

Assembly 2016 Evaluation Summary

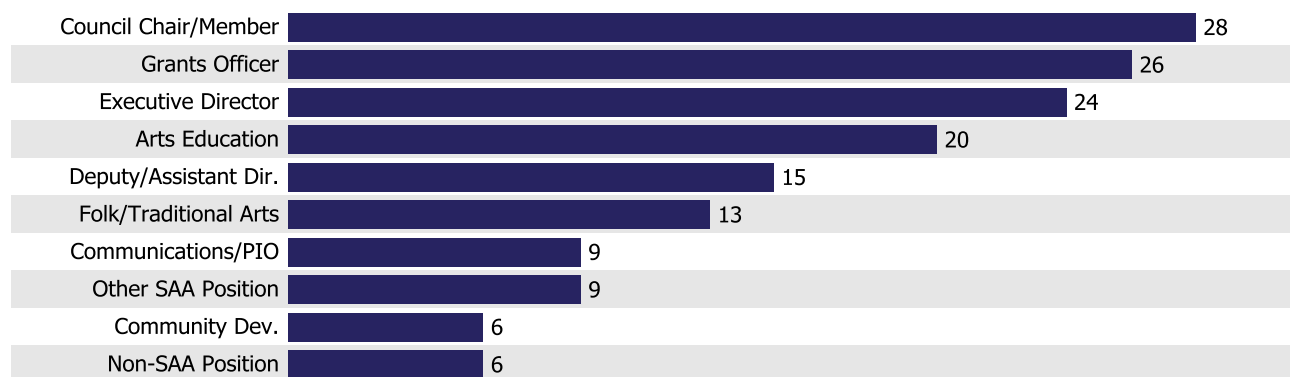
The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) convened Assembly 2016 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 14-17. 303 participants attended the meeting, out of which 222 were NASAA members. There were 232 total registrants for peer group sessions. Executive directors made up 20% of all peer group session registrants; grants/fiscal officers, 18%; chairs/council members, 16%; arts education, 15%; folk/traditional arts, 12%; deputy directors, 10%; community development, 8%; and communications/PIO, 6%.

As a measure of attendees' experiences and to better plan future meetings, NASAA distributed paper and electronic copies of an evaluation questionnaire to participants during the closing plenary session. From both the on-line and paper methods, a total of 156 questionnaires were completed, with 150 of the respondents identifying themselves as members. This yielded an overall response rate of 51%, which increased to 68% when considering only members.

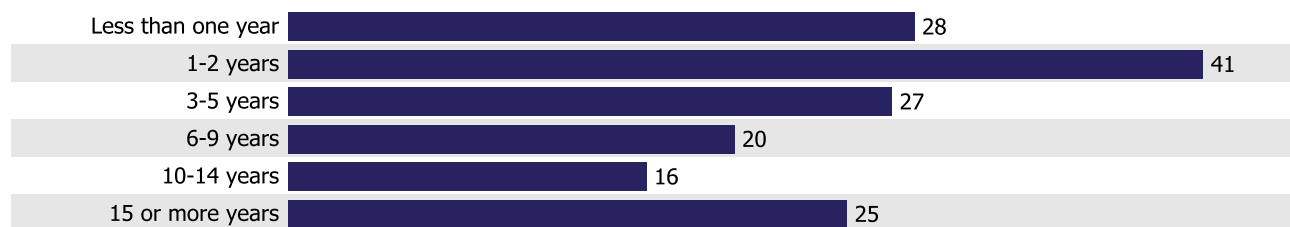
This report contains the key results of the evaluation in cross-tabulations, as well as a complete list of all comments.

About the Respondents

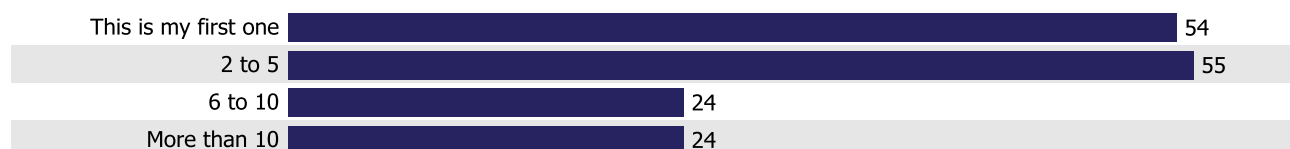
Primary Position



Years in Current Position



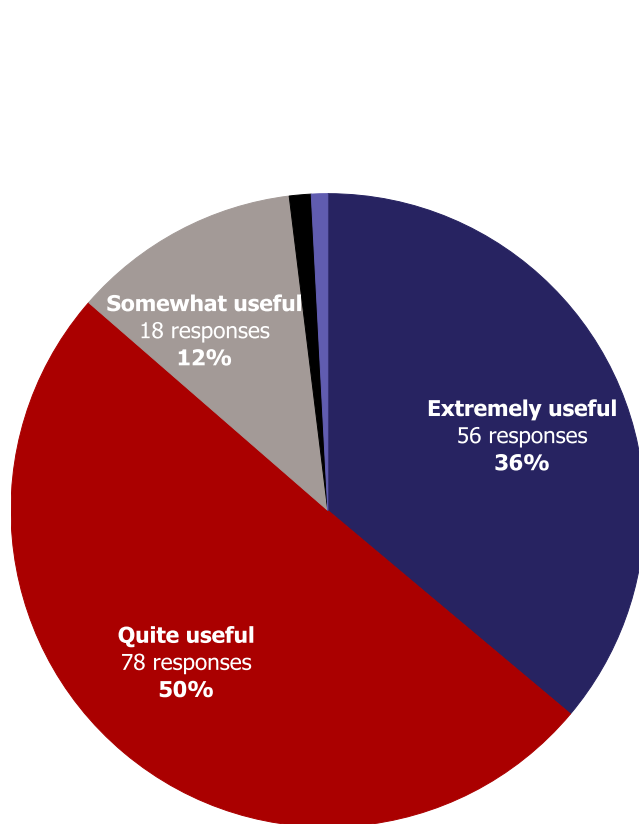
Number of NASAA Meetings Attended



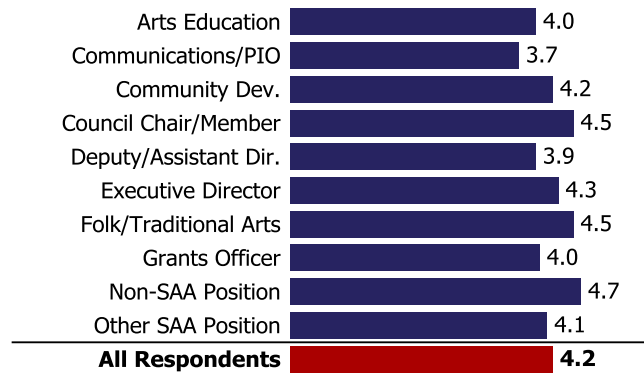
A significant portion of respondents are fairly new to the NASAA community. 44% have been with their arts councils for two years or fewer, and 70% have attended five or fewer NASAA meetings. The primary

position chart shows the number of respondents broken down by peer groups. Comparing the percent of total registrants to the percent of total responses by peer group, there are minor differences. The response rates by peer group best indicate where there was over- or underrepresentation in the survey. The highest response rates were from grants officers (81%) and chairs/council members (78%). The lowest response rates were from community development and folk/traditional arts staff (33% and 48%, respectively). Compared to Assembly 2014, NASAA received proportionally fewer responses from deputy directors and executive directors, but more from grants officers. Please note that respondents who wrote in "fiscal officer" were categorized with grants officers due to their shared peer session.

Overall Ratings of NASAA Assembly 2016



Rating by Position



Rating by Tenure



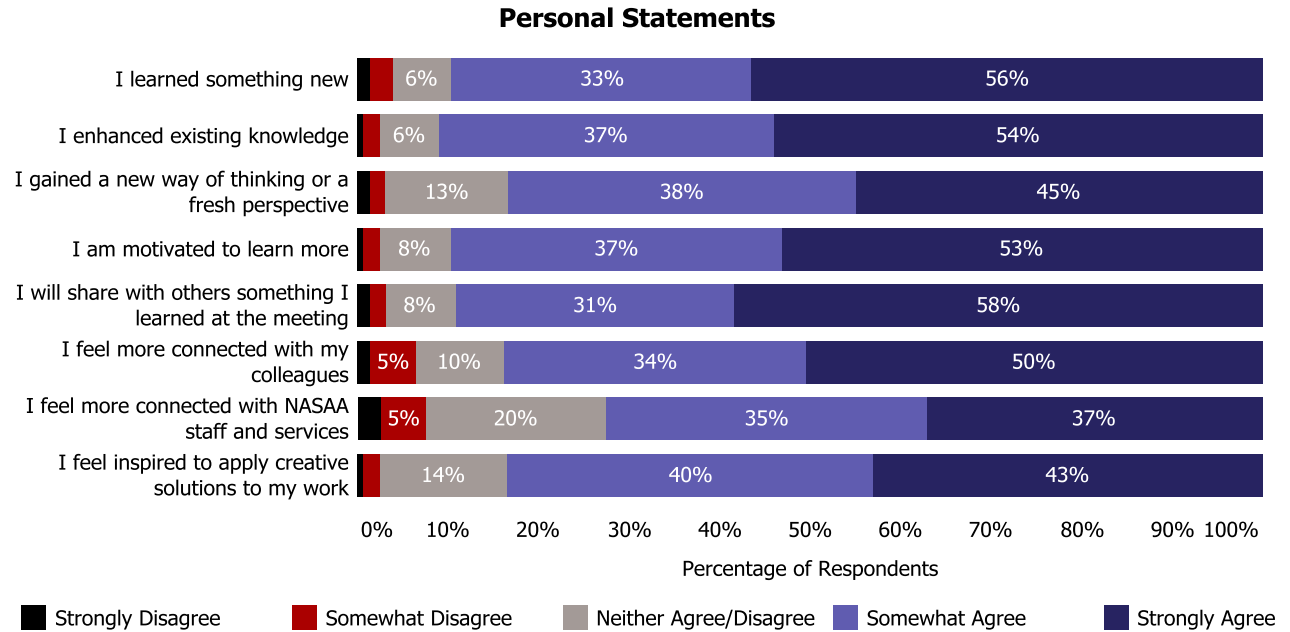
Rating by Number of Meetings



86% of respondents found Assembly 2016 quite or extremely useful. When using a numerical scale for the overall rating (from 1 = not at all useful to 5 = extremely useful), the average rating is 4.2, which is consistent with an overall average of 4.1 from the Assembly 2014 evaluation. Respondents by position, length of tenure and number of meetings attended all reported relatively similar levels of satisfaction. Members in communications or deputy positions gave lower average ratings, below 4 (3.7 and 3.9, respectively). This is likely due to three outliers who were dissatisfied with the meeting.

Impact on Participants

Personal statements included in the questionnaire help gauge participants' self-perceptions, knowledge attainment and changes in motivation.



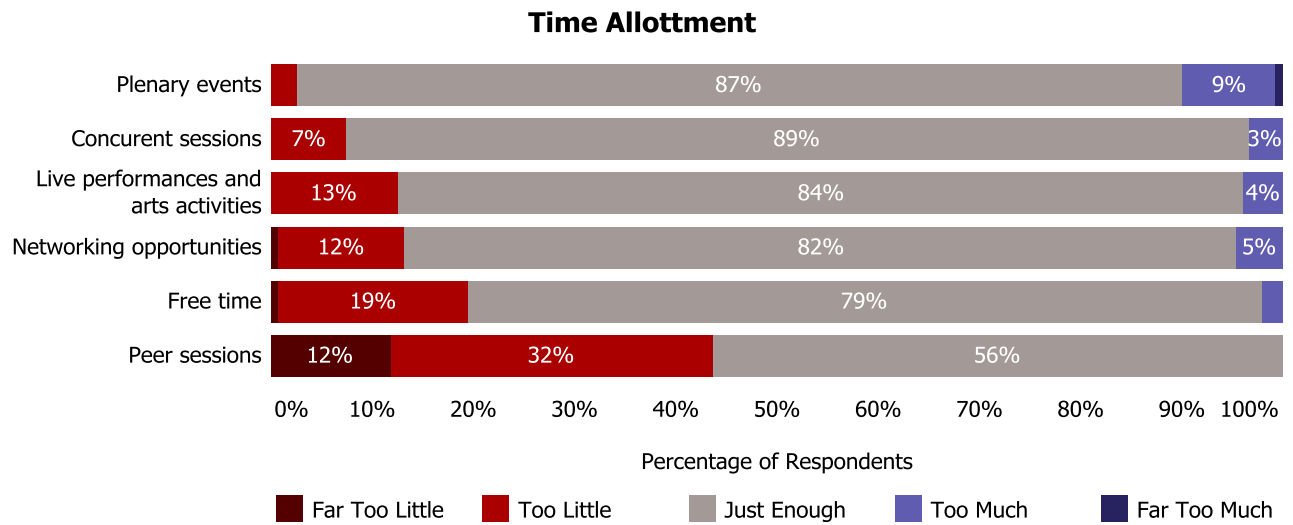
More than 80% of respondents indicated that they somewhat or strongly agreed with seven of the eight statements. "I feel more connected with NASAA staff and services" received a lower agreement rating, at 72%. This year's results are consistent with 2014 results.

Personal Statements by Tenure

		Less than one year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	All Respondents
I learned something new	Strongly Agree	20	25	14	7	10	12	88
	Somewhat Agree	6	12	12	9	5	8	52
	Neither Agree/Disagree	1	3	1	2	1	2	10
	Somewhat Disagree	1	1				2	4
	Strongly Disagree				1		1	2
I enhanced existing knowledge	Strongly Agree	17	20	13	8	11	15	84
	Somewhat Agree	8	16	14	9	5	6	58
	Neither Agree/Disagree	3	4		1		2	10
	Somewhat Disagree		1				2	3
	Strongly Disagree				1			1
I gained a new way of thinking or a fresh perspective	Strongly Agree	19	16	11	5	8	11	70
	Somewhat Agree	7	18	13	9	5	8	60
	Neither Agree/Disagree	2	6	3	3	3	4	21
	Somewhat Disagree		1		1		1	3
	Strongly Disagree				1		1	2
I am motivated to learn more	Strongly Agree	20	21	12	9	10	11	83
	Somewhat Agree	7	17	13	7	4	9	57
	Neither Agree/Disagree	1	2	2	2	2	3	12
	Somewhat Disagree		1				2	3
	Strongly Disagree				1			1
I will share with others something I learned at the meeting	Strongly Agree	20	22	17	10	11	11	91
	Somewhat Agree	6	12	9	7	5	9	48
	Neither Agree/Disagree	1	6	1	1		3	12
	Somewhat Disagree	1	1				1	3
	Strongly Disagree				1		1	2
I feel more connected with my colleagues	Strongly Agree	19	14	11	11	11	12	78
	Somewhat Agree	6	14	12	6	4	10	52
	Neither Agree/Disagree	2	7	3	1	1	1	15
	Somewhat Disagree	1	4	1			2	8
	Strongly Disagree		1		1			2
I feel more connected with NASAA staff and services	Strongly Agree	11	10	12	9	7	9	58
	Somewhat Agree	9	19	8	6	6	7	55
	Neither Agree/Disagree	8	6	6	2	3	6	31
	Somewhat Disagree		6		1		1	8
	Strongly Disagree			1	1		2	4
I feel inspired to apply creative solutions to my work	Strongly Agree	15	15	11	7	8	11	67
	Somewhat Agree	9	16	12	9	6	11	63
	Neither Agree/Disagree	3	10	4	2	2	1	22
	Somewhat Disagree	1					2	3
	Strongly Disagree				1			1

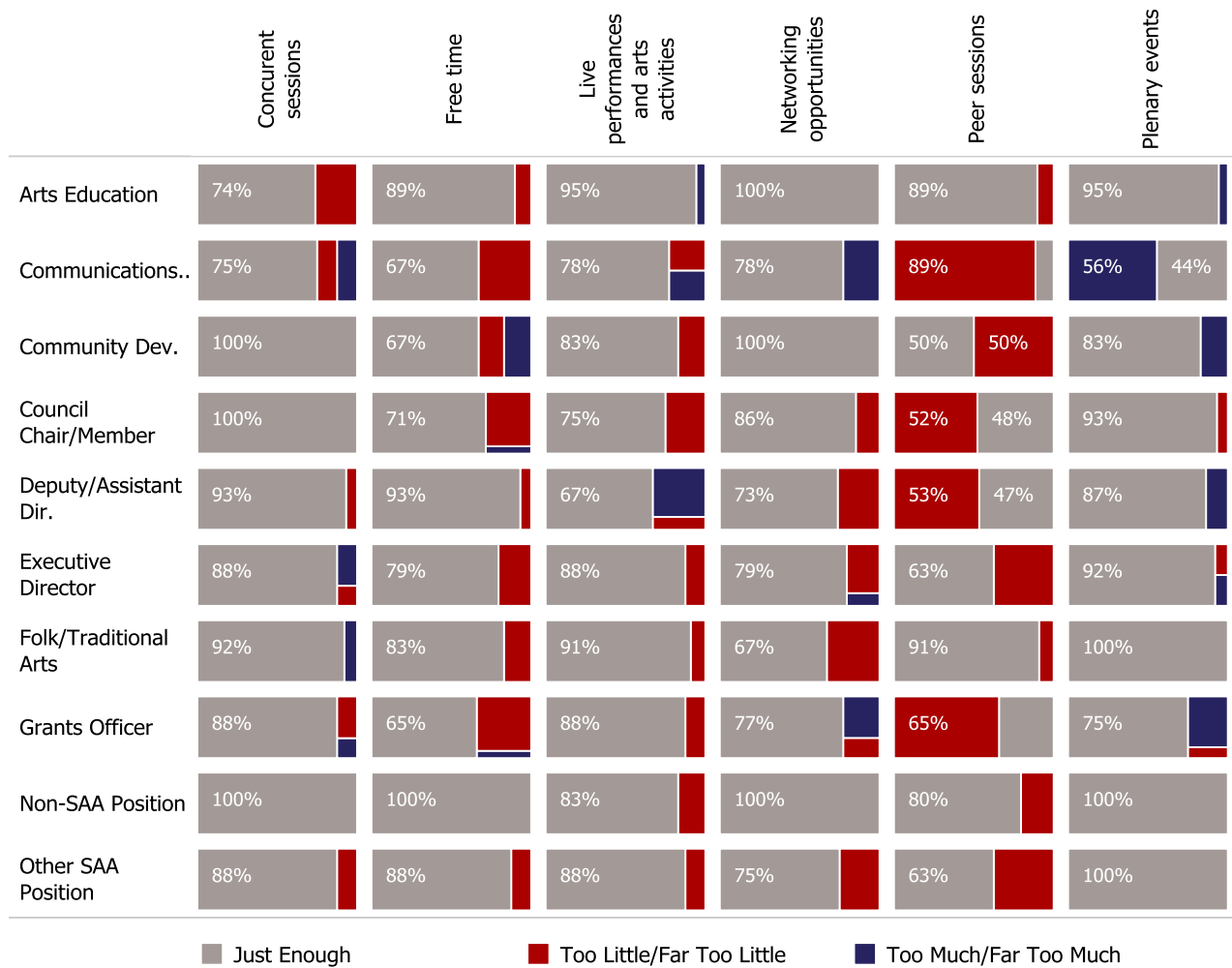
Most respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed with the personal statements, regardless of tenure. Respondents who have been in their position less than one year responded with the highest level of agreement to these statements. Those who have been with their arts council for 10-14 years also displayed relatively high levels of agreement. Responses to these statements, especially from those who have held their SAA position for 15 or more years, can be misleading—at least one respondent indicated that he or she "could not feel more connected" and thus selected "strongly disagree."

Time Allocation



44% of respondents indicated there was too little or far too little time dedicated to peer sessions. Other than peer sessions, the vast majority of respondents believed there was just enough time allocated to the rest of the Assembly activities.

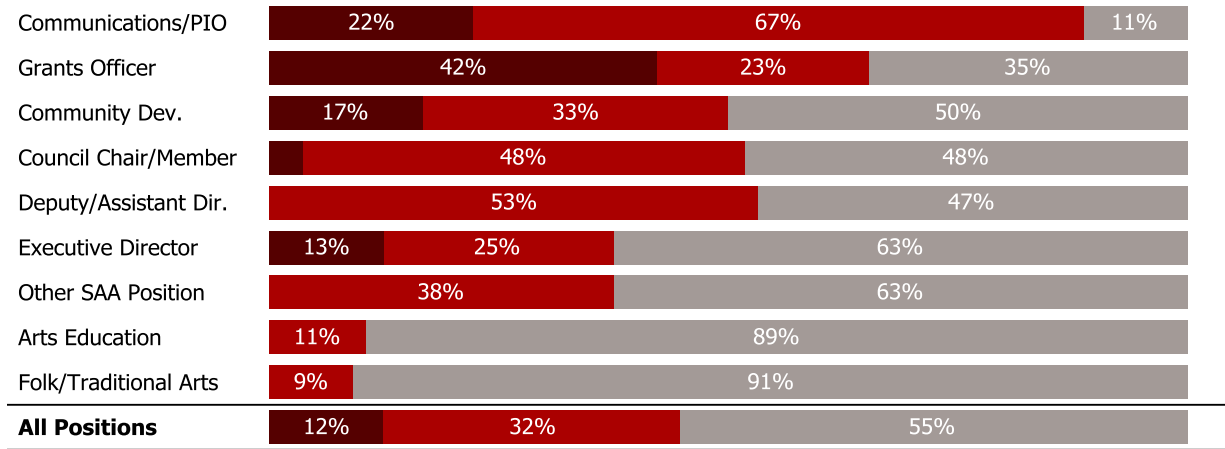
Time Allotment by Position



These tables convey attendee attitudes toward the duration of activities by position type. Most respondents wanted more time allocated to peer sessions—this was especially true for grants officers and communications/PIOs.

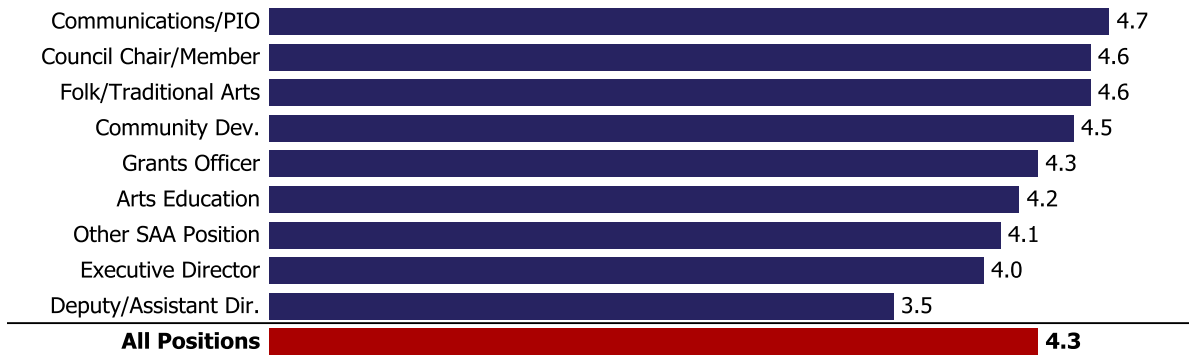
Peer Sessions

Peer Session Time Allotment by Position



Far Too Little
 Too Little
 Just Enough

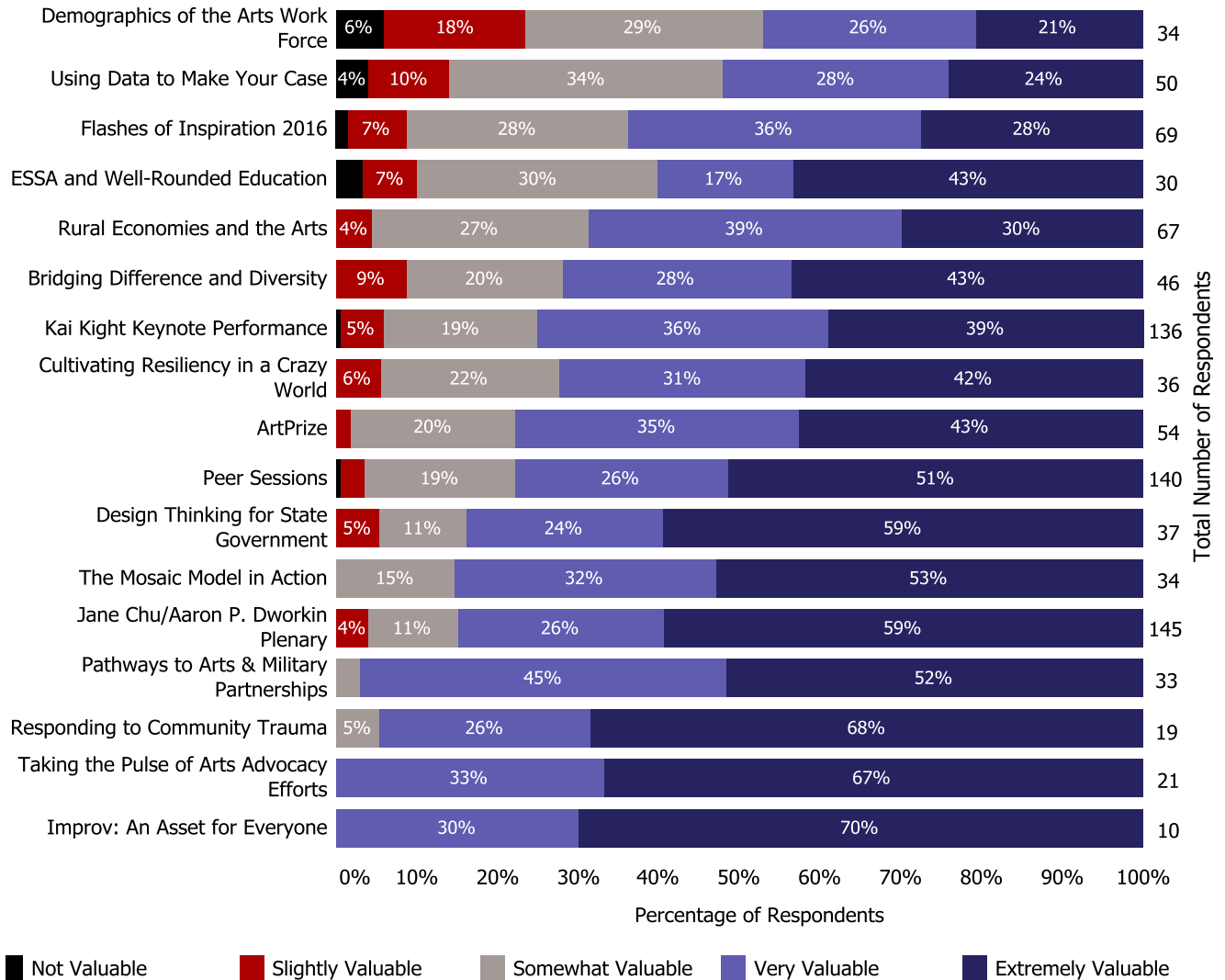
Average Peer Session Rating by Position



Many respondents wanted considerably more time—including 89% of communications/PIO staff and 65% of grants officers (with 42% indicating there was "far too little" time). Most responding folk/traditional and arts education staff members, who have preconference programs, felt the right amount of time was allocated to peer sessions. In terms of satisfaction with the sessions themselves, the average ratings by peer group were between 4.0 and 4.7. Deputy directors had a much lower average rating (3.5) than the rest of the groups, which was down from a 4.2 average rating in 2014.

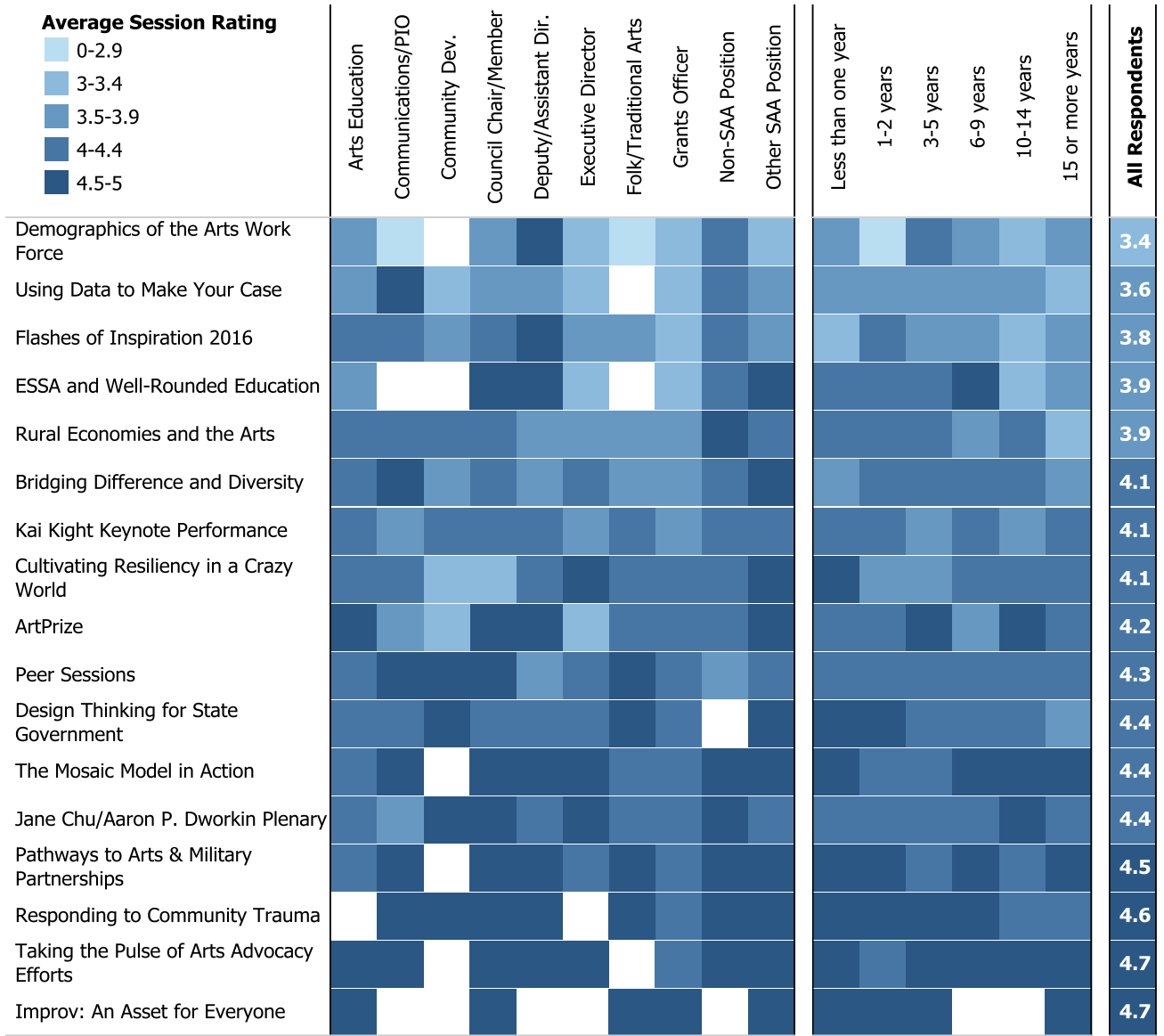
Session Ratings

Session Ratings with Total Number of Respondents



The bars display the ratings percentages for each session, while the numbers on the right side of the chart are the total number of respondents who rated each session. The lowest average response rating for a session was above 3.0, which corresponds to "somewhat valuable." Most respondents felt sessions were "very valuable" or "extremely valuable." The comments section below provides more detailed session feedback, and is consistent with this chart's findings.

Session Ratings by Position and Tenure



Comments

Comment Word Cloud



General Critique

- Would love to have a pre-conference! I would also enjoy a session for young professionals in NASAA
- Please have a public art tour in Oregon next year! They have the best collection!
- Start 30-60 later in the mornings! More facilitated networking.
- We need to continue talking about diversity and inclusion
- A list of Art Prize venues open this weekend. Run conference Wed-Fri rather than Thurs-Sat.
- Uniform treatment for handouts and materials would be helpful
- Spread out keynote presentations and artist presentations more. Most presentations were done all on Friday morning.
- Further examination of best practices. Provide array of sessions on ideas beyond grant making for agencies. Deeper focus on inclusion, diversity, equity and access principle and actionable measures.
- So many of us have multiple programs to coordinate. It is disappointing that we have to choose between which peer session to attend (especially at pre-conference, but I realize this would be difficult/really impossible to do differently).
- Smaller get-to-know you session. Possibly small groups to go to museums etc. Make it more intimate and casual and fun.
- Provide a quick, one page schedule on the website. As a first time attendee, I was confused by the lengthy schedule. Provide free time in the afternoon/day to experience Grand Rapids. Hotel was slightly confusing to get around.
- Include more topics, performances, speakers, keynotes, etc. that include people with disabilities.
- Include the speaker bios at registration, not at the "extras" table.
- Remote access for sessions would be extremely helpful for staff members who are unable to travel but could make significant contributions or gain a lot from a session.
- Possibly think about moving the awards to an evening meal or reception to give it more prestige.

- I wonder about the timing - specifically starting Thursday and ending on Saturday. I'd be interested to know attendance #s at the Saturday workshops vs the rest of the conference. Have we ever considered starting a day earlier and ending on Friday afternoon?
- I would like more information on federal guidelines do's and don't's. Training from the NEA or at least sharing the latest changes in funding guidelines etc. The one the NEA did two years ago in New Orleans was great. We should have something like that every two years at least.
- More conversation on big topics. More talk about democracy and our place in it.
- Co-joint peer session. AE and FA both had social justice workshops. If staff had been together we would be empowered to make collective change in our house offices. Now disconnected experiences.
- More free time.
- Those of us who are involved in SP3 would suggest that these meeting not be connected to each other. It's too many days of conference activities. We hit a point of fatigue and diminishing returns.
- PDI and NASAA and SP3 = too much! Need reflection time.
- Low turnout Saturday morning, maybe too much.
- Friday was a bit jam-packed but good! Too many choices on seminars, wanted to go to all of them.
- Feeling that there are too many session that double as vendor pitches (from West AF, Arts Data).
- I wish we would somehow work in more free time, however, the sessions are excellent.
- As a newbie, I didn't really know what to expect-maybe a little more front loading about NASAA (I felt prepared for PDI).
- Every year I ask you guys why you have such loud music at your opening reception? It's a year since we've all seen each other, and it is extremely frustrating that we cannot carry on a conversation because of the loud music.
- Careful with bands-maybe next time Jazz.
- There were some room changes during the pre-conference sessions that had us running around a bit-everything beyond that was stellar.
- The sequence on Friday was different, going from Jane Chu's presentation to lunch then to a keynote was a lot of "sitting." Not sure how to remedy this situation, however. The opening party, while fun, was hard to hear and have discussions.
- Breaking up lunch then reconvening was not as successful give people being people- not returning for artists Kai performance.
- The registration was frustrating, the platform is not conducive to finding the fundamental information that one needs. As someone who was registered for the PDI, a Pre-Conference, and the Full Conference I found myself very confused as to what was when/where, the lines of communication seemed to get crossed and there was no home based (online) for timely relevant information (only the pre-registration information). If there was more, elsewhere, if the program was made available in advance, or schedules, that was lost on me.
- Somehow I had no idea the theme of this conference was "Diversity." Did I miss it in the online registration materials? I was even more surprised to learn that many folks had no idea that we need to work harder on making sure we look at our work with a diversity and inclusion lens - this was truly a revelation for many people in the Council member peer group meeting. In the Arts! Unbelievable! Maybe I'm unique in that my day job for 15 years has been in independent philanthropy, and 8 years before that in nonprofit management, but wow. No wonder the big arts institutions keep getting bigger and the grass-roots guys have such a hard go. I plan on forming a subcommittee to make sure we make diversity and inclusion a priority for our state council. So thank you for opening my eyes to a problem I assumed did not exist.
- I think people attending the general assembly, particularly at the executive level, need the opportunity to take dive deep into some of these conversations and training around IDEA. The general assembly felt somewhat scattered compared to the intensive exploration of content during the AE pre-conference. I say this because intensives for all would help states do this work as a more united from and from a place of shared knowledge.

- I was surprised at the lack of diversity with regards to the race/ethnicity of participants, presentations and performances given that diversity was an overarching theme for the event. Overall I was one of very, very few Latinos/as/x present. Additionally NONE of the presentations/performances included Latinos/as/x artists (that I saw). This was a major disappointment to me as a participant and diminished my experience and learning. I left wondering what the overall numbers are with regards to staff of state arts agencies across the national landscape. Are people of color a rarity in state arts agencies?
- Staying on schedule and more advance notice of program schedule.
- Would like to have had opportunity to network specifically with Chairs, i.e. Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation dinner was an outstanding opportunity to connect and have meaningful conversations with in our region.

Sessions

- All were thoughtful and well-prepared!
- I was blown away by all sessions being extremely valuable.
- Hearing about innovative, successful programs, strategies.
- Appreciated sessions with multiple presenters and ideas. I feel like I got more out of them. Peer sessions were good, it would have been nice to have more time.
- I LOVED the addition of offsite sessions on Thursday afternoon.
- I like that you allow time between sessions!
- Recognition of the intrinsic healing power of the arts. Healing power of the arts with special constituencies offers tremendous potential not only to recipients but for advocacy. I would like to see legislators more aware of these initiatives.
- Rich learning opportunities and great interactive sessions.
- Best thing: seminars
- I really appreciated the opportunity to see a diversity of models in the "Flashes," "Using Data," "Rural Economies" and "Arts & Military Partnerships" sessions. These sessions are a wealth of opportunities to see how different states are tackling ideas we are interested in, in our state.
- The breakout sessions were very interesting. It was very important for me to attend this conference to be inspired as a new staff in a state arts agency.
- The demographics session was a bit misleading in description and I think it would have been a better use of time to offer insights into how an understanding of the demographics of a constituency can be applied, along with other information, to inform outreach/programming/grant seeking/etc. A couple examples would be very helpful to tamp down the instinct of some who are threatened by demographic information collection, or at best, find it useless.
- Data arts seminar description was a little misleading.
- The session on data and ways to apply the formation gathered.
- "Using data" session-was good for showing data, wanted more on how it was used to make the case, what was the audience, how they responded, what they got right/wrong, etc.
- Best thing: Military Workshop.
- Military-very informative. Loved the idea of commitment to diversity!
- Pathways to Arts & Military Partnerships - likely the most useful and informative session I attended. Very useful, realistic information, especially about challenges and pitfalls.
- Flashes of Inspiration is always a favorite.
- Flashes of Inspiration- get much better sound, put this in a room with better acoustics. Speaker was somewhat offensive, inaudible (bad sound)
- Flashes of Inspiration - combination of acoustics, speaker styles, and intermittent microphone made most of the session difficult to hear and understand.
- The acoustics in the room for the "Flashes" workshop were very bad and I missed most of what was presented because I couldn't hear or understand (audibly) what was presented.

- Room for Flashes of Inspiration was a bummer--sound system not effective, popcorn popping was distracting (although a nice afternoon snack option). Placing that session opposite the offsite tours made for a smaller audience.
- Flashes of Inspiration could have been much better if audio was working properly. Also would prefer the presenter have more time to talk than have the second half speaker.
- Flashes of Inspiration session second half did not relate to the earlier presentations
- Bridging Difference and Diversity Seminar: wish we had more time to dive deeper.
- Best thing: the Advocacy and Diversity workshops.
- Diversity session needed more time than allotted.
- Diff/Diversity- good intro to thinking about diversity, but I was really hoping for more of a toolbox of ideas about how to build bridges- some "how to's" about how to connect/build bridges.
- Cultivating resiliency: gosh, what a thoughtful way to end my time here!
- Cultivating Resiliency session was most useful- particularly as the end of a long and productive but exhausting week.
- [Cultivating Resiliency was a] great session for pure personal insights! Read something like this at each conference-April was a great facilitator.
- The Resiliency session was amazing. Please bring her back!
- Best thing: resiliency The Cultivating Resiliency session was fabulous. It allowed for building skills in practicing self-compassion from which all could benefit. I really liked the ESSA session and the time spent with AEP's Jane Best. It was nice to get a greater understanding of where AEP is in the ESSA work as well as learning what others are doing around the country with ESSA. The Peer sessions were great, and I believe even more time could be spent in this realm. The Friday Arts Education session in the morning might have been improved if the table facilitators would have shared out what they had determined as common themes among the three different table discussions. The large group discussion at the end didn't include quite the dialogue or depth I was hoping for. Maybe everyone was tired by then though! It was a long week with so much good information. Thanks for a great conference. The tools are very helpful, and the topic is definitely timely.
- The Saturday Cultivating Resiliency workshop was incredible. It not only provided useful tools and a new mindset to utilize in our professional and personal lives but provided reflection on how we may be effecting our own environment and coworkers. I found it extremely helpful to be able to connect with my arts agency colleagues in a caring way, outside of stats and data and issues. I would have found it helpful to actually begin my time in Grand Rapids this way and have the connections I developed in this session present throughout the assembly.
- I LOVED both the Design Thinking and Cultivating Resiliency sessions! Both were great motivators for changing how we think and act. THANK YOU! All presenters did a wonderful job of including the participants, asking questions, and allowing time for dialog.
- The hands on nature of the Design Thinking was right on. While we desperately need the session on using Data to make your Case, the presentations were terrible. The Thursday workshop presenters were not as high caliber as the rest of the conference, and needed more prep on giving good presentations.
- I thought the design thinking workshop was BRILLIANT! I wish we'd had a full day to fully absorb and understand as a group the potential value of adopting design strategies in our organizations.
- Enjoyed the design thinking session the most.
- Design thinking-less hands on more example of type problems and how solved 3 examples in overview.
- Loved the design thinking and improv for engaging activities.
- **Loved** the improv and mosaic.
- Loved Mosaic and presence of direct participants in program.
- The Mosaic session, following their performance, was really outstanding.

- Community Trauma was an especially valuable session. It reminded me about the "continuum" of trauma and increase my sense of urgency that state arts agencies cannot operate independent of communities and cannot wait until crisis to build relationships beyond the arts community.
- Sat Am advocacy workshop-really great. Compelling, clean example of how data tells a story.
- Pulse of advocacy efforts-very useful
- Pre conference (ADA) was great! Really enjoyed the plenary sessions.
- ESSA was more about advocacy than content. The PDI for Arts Ed was the highlight of the entire conference.
- PDI-such a great experience. Really helped me as a new Arts Ed Director.
- Conference sessions, peer sessions, AEPDI (Susan O. does a great job), Plenary sessions. I would have attended more briefing sessions.
- Rural session was description of specific program, not rural specific, compared to military service was good professional development.
- Best thing: Rural economies.
- I enjoyed this year's conference, especially the location. I did feel the 2-hour sessions were too lengthy and would have preferred more options for the afternoon breakouts. That being said, it was a delightful event and kudos to all who facilitated. The length of the breakouts was too long, in my opinion. I also felt several of the presenters were there more to sell their services than to educate the membership. I found this unfortunate.
- I did not necessarily find the concurrent sessions all that pertinent to my work as a grants officer-they were very basic
- Sessions should have accessible (ADA) presentations and powerpoints
- I don't feel I gained many take-always--in other words, something I can really take back and use at my agency. All ideas but few action steps.
- Overall, sessions were not all that informative as other conferences. I struggled to find relevance in my day to day and gather tangible items to take back.
- Sessions could be more in-depth and deeper thinking.
- A few more session opportunities.

Peer Groups

- I really enjoyed our PIO peer sessions- especially the unstructured time when we just had an open conversation with each other. Would love to have a pre-conference!
- Folk arts peer sessions-thank you for supporting our gatherings
- Really enjoyed the folk and traditional arts peer group pre-conference, though I wish we had stuck closer to the schedule and allotted times. I also would have appreciated more time in the Q&A/presentation by NEA Folk & Trad. Arts director Cliff Murphy, and less w/ the folk arts and aging session.
- The Folk and Traditional Arts pre-conference was incredibly valuable.
- Race workshop in the folk arts peer group. Discussion of succession planning.
- As a new deputy director, I am dismayed that the peer session was designated as a "commercial" and not focused on any issues or challenges in the DD position. It wasn't a value-added.
- I found the [DD] peer session interesting but it lacked opportunities to network with my peers, explore current challenges we face and address the issues that people stated that they were interested in discussing.
- The [DD] peer session didn't really offer any new ideas of inspiration. There was not time to network or have a discussion, it was very much a presentation and not particularly targeted to deputy directors.
- Peer session for grants directors-but we need more time or a pre-conference. 2 hours every two years is not enough.

- The Grants Officers peer session might have included more substantive information on data analysis from NASAA itself and not just SAA colleagues.
- Fiscal/Grants officers peer groups need more time together-a preconference for that group was discussed and I would strongly support such!
- Really need more time for my peer session. This is critical for the grants people.
- More time for things that take more time--peer session for grant managers needed a lot more time than allotted.
- I feel peer sessions are too short. Perhaps a four hour session on Thursday morning for finance - while educators and folk members meet. More peer time together. More fiscal information.
- Best thing: Peer Session - Grants/Fiscal
- The most useful thing about this meeting was our peer session. Longer session for the peer session for grant/fiscal officers. I felt the peer session for grant/fiscal officers' session can be longer. This is the only time we meet and the two hours didn't seem like enough.
- I was uncomfortable with having Bob Lynch at our peer session
- ED time peer session (wish Bob Lynch wasn't there though- needs to be sacred space/safe for sharing).
- Not enough ED peer time.
- A more process-based [ED] peer session- no disrespect intended to our kind peers who led ours.
- I think we tried to tackle too many big subjects in the ED peer session this year.
- Peer sessions earlier in conference-Day 1?
- Would love longer, more involved peer sessions
- Really appreciated FTA peer sessions and support! SO important for us to gather and share.
- As someone new, meeting others in my peer group was extremely valuable.
- Sound- have speaker in peer session use headsets.
- The peer session was nice
- Best thing: Peer sessions
- Best thing: Peer session
- Optional additional day for peer group time
- I would have attended more peer sessions.
- Peer and pre-conference sessions were the best thing.
- Peer sessions longer; cohort segregated for deeper dives into topics of relevancy.
- Best thing: Peer sessions!
- More sharing with peers.
- Perhaps split peer sessions into two gatherings on separate days.
- Peer groups valuable but need more time. Best thing: peer session.
- Time to connect with peers in different states. Peer group questions or facilitated discussion.
- Really would like more time with peers in peer sessions.
- Peer sessions bring me here. Everything else is pure gravy. This year there was plenty more that was spot on, inspiring and relevant.
- More time is needed for the peer sessions.
- The peer session was great as it allowed for lots of free-wheeling discussion, but hard as someone new to capture much. Minutes?
- Best thing: Peer session-working with others in the same capacity.
- I thought the peer session was appreciably different than in the past few years.
- More peer group time
- Best thing: peer session. More time with our peer groups.
- I would have benefited from more time in the peer sessions. We had just started to delve deeper into community development issues in the last 30 minutes of the session, not nearly long enough to gain beneficial take-always!

- Bringing themes from peer sessions into other sessions. Those isolated learning times can create silos in the work place. Teams need opportunities to share learning across job descriptions--especially when the topics are as critical as equity and access.
- Additional time in peer groups as well as a peer group for artist services managers. Artists are the reason that we do our jobs so I'm not sure why we do not have a peer group.
- Best thing: Peer interactions.
- Thank you for supporting the peer sessions. They are so important.
- I would have enjoyed more time to spend with my peers, perhaps with more of an agenda for what we would cover/work on. We all could have kept chatting for hours solving issues!
- Best thing: being with peers in the field
- Best thing: peer group
- Best thing: Connecting with other communications professionals during the peer session.
- Best thing: Peer sessions and love the networking. Wants: Longer peer sessions.
- Meeting with peers and seeing so many other arts colleagues.
- Loved peer group time.
- Eric and Paul provided excellent peer session support.

Keynote

- Best thing: Jane Chu/Aaron Dworkin Plenary
- Best thing: Chu, Dworkin, Pianist
- Best thing: hearing Aaron Dworkin's presentation
- Dworkin and Kight awesome.
- Best thing: Aaron Dworkin
- Best thing: Jane Chu/Aaron Dworkin
- Aaron P Dworkin (APD=Amazing, Powerful, Delightful), he was 20 out of 10!!
- Aaron Dworkin's remarks were excellent.
- Best thing: Aaron = Speaker
- Best thing: Aaron Dworkin's Keynote.
- Best thing: Jane Chu and Aaron Dworkin-esp. our last chance to see Jane before her administration comes to a close.
- Aaron Dworkin and Jane Chu put an incredible amount of important content into such a short space of time.
- Aaron Dworkin was VERY inspirational!
- Outstanding key note
- Best thing: The inspiration of the plenary sessions/keynotes/performances. The keynotes were all fantastic
- Dworkin's views were great, Chu's information always good.
- Jane Chu and Aaron Dworkin's talking points as well as Kai Kight's performance/storytelling...all inspirational.
- However Kight seemed to phone it in.

Grand Rapids/ArtPrize

- Best thing: Being in GR
- I just wished the timing of the Assembly was during Art Prize so we could see more site-specific installations. A bus tour of these would have been great.
- Good site.
- Best thing: opportunity to learn more about the GR arts and culture scene.
- Great location!

- Wish that local sites such as the GRAM and the Meijer Gardens would have evening hours. Evening free hours would have been a great time to get there!!
- Great location-great hospitality.
- Grand Rapids was the best thing about the meeting.
- Great location in Grand Rapids- very walkable and enjoyable city.
- Best thing: Grand Rapids/ArtPrize
- Best thing: Art prize!
- Artprize and connecting with others.
- From my perspective, nothing. Conference and Grand Rapids were great!
- Loved it all. Should have stayed Sat-Sunday to see more of Grand Rapids as I didn't want to miss anything at the assembly.
- Location was wonderful. Grand Rapids a great city.
- Being exposed to and having such inspiring works in Art all around us. I think the buzz around town regarding ArtPrize added to the incredible sense of Art as Inspiration to Life, and that Art is the way to making our States where we live, those communities we serve better places (through and because of the arts).
- I would have appreciated more personal time to explore the many museums and galleries in Grand Rapids.
- Grand Rapids was a great host!
- I'd have to say the best thing about the meeting was its timing with Artprize and it's location in Grand Rapids. The city is steeped in culture and everywhere you looked there was a lesson to be learned related to arts and culture. Therefore, I felt I was learning even when I was not in the conference setting, which was excellent!
- Grand Rapids was OK. Very walkable and easy to navigate. Good venues for sessions. Plenty of restaurants nearby. Even though Art Prize was used as a big selling point, I didn't really have time to explore and the only thing I'm sure that I saw related to Art Prize was the guy living in the art globe on the sidewalk (I was thinking maybe he got evicted and this was his creative way to find housing until he could make other arrangements)

Accommodations and Food

- Hotel was rambling
- [Want an] easier space to navigate.
- Hotel was noisy. Lay-out confusing
- The only thing that seems lacking at times was the directional signage throughout the venue.
- Room temps
- Have something besides carb/pastries for snack on Saturday-fruit, cheeses, whole grains, most conference rooms were much too cold
- The hotel rooms were odd-extremely old fashioned-otherwise I enjoyed it
- Temperature.
- Air temp in hotel-uncomfortably COLD.
- Toooo cold in some rooms.
- Food was adequate, but more choices for vegetarians/gluten free would be welcome.
- Food complicated meeting locations/logistics
- The hotel lobby and conference rooms were great. The rooms and service were mediocre.
- Better coffee.
- Better food.
- Difficult to find way around rooms.
- Less perfume in lobby. Vegetables! At dinner, less cheese/carbs/starch.
- Food-could have labeled so folks with allergies could know what is in it. GF, DF, nut free, soy free, etc.

- More rooms at conference hotel. Because of rates, I had to stay at Hampton Inn which was not convenient for walking, esp. at night. Also would like to request peer group or forum for individual artist programs/services
- On a procedural level, the hotel staff were extremely nice and accommodating, and the food was good.
- The hotel lobby was great, but the hotel accommodations left room for improvement. The conference rooms were great. Flying into Grand Rapids was comparatively expensive - so to save money and stay in budget, I chose arrival and departing flights with layovers, which cost more time and energy. The opening night reception was good (food, music), but the venue was strange (was there a theme to that museum, or was it just a collection of everything?).
- Expensive flights to Grand Rapids, although the hotel rate was amazing!
- Liked: Ability to walk everywhere

Misc "Best things"

- Networking
- Opportunities for networking and dialogue with colleagues
- The networking party!
- Networking and "staying current" with SAA community, connection with arts ed PDI
- Sharing solutions and resources and networking. Art and food and network time
- Getting to meet people I correspond with face to face.
- Meeting peers.
- Connecting generally
- Strong collegiality and excellent networking opportunities.
- Networking
- The opportunity to meet and chat with national colleagues.
- Putting faces with names and hearing different perspectives!
- Meeting and connecting with colleagues, arts immersion with artsprize happening concurrently
- As usual, the comradery and fellowship.
- Networking.
- The artists this year and performances were exceptional.
- Everything/everyone was wonderful-really cannot specify "best thing".
- Connecting with colleagues.
- Reconnecting and meeting new people.
- The greatest value came from networking opportunities and information exchanges with other states.
- Relationship building.
- Working with if meeting colleagues; collaborating on current issues; sharing information.
- Meeting colleagues from other agencies. Hearing new ideas.
- The recognition that we are all in this together and the depth and intellectual substance of the content.
- Networking-establishing contacts.
- Being able to connect with peers
- Seeing everyone.
- Connecting and learning with and from colleagues.
- Meeting folks from other states.
- Networking
- The ability to start to get to know my colleagues.
- Inspiring talks from the performers
- The opportunity to network, and create shared learning experience among colleagues who understand the work and the opportunities, as well as challenges.
- Meeting colleagues and being able to connect with people in a meaningful way!

- Networking with peers. Seeing other States Arts Agencies in action - artprize etc... Realizing how much state Arts agencies are doing with less.
- Performers. Loved seeing so many different disciplines represented and celebrating Michigan talent.
- Networking with colleagues.
- Connecting with colleagues and learning what is happening in other state arts programming; generation of ideas and collaboration.
- Connecting with peers and recognizing the impact of our work through the wonderful performances.
- Meeting colleagues and hearing ideas from around the country
- Networking
- Connecting with peers, learning still more best practices.
- The professional development content and networking opportunities. Most of the sessions were great.
- The talent that gathers here
- Art/performances and personal stories that were shared.
- Focus on diversity and inclusion.
- Learning the national landscape/composition of arts agencies.
- Pre-election discussions
- Sessions were great-staff was helpful-time spent in PDI was by far the most useful.
- The Arts Education pre-conference was the best part of the week along with the ESSA conversation.
- The Arts Ed PDI was spectacular because of the focus/content. The topic of diversity, equity, inclusion, access was refreshing because of the sheer amount of focus that was devoted to it (not just one session for those who happen to care about diversity).
- Informal conversations with NASAA staff and NEA representatives...meeting and hearing Pam Breaux!!! Spending time with Jonathan Katz!
- Pam B in charge!
- Getting my board chair involved
- Great balance of peer & plenary, networking and learning. Held in a relaxed but interesting setting.

Praise

- Everything you did was great.
- This was a great first experience, thank you!
- Sessions were great-staff was helpful-time spent in PDI was by far the most useful.
- An amazing job! Thank you, NASAA! I can think of nothing to improve.
- This conference (and all NASAA conferences I've attended) make learning fun! Such a nice mix of learning sessions, live performances and nice accommodations.
- I so appreciated attention of NASAA staff and HIGH QUALITY of programs.
- I usually dread the performances at events like this, but your choices of performances was terrific. High quality, and good length.
- I very glad to have been able to come to this event.
- This was my first NASAA conference and I thought it was a great experience for a new staff member.
- The balance of free time with sessions-time between sessions for transition=great!
- As a long term SAA staff, there is not a lot of truly 'new' for me but I continue to be engaged and find new insights and inspiration.
- My experiences at the Assembly far exceeded my expectations. This being my first assembly, I really can't say-but it would be challenging to top this! :-) Thank you.
- Very well organized.
- I really enjoyed my first NASAA conference and look forward to using the energy and insights I gained back home in my daily work.
- The whole conference was fantastic!
- I will be preparing a report for my council so they may learn from my being here.

- Positive inspiring environment- found it uplifting (esp. performances) and good reminder why I do what I do. :-)
- The pacing was great.
- Good connections/timing to local arts events.
- The flow was excellent, easy to maneuver.
- Nothing, you are amazing! Staff and board.
- Always a great gathering of leaders. Managed incredibly well by the NASA team
- The thoughtful planning and execution of a well-designed professional learning experience.
- Nothing comes to mind. It was one of the best conferences I've ever attended. And I've attended many!
- I am VERY new to my position and must say the people were the best part of this meeting! Everyone was so welcoming and nice.
- I did enjoy the opening session and reception a lot. I loved all of the entertainers.
- As a first time attendee, I appreciated the ample time to network and meet others in similar fields. Everything ran very smoothly and professionally.
- The timing - having NASAA held after the regional arts conferences is much better.
- No complaints!
- Amazing performances.
- I'm happy.
- I wouldn't have changed anything.
- Can't think of anything since it has been so long since I was last able to attend a NASAA conference. I enjoyed this one very much.
- Still, all in all it was a great conference, so kudos to the NASAA staff for their hard work.

Nonmembers

- Getting a national overview of issues and trends, networking with colleagues.
- It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with SAAs within our region
- It was fantastic hearing directly from the youth of Mosaic Youth Theater about the impact of the program on their lives. Hearing from youth should be designed into every assembly in some way.
- Gathering together, face-to-face, is an invaluable opportunity. Hearing from leaders in the field and learning from each other is critical.
- Well done! Huzzah to the mighty TEAM NASAA. Your responsiveness to you constituents is legendary and much appreciated.
- I loved having the chance to see local museums as part of the official events, plus being here for Artprize. Eric and Paul provided excellent peer session support!
- Include more topics, performances, speakers, keynotes, etc. that include people with disabilities. Include the speaker bios at registration, not at the "extras" table.
- Having time to spend with many of my colleagues, to reconnect and conduct business. The timing - having NASAA held after the regional arts conferences is much better.