



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN  
AMERICAN MUSEUMS

# 2021

## MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENT

prepared by  
People, Places & Design Research

# 2021 Membership Assessment

## Association of African American Museums

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The Association of African American Museums will continue to strengthen its organizational effectiveness by expanding member services and assessing the impact of recent capacity building efforts. The association will work with two student interns to assess member services in response to a 2017 National Needs Assessment and to identify additional needs that have developed over time. A consulting firm will assess the organization's success in implementing strategic plan goals over the past three years. The project will support and train students from historically black colleges and universities in learning skills related to organizational sustainability and capacity building while gaining working knowledge in areas such as member cultivation and engagement and program development. Association members will benefit from at least three professional development webinars based on survey findings, and the organization will complete revisions to its strategic plan.

## Executive Summary

This Membership Assessment was commissioned as a follow-up to the strategic planning process undertaken during 2016-2018. It was designed to help reflect on members' awareness and perceptions of various aspects of how AAAM functions, as well as to provide input for ongoing and future decisions within the organization. Also, since the implementation of strategic planning, there has been a very substantial change in the organization: the all-volunteer nature of AAAM has been enhanced by a central office and paid Executive Director. So this point in time was also appropriate in the sense of seeing how one of the biggest strategic planning actions – creating a full-time office and Executive Director – might be affecting members' perceptions of the organization.

Considerable input was used to create this membership assessment in a way that was as comprehensive as possible; we sought to reflect on issues that have been given attention in the last five years (since the 2017 National Needs Assessment) as well as look forward to initiatives that may not have been implemented yet. Overall, the content of questioning is represented by these six topics:

- member characteristics
- member satisfaction with AAAM
- perceptions of benefits of belonging to AAAM
- perceptions of communications
- perceptions of the annual conference
- challenges that members are facing

### Overview of the research method and quality of data

This membership assessment was conducted as an online survey. The content was developed between September and November of 2020, a draft of the survey was tested in December, and after revisions and further input from the Executive Director and the Board, the survey was launched in late January 2021. The survey remained open through mid-April; numerous reminders were used to prompt member participation. Donated gifts were awarded to randomly selected survey-takers and announced at several points to enhance members' awareness and encourage their participation in the ongoing survey.

A critical issue in all surveys is whether the data can be trusted. Typically, there are three factors to consider: is the survey based on a sufficient sample size of the group being studied? is the sample of people who participated representative of the population being studied? and are the questions clear, understandable to the survey-takers, and reflective of the goals of the project? In brief, these factors were thoroughly considered and met successfully in this project:

- ★ The *participation rate* was 59% of members-at-the-time,<sup>1</sup> which is excellent, yielding 422 complete questionnaires, plus another dozen or so with some usable information.
- ★ *Representativeness of the sample* was assessed by comparing the types of members who responded vs. the types of members in AAAM's data base, revealing a highly similar pattern. Also, the range and variety of members was impressive (a wide range of experience in the field, people who work at a museum and people who work independently, and many job types).
- ★ *The questions were designed with input* from AAAM's Executive Director, Vedet Coleman-Robinson and the Project Manager, Camille Vincent, the Board, and a dozen or so 'Good Thinkers'<sup>2</sup> who added a layer of realistic and strategic thinking to the topics of this effort to understand members and their needs. Then the questions were tested with early participants, revisions made based on their answers and comments, and as the survey was launched there were several checks on the accumulating answers to ensure that we were getting meaningful patterns of information.

Evidence about the impressive extent of members' participation and the quality of data is presented after this Executive Summary, with the heading of 'Confidence Builders about the Data.'

## FINDINGS

This membership assessment offers a substantial amount of data on several topics. The results go way beyond one or two findings, and therefore we are reporting findings in the following way:

*"What have we, AAAM, learned about [each of 6 topics]?"*

Each 'what have we learned' is accompanied by a strategic implication or question for consideration ("Something to think about").

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<sup>1</sup> The actual base of members at the time when the survey logistics were being planned, December 2020, was just over 800, but some memberships are 'admin' accounts (e.g., an office or library where there was no one individual who could be contacted to answer the questions, or a sponsor account), and AAAM's central office estimated that approximately 70-80 such memberships should not be counted as part of the base of potential respondents to the survey. In addition, some Board members and AAAM staff felt that their participation might bias the results in some way, so by declining to participate those members were also subtracted from the total membership base before calculating the 59% participation rate.

<sup>2</sup> 'Good Thinkers' was the name given to the team of people selected by the Executive Director to provide input to the survey topics. We credit them here for their early insights and contributions that made this initiative more robust. Alphabetically, they were: Shaun Halifax, Shelby D. Henderson, Gina M Jackson, Stephanie M. Jones, Jessica Kelly, Julian B. Kiganda, Michelle Lanier, Kim Cliett Long, Sister Paula Livers Powell, Shelley Ritter, Angela Thorpe, Skyller Walkes, Lance Wheeler, Jada Wright-Greene, Stephanie Wright Griggs.

What have we learned about ‘membership characteristics’?

- ❖ **AAAM’s membership is composed of a wonderfully diverse representation of the field of culturally-connected professionals.** AAAM members include people who are affiliated with a specific museum or site, as well as people who work in the field in other ways: independent, consulting, academic, arts administration, associations, students. The work sectors and job types encompass a wide range of skills and roles, including directors and other executives, curation and exhibition roles, educators, public program roles, development, marketing, and collections.
- ❖ The membership is an impressive group of professionals who are extremely well-educated and well-connected with other parts of the museum community.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** The breadth and depth of experience of the membership adds up to being an immense resource. How can AAAM make more use of its membership as a resource?

What have we learned about ‘member satisfaction’?

- ❖ **Clearly, AAAM has earned a very positive status in the eyes of the membership.** In the last five years, the proportion of highly satisfied<sup>3</sup> members nearly doubled from 29% in 2016<sup>4</sup> to 52% in 2021. Also impressive is that three-quarters of the members say they are likely to renew their membership and recommend AAAM to a colleague.
- ❖ There is also evidence that some members are not fully engaged with AAAM and its activities, and some members want more from AAAM.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** Satisfaction is notably higher for specific parameters of association functioning than for AAAM overall (see chapter B), and combined with the observation that some members want more from the organization, this suggests a pattern of *rising expectations*. If true, that will probably mean more demands on a central office as well as a need to strengthen networking, collaborating, and mentorship.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Highly satisfied’ is defined by rating ‘what AAAM does’ as a 9 or a 10 on a 10-point scale.

<sup>4</sup> Technically the data in the 2017 National Needs Assessment were collected in 2016 and analyzed by the end of 2016, then published in 2017.

What have we learned about ‘perceptions of member benefits’?

- ❖ **Some members are aware and engaged with the variety of AAAM offerings, and some are not.** There is considerable room for increasing the level of engagement, especially among EMPs and the newest members.
- ❖ Multi-year and long-term members seem reasonably aware of multiple benefits, with long-term members being especially likely to have used or participated in professional training opportunities and the Regional Conversations series. Among EMPs, the standout is *First Friday Socials*: two-thirds are aware of them and 40% have participated.
- ❖ Members’ strong appetite for professional development and networking continues (as noted in the 2017 National Needs Assessment). In this analysis, three potential benefits were met with enthusiasm: webinars, regional meetings and reciprocal admission.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** The substantial deficit in awareness of member benefits among the newest members raises the question of whether there is or could be an orientation package that puts this information “under their nose.” Counting on people to spontaneously explore the website probably won’t happen if they don’t know there are benefits available.

What have we learned about ‘communications from AAAM’?

- ❖ **Most members are highly satisfied with communications from AAAM.** Primarily this means the consistency of the weekly Monday newsletter with useful resources and information about what’s going on in the field. The Monday posting of job opportunities and grant programs is much used and appreciated by younger and newer members – it’s the only benefit where they are as likely to be aware of it compared with multi-year and long-term members.
- ❖ About two-thirds of members appear to be following AAAM on social media.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** “You can lead a horse to water...” or post emails to members – that they don’t necessarily read. However, the stunning success of the Monday newsletter (about money) may provide a precedent for another awareness-raising initiative about programs and benefits. Without overloading the central office or overloading members who might feel they’re getting too many emails, what if one Monday of the month was a newsletter about benefits and programs? – possibly including an opportunity to vote for a webinar topic, and an invitation for people who would volunteer to do a webinar on the topic selected the previous month.

What have we learned about ‘perceptions of the annual conference’?

- ❖ **For many members, the 2020 virtual conference was a bright spot amidst the pandemic.** About half of the members say they attended some part of the virtual conference, and they were happy that it was possible to hold it in some form, impressed by the presenters, the ease of use of the virtual interface, and the fact that it was possible to connect with colleagues and maintain some sense of community despite not being together in person.
- ❖ Not everything was positive about the virtual conference. People missed having events at local museums, the tours to sites in the area, the vendors, and the informal networking time that is – for many people – the once-a-year chance to see many friends and colleagues.
- ❖ Among the people who attended the 2020 conference, a core group (42%) said they would attend the next conference in whatever format it happened – in-person or virtual. However, another contingent (28%) were focused on the financial and logistical advantages of a virtual conference, saying they would *only* attend the next conference if it were virtual.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** There is no one right answer here: some members are eager to see friends and colleagues in person, and some are only able to attend the virtual format because of the absent cost of transportation, accommodations, and a lower registration fee.

What have we learned about ‘other challenges that members are facing’?

- ❖ **The effects of the pandemic have not been equally felt across the membership and the field.** A year into the pandemic, about half of members were still feeling stressed, but said their stress was mostly manageable. About one-quarter were starting to feel hopeful.<sup>5</sup> And yet, more than a quarter of museum-affiliated members indicated that revenue losses due to the pandemic were likely to impact the organization’s operations this year.
- ❖ When asked what AAAM could do to help, most members had no suggestions; there are many difficult challenges. Some people mentioned more virtual networking opportunities, more funding, more job posts or help with a specific issue.

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<sup>5</sup> It might be relevant to note that the January through April timing of answering survey questions was before the emergence of the Delta variant of COVID-19.

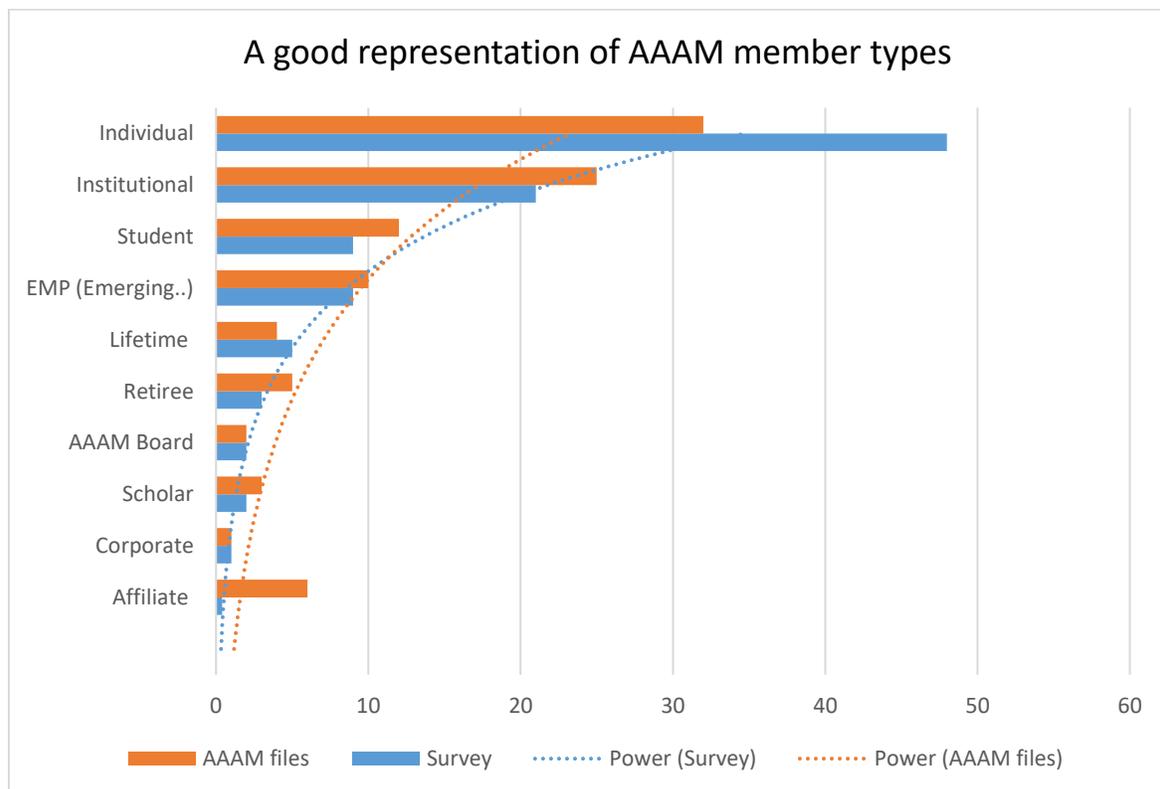
**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** AAAM does not have to solve every problem that arises. But allowing members to feel comraderie with others and provide some forum for airing needs and challenges could be useful. When asked what AAAM could do to help with their challenges, this survey produced pages of suggestions (Chapter F, section 3).

## How do you know that the data can be trusted?

### CONFIDENCE BUILDER SIDEBAR #1 about AAAM Membership distribution

In addition to the high rate of participation (59%), this page illustrates another really good reason to trust the data: the pattern of representativeness of the survey-takers. Overall, the results represent a great cross-section of the membership – note the similarity in the dotted curved lines in the graph, indicating very similar proportions of response between the types of members in the data files vs. the survey-takers.

<u>Type of membership</u>	<u>Survey</u>	<u>AAAM file</u>
Individual	48%	32%
Institutional	21%	25%
EMP	9%	10%
Student	9%	12%
Lifetime member	5%	4%
Retiree	3%	5%
AAAM Board Member	2%	2%
Scholar	2%	3%
Corporate	1%	1%
Affiliate	<1%	6%
	100%	100%



## CONFIDENCE BUILDER SIDEBAR #2

from the winter-spring 2021 survey (422 people responding)

### Diversity of Member Affiliation

Most people who are familiar with AAAM would know that this community of members includes people who work at a specific museum or site, as well as people who are part of the field but are not affiliated with one specific museum or site. But we needed to know if all those types of people were represented in this membership analysis. Note that there is great representation of both of those “halves” of the AAAM community.

#### Type of museum affiliation

#### Survey

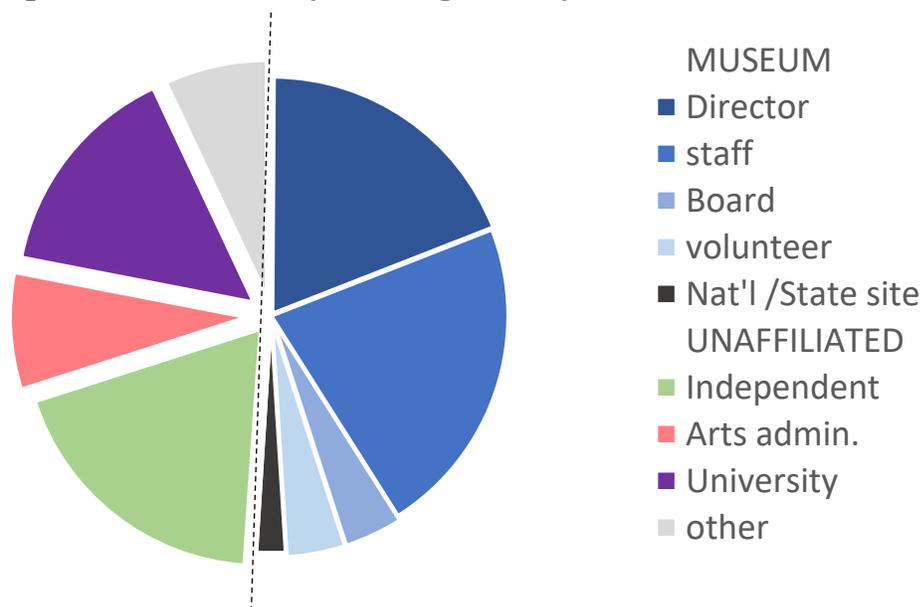
##### A SPECIFIC MUSEUM:

Director /founder	19%
staff	22%
Board member	4%
volunteer	4%
Nat'l or State site	2%

##### NOT WORKING AT ONE SPECIFIC MUSEUM:

Independent professional	19%
College or University	15% (incl. 8% students)
Arts administration	8%
other	<u>7%</u>
	100%

**Half of the members are directly affiliated with a specific museum (blue segments), half are not**



# A CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEMBERS

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

Understanding the characteristics of the membership is fundamental to good planning and management. If you don't know who your constituents are, planning for their needs might not be as "on target" as you would hope.

**This membership is a wonderfully diverse representation of the field of culturally-connected professionals.**

- half are affiliated with one specific site (museum etc.) and half work in other ways (independent, academic, arts administration, associations, students)
- there's a broad age range: long-term careers as well as EMPs (Emerging Museum Professionals)
- the 'great expansion' of membership in the last 2 years includes all levels of experience in the field, from emerging to mid-career to senior to very senior people; these newest members include more young people compared to the previous membership base; and the newest members are more ethnically diverse

**It's an impressive group of professionals.**

- extremely well educated: 72% with post-graduate degrees
- well-connected: 79% belong to at least one other professional organization (half belong to 2 or more)

**Fast facts to understand the membership.**

- 82% have some African heritage
- 73% are women
- 72% live on the East Coast (half of those, 38%, in the Southeast)
- 32% have an HBCU connection, 68% do not

## A.1. Membership characteristics

OVERVIEW: About half of the members who responded to this survey hold individual memberships, and 21% represent institutional memberships. The sample includes a lot of new members (50%) which accurately reflects the doubling of membership numbers over the past two years. The membership includes a wide range of types of affiliations with museums, a wide range of types of jobs, and a wide range of length of experience working in the museum field.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016<sup>6</sup></u>
<u>Type of membership</u>		
Individual	48%	
Institutional	21%	
EMP	9%	
Student	9%	
Lifetime member	5%	
Retiree	3%	
AAAM Board Member	2%	
Scholar	2%	
Corporate	1%	
Affiliate	<1%	
<u>Affiliation with museums</u>		
DIRECT:		
Staff	22%	30%
Director/founder of a museum	16%	5%
Board member	4%	8%
Volunteer	4%	7%
INDIRECT:		
Independent professional	19%	24%
Arts administration/non-profit	8%	n/a
College or university	7%	16%
Other (national or state site, library, historian)	11%	4%
<u>Work sector</u>		
Director/executive	33%	
Education	29%	
Curation/exhibitions	27%	
Public programs	21%	
Development	11%	
Marketing/audience development	11%	
Collections/registrar	10%	
Other (research, everything, administrative, etc.)	23%	

<sup>6</sup> The data identified as 2016 were the basis of the 2017 National Needs Assessment: data collected and analyzed in 2016, organized into a report in the spring of 2017.

**Membership characteristics (continued)**

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016</u>	
<u>Length of AAAM membership</u>			
Excluding the 7% of lapsed members who participated, the proportion of 'newest members' (<2 yrs) is 50%.	lapsed member	7%	28%
	less than 2 years	47%	43%
	2-4 years	26%	8%
	5-9 years	10%	11%
	10+ years	10%	11%
<u>Length of experience in field</u>			
Not yet working in museums	10%	12%	
Emerging professional (1-4 years)	27%	24%	
Mid-career (5-9 years)	22%	15%	
Senior professional (10-19 years)	20%	24%	
Very senior (20+ years)	21%	25%	
<u>Other professional memberships that members hold</u>			
American Alliance of Museums (AAM)	41%	32%	
Amer. Assoc. for State & Local History (AASLH)	28%	18%	
Assoc. of Study of AA Life and History (ASALH)	26%	n/a	
A regional museum association (SEMC, NEMA)	22%	16%	
A state museum association	22%	13%	
National Council on Public History (NCPH)	13%	9%	
An NPHC Organization	11%	10%	
Assoc. of Academic Museums & Galleries (AAMG)	4%	n/a	
National Art Education Association (NAEA)	3%	5%	
National Coalition of 100 Black Women	1%	n/a	
Other	17%		
<u>Number of other memberships</u>			
none	21%	23%	
one	29%		
two	18%		
three	15%		
four or more	17%		

## A.2. Personal characteristics

OVERVIEW: Almost three-quarters (72%) of the members are from the East coast, and three-quarters are women. Members are highly educated, with 72% holding post-graduate degrees. About 80% of members have African heritage, and one-third have attended or worked at an HBCU. [the data continue on the next page]

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Region of Residence</u>		
Southeast	38%	
Northeast	29%	
Mid-Atlantic	5%	
Midwest	12%	
Southwest	7%	
West	6%	
International	3%	
<u>Gender</u>		
man	24%	26%
woman	73%	74%
non-binary/another identity	2%	
<u>Education</u>		
high school	1%	
some college	6%	
college graduate	21%	33%
Master's degree	54%	47%
Doctorate	18%	14%
<u>Ethnic identity</u>		
African American	69%	} 82%
Afro-Caribbean	6%	
African immigrant	4%	
Afro-Latino	3%	
White	16%	
Hispanic / Latinx	2%	
Asian	1%	
American Indian	1%	

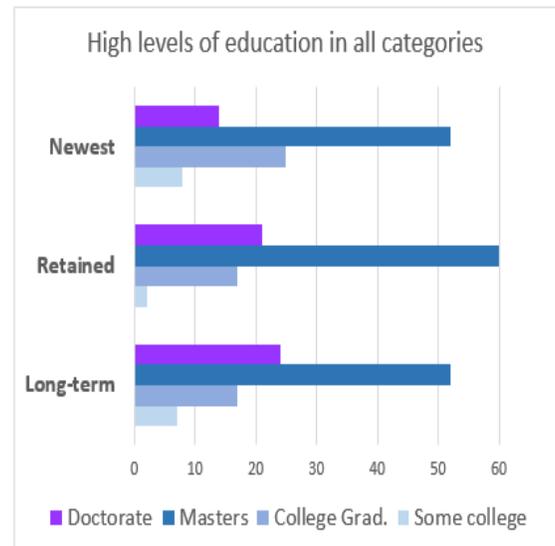
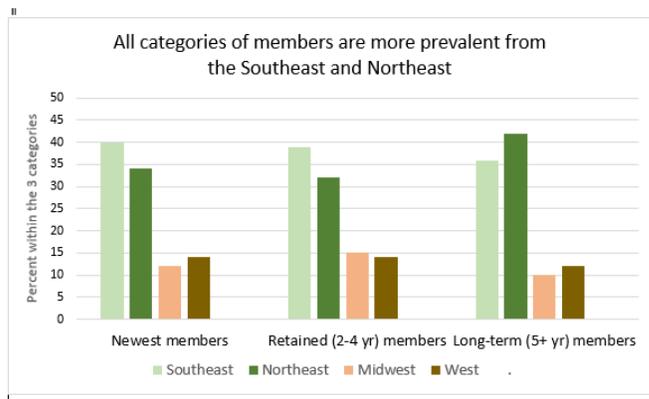
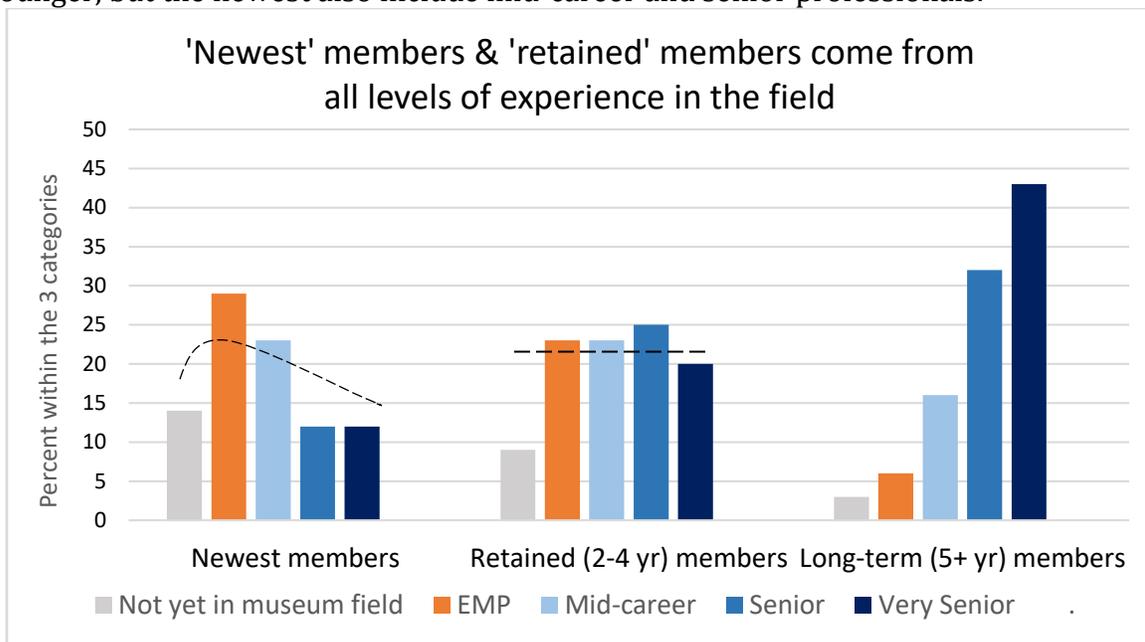
adds to more than 100% because some people chose more than one category.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Age</u>		
Gen. Z [age 18-24]	2%	
Millennial [age 25-40]	35%	17%
Gen. X [age 41-55]	26%	26%
Gen. Jones [age 56-66]	20%	24%
Boomer [age 67-75]	13%	23%
WWII Gen. [age 76+]	4%	10%
 <u>HBCU Association?</u>		
Graduated from HBCU	23%	
Work/worked at HBCU	10%	[overlaps with the category above]
Current student at HBCU	<u>3%</u>	
	32%	
No connection	68%	

### A.3. Characteristics of new members

OVERVIEW: Since the membership has approximately doubled in the last two years, a useful question for management and recruiting would be: Are the newest members different, or more-or-less the same? The data provide this answer: the newest members are very similar to the existing membership, with some minor differences.

To best understand this question and its multiplicity of answers, think of three categories: the **'newest'** have been a member for less than 2 years; the **'retained'** have been members from 2 to 4 years; the **'long-term'** have been members for 5 or more years. These three graphs show some patterns of substantial similarity, although the top graph also shows a minor difference: the newest members are more likely to be younger, but the newest also include mid-career and senior professionals.



Summary: How are the **newest members** similar to or different from 'retained' and 'longer term' members?

### INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Similar: ● The **regions** where they live (most live in the Southeast & Northeast)

Similar: ● The proportion who are **affiliated** with a specific museum

Slightly different: ● **Gender** (the trend of more women continues to increase)

Slightly different: ● **Age** (a wide range, but more younger vs. long-term members)

Slightly different: ● **Race** (majority African heritage; slightly more white vs. before)

Slightly different: ● **Education level** (the newest: fewer advanced degrees so far)

Slightly different: ● **Experience** in the field (wide range, some less experienced)

Slightly different: ● The % **connected with an HBCU** (slightly more not connected)

Different: ● Number of **other professional memberships** (newest have less; they're not so experienced yet)

# B MEMBER SATISFACTION WITH AAAM

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

Measures of satisfaction might seem to be just a curiosity, but in fact they can be a diagnostic indicator of how the organization is perceived. Ratings of satisfaction can also help define whether some types of members are more attuned to the organization than others are. In this study, six measures of satisfaction were used to give an in-depth picture of members' perceptions.

**AAAM has earned a very positive status in the eyes of the membership.**

- 52% are highly satisfied with 'what AAAM does' (an overall measure)
- 76% say they are likely to renew
- 73% are likely to recommend to a colleague
- 67% are highly satisfied with the value for cost
- 64% are highly satisfied with communications from AAAM

Some members are not so engaged

- 47% of members could not think of two good experiences they have had with or because of AAAM, aside from the annual conference.
- Among the members who were less satisfied (rating of '7' or lower on a 10-point scale), the top two categories of reasons were 'unaware' and 'don't know enough'

Some members want more from AAAM

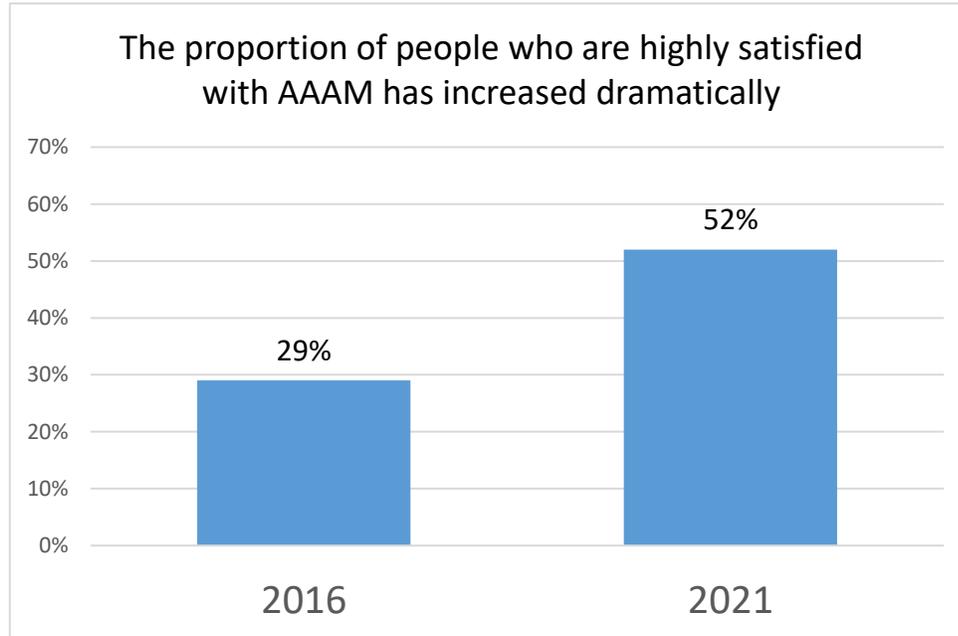
- The financially fragile portion of the membership wants help, so some are turning to the central office
- Younger members may have more hopes for a professional home, like a close-knit college was

## B.1. Ratings of overall satisfaction

OVERVIEW: A major finding is that satisfaction with “what AAAM does” has increased significantly since the 2017 Needs Assessment – 52% give high ratings now, compared with only 29% in 2016.<sup>7</sup> This figure indicates positive perceptions, with some room for improvement. It is particularly notable that the proportion of low ratings (1 to 6, on a 10-point scale) has dropped considerably, from 32% in 2016 to only 10% now.

*On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with:*

	9-10 <u>High</u> <sup>8</sup>	7-8 <u>Medium</u>	1-6 <u>Low</u>
<u>What AAAM does?</u> (compared with 2017 rating):	52% (29%)	38% (39%)	10% (32%)

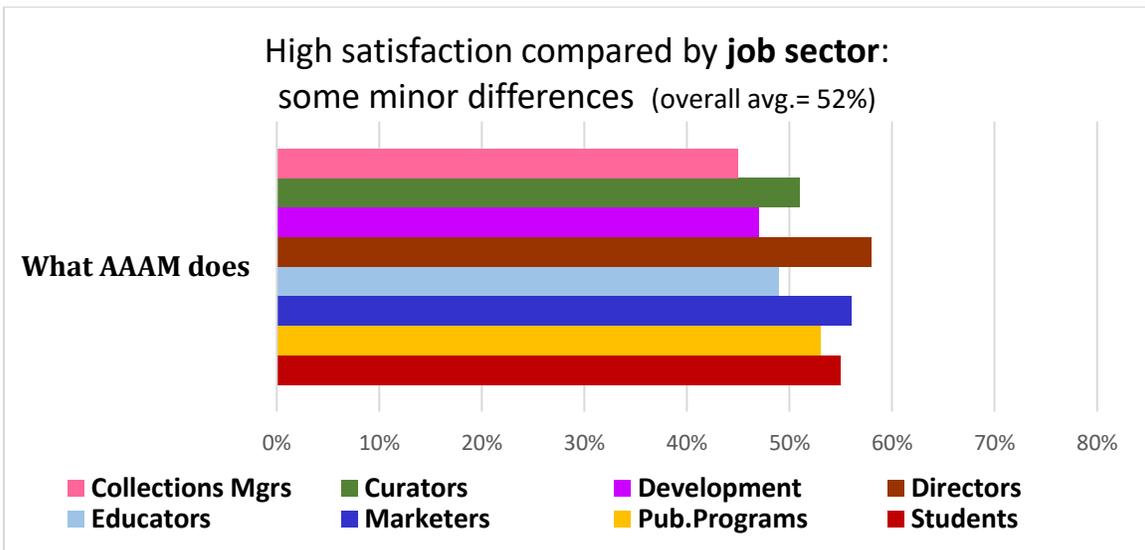
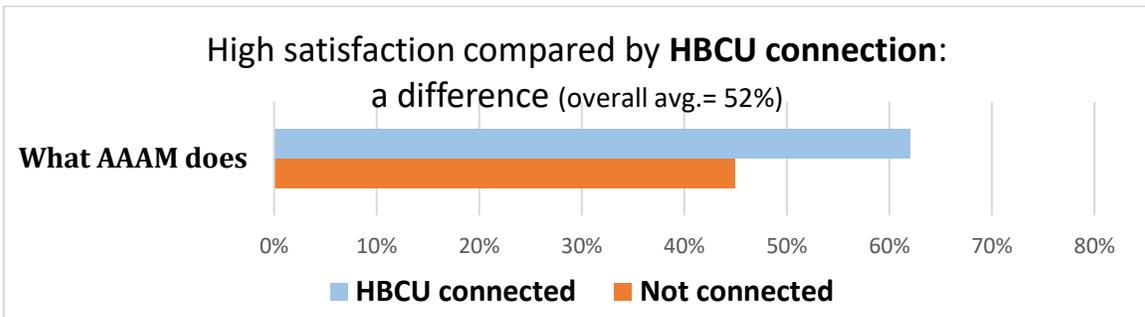
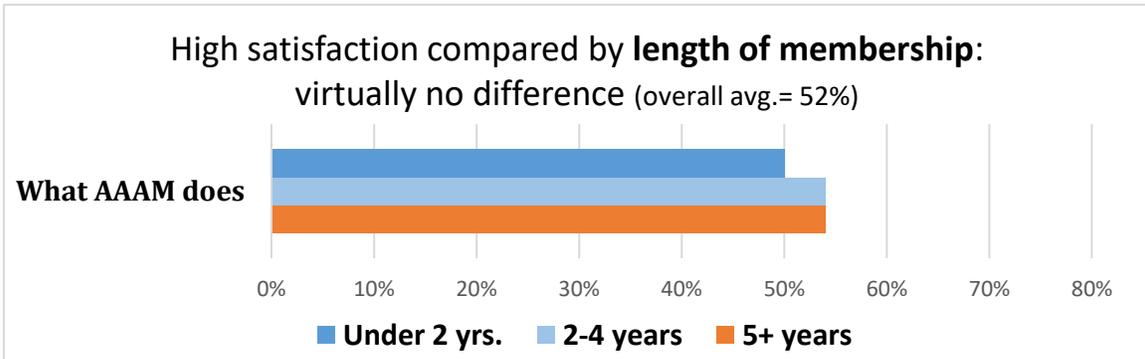
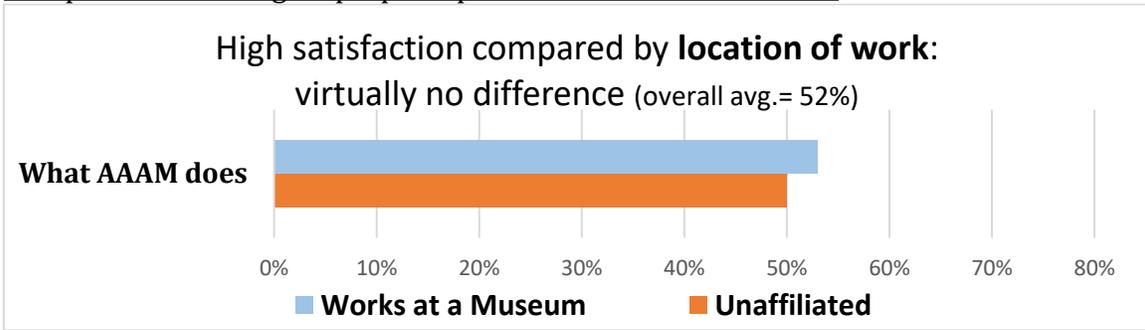


Graphs on the following page explore various subgroups of the membership to understand whether some types of members are less satisfied or more satisfied with AAAM. Mostly, satisfaction with AAAM is similarly good across the membership.

<sup>7</sup> The 2017 Needs Assessment report was based on data collected in 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Interpreting ratings on 10-point scales is based on years of experience with museum visitors and members, using follow-up questions to ask what their ratings mean, or why they gave a particular number. Consistently over time and a variety of settings, we have found that ‘9’ or ‘10’ means an excellent experience which is completely positive, a ‘7’ or ‘8’ means a moderately positive rating which can be accompanied by some misgivings or not-so-enthusiastic support, and a ‘6’ or lower number indicates a disappointing experience or one with substantial misgivings. The highest ratings have been in the range of 75%-80% nines and tens.

Comparisons of subgroups' perceptions of "what AAAM does"



## B.1. Ratings of overall satisfaction (continued)

OVERVIEW ABOUT POTENTIAL DISSATISFACTION: Members who gave a rating of 7 or lower for 'what AAAM does' were asked to explain their rating. Some gave lower ratings because they are new, or haven't engaged very much with the organization. Others suggested that they would like to see more programs, or more communication.

(for those who rated 7 or lower for 'what AAAM does') **Why did you give that rating?**

4%	I'm unaware of offerings or haven't engaged with any
3%	I'm new and don't know much about it so can't really rate it
3%	would like to see more events, programs, training, and webinars
2%	need more/better communications
2%	positive, but room for improvement
1%	need more that is relevant to small or developing sites
1%	more about specific topics or areas
1%	more for EMPs (Emerging Museum Professionals)
1%	we need help!
2%	other

### Sample of answers – Why did you give that rating? (7 or below)

#### Unaware, haven't engaged

*I just haven't found it too relevant to me.*

*I don't think I know enough about the full offerings. Also, though I work in the arts, I do not work in a museum and I feel a bit disconnected.*

*Not quite sure what AAAM does beyond the annual meeting.*

*Not enough available to keep my interest*

*Organization still feels "distant" to me. Not sure exactly how to jump in and engage.*

*Website sometimes feels static.*

*Not involved with the meetings or conferences*

*I received the list of funding opportunities but haven't taken time to look through, unsure of what other support is being provided*

*I haven't been very active so I can't speak much to the organization*

#### New, don't know enough

*I am a relatively new member and I am not sure all that AAAM does or has to offer.*

*I've only just become a member so am waiting to learn more!*

*I don't know all that you do.*

*Only been a member since Covid. Haven't participated in any events*

*I do not yet have enough experience with the organization to provide an informed rating.*

*I joined during the pandemic so have not experienced all the work of the AAAM*

*This is my first year as a member of the organization. Therefore I have not yet seen or experienced all of the benefits of being a member.*

## Why did you give that (lower) rating? (continued)

### Would like to see more events & programs

*More online interaction*

*I would like to see more programming more often and on a regional level. I believe the organization is largely known for the conference and so much more of a contribution could be made to the field.*

*I believe that more resources could be offered, training etc.*

*Would like to see AAAM offer more member-based training.*

*I would like to see more webinars.*

*More educational events*

*I would not say disappointed, but outside of the conference and summer leadership conversations, I have not been aware of many membership opportunities and those that I have seen (EMPS happy hours, etc.) have not been of interest to me. I would love to see more resources and opportunities to connect outside of the conference.*

*Satisfied but could have more programs, articles, readings, EMP geared content*

### Need more/better communications

*I tried volunteering a couple of times but no luck. Also, I get news of events only a couple/few days before the event, making it almost impossible to attend.*

*Response times can be slow and aren't always successful but I imagine it's largely due to limited staff*

*I'm only now getting to know what AAAM has to offer. I renewed my membership recently. But my initial experience with AAAM as a member was one in which I received no welcome, no e-mails, no communication, in effect no service, when I first joined.*

*Seek more consistency and more robust communications on timely events.*

*I was not receiving correspondence or information on a regular bases.*

*I have written to you to ask for help. We are under pressure here and really need support. I haven't heard back from you.*

*Know little about what the association is doing to advance the work of the field and how one can get involved in doing it and unclear how you are collaborated with other sister organizations to advance mutual aims.*

### Positive, but room for improvement

*It's dope but there is room for improvement.*

*I feel like AAAM is doing great things. That said, I would love to see its support and relevance for museum professionals increase in ways that are meaningful to its broad (and specific) membership groups. This survey is a fantastic way to start!*

*I am very excited about the new direction of AAAM. I believe there exist opportunities for increased networking between curatorial and public history aspects of this organization to bridge it with arts management, public relations, and other business aspects that have largely been unacknowledged.*

*I believe AAAM is doing a good job to organize its priorities. I am not certain where the planning and assessments are going just yet. I want to see programs to enrich individual administrators as well as organizational members.*

## Why did you give that (lower) rating? (continued)

### Not so relevant to small or developing sites

*As with most museum associations, AAAM does not cater to the small/ultra-small museum space.*

*Help with small museums*

*I think that AAAM is more relevant and useful if you are a staff member of an established museum or institution in the USA. I think there is scope for improving AAAM's outreach and service offering.*

### More about specific topics

*Not enough on exhibit development*

*There are not many resources for exhibit designers.*

*Focus is usually on history which is appropriate but would like to see more attention given to art historical-art museums and galleries, since there is a lack of Black scholars in this field*

*I don't feel there are enough programs that cater to professionals who provide services to museums, or enough exhibit design/marketing-related programming. Also, outside of the annual conference and weekly newsletters, it would be great to have more events (virtual or otherwise) where we could engage on a more personal level.*

### More for EMPs

*I'd just like to see more content for graduate students and emerging professionals.*

*I would like to see our EMP events to be a mix of skill based and social. The few events I went to made me unsure if it was worth the membership. I love the conference, but especially in COVID, I need more consistent and meaningful digital programming.*

*Increased job opportunities for emerging professionals*

*I enjoy upcoming events that are posted and interactions I've had with other members. I'm disappointed that many opportunities for upcoming professionals or students are primarily for HBCUs.*

### We need help!

*AAAM=Black Museums need more support and promotion within our own community.*

*What AAAM offers does not meet the needs of the struggling Historical Society currently with no paid staff, no professionals in the field, but with a large corpus of historical, fine art and cultural artifacts at risk of deterioration and loss - How can you help us?*

### Other

*Not enough information or representation of African or diaspora history or job field*

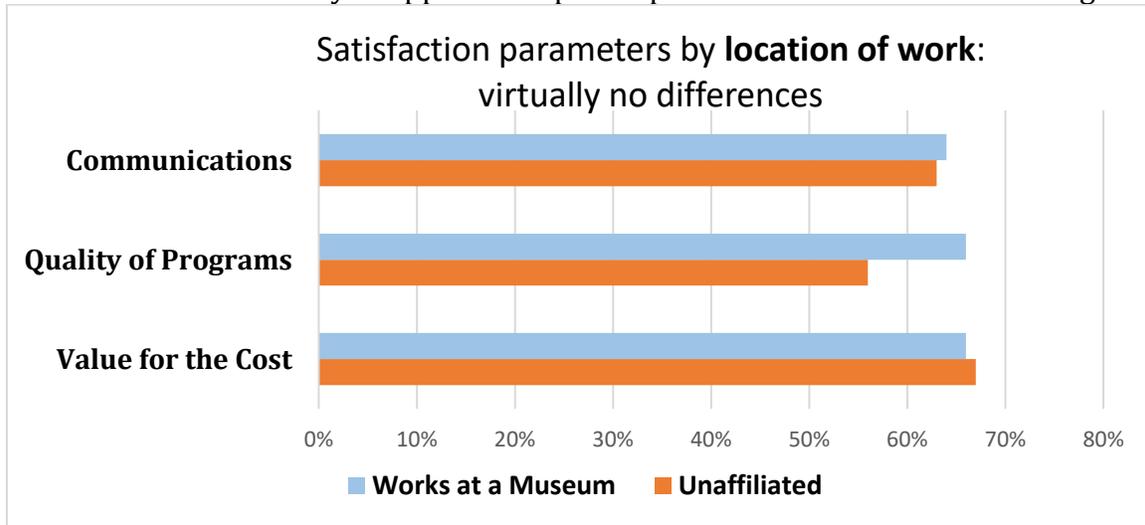
*We have had recurring difficulties with registration to events and last year we paid for a board member to be a part of the conference and she was never able to get on line.*

*I feel like AAAM does not always appreciate professionals who did not attend HBCUs. I think that people who did not attend an HBCU and are black are just as valuable in the Museum field and have a unique perspective to offer.*

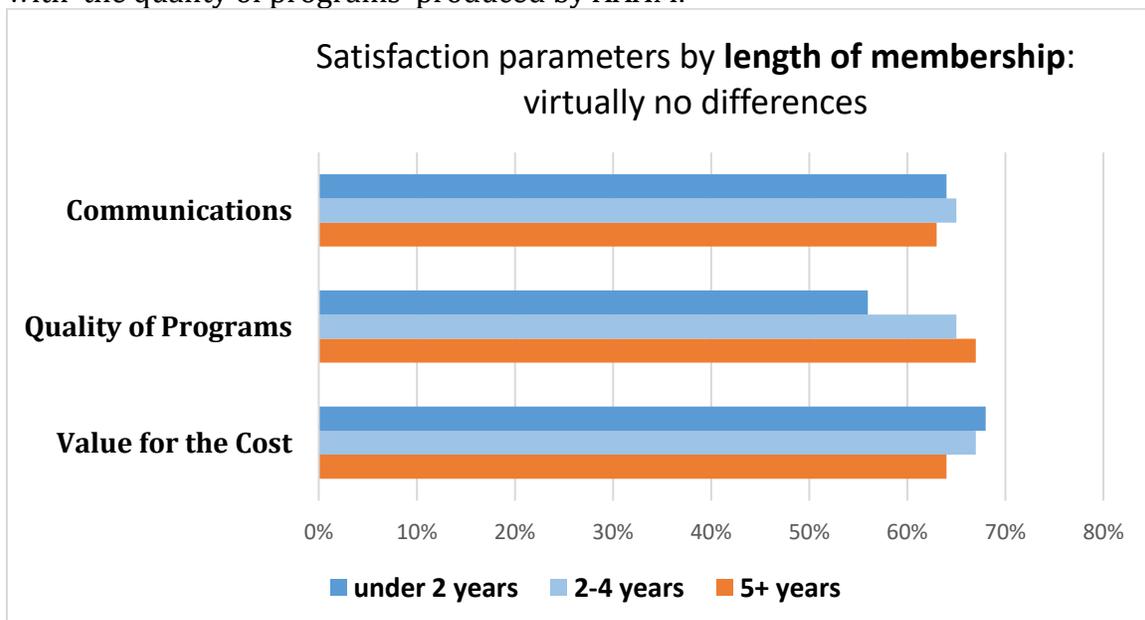
*Too membership driven with limited public engagement*

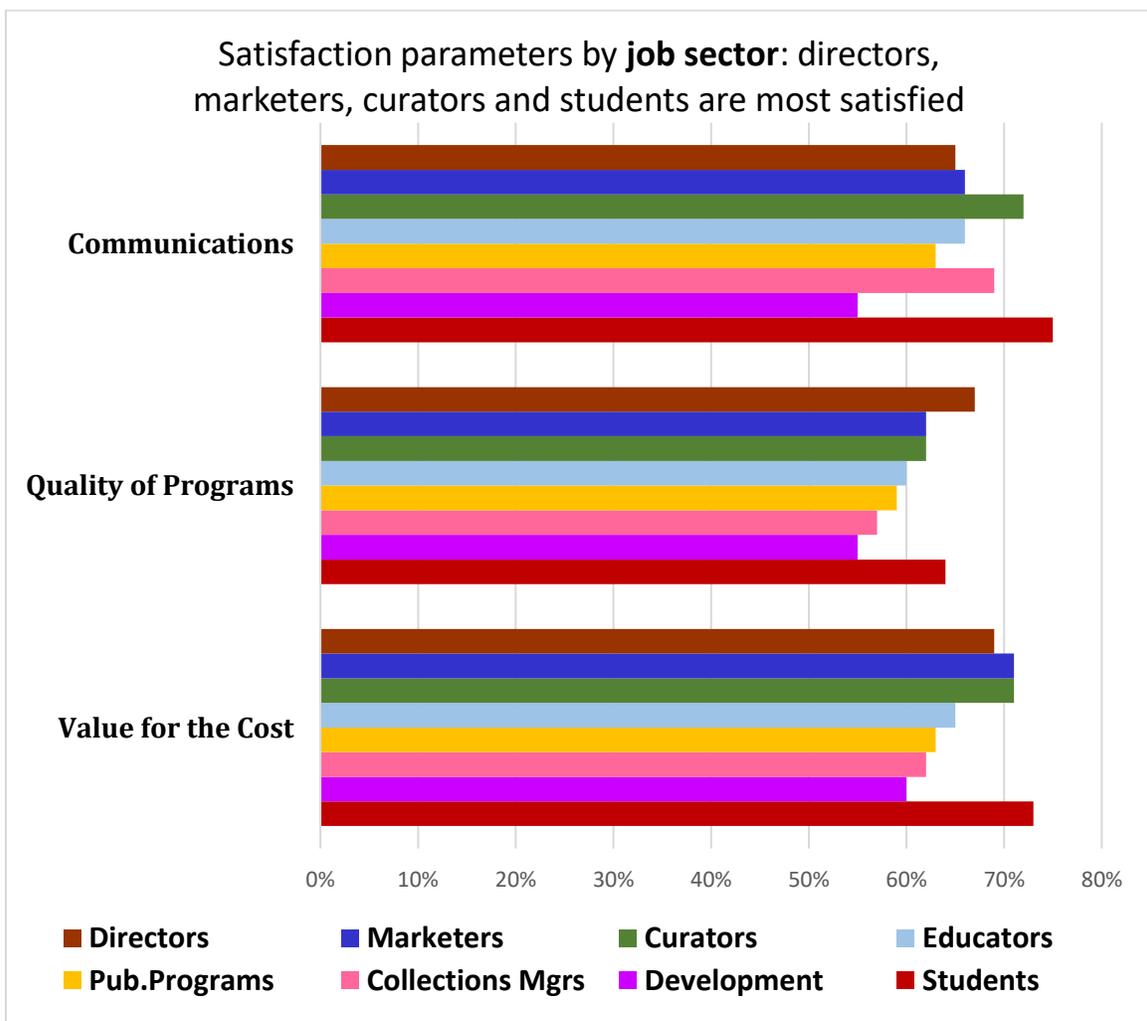
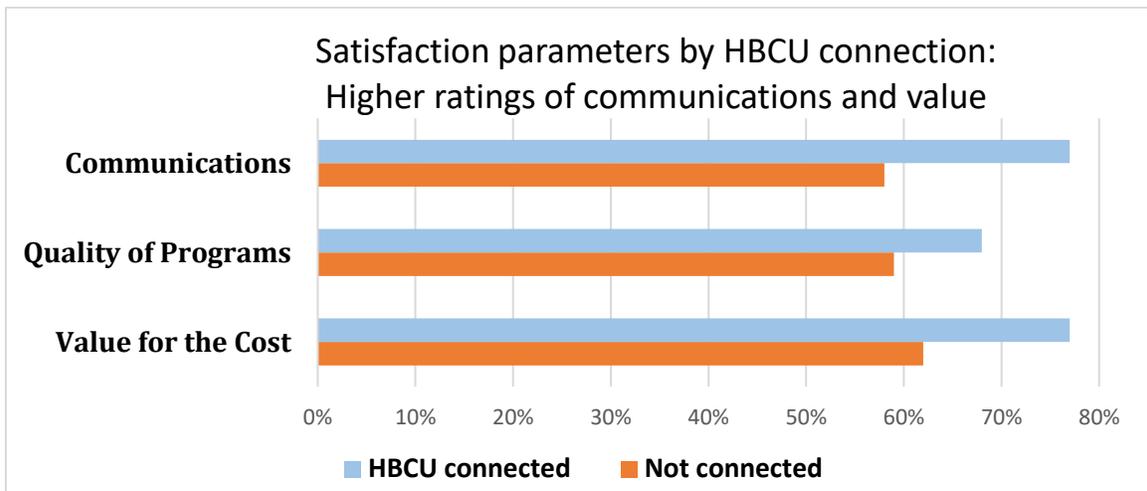
### B.1.b. Parameters of satisfaction

OVERVIEW: In addition to a sense of overall satisfaction –“what AAAM does”– we also explored three *parameters* of association functioning: satisfaction with communications from AAAM, the quality of programming (conference, leadership circles, etc.), and value for the cost of membership. Each of these three parameters are rated more positively than overall satisfaction: averaging 61% to 67% compared with the overall average of 52% high ratings. Therefore, to a modest degree (~10% to 15%), members are more likely to appreciate specific parameters of AAAM functioning.



How to read the data on graphs like these: (above) 64% of people who work at a specific museum (the blue bars) are highly satisfied with ‘communications from AAAM.’ Example below: 56% of members under 2 years (the dark blue bars) are highly satisfied with ‘the quality of programs’ produced by AAAM.





**Supporting data for the graphs on previous pages:**

Ratings of specific parameters of satisfaction, such as quality of programming and value for the cost, are higher than the overall average of 52% for 'what AAAM does.' One of the few characteristics that makes a difference is having a connection with an HBCU – among those people, overall satisfaction was higher and so is satisfaction with 'communications from AAAM' and 'value for the cost' of membership.

***On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with:***

	9-10 <u>High</u>	7-8 <u>Medium</u>	1-6 <u>Low</u>
Communications?	64%	29%	7%
Quality of programming?	61%	31%	7%
Value for the cost?	67%	24%	9%

Statistically significant differences  
when comparing HBCU connections:

	<u>High ratings among members who</u>		
	<u>have an HBCU</u>		<u>don't have a</u>
	<u>connection</u>		<u>connection</u>
Communications?	77%	**	58%
Quality of programming?	68%		59%
Value for the cost?	77%	**	62%

(Note that these differences are smaller if only looking at race as a factor: African-heritage people indicate smaller differences on average comparing satisfaction among those who do or do not have an HBCU connection; whites do not tend to have an HBCU connection.)

## B.2. Best experiences with AAAM

OVERVIEW: Members most appreciate AAAM for the networking opportunities, the weekly job postings, EMP programs, and virtual programs/webinars. The various categories of answers are useful, but about half of the survey respondents could not answer the question.

***Aside from the annual conference, what are the best 2 experiences you have had with (or because of) AAAM?***

13%	networking
8%	job postings
6%	EMP programs and events
5%	working with committees or the Board
5%	webinars, professional development
5%	virtual programs, meetings (unclear)
5%	weekly newsletter
4%	grant funding opportunities
3%	getting to know other museums, collaborations
2%	information and resources (website, etc.)
2%	regional Zoom meetings (Leadership Circles)
1%	mentoring program
1%	Vedet and staff, responsiveness, discussions
4%	other
8%	I have only experienced the conference
47%	blank

### Sample of answers

#### Networking

*Created connections with other black museum professionals*

*Contacts which have led to forever friendships.*

*Meeting people at the conference and networking with them later.*

*Network provided several key connections and support personally and organizationally.*

*Meeting new people. Becoming aware of other museums.*

*Connections to museum professionals*

*Interacting with AAAM professionals throughout my museum career.*

*Continued relationships with colleagues.*

*Meeting new professionals in the field and staying connected in professional goals*

*Networking, making friends*

*1) Relationship-building with other Black museum professionals...have built my network because of AAAM*

*Connections to people I otherwise would not have known, networks*

*Virtual programs and networking*

## **Best experiences with AAAM (continued)**

### Networking (continued)

*Networking with African American museums and museum professionals nationally and internationally*

*Connecting with like-minded colleagues, and becoming acquainted with younger “Keepers of the Culture” is my greatest reason for continued affiliation.*

*Post-conference networking. Over the last two years, I've noticed an increase in communication and engagement - particularly online - that I've really appreciated*

### Job postings

*Applying to jobs on the lists AAAM sends*

*The weekly job email has been very helpful.*

*The job board is helpful for posting.*

*I enjoy the weekly updates on job postings and funding opportunities.*

*Resources available for jobs*

*Looking through the job postings that are emailed is valuable.*

*The job announcements are an invaluable resource.*

*Job listings and programs*

*Receiving information about employment and internships*

*Listing of jobs and fellowships*

*Access to funding and employment opportunities*

*Job listings and funding opportunities. They give me hope for my students.*

### EMP programs & events

*I found the recent joint Bay Area Emerging Museum Professionals (BAEMP) & Association of African American Museums EMP's Land That Job sessions very insightful.*

*The EMP group has become my family and my mentors are phenomenal.*

*The first Friday events and joining the e-board for the EMP committee.*

*First Fridays with EMP and the EMP group chat*

*The virtual social gatherings.*

*Emerging museum Professionals events/networking*

*EMP Programs, Fellowship*

*1st Friday's social (especially during coronavirus & working from home it's been great to have a fun social to look forward to) and the free virtual panel discussions when I am able to learn something new typically it's been in partnership with one of the museums or another organization.*

*EMP virtual sessions were very beneficial.*

*EMP Zoom Networking*

*The Friday happy hours.*

*“Fireside Chat” over the summer about BLM; Trivia Night with Trivia Black*

*The first would be an EMP event I attended last summer that was a response to the protest for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd.*

*I enjoyed the emerging professionals series Fall of 2020.*

**Best experiences with AAAM (continued)**Working with committees or Board

*Meeting with Board Members and Ex. Director*

*Board member; search committee*

*Serving on the Board and Connections with professionals in the field via AAAM*

*Digital events in serving on the planning committee last year*

*Any experience where I have to work with the leadership and the committees are great experiences.*

*Serving on the Board and attending virtual programs*

*Serving on communications committee*

*Conference Program Committee Network*

*Representing as an Ambassador of AAAM for the Advocacy Day in Feb. 2020 right before the pandemic.*

Webinars, professional development

*I participated in the SEMC Leadership Institute that AAAM supported; I have participated in special webinars that I have very much enjoyed.*

*ED conversations, grant workshop webinars*

*I have enjoyed the workshops, which I don't recall in past years.*

*Workshops covering grant opportunities*

*COVID-19 webinar series*

*Workshops on grants (NEA).*

*Professional Development programs and webinars.*

*National Park Service Webinar re AACR*

*I'm very new to this. I've attended several webinars where reps from federal grant agencies provided info about specific grants. All were useful.*

Virtual meetings and programs

*Zoom meetings*

*Virtual Meetings*

*Information sessions with key leaders in the field.*

*The virtual programming offered over the past year.*

*On Line web based Work/Info sessions*

*Zoom talks during the pandemic.*

Weekly newsletter

*Receipt of emails*

*The regular emails with funding and employment information are great. I think that there are some great networking opportunities.*

*Updates & engagement from Exec. Director*

*Newsletter and network*

*Grateful to know about this kind of organization. I really appreciate the emails, they are informative of work and funding opportunities*

**Best experiences with AAAM (continued)**Newsletter

*My organization only recently became members of AAAM (during the COVID-19 pandemic) so we have limited experience with AAAM beyond their email communication & job posting board.*

*Communication about organization.*

*Brand new member, but I like that the announcements are consistent with this group*

Grant funding opportunities

*Continued Support and Funding Info*

*Communication about funding and professional development opportunities.*

*I enjoy getting the job postings and grant updates.*

*Grant information*

*Online opportunities re: grants*

Collaborating, getting to know other museums

*Collaboration on projects for the Birmingham Civil Rights, Institute, Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, James Madison's Montpelier among others.*

*Collaboration projects and networking*

*Learning about other members' activities.*

*Learning about other organizations through online resources and communications.*

*Visiting and Speaking at the Wright Museum in Detroit, MI.*

Information and resources

- 1. Having a resource to learn about museums that feature African-American history. 2. Learning about individuals who are making a difference in the representation of African-Americans in museum spaces.*

*Information; News about issues involving COVID*

*Programming at our museum using experts from AAAM.*

*Being introduced to digital possibilities for the museum*

Regional Zoom meetings / Leadership Circle

*The regional zoom meetings last summer*

*Other than the leadership conversations, I have not had other experiences*

*The regional conferences to address COVID Concerns is the number one experience of importance for me. I only wished that these were not marketed to attract senior leadership. While every member could attend, the promotion of the conversations initially targeted senior administrators. These conferences would also have worked across geographical regions and I would have liked them all to have been opened and marketed to the entire membership.*

*The COVID Conversations were really good and I hope to see that information distilled and reported soon.*

*Leadership circle*

**Best experiences with AAAM (continued)**Mentoring program

*The speed mentoring experience at the conference was great.*

*Participating in the mentoring program as a mentor.*

*The second would be the mentorship that some members have given me since we met at conference. I don't know if you can describe that as something that AAAM is "continuing" to provide me, but it wouldn't have happened without the collaborative nature of this organization. It's substantial and I don't know if I can put a price on how valuable that has been to me*

*Mentorship from some members*

Vedette and Staff

*The staff at AAAM has always been the utmost responsive, which is unique.*

*Communications and one-on-ones with AAAM Leadership*

*Discussions with the Executive Director and other leadership*

*Ms. Vedette Coleman-Robinson is simply amazing, so helpful, so efficient.*

Other

*Receiving my first AAAM Membership Phone Directory and membership card back in 2002*

*Listening to presenters from AAAM at the most recent AASLH annual meeting.*

*Getting a discount to attend MAD Workshop with NPS - AACN*

*I received clients from being a part of AAAM. I have been able to create videos to preserve our stories and our legacy here in the United States.*

*The authors' roundtable -- listening to the panel and kibitzing with other authors.*

### B.3. Likelihood of renewing or recommending

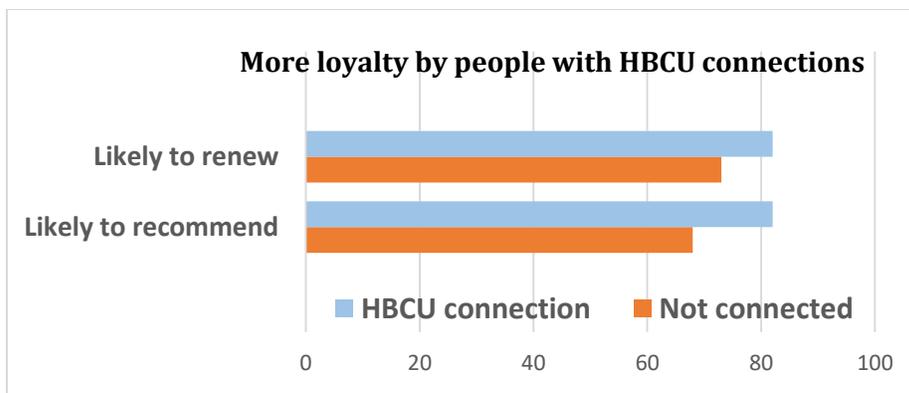
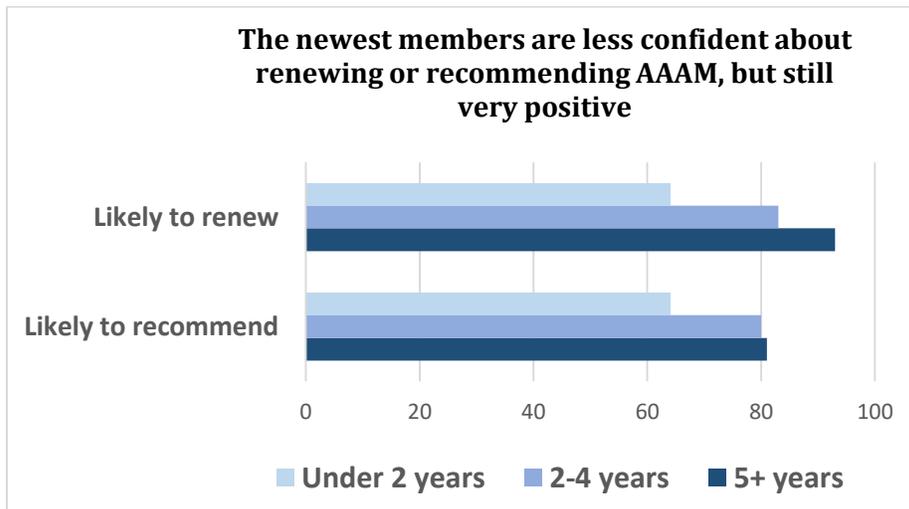
OVERVIEW: Members are highly likely to renew their membership, and to recommend AAAM to others. The newest members (1-2 years) are less enthusiastic than longer term members, yet still positive about renewing and recommending.

*On a scale from 1 to 10,*

*how likely is it that you will:*

	9-10 <u>High</u>	7-8 <u>Medium</u>	1-6 <u>Low</u>
renew your AAAM membership?	76%	15%	9%
recommend AAAM to a friend/colleague?	73%	20%	7%

Statistically significant differences among subgroups of members:



## B.4. Additional Suggestions

OVERVIEW: Many people offered praise and thankfulness when asked for additional feedback or suggestions. There were also a variety of suggestions (see next page).

### *Do you have any additional feedback or suggestions to offer?*

#### Positive comments

*Thank you for everything that you all are doing! This survey is a fantastic idea. I look forward to seeing the results once you all are done.*

*I support and am enthusiastic about the direction this organization is moving*

*Keep up the good work. Our museum are made better because of the intentional efforts of AAAM*

*Great work! Proud of AAAM.*

*I appreciate AAAM so much. It's so important to have community in this field where comparatively so few African Americans are represented.*

*I appreciate everything you're doing!*

*Thank you for being "a rock to swim to" as a resource for those of us who are in the field of Black heritage and history to educate, collect and preserve.*

*Keep doing what you're doing! I am excited to see what the future holds!*

*Keep up the good work. It was nice to see addition of internship.*

*Just want to say thank you to Vedet and her team for the great work you all are doing!*

*Just keep doing what you are doing. Keep reaching out to improve and keep finding ways to make African American museums viable and able to continue to be a repositories for our Vital and Valuable history.*

*Thanks for adjusting so quickly to the pandemic reality and continuing to provide service.*

*An AMAZING group of members! Thank you for the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals*

*Thank you for emphasizing your efforts to be of value during these times.*

*Continue to be awesome*

*It is refreshing to see how AAAM has stepped up to the plate to provide support to its members. I look forward to reading the postings and signing up for events.*

*Thank you for the insight and information. I feel that this organization is in full support of our mission!*

*None other than continue doing what you're doing to keep all of us engaged*

*Thank you for all the work that you do and continue to do in this field!*

*Thank you for the AAAM*

*Keep up the good work and continue to mobilize and promote AAAM as the premier advocates of the black experience in America and beyond.*

*Continue to provide resources.*

*Thanks so much for all you do!*

*I love and admire everything that you do! Can't wait to attend an in-person conference.*

*AAAM is one of my favorite museum organizations.*

*Thank you in your persistence to gain feedback from members.*

*AAAM is doing a great job. I love staying connected!*

### Suggestions

*I also hope that more staff is being planned to address and expand the organizational capacity that will be needed to accomplish grand visions.*

*After regional conversations, I was disappointed to see that follow up conversations were not a significant feature of the annual conference. I would like to see consultants used to help plan conference and other educational content.*

*Develop a virtual kiosk of member institutions*

*I would like to see AAAM do more to reach out to middle school and high school students/teachers informing them about museums and careers.*

*Please consider developing some exhibits that do a then and now on historical topics.*

*Free participation by students to involve them in AAAM. I have student interns that I would like to join sessions, but they are not members at this time.*

*Keep the field updated on new and forthcoming projects and programs*

*Simply take into consideration the cost of things. Covid had created vast unemployment and due to the lack of funds money is tight for some members. Also, consider your international members and their needs.*

*Send signed AAAM certificate to Life Members*

*The Annual Conference plan for a variety of membership types and categories and varied the formats for panel sessions and discussions, especially focus on individual skills and small grassroots leadership development,*

*Some museums have an African American section. Working with that section might generate more interest in American history in those museums.*

*I was unaware of numerous membership benefits introduced in this survey. Could you do more to publicize the full range of these benefits? (Keep in mind that you might have explained the benefits in an email that I didn't read, in which case it's on me.)*

*It isn't clear how to become more involved in AAAM. It would be nice to get to know, connect with, and work with other members. Are there committees or working groups? It's also not totally clear what experiences to engage AAAM offers outside of the annual meeting.*

*Provide information for how to get more involved in the organizations committees, groups, etc. I only know about the EMP group.*

*I am very interested in providing non-monetary support, but have observed that for understandable reasons perhaps, there appears to be an inner network of the same people that are tapped for meaningful support opportunities.*

*I would love more social events and networking opportunities throughout the year. How can AAAM extend the mentorship capacity for student and emerging professional members?*

*Maybe updating the job opportunities more frequently or have a date where expired ones automatically get removed. Keep up the good work!*

*Maybe have some webinars around mental health check-ins or just a fun social gathering to celebrate life and check in with folks.*

*I need some help with locating grants*

*I believe at times, the focus of themes can stray away from museum work, such as topics concerning exhibit design, curation, preservation.*

*Provide on-going assistance to developing museums.*

*Keep doing what you're doing and increase efforts towards developing and strengthening partnerships with government funding agencies, key national and regional museum associations, and AAAM institutional members.*

*Keep up the great work and share with others; have more professional development opportunities for staff/volunteers*

*A way to better engage directly with fellow members would be a happily welcomed! I'd love an AAAM journal! Does that exist or is that in the works?!*

*I would love to see AAAM make an effort to attract young people to the museum field.*

*Ask each organization to prepare a "1-3 minute sizzle reel" and provide a link through AAAM for others to view.*

*I think more work needs to be done with collections practices related to issues with antiques dealers that are continuously profiting from the sale of objects and records related to African American trauma. Those items should be donated.*

*I am an old museum professional! Not because I have worked in the field that long but because of my age. I actually did not get involved in museum work until about 8 years ago. I feel like the scholarship opportunities are geared toward younger people entering the field.*

*AAAM should give African Members letter of invite during conferences to the embassy to enhance the issuance of visa in order to participate in most of the programs.*

*Don't follow the AAM model AAAM needs to stay Black for Blacks. Our institutions are in bad shape*

*Be more open to small museums*

*I would love to learn more about the research and evaluation taking place at other AA museums. If there is a way to have a repository or provide guidance around this I would be happy to learn about it and support these initiatives.*

*I think that many black folks take our HBCU's for granted. Every AA museum...and even historical societies should have exhibits about either the local HBCU's or about "all" HBCU's. Many people just do not know about them...and especially don't know about the trailblazers and luminaries who led them/ taught at them/ attended... Having an exhibit of the black folks who "early" attended majority white institutions--in the 1800's and early 1900's would be a wonderful exhibit as well!*

*Member spotlights that highlight unique and innovative work and sights worth visiting.*

*Consider issuing an Annual Impact Report highlighting recent accomplishments to engage multiple audiences and to reflect the benefit of external funding (NEH, IMLS, Mellon and NMAAHC).*

# C USE AND PERCEPTIONS OF MEMBER BENEFITS

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

A key purpose of this membership assessment was to find out if the benefits of membership – several of which have been instituted since the strategic planning process – are being recognized and used.

**Some members are aware of, and engaged with, the variety of AAAM offerings, and some are not.**

- Nearly everyone is aware of the job postings and grant funding opportunities through the weekly newsletter. About half of those who learn about job postings and grant funding opportunities say they have used these benefits.
- Most members say they are aware of professional training options, and 25% have participated in them. Awareness and use of four other benefits was considerably lower among the membership as a whole.
- 40% of EMPs have participated in *First Friday Socials*. However, only about half had even heard of four other initiatives for EMPs.
- Members indicated strong interest in several potential future benefits including webinars, regional meetings and reciprocal admission to member museums.
- There is considerable opportunity to increase the level of engagement with the variety of AAAM offerings, especially with the newest members and Emerging Museum Professionals (EMPs).

## C.1. Familiarity with member benefits

OVERVIEW: Almost everyone is aware of the weekly job postings and the information about grants and funding. Most members have some familiarity with the professional training opportunities. Only about half of the members were aware of the other four benefits listed (List Serve, Regional Leadership Conversations, Lord Fellowship, and sponsor promotions).

### *How familiar are you with these AAAM member benefits?*

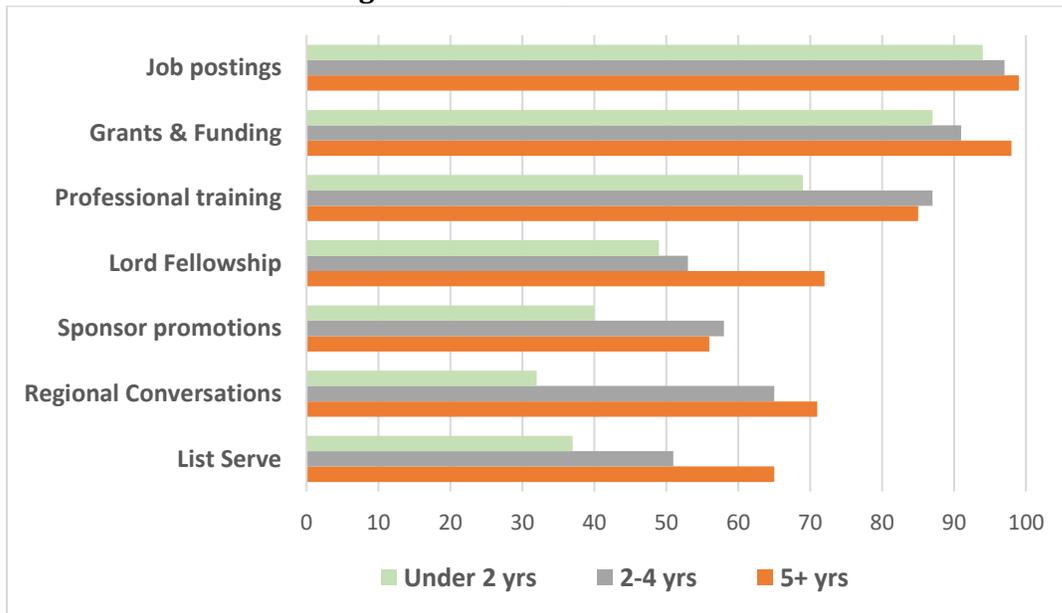
	<u>Used</u>	<u>Heard of</u>	<u>Unaware</u>
Weekly postings of museum job openings	56%	40%	4%
Information about grants and funding options	46%	44%	10%
Professional training opportunities	25%	53%	22%
AAAM Community List-Serve	15%	32%	53%
Regional Leadership Conversations	14%	35%	50%
AAAM & Lord Cultural Resources Fellowship for Black Americans in cultural spaces	8%	47%	45%
Promotions offered by partnering sponsors (e.g., Trip Advisor, Bounce TV)	6%	42%	52%

### Familiarity with member benefits (continued)

OVERVIEW: All members, regardless of length of membership, seem to be aware of the weekly job postings and information about funding opportunities. However, the newest members have lower awareness of five out of the seven benefit items on the list, while long-term members are most aware. New members are also less likely to have used benefits such as grant funding information, professional training, and regional conversations.

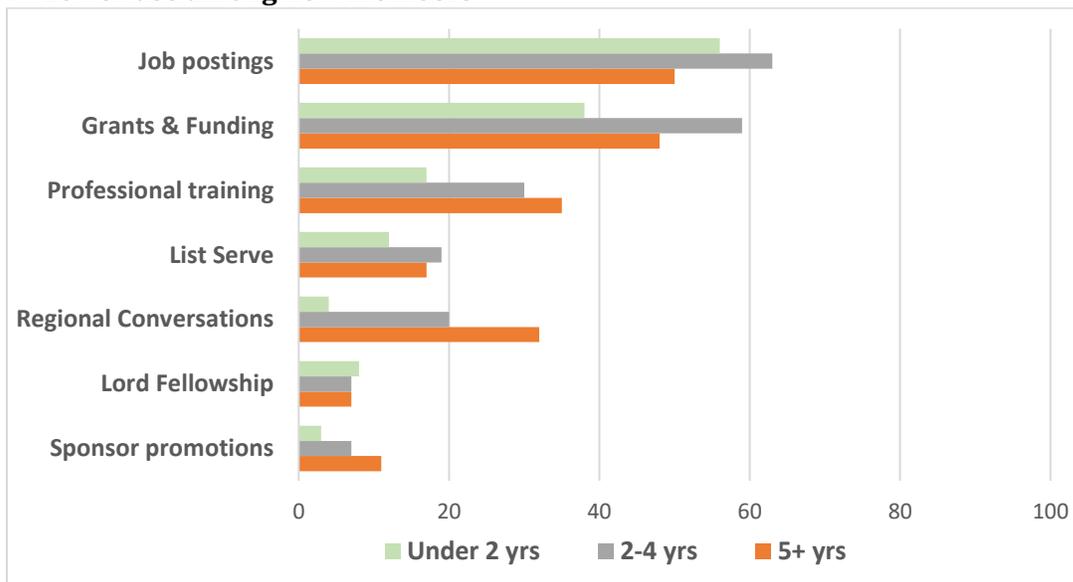
#### Awareness analyzed by length of membership:

##### ► Lower awareness among new members



#### Use of benefits analyzed by length of membership:

##### ► Lower use among new members



## Familiarity with member benefits (continued)

OVERVIEW: Different benefits are used by different types of members, although EMPs and students are the highest users of three features (statistically significant differences are shown in bold, compared to the overall average in parentheses).

Who is using the weekly job postings? (56% overall)

**78%** of students  
**74%** of EMPs  
67% of programs people

Who is using Information about grants and funding? (46% overall)

57% of directors  
54% of program people

Who is using professional training opportunities? (25% overall)

32% of directors

Who is using the Community List-Serve? (15% overall)

**23%** of EMPs  
**22%** of students

Who is doing the Regional Leadership Conversations? (14% overall)

24% of directors

Who is using AAAM & Lord Cultural Resources Fellowship? (8%)

**26%** of EMPs

Promotions offered by partnering sponsors (6%)

14% of students

## Perceptions of member benefits (continued)

OVERVIEW: The most highly recommended benefits are the weekly job postings and the grant funding opportunities.

*If you've used any of the benefits above, which ones would you recommend to other members?*

40%	weekly job posting
21%	grant funding opportunities
14%	all of them (not specified)
11%	professional training opportunities
5%	regional Zoom conversations
2%	fellowship
2%	list serve
1%	other
26%	blank (used some but didn't give an answer)

## C.2. Familiarity with initiatives for emerging museum professionals

OVERVIEW: First Friday Socials are the most popular initiative among Emerging Museum Professionals (40% have participated). Participation in the other offerings (mentoring sessions, Playlist Event, Fireside Chats) is in the 20-26% range. Many long-term members are doing their part by being mentors.

### *How familiar are you with these initiatives for EMPs?*

(ONLY AMONG EMPs; n=35)

	<u>Used</u>	<u>Heard of</u>	<u>Unaware</u>
First Friday Socials	40%	26%	34%
Mentoring sessions at the Annual Conference	26%	23%	51%
EMP Protest Playlist Event	23%	17%	60%
Fireside Chats	20%	23%	57%
AAAM & Solid Light Fellowship/Internship for EMPs	14%	31%	54%

### **Mentoring sessions, analyzed by length of membership:**

	<u>Used</u>	<u>Heard of</u>	<u>Unaware</u>
under 2 years	7%	34%	59%
2-4 years	31%	41%	28%
5-9 years	37%	54%	10%
10+ years	<b>46%</b>	42%	12%

### C.3. Interest in potential future initiatives

OVERVIEW: There is very high interest in webinars, and high interest in regional meetings and reciprocal admission. Discounts for special services are only of interest to some people. Interest in future initiatives was not related to museum affiliation, length of membership or work sector.

#### *How interested are you in these ideas for future initiatives?*

<i>HIGH interest:</i>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Museum Affiliated</u>	<u>Not Affil.</u>
Webinars about various topics	76%	78%	75%
Regional AAAM meetings	64%	69%	59%
Reciprocal admission to member museums	63%	67%	59%
Discounts for shipping or car rentals	38%	39%	37%

#### Who has high interest in webinars?

- ++ 79% of women  
67% of men
- ++ 75% of Millennials  
85% of Generation X  
82% of Generation Jones  
67% of Boomers

#### Who has high interest in reciprocal admission?

- \*\* 72% of Western region members  
72% of Mid-West region members  
66% of Southeast region members  
53% of Northeast region members

## Interest in potential initiatives (continued)

OVERVIEW: Members cited a wide variety of topics for webinars, with fundraising and digital engagement at the top of the list.

### *Can you suggest one or two topics that you would attend a webinar for?*

8%	fundraising & sustainability
7%	digital engagement, virtual tours, digital humanities
6%	diversity, equity, and inclusion
6%	collections management and historic preservation
6%	education about black history topics, and art
5%	community engagement, marketing & audience development
5%	exhibits and interpretation
4%	collaborations and partnerships with other organizations
4%	job seeking skills, how to get museum jobs, change jobs
3%	grant preparation and administration
3%	museum activism and social justice
3%	leadership, management
3%	programs
2%	student and EMP issues, how to prepare for museum jobs
2%	pandemic issues
2%	financial management, bookkeeping
2%	spotlight on specific museums, success stories
2%	dealing with Boards & Trustees
2%	tips for Black employees in White institutions, self-care
1%	working with volunteers
18%	other
36%	blank

### Sample of answers

#### Fundraising

*Evaluation; fundraising*

*Fundraising, Branding your museum*

*Black Museums Sustainability*

*Fund raising strategies,*

*Ones that network with funders*

*Finances/fundraising and Leadership*

*Funding and Programming*

*Fund Development for Grassroots and Small Organizations:*

*Development and fundraising strategies*

*1) Financial sustainability (fundraising, diversifying earned income streams, grants)*

*Small Museum funding and management*

## Suggestions for webinars (continued)

### Digital engagement

*Something on building digital experiences for visitors.*

*Virtual Reality Interface and Exhibitions during COVID19. Use of CollectSpace or a similar Collections development*

*Digital Humanities; Use of Augmented Reality/Mixed Reality in Museum Exhibitions.*

*Planning events for museums. Interested in both virtually and once the world opens back up.*

*Digital humanities*

*Transitioning to virtual exhibits on virtually no budget; building archives from assorted /diverse collections*

*Digital platform highlight - trainings*

*Virtual engagement with communities*

*Digital engagement*

*Virtual Museums*

*Pivoting into the virtual world.*

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

*Dealing with DEAI work in museums. As some museums are taking these initiatives it would be great to chat with other Black museum folk about their experiences.*

*Dismantling White Dominant Culture in the ways it show up in Black Museums;*

*Centering Equity work during the pandemic.*

*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within legacy and start up African American Institutions*

*(1) DEIA training and (2) the debate over African Art Collections in American museums (how they got there, repatriation, museum education development on the art of Africa).*

*Anti-racism, environmental sustainability, inclusion, truth/trust/reconciliation*

*Diversity and Inclusion*

*Advocating for diverse collections at a PWI*

*Decolonizing Art Institutions*

*Racial divide, how to hire/outreach to more BIPOC people in the museum world.*

*Recruiting and engaging more African Americans to serve as executive level professionals, and on boards of directors.*

*Trauma informed museum practice*

*Entering the museum field and providing access to underserved communities, ethical issues within the field i.e. how artifacts are collected, and the role of everyone in keeping history*

## **Suggestions for webinars (continued)**

### Collections management

*Anything related to collections, collections management*

*Collection management, and establishing a price point for museum services.*

*Information around archiving and the storage of artifacts that are not being used..*

*How to build a private collection*

*Archiving and collections in museums*

*Restoration Cataloging*

*Collecting Black art; collecting Black historical documents/ephemera, including strategies, care, estate plan, disposition. How can our institutions more successfully uncover hidden gems in personal collections?*

*Historic Preservation of Black spaces*

*Basic museum skills: archiving, collections, creating exhibits, etc.*

### Education about Black history topics, art

*Anything related to Black art or Black history*

*1.) The growing assault on Black history by revisionists, opportunists, culturally incompetent white educators, etc. 2.) Monuments of revolutionary heroes from the Caribbean-African diaspora*

*Preserving stories about Black Americans.*

*Jim Crow Era, Blues Music*

*Global African Diaspora culture -- various manifestations -- ideally with visuals*

*African Diaspora communities in the Eastern hemisphere*

*Interpreting important but relatively unknown persons/events in African-American history.*

*History on the Slave Trade.*

*Documenting Black History in Pre Columbian America.*

### Community engagement, marketing

*Recommendations for museum onsite and outreach programs and events that engage a broad public, strengthen connections to the community, and heighten awareness and support for museums*

*Storytelling, Community engagement*

*Keeping the museum audience engaged*

*1. Broad community engagement...including successful outreach to non-traditional partners...thinking outside the group of usual suspects*

*Marketing history resources*

*Crafting and executing marketing/advertising campaigns, social media and other communication outreach that result in new revenue to the organization*

*Social impact to increase underrepresented communities participation in museum attendance and membership*

*Marketing of museum sites to broader audiences on a continuous basis*

## **Suggestions for webinars (continued)**

### Exhibits & interpretation

*Balancing narratives at white organizations with African American stories through interpretation, audience engagement.*

*Enhancing museum programs by including a focus on the fact that black history is American history.*

*Pretty much anything dealing with interpretation--such as interpreting Black Power; dealing with complex issues (FBI informants in Civil Rights movement, etc.)*

*Teaching black history in white spaces*

*African Americans in science museums*

*Interpretation and research (building the knowledge base) at historic sites and historic houses. Thinking of the many clients I've worked with who don't know their history nor how to go about learning more.*

*Traveling exhibits coordination.*

### Collaborations and Partnerships

*Discussion of future exhibit ideas that we could collaborate on*

*Inter AAAM member collaborations/ opportunities to collaborate.*

*Collaborations strategies that help build sustainability and AAAM role and proactive TA in that regard.*

*Collaborations with school libraries and Library of Congress*

*Successful collaborations/partnerships between AA museums and mainstream museums.*

### Job seeking issues

*I hear a lot about navigating the job market from folks. Demystifying the process.*

*Successful strategies for job hunting and mentoring*

*How to apply to and interview for jobs.*

*Transitioning from academia to museum professional*

*Getting a new job.*

*Mid-career transitions*

*Finding museum work outside the U.S.*

*Job market*

*Reentering the museum world: Tips and Skills to make your application/resume stand out.*

### Grant preparation

*Grant funding & development*

*Applying for Grants for Black Museums*

*Grants and Financial Resources for Historic House Museums*

*Funding/Grant application research and completion processes*

*Preparation of grants*

*Grants for small museums.*

**Suggestions for webinars (continued)**Museum activism

*Social justice responsibility of cultural institutions*

*Pushing the envelope with exhibitions and programming to combat racism.*

*Education and social justice*

*Social justice & museums, working with descendant communities, racism & ethics*

*Socially engaged art and activism in museums*

Leadership

*Any type of Leadership skill based webinars*

*Executive leadership during a pandemic: challenges and opportunities.*

*Next generation of leadership; where do we go from here accreditation*

*Leadership*

*Conversation with the Directors and how they are training or mentoring those for the future roles*

Programs

*Innovative museum programming*

*Education programs*

*Program development*

Student and EMP issues

*How best to present yourself (preparing cover letter, CV, website, social media) when you are applying for a curatorial fellowship or your 1st job after graduation*

*Conversations from others about the job field for grad students.*

*How to navigate being an EMP (applying for positions, navigating new workplaces, museum-specific industry advice)*

*How to get into museums as an EMP. Where to look for mid-Atlantic museum opportunities.*

Financial management

*Financial Management during a crisis.*

*Bookkeeping*

*Financial management. Organizational planning and development.*

*More budgeting and finance*

## **Suggestions for webinars (continued)**

### Spotlight stories

*Highlight special galleries and exhibits*

*Museum Spotlights from around the country*

*The History of Black Museums, spotlights/conversations on museum pioneers*

*Spotlighting/taking a close look at a particular success (with pitfalls) that a member museum could walk us through*

### Boards & Trustees

*Building Capacity for Trustees*

*Current State of Black Boards: Missed Opportunities and Closing the Age Gap What happens when your Board Responsibilities and the Museum are 3rd and 4th on your list?*

*Board development and training*

### Tips for Black employees

*How to survive working in Predominately White Institutions when you're the only BIPOC person*

*Topics that specifically address and supply tools and techniques to address the unique experiences of BIPOC museum professionals: micro-aggressions, conscious and unconscious bias, etc.*

### Other

*Communities of Practice.*

*Succession planning*

*Must have resources for museums. Or new developments in the field.*

*Learning about museum registries and touring exhibitions*

*The role of anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences in museums.*

*Dealing with challenging visitors*

*Black museums and global/ transnational institutional identities*

*Best practices for transitioning from stable employment to entrepreneurship, managing up*

*Technical skills and software training.*

*Creating space for African American Art and Culture Developing Museum Professionals*

*Working relations between different departments/how to work together*

*Entrepreneurship in the arts, running your own arts magazine*

*Becoming a historian*

*Connecting black archives/collections to community archives of other ethnicities*

*Oral history skills; social media skills;*

*Mentoring programs for youth interested in museums and cultural preservation. Art appraisals.*

*Best Practices, Emerging Technologies in the museum field*

*Historians in AAAM*

# D PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

One of the important components of member engagement is the communication they get from the organization.

**In general, members are seeing and interacting with the variety of AAAM communication channels and are highly satisfied with communications.**

- Member satisfaction on this topic comes mostly from the consistency of the weekly newsletter with job postings, grant funding possibilities, and information about what's going on in the field.
- Nearly everyone has browsed the website at some time.
- About two-thirds of members appear to be following AAAM on social media.
- The newest members have had less exposure to some forms of communication.
- Some members offered suggestions for improving communications.

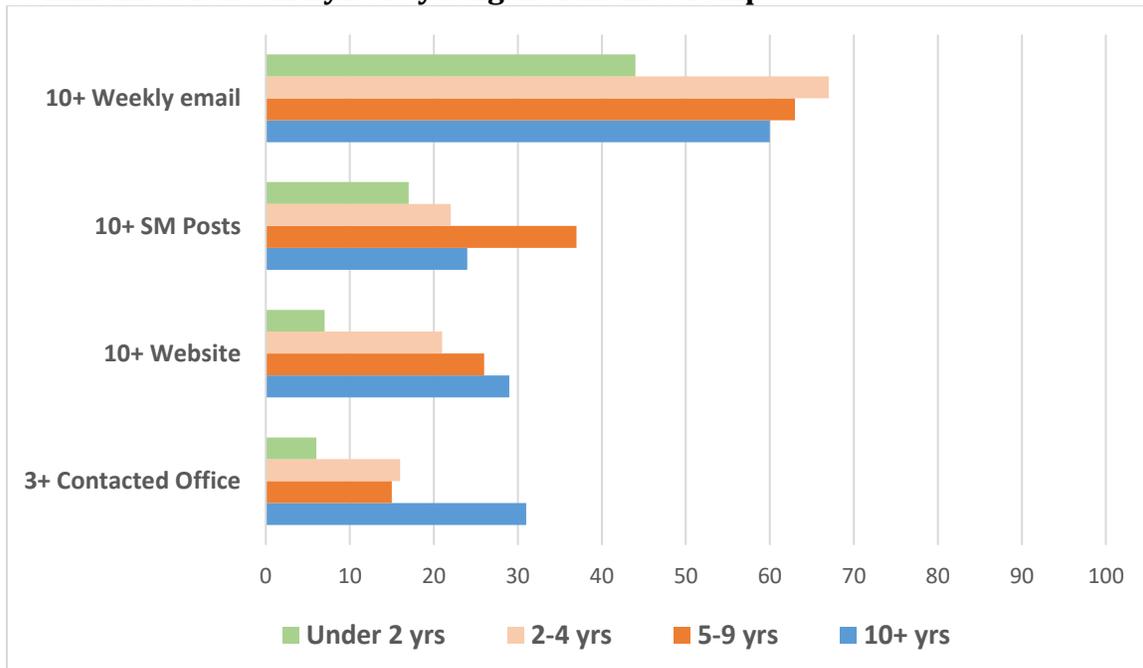
### D.1. Use of various communication formats

OVERVIEW: Nearly everyone has read at least one of the weekly emails, and more than half have read 10 or more emails. About two-thirds of members have seen one or more social media posts. Nearly everyone has browsed the website at least once. Long-term members were more likely to have contacted the main office three or more times. Also, museum-affiliated members were more likely to have contacted the office at least once compared with non-affiliated members (45% vs. 31%).

*In the past year, how many times have you connected with AAAM in these ways?*

	<u>10+</u>	<u>3-9</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>None</u>
Read the weekly emails	54%	30%	10%	6%
Read an AAAM post on social media	21%	30%	18%	31%
Browsed the website	15%	45%	32%	8%
Contacted the central office	3%	10%	24%	63%

#### Communications analyzed by length of membership



## D.2. Rating, and most-liked communications

OVERVIEW: Members gave mostly high ratings of the communications from AAAM. Ratings were similarly high among shorter and longer term members, and among museum-affiliated and non-affiliated members. People appreciate the weekly emails and feel that it's the right frequency for communications. They also like the job postings and other useful resources, as well as the sense of staying informed about what's going on in the field.

*On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with communications from AAAM?*

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Museum Affiliated</u>	<u>Not Affil.</u>
Highly satisfied (9-10)	64%	64%	63%
Medium (7-8)	29%	30%	29%
Least satisfied (1-6)	7%	6%	8%

*What's the best part of AAAM communications for you?*

19%	email newsletter
9%	consistency of weekly emails, just the right frequency
7%	job postings
7%	keeping apprised of what's going on in the field
6%	useful information and resources
4%	concise, clear, accessible communications
3%	sense of community, connection
3%	workshop and training opportunities
3%	grant funding opportunities
3%	responsiveness to personal inquiries
2%	social media
2%	friendly tone, positive and caring
1%	website
1%	professional quality of design and graphics
1%	EMP events
3%	other
40%	blank

### D.3. Suggestions for improving communications

OVERVIEW: Only a small proportion of members had any suggestions for improving communications, such as the challenge of reaching anyone in the office by phone, wanting additional content in the newsletter beyond jobs and funding, or increasing social media presence.

***Do you have any suggestions for improving any of these forms of communication?***

2%	can't reach office by phone, slow response to inquiries
2%	more content about things besides jobs and funding
2%	more alerts about events, a calendar of events
2%	increase social media presence
2%	highlight specific members and what they do
1%	website needs improvement
1%	design and visuals of newsletter could be improved
1%	newsletter format could be better, hard to read on mobiles
5%	other
85%	no, blank

# E PERCEPTIONS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Annual Conference is the most prominent program that AAAM produces. For people who were members years ago, it might have seemed like the only program, and now it may be the only program that new members know about. Therefore, it's important to understand how the Conference is perceived, as such information could inform future strategic decisions.

**For many members, the 2020 virtual conference was a bright spot amidst the pandemic.**

- The majority of members have attended at least one conference. Of course, the number of conferences attended increases with years of membership. The number of conferences attended is roughly the same whether members are affiliated with a specific museum or not.
- About half of the respondents to this survey attended the 2020 conference – the proportion was lower among new members and higher among retained members.
- People were happy that the conference could be held virtually, and they liked the topics and quality of presentations.
- Some people missed networking with colleagues, the way they could with an in-person conference, and also the on-site visits to local museums.
- Before it was decided to hold the 2021 conference virtually, 28% of 2020 attendees said they would *only* attend if it were virtual but 42% said they would attend no matter what the format.

## E.1. Past attendance at conferences

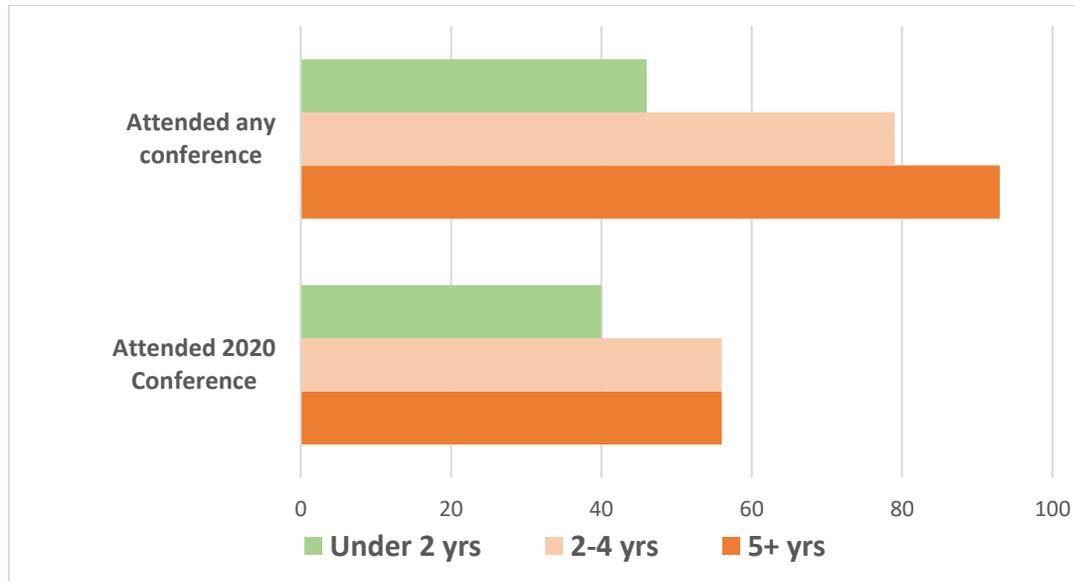
OVERVIEW: A majority of members have attended at least one annual conference. About half did attend the 2020 virtual conference. Conference attendance was related to length of membership, but not to museum affiliation.

### *Have you attended an AAAM Annual Conference?*

10+ times	5%
5-9 times	9%
2-4 times	26%
once	26%
Not yet but aware	29%
No, not aware of it	5%

### *Did you attend the virtual conference this past August?*

Yes	48%
No	52%



## E.2. Opinions about the 2020 virtual conference

OVERVIEW: People thought the virtual conference was well-organized and the virtual platform (Pheedloop) worked well for the most part (although a few people had trouble navigating it). Members were happy that the conference happened (virtually) and that they could attend. People appreciated the panel presentations, relevant topics, and connecting with colleagues. Disappointments about the conference included: that it had to be virtual instead of in-person, so it was harder to connect with colleagues and local museum site visits couldn't happen.

### *What did you like most about the virtual conference?*

26%	panels, presenters, workshops
25%	good job, virtual interface worked well
10%	that it happened, continued sense of community
13%	connecting with colleagues, chat conversations
10%	diversity of topics, relevant content
9%	Keynote conversation
8%	less expensive than travelling
8%	parties, events, music
3%	vendor exhibit hall set up
3%	information and resources
8%	other
13%	blank

### *Was there anything you didn't like about the virtual conference in August?*

9%	adjusting to virtual
8%	platform was a bit difficult to navigate, sometimes "buggy"
5%	harder to network and talk to people
3%	wanted more break-out session / opportunities to discuss
3%	hard to attend sessions while still at work
3%	missed the tours of local cultural sites
3%	not as many vendors, harder to see them
2%	wish sessions were recorded
1%	expensive for virtual
1%	concurrent sessions, hard to choose
1%	vendors couldn't participate in panel sessions
1%	time zone confusions
7%	other
58%	blank, no, all fine

## Sample of answers: Liked most about the virtual conference

### Good job, virtual interface was accessible

*Easy to navigate and prepare for.*

*The accessibility to be home and still have a quality conference experience. It was actually one of, if not the first, virtual conference for me.*

*The accessibility, the focus on wellness, infusion of Black culture (music, energy, hospitality), and reduced cost (not having to travel)*

*The online conference was GREAT. The option for virtual attendance was/would be a very compelling opportunity so that all of our staff can participate in one way or another.*

*The platform was easy to navigate.*

*I thought the interface was really great. It was designed intuitively and it approximated an in-person experience while still taking advantage of the digital space.*

*Accessibility. Convenience. Cost-effective.*

*The virtual platform had a lot of nice features to facilitate the breakout sessions, keynote presentations, virtual concerts and receptions.*

*Pheedloop platform,*

*I liked the format and how I could jump to the sessions I was interested in with ease. The format felt intuitive and natural to navigate almost like an in-person conference.*

*The PheedLoop platform worked so well and replicated a feeling of being in-person. The session content was also excellent.*

*I loved the virtual platform and the workshops.*

*I loved the usability of the platform and content of the talks.*

*The platform was really easy to navigate and we were all engaged despite being completely virtual.*

*It was well organized and the conversation robust.*

### Panels / presenters

*The discussion on funding for small museums and the enthusiasm of all the presenters.*

*Also enjoyed the session on men in the museum field*

*Excellent speakers*

*The sessions were very engaging. Presenters were extremely comfortable with the format, which made their sessions work. The flow was really good.*

*I found the panel offerings fascinating.*

*The content of the sessions was outstanding.*

*Session panelists were very knowledgeable and engaging.*

*All of the great sessions!*

*The presentations*

*The speakers.*

*Sessions were stimulating.*

*I like listening to the panels and talks. I learned a lot of information and history.*

**Liked most about the virtual conference (continued)**Connecting with colleagues

*The chat functions made it SO enjoyable on that platform.*

*Honestly, the same as the in-person conference, an opportunity to connect with colleagues with a shared background/experience.*

*Interactive chat.*

*Meeting and networking with professionals that I met from various sessions*

*It created a sense of community. It allowed us to network with one another individually and had mentorship opportunities.*

The fact that it happened, sense of community

*The ability to still have community even though we were all in separate locations. I also enjoyed the discussions had during the conference.*

*That it HAPPENED, and we didn't have to skip a year*

*I appreciated the willingness and capacity of AAAM to transition to a virtual format with relatively short notice in order to ensure that the conference would continue.*

*That the sense of community was not lost when forced to transition to a digital environment. One of the best parts of the AAAM conference is that "homecoming" feel and I am pleased that it wasn't lost by going virtual.*

*Enthusiasm to keep the conference going and relevant.*

Diversity of topics, relevant content

*Programming and topics*

*I like the range of topics.*

*Wide variety of speakers*

*I also enjoyed the topics because they were directly targeted to me as a black person.*

*The content was appropriate and timely.*

*Wide variety of speakers from different aspects of museum administration, like education and curation*

*Superb programming*

Keynote

*Loved the keynote speakers.*

*Hearing from Secretary Lonnie Bunch was certainly a highlight.*

*Mr. Lonnie Bunch's talk was phenomenal.*

*The keynote conversations.*

*The keynote program with Lonnie Bunch was relevant and timely.*

Less expensive than traveling

*I enjoyed how easy the virtual conference was to attend. Typically, AAAM is the most expensive conference that we attend. The virtual conference made the experience cheaper and easier.*

*Being able to attend without the added cost of travel and time off*

*That I was able to attend because it was virtual! The panels were very informative.*

*I did not have to travel. Less expensive.*

**Liked most about the virtual conference (continued)**Parties, events, music

*Virtual parties- networking events*

*Party/DJ events were good.*

*Especially the social parties which were more fun than I thought could be had virtually.*

*The live entertainment*

*Music...I was not able to attend events during the day*

*And musical entertainment.*

Vendor hall

*I had a booth, had an opportunity for exposure and shared services.*

*The virtual exhibit hall*

*I also like the way the vendor hall was set up. As an introvert in "live conferences", I do not typically take advantage of them. But in this format it was easy to browse and make direct connections if I felt I needed to.*

Information and resources

*Great information about museums*

*Shared resources that allowed me to improve my efforts as a working professional.*

*Excellent information!*

Workshops

*The ability to view a variety of workshops from your home.*

*Workshops*

Other

*Everything, it was a community*

*Realness*

*The flexibility to come and go in the various sessions*

*Everything!*

*I really appreciate that conference sessions were made available to view as recordings for future reference. The feature enabled me to choose presentations to attend without apprehension about missing out on other great sessions.*

**Sample of answers: anything you didn't like about the conference?**Adjusting to virtual

*Of course nothing beats an in-person AAAM conference! They are THE BEST!!!*

*That is was virtual.*

*I missed the physical interaction.*

*It would have nice to have been in person but, I probably would not have been able to attend.*

*That it wasn't in person. :)*

*Nope. I just miss being all together. It's like a vacation from white supremacy. It's hard to get the same retreat-like experience when you don't go anywhere physically. Can't wait to get vaccinated*

*Getting used to the new format*

*Not seeing everyone in person and getting away from the home office to engage in professional conference sessions & visiting other museums in the conference host cities*

Platform a bit difficult to navigate

*The platform was a little confusing at first.*

*The virtual platform was something to get used to*

*The app was buggy*

*Evening programs like reception had many technical issues*

*The platform was a little confusing.*

*I had some technical difficulties accessing the personal video one on one connection on the platform*

*A little confusing to navigate at first.*

*Difficulty with software sometimes*

Harder to network and talk to people

*I would have appreciated a way to have more interaction and discussion with non-presenters attending the conference. The social aspects of the conference needs additional work.*

*It is impossible to connect with people virtually.*

*I do wish there was a better way to connect with new people. I just don't know how you duplicate the effect of simply running into someone at dinner or in the lobby of the hotel and finding someone who adds to your personal and professional life.*

*It could've had more networking opportunities.*

*Lacked the in-person conversations and interactions.*

Wanted more discussion, break-out sessions

*I wanted to see more discussion for people attending the sessions as well as some live sessions with discussions.*

*We could've have used more breakout sessions to connect us with others in our departments*

**Anything you didn't like about the virtual conference? (continued)**Hard to attend while still at work

*I've been struggling to attend virtual conferences that I sign up for. It's hard to put other work aside when not in person.*

*The usual challenges with virtual, hard to balance regular workday with the conference. I wasn't able to totally disengage from day-to-day work activities the way I could if I were submersed in a face-to-face conference.*

Missed the tours of local cultural sites

*The absence of group visits and tours of area museums and historic sites*

*Missed the visits to the museums for receptions in the host city.*

*I like visiting cities and touring sites and museums to see how other organizations showcase their exhibits*

Needed more breaks, time between sessions

*I do wish there were five minute breaks between sessions to allow for time to switch to different streams and go to the restroom/ get a drink of water without missing anything.*

*Needs more breaks*

*It would be great to add more breaks during the day - opportunities to eat lunch, go to the restroom, etc. There were times I did not want to leave the computer because I didn't want to miss anything.*

Vendors

*We were presenters in the hall and did not have access to many talks. The topics looked so amazing. I would have liked to hear from the presenters but understand why access may have been limited. We also had almost no traffic. I toured the expos center and it did not appear we were alone in that regard.*

*As vendors we were not allowed to be a part of the conference, except for social events*

Other

*Late enrollment caused some issues that prevented me from attending sessions, but it was handled expeditiously.*

*There was more training needed for volunteers*

*For a virtual format, it would have been nice to have more a la carte registration options for the panels.*

*I would have appreciated a PDF schedule/schedule-at-a-glance for the conference.*

*The lack of programming for Life Members*

*I would just reiterate that I would have loved the chance to attend sessions designed for new members, particularly new members interested in working in black museums and transitioning from other fields.*

*Not enough EMP content*

### E.3. Factors influencing intentions to attend the 2021 conference

OVERVIEW: Members were asked about their intentions to attend the 2021 conference (before the decision was made to hold it virtually). About one-quarter said they would only attend if it was a virtual conference, but 42% said they would go either way: in-person or virtual. About one-quarter of members weren't sure yet if they could attend. The main factors impacting people's ability to participate are hotel and transportation costs. For some, the registration fees are an obstacle.

#### ***Do you plan to attend the 2021 AAAM Conference in Miami in August?***

[Only asked of those who attended the 2020 Conference]

Yes, either in person or virtual	42%
Only if it's virtual	28%
Only if it's in person	2%
No I will not attend	2%
Not sure yet	26%

#### ***What economic factors or costs may impact your ability to participate in the 2021 conference?***

Hotel accommodations / lodging	41%
Transportation costs	38%
Conference registration fees	27%
Membership fees	8%
Other: pandemic concerns	10%
Other: schedule, commitments	3%
Other: costs	2%
None of these will prevent me from attending	39%

# F CHALLENGES THAT MEMBERS ARE FACING

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

Given that this membership assessment occurred during the pandemic, there was an attempt to recognize the challenges and “take the pulse” of how members are doing.

**The effects of the pandemic have not been equally felt across the membership and the field.** Some members are in relatively stable positions, but some are in financially fragile organizations or work independently as work is available.

- A year into the pandemic, about half of the members were still feeling stressed, but felt that it was mostly manageable. About one-quarter were starting to feel hopeful.
- Among those who work at a museum, 40% said their museum was still closed due to the pandemic (the survey was mostly taken during February and March).
- Three-quarters of the members were employed at this time. Only 4% were unemployed and looking for a new job (the rest were students, retired or volunteers).
- More than a quarter of museum-affiliated members indicated that revenue losses due to the pandemic were likely to impact their organization’s operations this year.
- When asked what AAAM could do to help, some people mentioned more virtual networking opportunities, more funding, more job posts or help with a specific issue.

## F.1. Effects of the Pandemic

OVERVIEW: At the time of data collection (January through April 2021), 40% of the organizations were still closed due to COVID, AND 40% were open with reduced capacity. Most of the members (61%) were employed full-time. (It's odd that so few members are seeking employment given that they cited the weekly job postings as the best part of AAAM communications in section C.) About half said they were still feeling stressed by the pandemic. Stress levels were similar for the full-time employed and others.

***If you represent a museum or cultural organization, or work/worked at a museum, is your organization currently open?*** [ONLY AMONG MUSEUM-AFFILIATED]

Yes, with no limits on capacity	6%
Yes, but with reduced capacity and/or hours	41%
No, closed temporarily due to the pandemic	39%
No, closed maybe permanently	1%
Other	13%

### Other answers

New museum, not yet open (4%)  
 Doing online programs (3%)  
 Closed for renovations anyway (1%)  
 We don't have a building (1%)  
 Various other answers (2%)

### ***Are you employed?***

[ASKED OF EVERYONE]

Yes, full-time (32+ hours)	61%
Yes, part-time	10%
Yes but working reduced hours due to pandemic	5%
Unemployed, looking for a new job	4%
Furloughed, hoping to return to previous job	1%
Unemployed, not job-hunting	0
Retired	9%
Student	4%
Self-employed	4%
Volunteer	2%
Other	1%

**Effects of the pandemic** (continued)***How is your stress level at this point?***

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Others</u>
It's fine	20%	20%	23%
It's been rough but feeling hopeful	29%	28%	32%
Stressed but managing	42%	43%	42%
Highly stressed, barely managing	7%	9%	3%
Other	2%	(not included)	

## F.2. Expected budgetary challenges in 2021

OVERVIEW: The main financial challenge for organizations in 2021 is loss of revenue due to the pandemic. Some also cite staff layoffs and lack of available volunteers as potentially impacting operations.

***What factors will most likely impact your organization's operation and budget in 2021?*** [MUSEUM-AFFILIATED ONLY]

Revenue losses, budget pressures	28%
Low volunteer availability or confidence	13%
Staff redeployment, layoffs, or recruitment challenges	12%
Cost or availability of technology or software (e.g., timed tickets, contact tracing, etc.)	8%
Professional development	7%
Cost or availability of equipment and safety measures (e.g., PPE, barriers, sanitizer, etc.)	6%
Lack of training for safe re-opening (e.g., limited time or resources)	4%
Other	6%
I'm not in a management position (don't know the answer)	5%

Other factors:

- 2% Pandemic concerns (health & safety, travel restrictions, etc.)
- 1% Lack of ability to do exhibits & programs
- 1% Various other answers

### F.3. What can AAAM do to help or be a better advocate?

OVERVIEW: Most members couldn't think of anything that AAAM could do to help with pandemic-related challenges. A few people mentioned more virtual networking opportunities, more funding, more job posts, or specific things that they need help with.

#### ***Is there something that you think AAAM could do to help with your needs?***

[AFTER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW PANDEMIC IS AFFECTING THEM]

9%	keep doing what you do (positive, helpful)
5%	zoom discussions, networking opportunities, build partnerships
4%	emergency funding, grant writing help, more funding ideas
3%	more job posts, expand types of jobs
3%	need help or info about a specific topic
2%	resources for virtual programming
2%	more professional development opportunities
2%	suggestions for webinar/workshop topics
1%	more art-related things
1%	lower program costs
1%	hard to contact AAAM, be more responsive
5%	other
67%	no, blank

(At end of survey): ***What can AAAM do to be a better advocate for African American museums and for the people who love them?***

14%	more promotion of individual member sites, e.g., a monthly “spotlight” or direct help with marketing
12%	more financial help, e.g., grants, fellowships, sponsors, direct funds, reduced fees
8%	advocate at national and state government levels
5%	more help with networking and collaborations, e.g., regional groups, matching sites with other similar ones
5%	more outreach and connection with other Black organizations
3%	continue connecting with EMPs, more offerings for them
2%	more professional development opportunities
2%	more mentoring programs
2%	more related to arts organizations
2%	continue to expand membership, e.g., in Midwest and west.
2%	more education and outreach to schools and HBCUs
2%	expand international connections
1%	get more people to visit Black museums
1%	create a publication for relevant scholarly articles, etc.
1%	more webinars and help by experts
9%	other
47%	no ideas, blank

### **Sample of answers: What can AAAM do to be a better advocate?**

#### More promotion, spotlights

*Publishing information articulating the importance and significance of African American museums in small and rural communities*

*Exposure to smaller museums*

*Marketing and advertising is a difficult task for smaller institutions. If AAAM could do some sort of regional ad listing all member sites that would help.*

*AAAM could have a national traveling show, with items from member museums.*

*Maybe spotlighting a Black museum for a specific period of time (month/week) , on their history, what they cover, how they impact their community and what help they need via AAAM newsletters/social media/etc. a lot of people are very new to the field or new to attending museums so I think starting simply and showing how museums can impact the world and the community around them and are not just a building with history inside them. Featuring the humanity of museums, making them feel like something integral to our survival to everyone, not just museum nerds haha. I don't have specifics, but just humanizing and showing what the actual work looks like in your communications.*

*There are SO MANY wonderful small African American museums that I feel like are invisible to everyone except those who live nearby. Maybe a "Museum of the Month" or something like that to help promote them?*

*Feature some smaller or lesser known museums in newsletters*

*Can you spotlight which of the African American museums are offering virtual tours or activities (just a list with the link to their website would be great, it's been hard to find this info in one spot).*

*Highlighting different AA museums in newsletters and an employee from a different AA museum*

*Maybe identifying the museums that may need extra support and creating more visibility for their needs. For example, some smaller AA museums are under the radar but this association may be able to help boost awareness and resources for them.*

*Highlight museums on social media on a weekly basis so that there can be more awareness about the museums.*

*Use the weekly newsletters, website, and perhaps a quarterly online publication to highlight member Museums, individuals, groups and even vendor/consultants who have successfully developed programs, events, community and school outreach programs, and online offerings that have successfully increased museum engagement, public access, and program funding*

*Create an ad for this community of institutions and get it sponsored nationally*

*People need to know about the existence of the Black museums in the US. More ads need to be shared online through social media. If other museums are open to promoting other museums please do it.*

*Heighten the profile of museums and advertise more*

*Expand its marketing of the organization and member institutions*

### Promotion; spotlights

*It is a moment to aggressively grow interest across the country in AA museums. Many mainstream museums are working hard to include and promote Black content from their collections or communities. AA museums need to make their entire communities aware of their being, important, and in many cases, innovative work. Maybe regional marketing plan for AA museums?*

*Maybe a monthly spotlight on different museums in your organization (or the museums of the members) and the work that they do. I would love to learn about the different members of this organizations and their institutions in a brief way to then maybe look them up further at a later time*

*Have more interactive sessions with the community that rotate amongst the various sites/museums*

*Feature successful member initiatives broadly with media outlets. Have spokespeople who can make a TV show here or there.*

### Marketing

*Do you already have feature articles on museums in your newsletter on social media?*

*Museum highlights, direct connections to museum professionals to EMPS, exclusive viewings*

*Amplify the work of all of its members (including individuals) not just select institutions that have more visible brands.*

*Reciprocal museum benefits and highlighting exhibits*

*Visibility in mass media for non-museum people. Focus on traveling African Americans.*

*Expand definition of museum to historic sites. Small to medium sized locations have historic sites, not museums. Missing this potential audience.*

*"Showcase" some museums and share what they're doing especially during this pandemic*

*Continue to feature African American museum professionals who are leaders (state, local and National) in promoting small Black Heritage Museums like those who are members of the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN)*

### More financial help

*Help them find money!*

*Connect us with major funders and foundations who are interested in improving African American Museums*

*Funding for needed renovations*

*Sustainability...finding or creating a superfund to keep us open*

*Sponsor museums by providing free tickets for the public for a couple weekdays or weekends*

*Centralizing philanthropy for member institutions.*

*Create an endowment*

*This may be too bold but perhaps AAAM could become a granting agency of sorts that can assist small organizations that can't get the capital they need to apply for high profile grants that require matching funds.*

*Plan early and communicate often with members and non-members via an online fund and friend-raising campaign with a national focus.*

*Funding is a huge issue. Advocacy for practical approaches to preservation - let's shake up the preservation community! Tired of the unrealistic expectations for preserving structures when making them living, meaningful historic sites is far more important.*

*The conferences are great. I think some of the expenses to attend are too great for smaller organizations. I think they can apply once for scholarship, but not every year.*

*I'm extremely interested in how we fund and finance emerging voices with respect to curatorial research and exhibiting artifacts and art from our respective communities. That said, what are the resources that AAAM can provide to amplify exploration /commentary of Black pasts and futures?*

### Advocacy

*Be a louder voice for Black museums in general and act as a conduit for amplifying the collective voice of the network.*

*Push for a huge investment by the Biden administration to support black museums.*

*Incorporate more messaging about the values and contributions of African American Museums to the widest audiences, particularly to non-African Americans.*

*Plan a listening session with Biden and Harris for African American museums*

*Greater presence in national advocacy and policy discussion.*

*I would definitely recommend continued outreach for advocacy and support with congressional, corporate, non-profits and institutions of higher education. Like to see AAAM represented at major conferences i.e., virtual or in person when applicable to promote our work and increase membership.*

*Lobby elected officials local and national, connect with major donors to cultural institutions*

*Ask Joe Biden to give funding to ALL African American Museums*

*Promote more and take out ad space on public transportation/partner with departments of Ed in a greater capacity.*

*Continue to advocate for funding for black museums.*

*Keep up with state legislation as well as national. There are some proposals in the Arkansas legislature to keep black history out of public schools including colleges. As individuals, or even small organizations, we feel like we can't fight this.*

*Speak truth to power -- the higher up, the better -- in this moment of reckoning.*

*Advocacy on the national level*

*Lobby federal, state, and local government for increased funding*

### More networking & collaboration opportunities

*Have large museums connect/collaborate with small museums.*

*My institution is located in (very white) New Hampshire. We are Black-led, BIPOC majority on the BOD. Almost all volunteers, including interpreters, are white. People who visit and attend our programs are primarily white (90%), female (70%), & over 50 (70%). Would love to brainstorm with other institutions with similar demographics. Can white staff and interpreters do justice to African American history? How might we evaluate our work to make sure our interpretation and programming continues to grow and deepen?*

*Establish connections with larger museums and smaller institutions..*

*Develop smaller shared exhibitions between member institutions.*

*Create opportunities for collaboration across institutional lines and do not forget smaller institutions.*

*Help make regional connections*

*I would love to see AAAM expand their offerings to regional conference/ webinars. It would also be great if there was a way for institutional members to receive site visits and feedback on their work and maybe even go as an expert to museums that are not traditionally telling African American stories but are trying to diversify their interpretations.*

*I like the regional conferences idea -- especially now that a virtual element makes conferences more accessible.*

### More outreach to other Black organizations

*Find a way to become a presence regionally on a regular basis; either through seasonal workshops that can be partnered with state museum organizations or other national museum orgs i.e. spring or fall workshops*

*Partnerships with architects and city planners to build more Black museums, galleries and cultural institutions*

*Continue to partner with sister organizations for biggest impact*

*Partner with organizations to offer capacity building grants*

*Sponsor events with other BiPoc oriented associations*

*Consider the role of other public history institutions that do museum like work.*

*Perhaps more partnerships/alliances with other museum associations representing BIPOC and other ethnic groups.*

*Cultivate a relationship with CBC, NAACP, NUL, ELC, D9 and other orgs that represent the diaspora of blackness in the USA*

#### Continue connecting with EMPs, and students

*Reach out to all universities and high schools to make them aware of opportunities for African/Native/Latina Americans in the museum profession. That information is not known at schools where there is no people of color presence*

*Encourage museums to hire millennial and Gen Z professionals and promote healthy workplaces.*

*I would like to learn more as an emerging professional how AAAM is participating in museum advocacy day. Also how AAAM is helping younger professionals create and identify lasting career opportunities in AA museums.*

*Maybe promote opportunities for young professionals to learn first-hand how to care for collections. Maybe offer classes on black history to the public*

#### Other

*Get involved the museum unionization and promote paid internships*

*There should definitely be a formal way to recognize lifetime members whether that be with swag or their names on something. A commitment of that size deserves some type of recognition beyond a small membership card because individuals who do have lifetime memberships are demonstrating an exceptional dedication and commitment to your organization for the duration of their lifetime and that matters.*

*I would like to support AAM. Could the association create a visitors national card for members to support visits.*

*Salary advocacy*

*More technology support*

*Try to be more inclusive. Right now it seems very exclusive, a central place for superstars.*

*Have volunteer opportunities m non-members year-round to advocate for AAAM and perform other necessary duties. After completing enough volunteer opportunities, offer free membership and/or access to the AAAM conference. This will provide access for younger attendees and those not currently in leadership positions at their institutions.*

*I think any ways in which AAAM is able to support black ownership of black cultural institutions, as well as reconnecting black people to their African heritage and history are invaluable.*

*Include a media list, like "Women Know History," so that journalists and others know who to contact if they want expert information about Black people in certain regions.*

*Expand to provide support for African Americans working within non-African American Museums - they need it*

*Maintain equilibrium in addressing: 1. History versus Current/Contemporary Events 2. Negative versus Positive Issues/Topics*

*We need to keep stressing that African-American history is American history and continue to show how vital the African-American experience is to our nation.*