organization and its members, and will likely have developed a knowledge plan that can be further shaped by the association's leadership.

Practical Approaches to Hiring, Onboarding, and Promotion

Taken together, the data points on incorporating diversity and inclusion into recruiting, hiring, orienting, and onboarding staff present a real opportunity for associations. While organizations are making efforts in each of these areas, the opportunity lies in integrating diversity and inclusion holistically throughout the staff life-cycle.

To recap, almost half of the survey respondents said their organizations have a diversity strategy for hiring; not quite 25 percent said their organizations have a strategy for promotion, retention, and onboarding; and slightly more than 55 percent discuss diversity as part of their staff orientation.

Finding qualified diverse applicants remains the greatest challenge to creating a more diverse workforce. As organizations review their talent development strategy going forward, consider the following suggestions:

First, develop the position specification/ job description with diversity and inclusion in mind. Does the language in the position description reflect any biases? Is the communication style highly restrictive, or open and accessible? In addition to the essential job requirements, can connections be made to desirable skills and experiences that will make the application of a specific pool of diverse candidates more likely?

Second, consider a purposeful recruitment and outreach strategy that will increase the diversity of the candidate pool. Where is the position advertised? Do the sources for suggestions on potential candidates reflect the diversity the organization is trying to foster?

Are essential skills and knowledge differentiated from what can be acquired through relevant experiences when discussing the job with the sources? What intermediate steps can be created in the process that invite a wider pool of candidates into the process?

Third, outline the steps in the interview process and identify questions that will be asked of each candidate to ensure the search takes a proactive stance on diversity and inclusion. Think about how the organization develops interview questions. Can bias be minimized, considering ways to recognize and understand a broader set of experiences in candidates?

Be open and honest with staff who are part of the interview process. Address unconscious biases, gender stereotypes, and assumptions about those who come from different backgrounds. Build questions that address these issues into the debrief about candidates. Seek to understand diverse viewpoints and responses to questions that are different from the more traditional responses often given in interviews. Avoid placing value on a candidate's message based on the individual's appearance, mannerisms, or accent.

Fourth, focus on the onboarding experience through the lens of diversity and inclusion. Are assumptions made during this process that might make some new employees feel excluded or uncomfortable? Is the diversity and inclusion policy reviewed with staff as part of employee orientation? Does senior staff discuss how to address situations and comments that challenge the value of diversity or create a non-inclusive environment? What is the process for staff to comfortably voice these concerns?

Fifth, evaluate where diversity exists in the organization. Promotion should always be merit based. With that said, does the association regularly look at where diversity exists in its ranks? Is it only at the base of the organizational pyramid? Is the senior leadership team diverse, but there are fewer diverse staff at mid-management levels? If organizations can identify structurally where diversity does and does not exist, it can then challenge itself on how it is guiding, supporting, and providing development opportunities for all staff so that they are better prepared for career advancement.

Finally, like any good talent scout, be proactive and consistent about cultivating diverse talent throughout the year. Building a pipeline takes persistence and a methodical overarching strategy and plan. While change won't happen overnight, the ongoing effort will yield results.

What can associations do outside of hiring, onboarding, and promotion?

The survey asked two questions to understand the approaches associations use to improve awareness about workplace diversity and inclusion and the behaviors used to increase sensitivity to workplace diversity and inclusion. The top three strategies identified by respondents are accessible and achievable.

One, communicate effectively by listening attentively and asking questions. This is a basic strategy for strong operations in general. Take a moment, and do more than just hear a viewpoint; actually listen to it. Spend real time thinking about the conversation in a serious way. If you don't understand it, respectfully ask questions until you do. This isn't to say it is easy to challenge your preconceived ideas, but it is worthwhile to do so.

Two, recognize that diversity exists and learn to value and respect fundamental differences. Successful organizations should not engage in group-think. Instead, they encourage vigorous discussion from a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and ideas. This robust process should not be seen as a negative. In fact, this culture often reveals weaknesses in proposals or strategies that would adversely impact the organization if not discovered.

Three, educate yourself about differences by reading, listening, and broadening experiences. Numerous media have published stories on the importance of diversity to the bottom line, innovation, and future viability.[6] This extends outside of the workplace as well. Your experiences at conferences, meetings, events, traveling, or socially all create learning opportunities. We all have unconscious biases, but all of our interactions with those different from us challenge those assumptions. Seek them out.

Strategies help you formulate a plan, but what are the steps to help you reach your goal? We have not seen anything in this study or in our conversations within the association community that indicate a special formula. The foundation for change is to deliberately consider our attitudes and behaviors, and through these to foster an environment in which diversity and inclusion can grow.

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[6] See, for example, *"The Latest Research: Diversity"* by the Harvard Business Review. This can be found at https://hbr.org/product/the-latest-research-diversity/DIVRES-PDF-ENG. *"Why is Diversity in the Workplace Important to Employees?"* by Ruth Mayhew. This article can be found at http://smallbusiness.chron.com/diversity-workplace-important-employees-10812.html. Entrepreneur.com has numerous articles on diversity and inclusion that can be found at https://www.entrepreneur.com/topic/workplace-diversity.

Form positive relationships with diverse people in the workplace. Speak with them as you encounter them. Create social opportunities so not all interactions are driven by work. Develop learning opportunities, which don't necessarily need to focus specifically on diversity. They could be on association-specific topics, industry trends, little known parts of your organization, etc. Work with diverse people to achieve mutual goals. This could be a specific work project, a philanthropic endeavor, a membership initiative, or a policy change. Welcome and incorporate all members of working teams as equals, regardless of their backgrounds. At the workplace, conferences, and social gatherings, seek out those who are not already participating in a conversation.

Incorporate diversity and inclusion into the organization's core values.

Study participants were generous in sharing their thoughts, recommendations, and experiences on specific actions that demonstrate an active commitment to diversity and inclusion. The recurring concepts and approaches they suggested include:

- Develop and internally publicize a diversity and inclusion strategy for the association;
- Instill the value of diversity and inclusion at every level;
- Add the advancement of diversity and inclusion to regular reviews of the strategic plan, projects, and employee performance;
- Know your organization's diversity and inclusion goals and their connection to its strategic plan;
- Create/Participate in training and awareness programs;
- Partner with another organization whose diversity and inclusion efforts you admire.

We've included a reference list of additional ideas for action on the next page, which were provided by the research respondents or developed from discussions in the academic community.

What Can I Do?

- Understand your unconscious biases. There are numerous resources and literature online to help explore and understand unconscious biases.

- Recognize where you have certain biases, and work to reduce them. We all have unconscious biases. These biases do not make an individual a racist/sexist/ageist/any other -ist. But they do impact how we interact with others, and improving those interactions begins with honest self-understanding.

- Instill the value of diversity and inclusion at every level of your organization, including incorporating them into the organization's core values.

- Develop and internally publicize a diversity and inclusion strategy for the organization.

- Add the advancement of diversity and inclusion to regular reviews of the strategic plan, projects, and employee performance.

- Know your organization's diversity and inclusion goals, their connection to its strategic plan, and how your work furthers those goals.

- Encourage diverse panels at presentations, industry events, and conferences.

- Address situations and comments that challenge the value of diversity or create a non-inclusive feeling. Do not hope that no one noticed; address these as "teachable" moments.

- Create/Participate in training and awareness programs.

- Partner with another organization whose diversity and inclusion efforts you admire.

- Listen attentively to those who are different from you.

- Respectfully ask questions to understand diverse opinions/viewpoints. Educate yourself about these differences of perspective.

- Address assumptions about people with different backgrounds than your own, and avoid group stereotypes.

- Avoid looking to one individual to represent the entirety of the diverse population.

- Avoid implying the individual is the exception to the group stereotype.

- Avoid placing value on someone's message based on the individual's appearance, mannerisms, or accent.

- Seek feedback from individuals and groups on how best to communicate respect for their diversity and their ideas.

- Encourage openness in discussing personal opinions, feelings, and reactions.

- Speak with the people in the room with whom no one else is interacting.

- Work with diverse teams to achieve mutual goals.

Conclusion

Successful diversity and inclusion efforts will be different for each association. Intentionality and comprehensiveness are key.

There is no cookie cutter approach to increase diversity and inclusion within organizations. At a minimum, leadership needs to determine what success looks like for its organization. Otherwise, it may have trouble claiming that diversity and inclusion are a priority. Fewer than 25 percent of the respondents said their association has benchmarks for D&I to determine if progress is being made. Is success increasing diversity at the board or executive level? Is it establishing a committee that actively seeks comment and criticism on inclusion efforts? Is it creating a pipeline to increase diverse talent and members? Is it a program, product, or service shift that attracts new voices to the organization? Is it having regular conversations on the subject with staff? Associations need to understand where they are trying to go before they can map out how to get there.
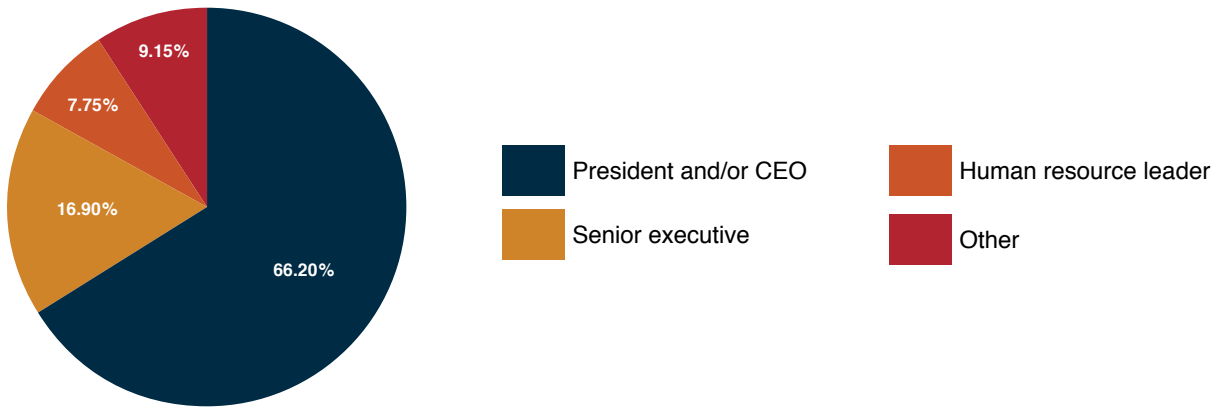
Association executives will need to develop a toolkit of strategies and approaches that is as diverse as the teams and plans they seek to foster and support. It's important to remember diversity and inclusion efforts should exist before and well beyond the hiring phase. How do D&I practices affect the board, staff, and membership pipelines? How are they incorporated into onboarding? Is training both sensitive to, and sensitizing others, where appropriate, to diversity and inclusion concerns? Do retention and promotion practices reflect a commitment to diversity and inclusion? This is a process, and one that requires re-visiting and re-evaluating questions like these to better define what diversity and inclusion mean to each organization in a specific, tangible way.

This research adds to the conversations within associations and moves them closer to their versions of success.
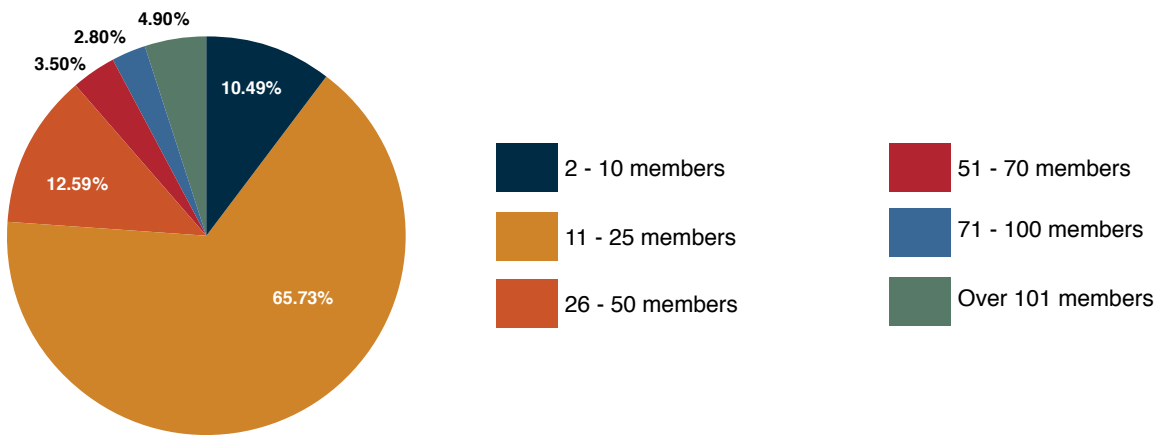
We in the association community have the opportunity to continue to move purposefully beyond our comfort zones. This study helps us to quantify the current state in the community, and move forward from that baseline. So the path ahead is to continue to be thoughtful and deliberate about diversity and inclusion. Engage in diversity and inclusion efforts both inside and outside of the work environment. Expand horizons not only professionally, but also socially, to widen outlooks and opportunities. Talk to the people no one else is speaking with. Use challenges within the association or industry as opportunities to educate, learn, and develop solutions.

Appendix: Respondent Profiles

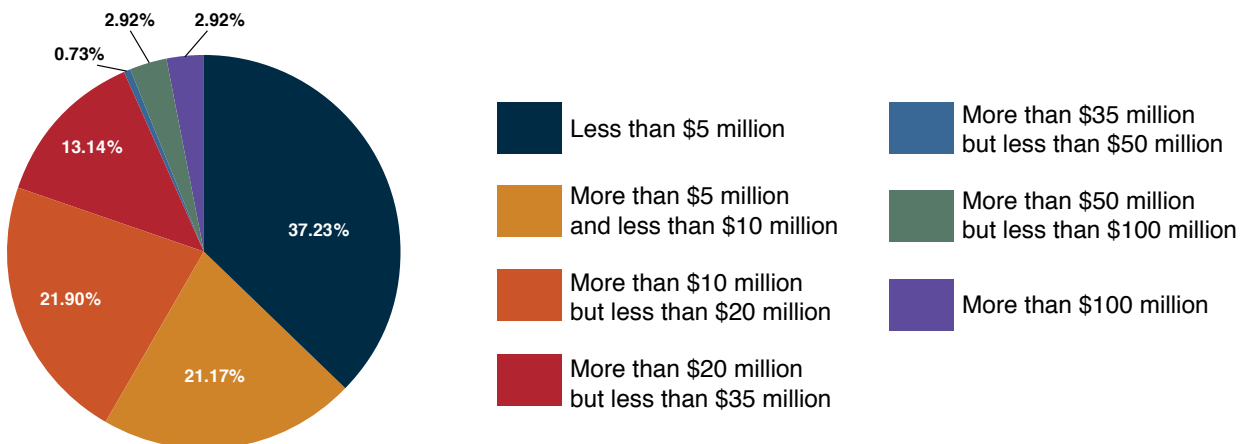## Please indicate your position within the association.

- President and/or CEO — 66.20%
- Senior executive — 16.90%
- Human resource leader — 7.75%
- Other — 9.15%

What is the size of your Board of Directors?

- 2 - 10 members — 10.49%
- 11 - 25 members — 65.73%
- 26 - 50 members — 12.59%
- 51 - 70 members — 3.50%
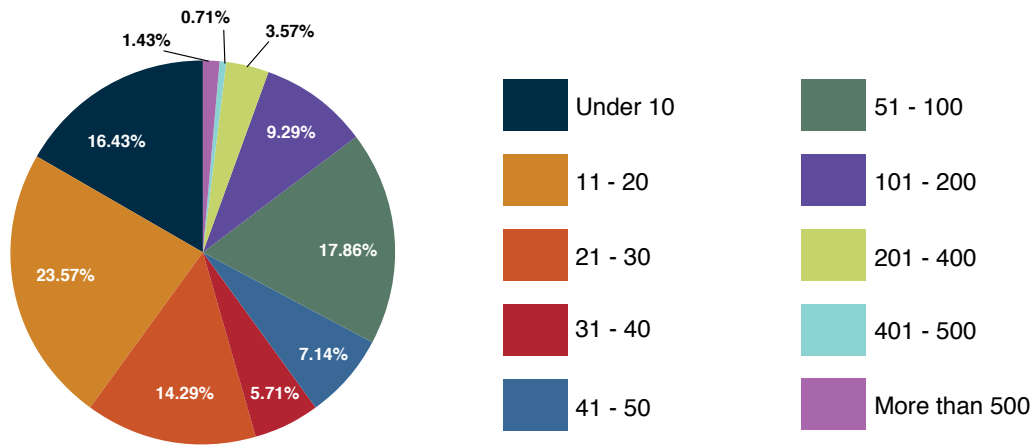- 71 - 100 members — 2.80%
- Over 101 members — 4.90%

What was the 2016 annual revenue of your organization?
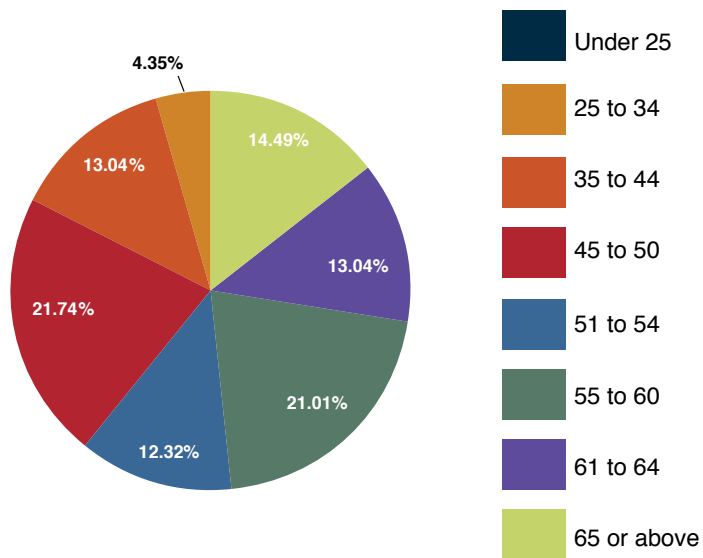*(If you do not use the calendar year, please use your last complete fiscal year's revenue.)*

- Less than $5 million — 37.23%
- More than $5 million and less than $10 million — 21.17%
- More than $10 million but less than $20 million — 21.90%
- More than $20 million but less than $35 million — 13.14%
- More than $35 million but less than $50 million — 0.73%
- More than $50 million but less than $100 million — 2.92%
- More than $100 million — 2.92%

Appendix: Respondent Profiles

What is the number of employees of the organization?

Legend:
- Under 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 40
- 41 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 200
- 201 - 400
- 401 - 500
- More than 500

Values shown: 0.71%, 1.43%, 3.57%, 9.29%, 16.43%, 17.86%, 23.57%, 7.14%, 14.29%, 5.71%

What is your age?

Legend:
- Under 25
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 50
- 51 to 54
- 55 to 60
- 61 to 64
- 65 or above

Values shown: 4.35%, 13.04%, 14.49%, 13.04%, 21.74%, 21.01%, 12.32%

Sex assigned at birth?

47.10% Male
52.90% Female
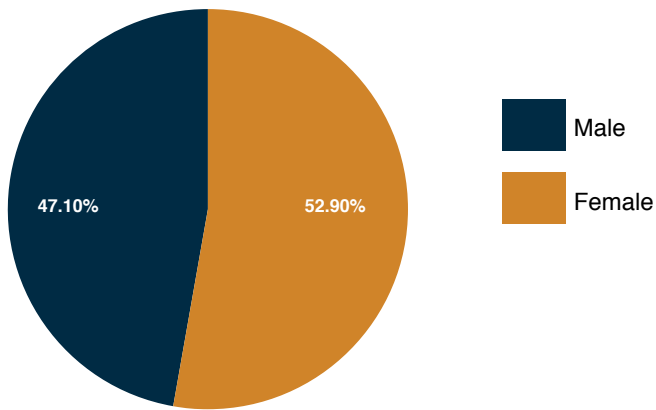
How would you describe yourself?

- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- American Indian /Native American/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White/Caucasian
- Other

4.35%
1.45%
1.45%
0.72%
8.70%
83.33%