



## **NASAA 2020 Learning Series Evaluation Summary August to October 2020**

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) transitioned the 2020 Assembly online, hosting seven sessions over the course of three months. Along with the platform, Assembly content changed to focus on the most pressing and relevant issues for state arts agencies (SAAs) during the crises. Overall, the online experience allowed for higher than usual participation rates spread out over a variety of SAA position types. 355 participants attended at least one of the seven sessions and 166 registered for all seven. 217 were members. 45 executive directors, 29 deputy directors and 42 council chairs/council members attended.

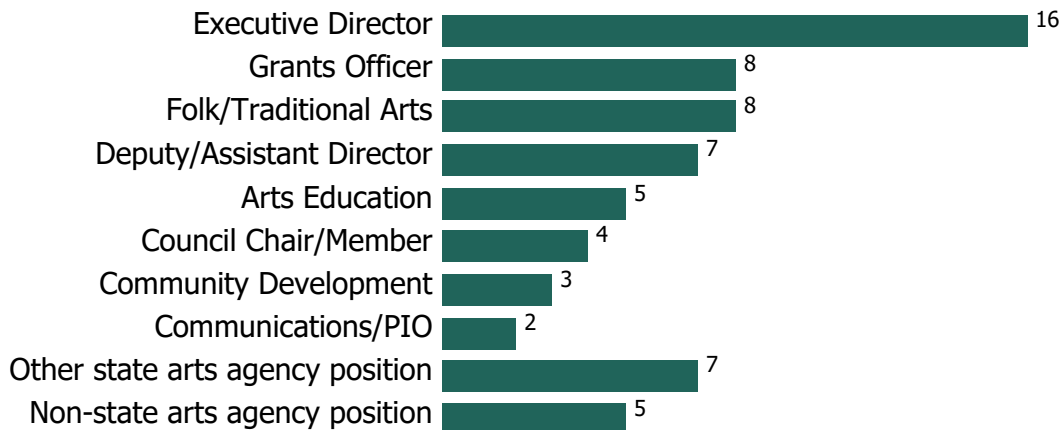
To better understand participant experiences, NASAA sent an online survey to all attendees between October 26 and November 6, 2020. A total of 65 questionnaires were completed, with 60 of the respondents identifying themselves as members. This yielded an overall response rate of 18% and a member response rate of 27%. Without an in-person push for attendees to fill out paper surveys and with sessions being spread out over several months, the response rate was much lower than in prior years. Like with all voluntary surveys, the results will not be highly generalizable to the entire universe of participants. This is even more the case this year, given the low response rate.

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

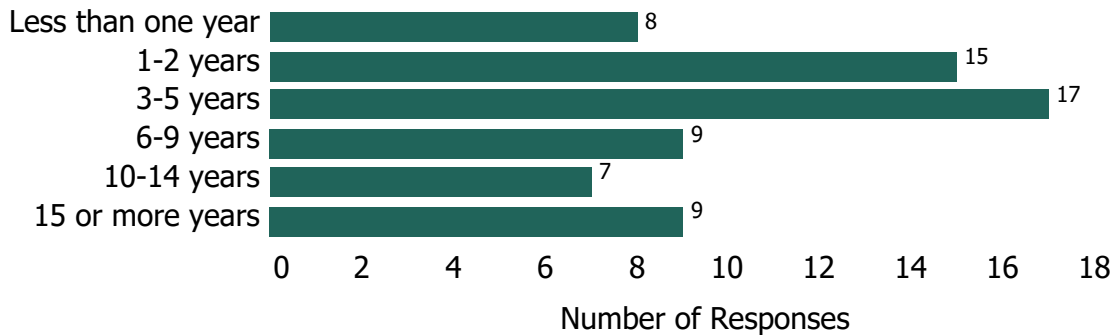
## About the Respondents

NASAA received responses from every state arts agency staff peer group. The largest peer group was executive directors, comprising a response rate of 36% of those who attended. The majority of respondents have been in their roles between 1-5 years. 58% of respondents had attended a NASAA meeting in the past. 38% of respondents had never experienced a NASAA meeting before. The majority of respondents (82%) attended more than one Learning Series session and 50% attended at least five out of seven sessions.

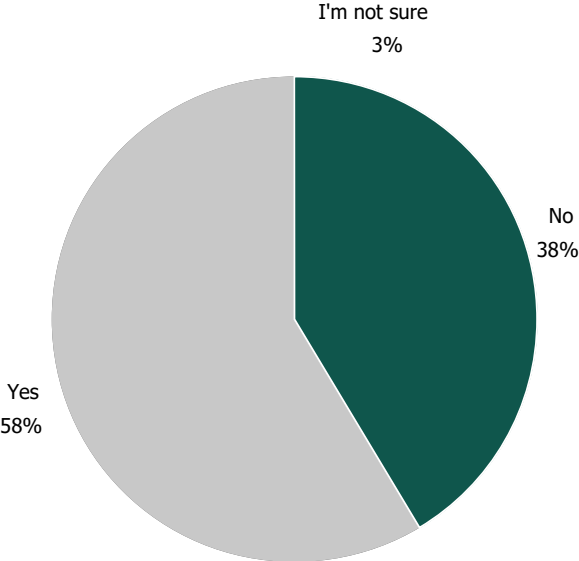
### Primary Position



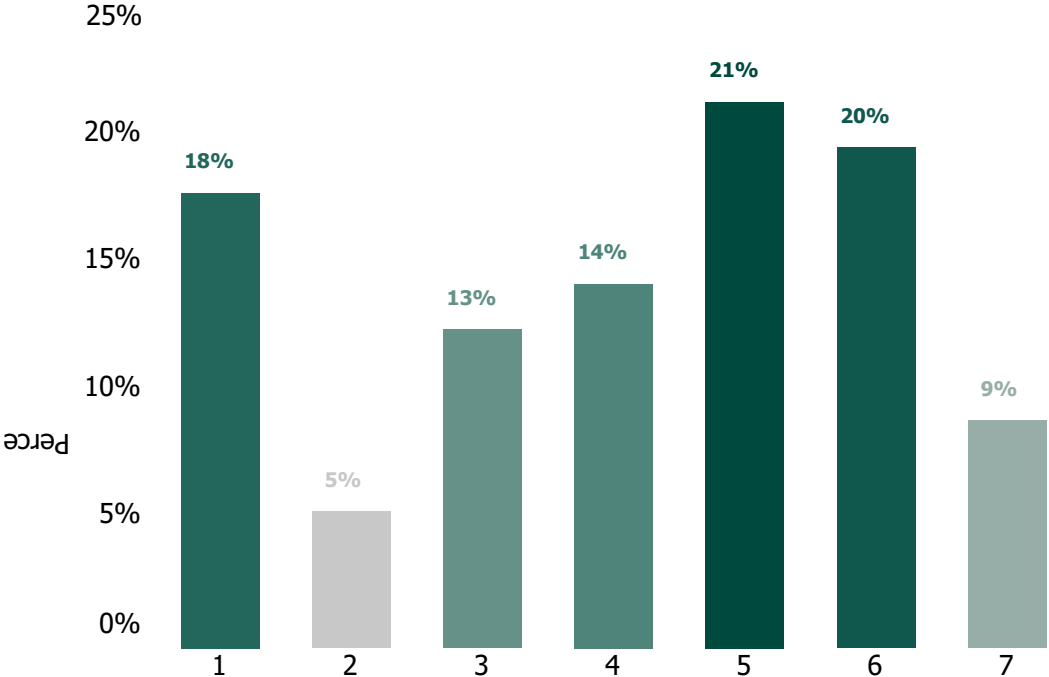
### Position Tenure



**Have you attended a NASAA Assembly or Leadership Institute in the past?**

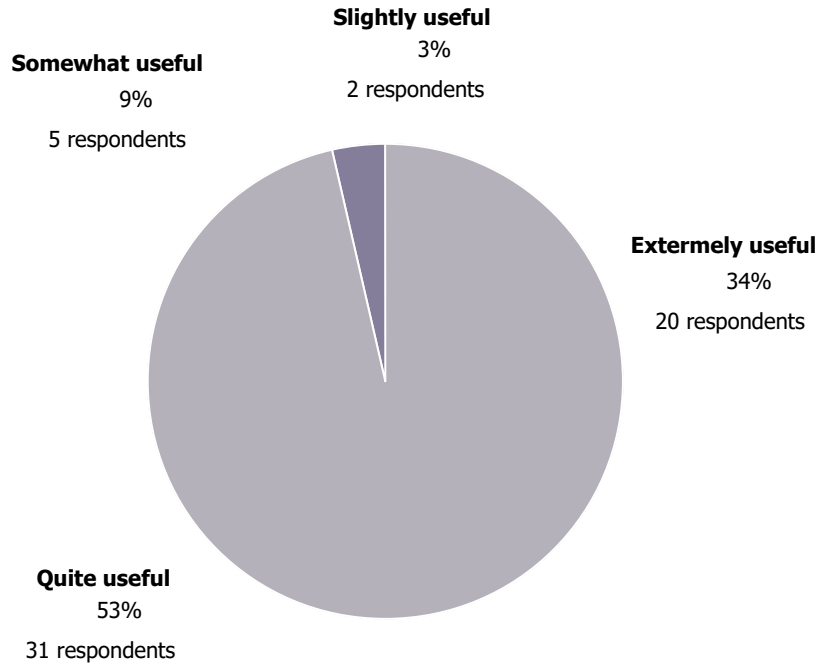


**How many of the NASAA Learning Series sessions did you attend?**

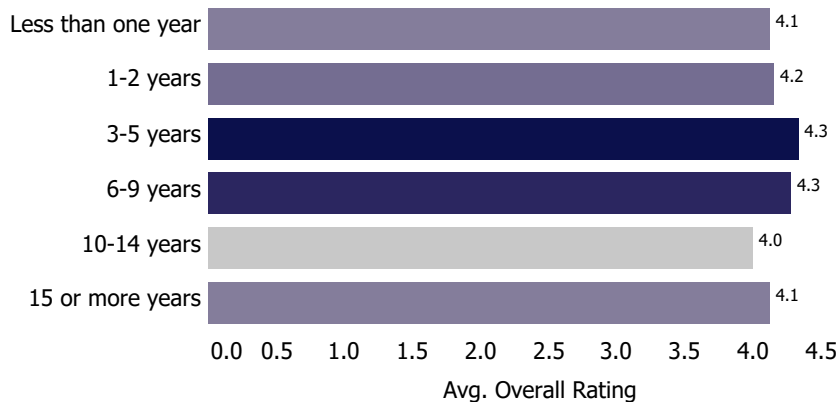


## Overall Conference Ratings

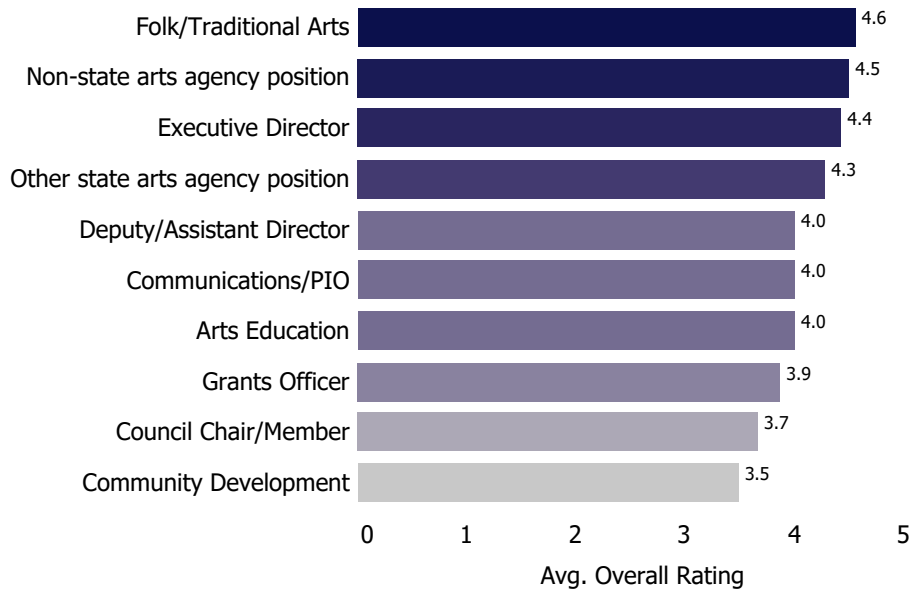
The vast majority of respondents (87%) said that overall the Learning Series was quite or extremely useful. Average ratings by position varied from 3.5 to 4.6 out of 5. This variance is partially due to the low number of respondents in many of the position categories. There was very little difference in average ratings by position tenure.



## Average Ratings by Tenure



## Average Ratings by Position



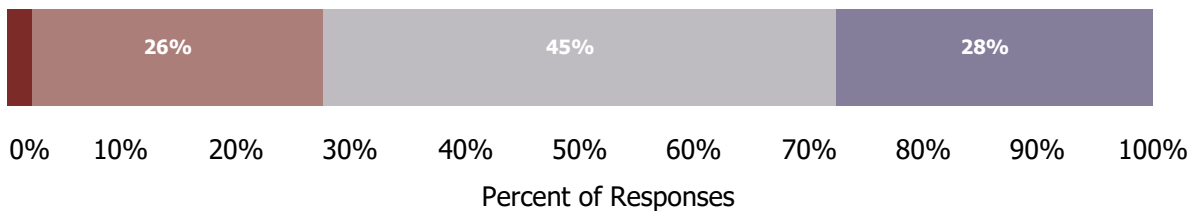
Respondents were asked to rate their experience with NASAA’s online series compared with other online experiences they have had during the pandemic. 64% of respondents said that their experience with NASAA’s series was better or much better than others and another 34% said it was about the same. When asked to rate their experience relative to NASAA in-person meetings, 45% said it was about the same and 28% it was better. Just under 30% said it was far worse or not as good as their in-person experiences.

### How did your online learning experience with NASAA's Shifting Policy and Practice series compare to other online learning experiences that you've had during the past six months?



Far worse    Not as good    About the same    Better    Much better

### How do you rate your online learning experiences with NASAA this year relative to your past learning experiences with NASAA's in-person conferences?

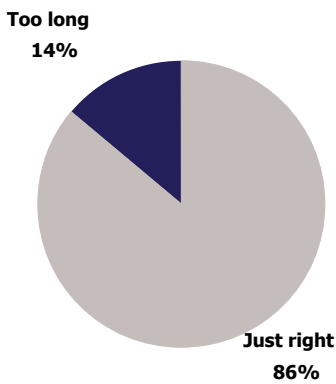


This year's evaluation also inquired about the spacing between sessions over three months and the length of the individual sessions, which were scheduled for one and a half hours. 76% of respondents said that there was just enough time between sessions over the course of the fall. A strong majority of 86% percent said the length of time for the sessions was just right, with 14% saying that the sessions were too long. No respondent said that the sessions were too short.

**Please rate how the amount of time between sessions matched your preferences.**



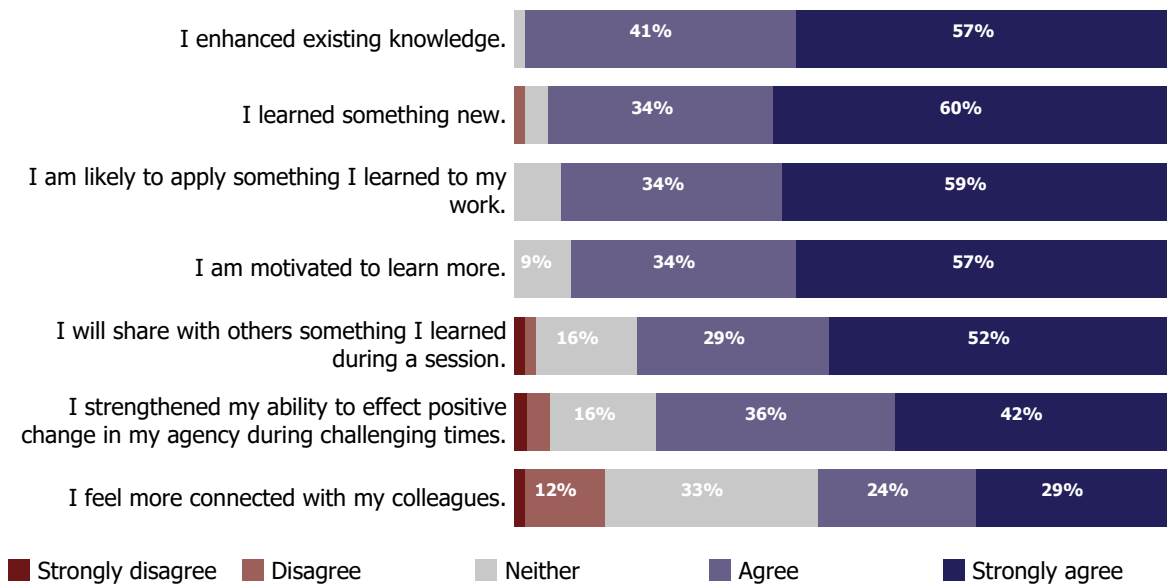
**Please rate how this length of time matched your preferences for the sessions you attended.**



## Learning Statements

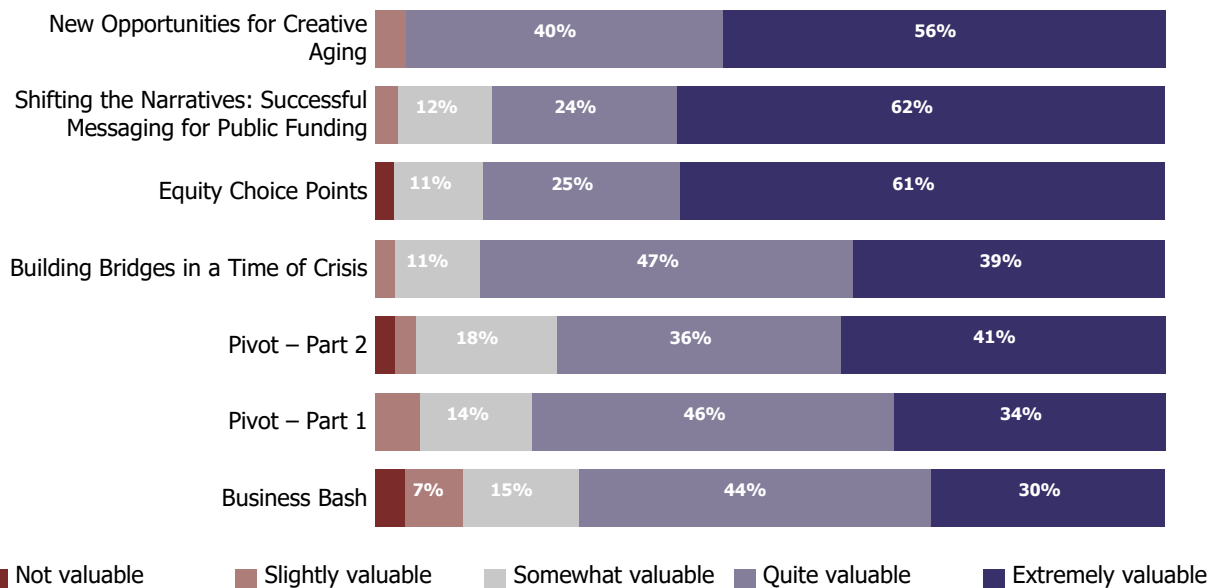
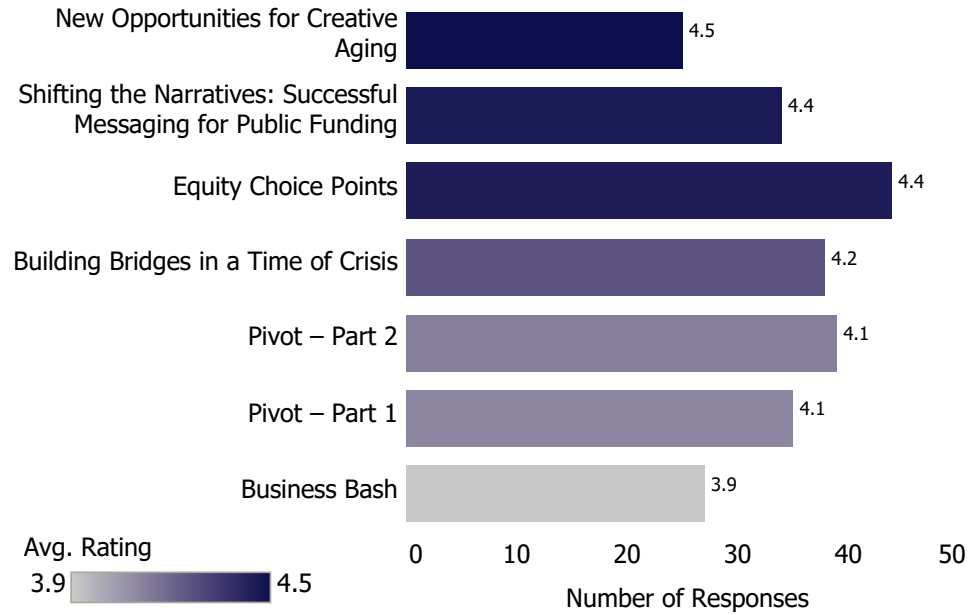
The respondents assessed how the Learning Series changed their behavior or knowledge. Overall the series received high ratings across most of the indicators. 98% of respondents said that the series enhanced existing knowledge and another 94% said that they learned something new. As would be expected from an online format, feeling more connected to colleagues was rated the lowest out of all the statements. 46% of respondents did not expressly agree they felt more connected (disagreed, strongly disagreed, or neither agree nor disagreed).

**Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to this meeting.**



## Session Ratings

The New Opportunities for Creative Aging session was the highest rated session on average (4.5 out of 5), closely followed by Shifting the Narratives and and Equity Choice Points. The Pivot series and Business Bash were ranked lower (4.1 and 3.9, respectively), however, these sessions still had high average ratings overall, with 74% of respondents rating the Business Bash quite or extremely valuable. When broken out into more granularity, over 50% respondents found the three top-rated sessions extremely valuable.





## All Comments

### Please share any comments you have about specific sessions.

- As much as I was enthused about the timing characteristics of a 90-minute weekly session, I found it more challenging to be able to consistently attend, due to competing priorities "in the moment." It seems counter, but wondered if it would have been easier for me to set aside 2 full(er) days to be more fully engaged. Not that any of us truly know that answer. Grateful for the ability to access online (which I hope is still available)! No matter what, I always feel incredibly supported by NASAA. You all are doing everything you can to support a culture of community, and the most relevant resources. THANK YOU for the often, heavy lift! It makes our jobs JUST a little bit manageable. :-)
- Availability of the recordings allowed us to share them with staff who were unable to attend the session and the Equity Choice Points transcript was especially helpful. (I would have scored this a 6, if I could have).
- During this time these sessions have been greatly appreciated!!!
- Good use of chats for interaction. The Oct 14 session was VERY important for our advocacy work. We will make use of this.
- I actually went to all 7-once I read titles
- I thought the instructor engaged participants in a meaningful way. The session was both informative and fun.
- In the Building Bridges session, the balance felt unequal . . . for the first part, two presenters (community arts orgs) were able to go in depth about their work, which was great! But then the SAA folks has a less time for more people, and were barely able to share any information, which was frustrating. It might have been more effective to split this into two sessions, so that we could hear more meaningfully from people--or have fewer presenters and share the time more equitably. I loved the way new resources were linked to the Equity Choice Points and Creative Aging sessions--that is very exciting!
- Land Acknowledgment section felt played off, especially since the first session was treated as a moment of silence rather than a share out in the group. The moment of silence felt closer to mourning the loss of these people rather than a recognition of their still present existence and the stewardship they still have over these lands. Additionally, during that first session, it felt like there was a disconnect between the panelist who was a white man and the rest of the panel of the direction of the conversation. When the moderator unfortunately lost connection for a moment, this panelist took it upon himself to take on that position and ask questions of his fellow panelists that seemed to ask them to speak to an issue in service of white comfortability and outside the scope of the intention of the panel. Additionally, during the portion regarding Pivoting in Part 2, the focus on leadership of these organizations, especially as they were all white and of an older generation, felt disingenuous to the true nature of the field and the work in which is being done in those State Arts Agencies. I would have much rather heard from the grant managers who were creating these pivots and were hands on rather than the leadership who oversees it. In general, the power-sharing with the discussions needs addressing and the lack of consideration of BIPOC folks who are part of the SAA network, as there is a lot of professional development that needs to occur around cultural competency.

- Many thanks for the webinars! I appreciate being able to watch them if I wasn't able to attend!
- Overall comment: The content and speakers were engaging. I enjoyed the insights shared through the chats. Facilitators were generous with sharing resources and connecting the dots throughout the sessions.
- Really enjoyed these sessions! I am new to the field so appreciate the professional development opportunity.
- Very informative and will inform future grant design for my organization.
- While I only attended one of these sessions, my staff have been attending many others.
- Thank you
- Thank you!
- Keep em going!

### **What was the most valuable take-away from this series?**

- Equity Choice points
- A lot of state agencies are facing the same set of challenges and new opportunities
- Being new to NASAA I found the whole series valuable to see the extent of the NASAA community and the work being done by everyone.
- being with colleagues
- Equity Choice Points
- Equity choice points and messaging. Online sessions work and promote greater access.
- Gained more perspective (grants that are needed, what we offer, our accessibility, tools we can use to grow and use to offer more diverse programming and grants to our constituents, to make a wider impact)
- Great selection of sessions, although my schedule only allowed me to attend one.
- I appreciated hearing from other state arts agency staff about their approach to the pandemic and using what I learned to enhance our emergency planning and strategic plan. I also appreciated the opportunity to share our resiliency as a collective group.
- I appreciated the mixture of topics yet they were grounded and unified. A lot of information that motivated me to continue this work when feeling a bit disconnected and tapped out.
- I think expanding the conversation on equity and the discussions about aging.
- I was encouraged by the participation from around the country
- I was excited to hear candid and innovative insights from colleagues around the country who are shifting their practices towards providing more equitable services--that was really powerful and generated ideas/conversations among my colleagues, a good number of whom attended the Equity Choice Points session.
- Information on the Equity Choice Points, and messaging.
- Learning from my colleagues
- Learning to see things from a different perspective by engaging in activity differently.
- links to add'l information
- Lots of creative projects and smart people out there.
- Messaging for conservative legislators.
- Most valuable was the fact that we pivoted so effectively to Zoom sharing and learning. I was able to attend more sessions than if we had been in person!

- Professional development by zoom can be effective.
- That there are two conversations happening in our field that need to meet each other and not rely on a past structure
- The confirmation that most of the messaging we employ around education/innovation/community is on track -- with the new addition of using "strength" as a core framework.
- The Equitable Points presentation and subsequent report. I am still going through the resources.
- The opportunity to make change within the arts community.
- The resources and work that others provided/are doing
- The thoughtfulness and care that NASAA put into the sessions and the ability to provide interconnectivity to our community to our current times.
- The tools and topics were all timely as were the discussions and this will all help frame the challenges in a broader context.
- the top talking points to use
- We are all going through this together and can learn from each other.
- We are all learning & struggling through these unprecedented times
- We participate because we need NASAA and one another. We are all working to survive and thrive in challenging times - NASAA's effort to bring us together in a meaningful way is appreciated.
- What is happening now is not that different from state to state across the nation.
- With the exception of a lack of social interaction, the learning series can work.
- Your data on shifting the narrative has been very valuable!

**Do you have any comments or suggestions about the online format and/or video conferencing technology used?**

- Everything was fine. Communication and preparedness for each session was fabulous. Openings for each session were thoughtful. Making sure our intended hosts knew we were thinking about them reminds us of our humanity.
- For some reason, even though my colleagues and I registered for the Learning Sessions, our ED was the only person on our staff to receive the links each time, so we had to download them into our shared calendar. This worked out okay, but it would have been more convenient if we could have each received the zoom link as registered participants.
- I am sure that there will be improvements in Zoom over time and that we will find them to be useful. But at this point in time I believe we could not have been more effective. Kudos to all who made the sessions so interesting and helpful.
- I enjoyed the breakout rooms, but sometimes I forgot that they were happening. AE PDI did a nice job of telling us when to have our cameras on and off, which was helpful.
- I liked the format and platform
- I really liked how the instructor had an overhead iPad to display what she was doing (like an old-fashioned overhead projector)
- I was pleasantly surprised by the ease of moving from larger groups to breakouts. Also liked the use of the chat feature to keep the conversation going and help reflect on the material presented.
- It's been working fine for me. Always appreciate not feeling pressured to have the camera on. I engaged when I could but also had family distractions at times.

- Nice to have Breakout Rooms, but would benefit from a designated facilitator to ensure it is a safe space
- Outstanding use of technology during a time of isolation. Thank you for adapting so quickly. I unfortunately do not have any suggestions about better online formatting or video conferencing at this time.
- Sorry--I answered this more so in the previous question. Technology worked well. Was blown away by the myriad breakout sessions of "2". I hope we can develop this technology muscle.
- This was the best video conferencing I have experienced; given the size of the audiences, there was ample engagement.
- Works great!
- It was good.
- It worked well.
- It worked.
- I liked it
- Great!
- You did a great job.
- No complaints - it was a good format.
- No, I thought it was well done.
- No.
- No. first time zooming.
- None at this time
- none, it was good
- None. The system was easy to use.
- None-I'm accustomed to working remotely

### **What about online sessions could be improved in the future?**

- Aside from the feedback I have already shared, I think you all did an incredible job of providing our field with some excellent sessions and keeping things going in such challenging times. I am tremendously grateful to all that must have gone into providing such a wonderful meeting! Thank you so much! The show must go on!
- Cross-agency collaborations around social justice, environment, corrections, and other state agencies.
- Focus on Artist Fellowships, Accessibility, equitable Grants Process
- Guest speakers are extremely helpful followed by room for discussion.
- Honestly it all comes down to the panelists and/or the speakers/presenters. I found the most engaging programs were those with panelists. They were well moderated and lively. I would suggest that lots of graphs/charts don't go over as well and are not as unique. There are plenty of those to go around.
- How to make arts explode in your small town.
- I loved when Kelly or someone would bring an element of fun to the 'work' session. Knowing that if we were in person we would dance, laugh, hug, and find joy in one another's company - these small things go a long way! Thank you.
- I was happy with the content and level of organization and delivery. There was good use of technology. I have no additional suggestions at this time.

- Is there a way to have break-out rooms with moderator for a short period of time to go further in depth and engage more with other participants? I do not think this was LACKING during this session, but perhaps something to think about for future sessions.
- It was a long grouping close together & we are being saturated with virtual programming
- It's difficult for me to attend in the middle of a normal work week
- More BIPOC folks from the SAAs themselves, or at least power-sharing occurring from the leadership of these fellow agencies with their staff, as the insight from the direct experience is no match to anything else.
- More breakout sessions
- nothing I can think of at this time
- One thing another conference did was have all cameras turned off and mics muted to allow us to focus on the speaker and any presentation materials.
- Really enjoyed the interactive components. Specifically the New Opportunities for Creative Aging session. Getting to participate in the example of an online class offered was enjoyable and educational.
- The impact of migration due to climate change on our cultures
- The positive energy really helps. Seeing creative ideas at the grassroots level by artists is always exciting.
- These got lost in the shuffle for me with the CDN summit, webinars from Nation Consortium of Creative Placemaking, planning for the ArtPlace summit, etc, as the fall went on I didn't prioritize attending as I had when the series first launched.
- We are living with a lot of distractions during this challenging time, and it is harder to focus and feel as engaged as we would feel in person. I was very sad to miss the assembly this year, but have no criticism of the series. It was well produced - it's just not the same.
- n/A
- No comment