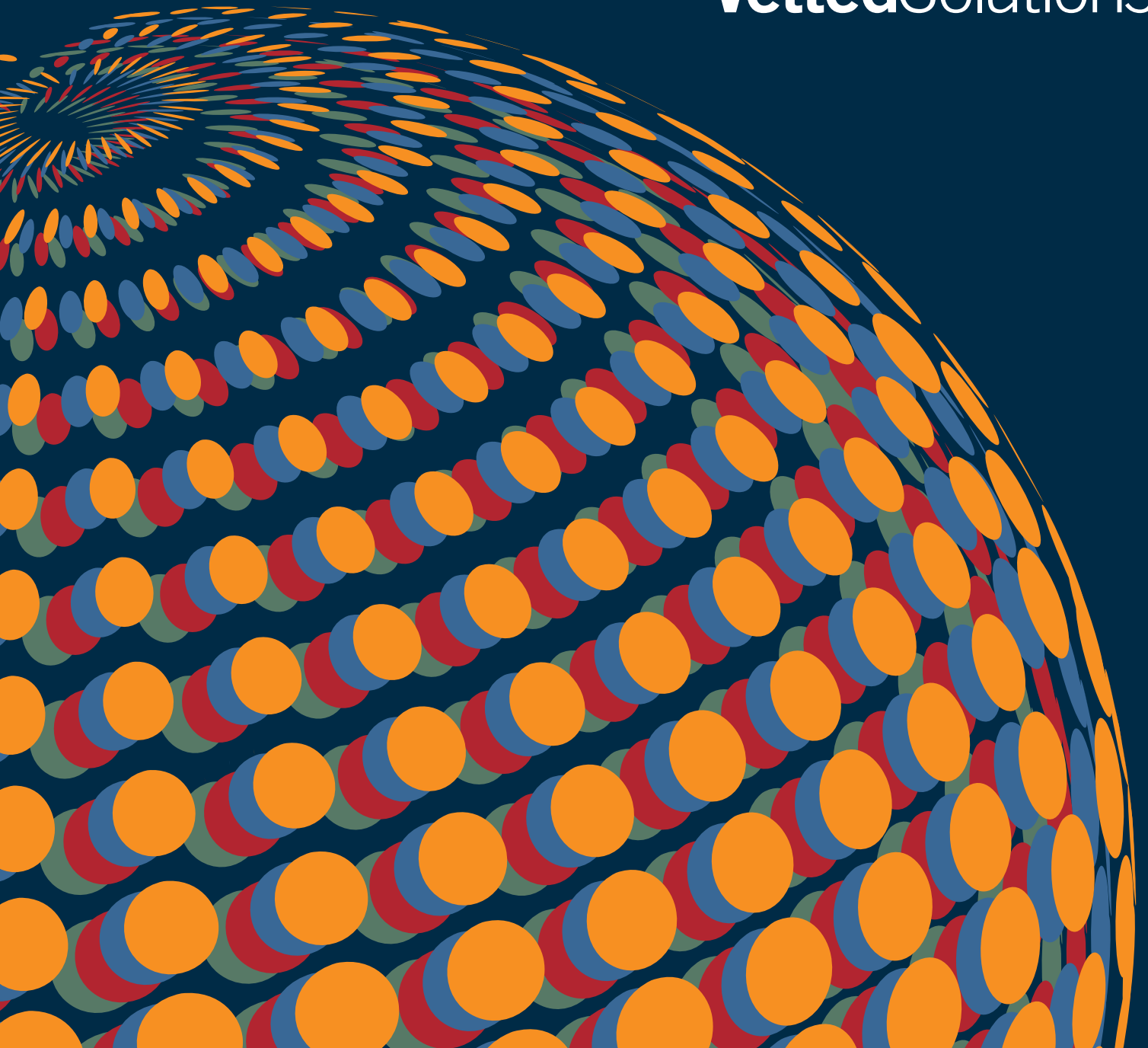


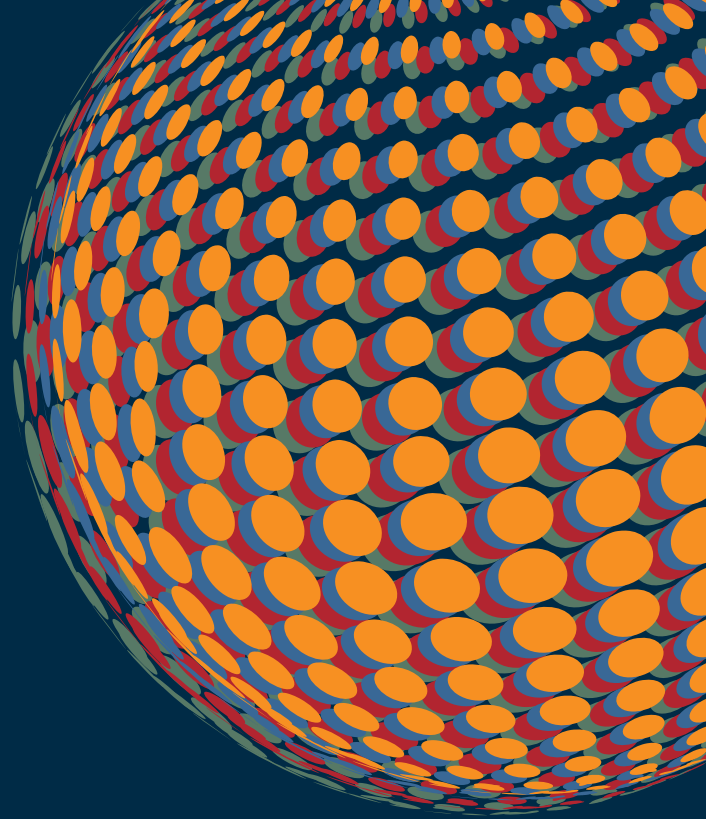
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE

FLORIDA SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

VettedSolutions





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Note from Frank Rudd

We are excited to share this report on diversity and inclusion in Florida associations and want to thank all of our members that participated in the survey. Sharing your information is crucial to help establish where Florida's associations are currently in regards to diversity and inclusion policies and initiatives at a staff and leadership level.

I'd like to thank James Zaniello, FASAE, President of Vetted Solutions, for spearheading this research project and report and Dr. David Rehr of Antonin Scalia Law School George Mason University for his expertise in gathering and mining the data.

Diversity is an important issue for the FSAE leadership. Our chair Vicki Long, CAE recently created a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force, led by Donna Son, IOM. The six-member Task Force is instrumental in guiding both FSAE and Florida's associations to be an inclusive and welcoming workplace for all Floridians.

We look forward to furthering the discussion on diversity, equity, inclusion among our members and seeing these efforts increase the success and member-responsiveness of all associations.

Thank you,
Frank Rudd
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“We are a staff of one, so our diversity plan focuses more on Board leadership.”

Preface

The Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) is one of the first associations to take an in-depth statistical look at diversity and inclusion among their state associations. They should be commended for both their interest and the positive role FSAE plays in the lives of Florida's citizens. I would like to thank Frank Rudd, President & CEO of FSAE and Adrian Amos Honderick, Director of Marketing & Communications, FSAE, for their insights in the creation of the survey document and help facilitating member engagement. Additional credit should also go to James Zaniello, President of Vetted Solutions and Kristan McMahon, a Principal with Vetted Solutions, who have spearheaded conversations about D&I in the association community, helped finalize the survey document, and drafted this final report.

Florida has an important stake in continuing its commitment to diversity and inclusion. This research was based on an earlier nationwide project, *Diversity And Inclusion: Core Values Among Associations* (2017), undertaken by Vetted Solutions and me that set the standards for diversity and inclusion conversations among the over 66,000 associations nationwide. Florida's results build on that earlier work and once again demonstrate that those in the association sector see the positive benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce in an ever changing and more diverse nation.

Evidence independent of our work here continues to demonstrate that diversity and inclusion help businesses perform better, create greater outcomes and improve enterprise decision-making when differing points of view and experiences are heard. I also believe that our country is made better by offering everyone the reality of opportunity and success America holds for hard-working, smart, practical, and perseverant individuals no matter their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, or native culture.

Florida is a testament of the great mix of citizens who are defined both as Floridians and Americans. While we are not where we theoretically could be with respect to diversity and inclusion, we continue to move in the right direction with the correct motivations. This research demonstrates that Florida associations see the value, importance, and economic benefit of diversity and inclusion as important to their success.

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Summary

The Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion and decided to partner with Vetted Solutions and Dr. David Rehr to develop a Florida association-specific study. This report, “*Diversity and Inclusion: Opportunities to Advance*” was born out of the need to establish a baseline of diversity and inclusion practices in Florida associations and a desire to provide guidance to all FSAE members.

The survey was distributed to 302 association executives in the first quarter of 2018. More than 125 executives completed the survey, which provides statistically sufficient numbers to understand diversity and inclusion efforts and indicate trends in Florida associations.

The research indicates that Florida associations recognize that diversity and inclusion contribute to their overall health — both as an association and for its members — and they are working on developing and implementing the necessary strategies to realize those successes.

- More than 90 percent of respondents believe diversity and inclusion efforts definitely or probably contribute to a more successful association.
- More than 60 percent of respondents say their core values express commitments to diversity and inclusion.
- The majority of organizations have a strong implicit commitment to diversity, but there is room for improvement on explicit commitments.

How do Florida Associations Define D&I?¹

Florida association executives in the survey have a broad definition of diversity and inclusion. Ethnicity and gender sit at the top of the respondents’ understanding of diversity and inclusion, followed closely by sexual orientation and age. More than three-quarters of respondents also included socioeconomic background, religious viewpoints, and geographic background in their views. Although not a statistically significant number, several respondents specifically called out disability as well.

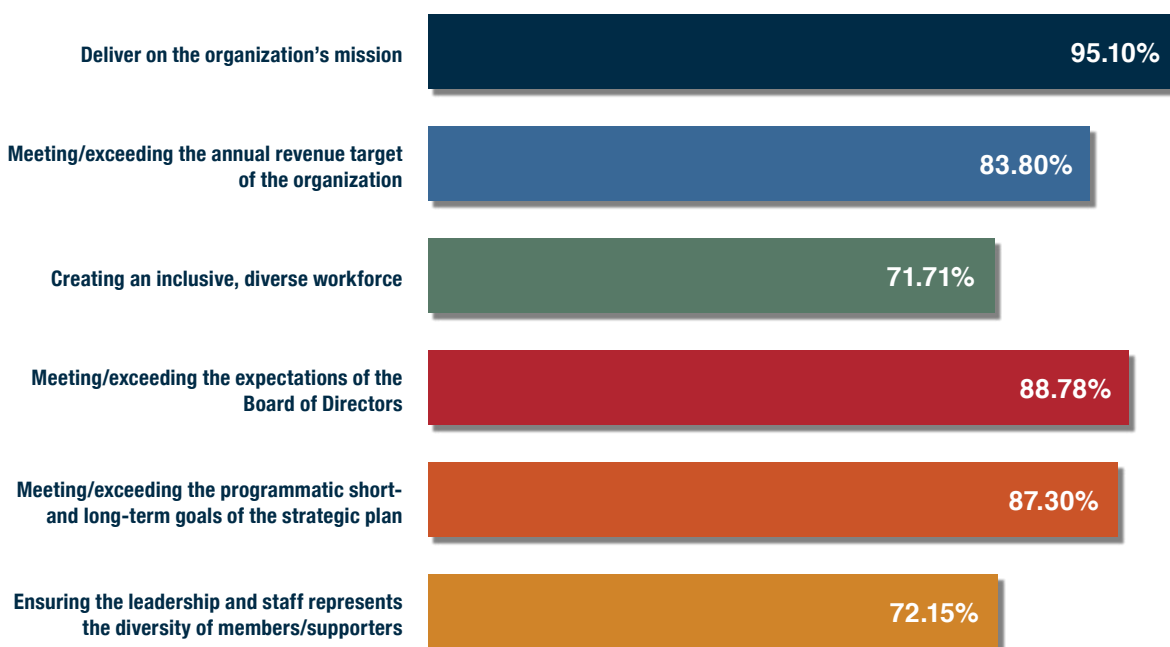
More than 90 percent of respondents believe diversity and inclusion efforts make for a more successful association. For this question, diversity is defined more broadly than we just discussed above to also include differing viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Inclusion is the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity. D&I efforts seem to lead to profound and enduring progress when they are undertaken continuously and deliberately.

¹ For ease of reading, we will occasionally shorten “diversity and inclusion” to “D&I”.

Guidance for Small Associations

- Incorporate diversity and inclusion principles into the organization's mission statement, strategic plans, and core values.
- Partner with other organizations whose diversity and inclusion efforts you admire or would help bolster yours.
- Be mindful about creating programs and volunteer opportunities that appeal to a variety of members.
- Broaden the outlook on diversity beyond the staff.
- Develop a board that reflects (or drives toward) the membership's diversity.
- Develop volunteer leaders that reflect (or drive toward) the membership's diversity.
- Ensure position postings and job descriptions are gender neutral.
- Tap into FSAE's resources on diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- Create a leadership roundtable, either internally or with other organizations, as a resource for addressing diversity challenges.
- Participate in diversity training.

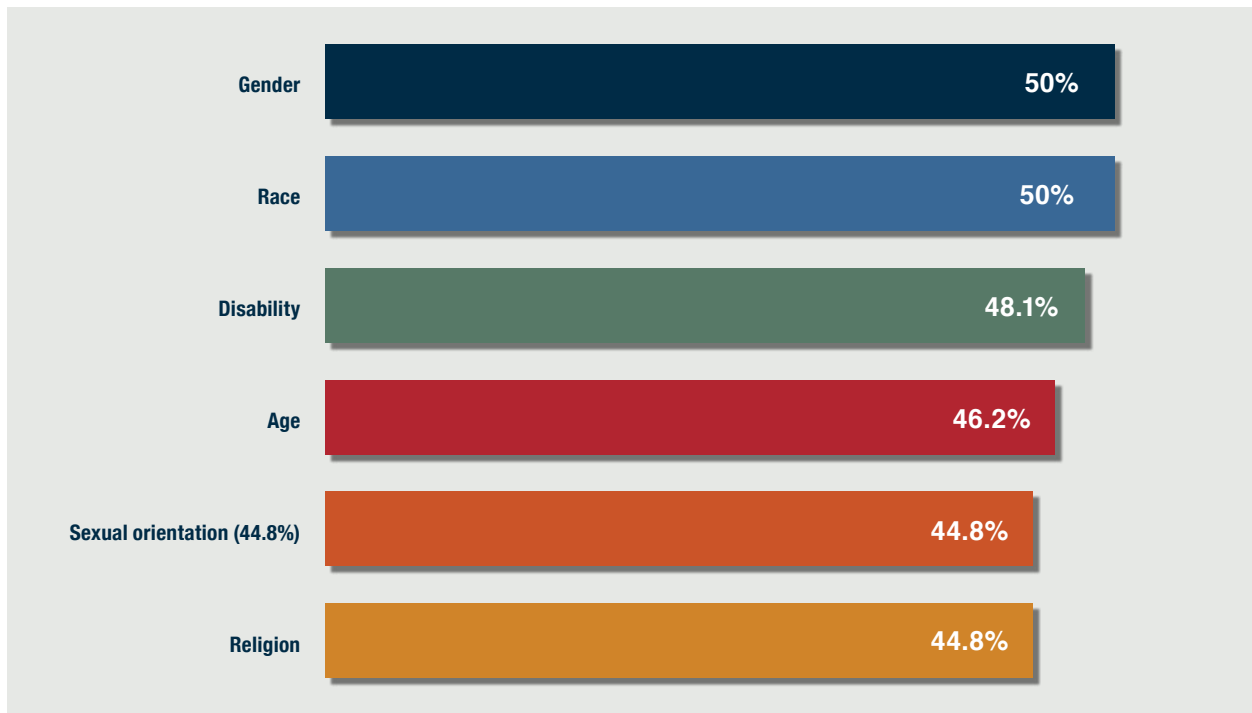
Figure 1. — Please rank the importance of each action to your organization.



It is not surprising that more than 95 percent of respondents list delivering on the organization's mission as the most important priority. Both ensuring leadership/staff represent the diversity of the members as well as creating an inclusive, diverse workforce rank significantly lower in importance, although it is encouraging that nearly three-quarters see these as having significant importance. This prioritization likely is a function of the staff size of the responding Florida associations. (See Appendix: Respondent Profiles for this information.) Small staff size presents a unique challenge, but there are ways to take diversity and inclusion into consideration, which will be discussed later in this report.

Figure 2. — **What do staff diversity policies cover?**

Approximately half of the respondents said their association has a diversity policy that covers:



On the flip side, this data shows that approximately half of respondents said either their organizations do not have or they do not know if their organizations have a separate staff diversity policy that covers the above. This indicates that the associations have two paths for growth in this area. First, more education for staff, so they understand the foci and requirements of the organization’s diversity policy. Two, the creation and implementation of a staff diversity policy. Even if the staff is small, it is important to have a policy in place to guide future leaders and ensure consistency of D&I efforts.

A small number of respondents state their association has a general antidiscrimination policy. In addition, some associations have even broader staff policies, covering national origin and HIV status, for example. It is laudable that these organizations have incorporated elements beyond what is “traditionally” included in the understanding of diversity.

“Diversity and inclusion affect not only the business’ people and operations internally, but also their customers, suppliers, and other external stakeholders.”

Focus on Opportunities, not Obstacles

When asked about the greatest challenge in creating a more diverse workforce, more than 60 percent of respondents replied either finding qualified diverse applicants or identifying diverse candidates with equal or greater skill levels and/or experience than non-diverse candidates.

Figure 3. — **What is your greatest challenge to creating a more diverse workforce?**
(Please check all that apply)



The comments to this question show that small staff size is a significant consideration for Florida associations as well. While the wording of this question focused specifically on staff, that is not the only opportunity to instill strong diversity and inclusivity practices in an organization.

There are numerous other opportunities to deepen your organization's D&I commitment. First and foremost, it is making sure the Board reflects the diversity of the association's members. If your membership could use a diversity boost, then the Board could model the range of voices you wish to include. In addition, a recent *Associations Now* article highlights a report from Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, which indicates diversity could make boards more effective. For example, boards with a large number of members under 39 years old tend to be more focused on governance and oversight, and boards with greater female involvement tend to be more successful at fundraising.²

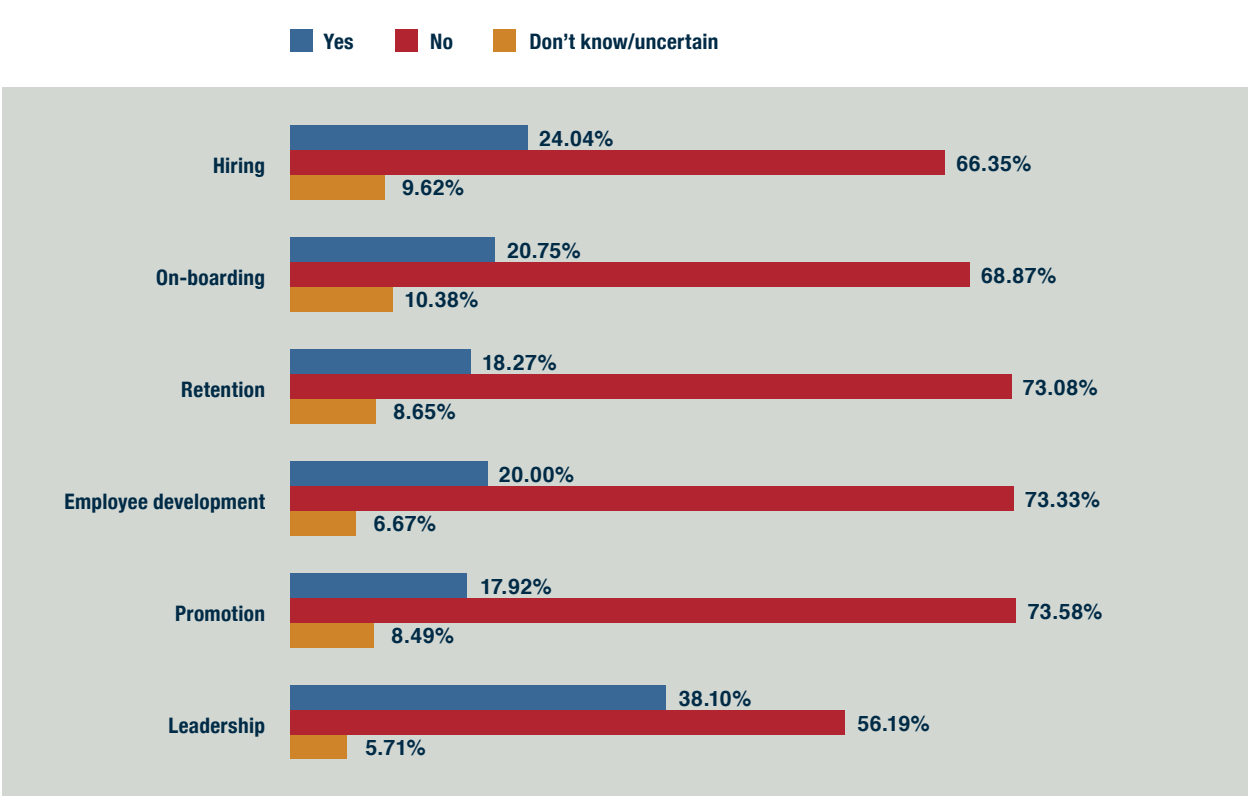
² "Report: improved Board Diversity May Have Positive Effects," by Ernie Smith. The article can be found at <https://association-snow.com/2018/02/report-improved-board-diversity-may-positive-effects/>

The Board is not the only prospective avenue to increase diversity in an organization. The association can develop and ensure its volunteer leadership and opportunities have diverse pipelines. In addition, programs and learning opportunities should be reviewed and developed to appeal to a broad audience and encourage participation not just within the membership but as a vehicle to bring in additional members. FSAE has created the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force to study FSAE’s membership demographics and act as a resource to encourage and increase diverse and inclusive membership and member engagement.

Infuse diversity and inclusion in the entirety of the association’s operations

Beyond staffing and leadership, it is important to ensure strong D&I strategies permeate the organization. These practices should be incorporated in onboarding, retention, employee development, and promotion.

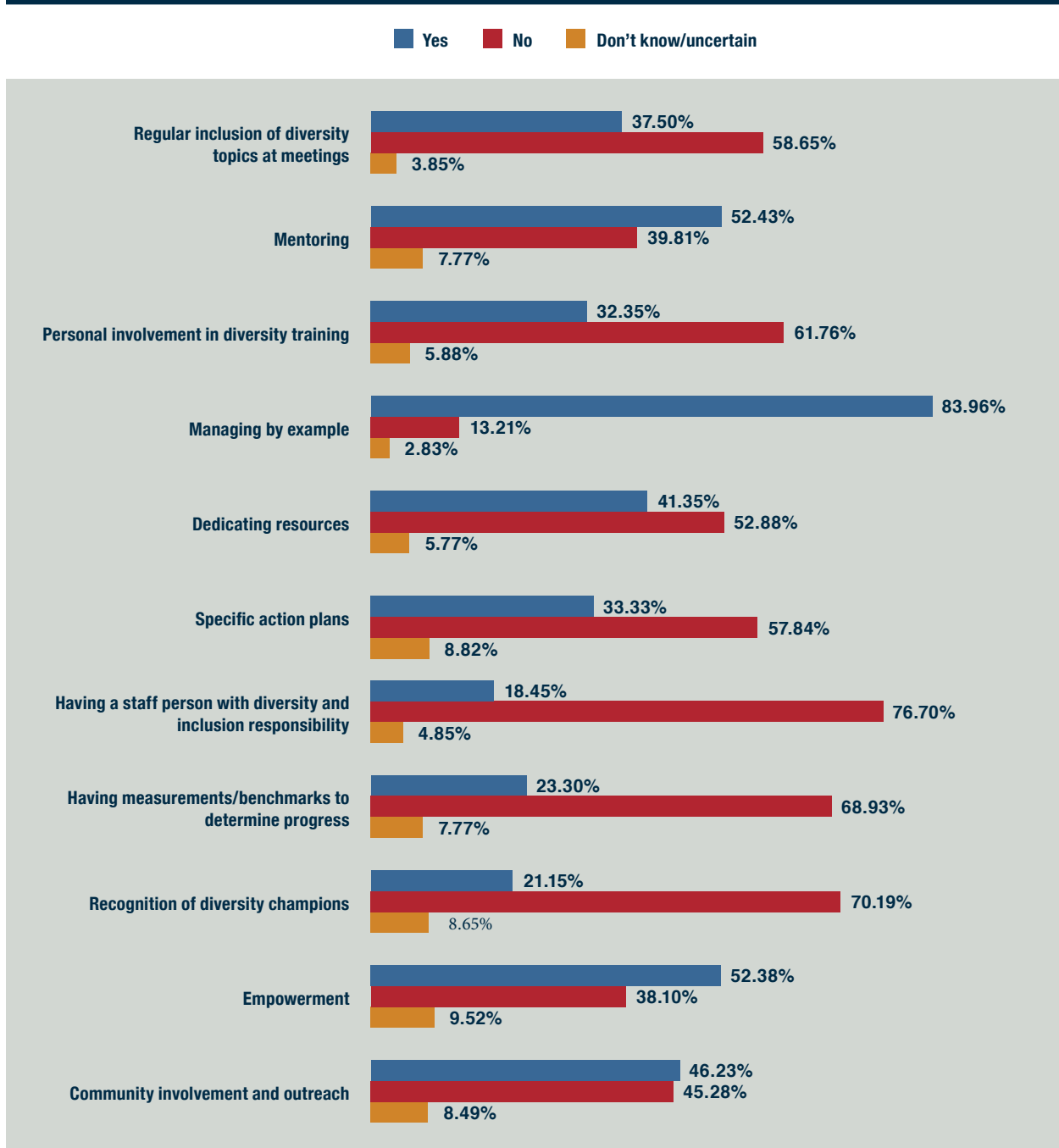
Figure 4. — Does your organization currently have a diversity strategy for...?



There are opportunities to implement D&I practices through every staff and volunteer touch point. Association executives need to be mindful that diversity and inclusion efforts do not stop at the hiring stage (or bringing in volunteers stage.) These practices should be incorporated into the organization’s fabric and the employee/volunteer complete cycle of involvement.

Encouragingly, the responding executives said there is significant implicit incorporation of diversity and inclusion principles. Eighty-four percent demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion through managing by example, and more than 50 percent demonstrate their commitment through mentoring or empowerment.

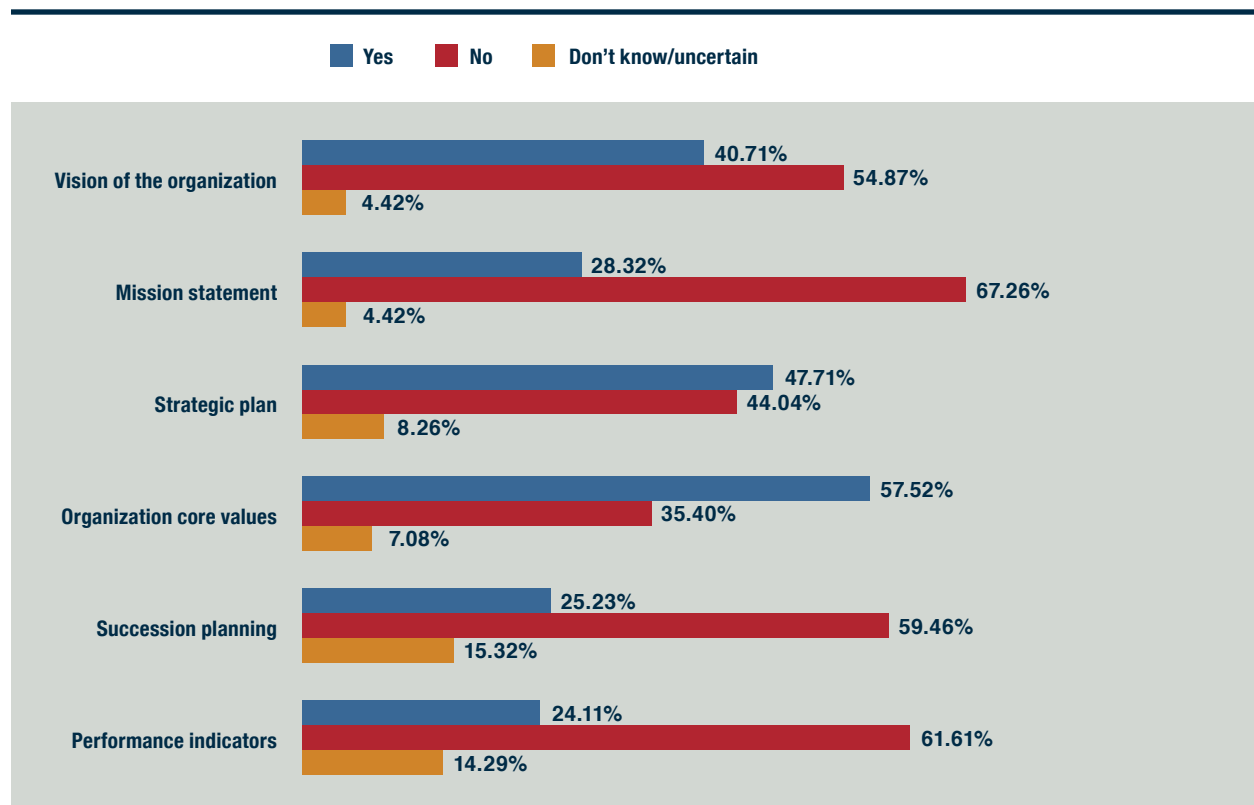
Figure 5. — **Do you and/or your leadership currently demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion by...**



However, there is room to improve on explicit manifestations of this commitment. While many organizations are not of a size to have a person or resources solely dedicated to D&I, this responsibility can be included as part of a staff person’s focus. Furthermore, the association can develop specific action plans or benchmarks — volunteer participation, partnerships with other organizations, programs — to showcase its commitment. The more overt the D&I measurements, the more likely these practices become deeply ingrained in the organization’s culture and activities.

In addition, it is important that the controlling documents and practices of the association have clear language regarding diversity and inclusion. More than half of respondents say there is an expressed commitment in their organization’s core values, and almost half incorporate them into their strategic plan.

Figure 6. — Which of the following includes an expressed commitment to diversity and inclusion for your organization?



Significantly, Florida associations have begun including commitments in their mission statements, succession plans, and performance indicators.

Actively seek diverse applicants rather than hoping that they show up in the applications process on their own.

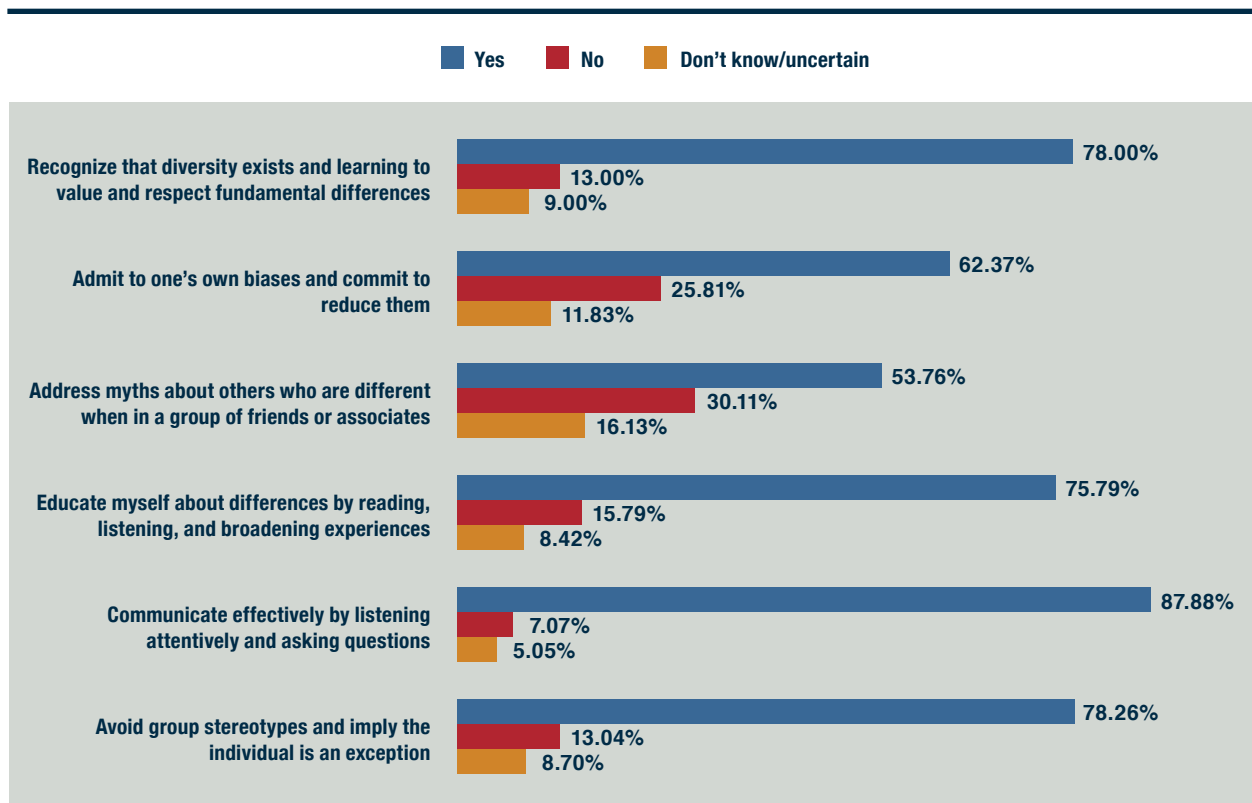
“Diversity and inclusion isn’t something you can force or that happens overnight. It takes a commitment from both staff and board leadership to change the culture of your organization.”

Certain respondents indicated an association management company (AMC) oversees the hiring practices for their organization. It is still important for the boards or leadership of these associations to understand the D&I strategies of the AMC and express their own desire for a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Increasing D&I Awareness

A significant majority of respondents actively explore ways to increase awareness about workplace diversity. More than three-quarters listen attentively and ask questions, avoid group stereotypes, value and respect fundamental differences, and educate themselves about differences.

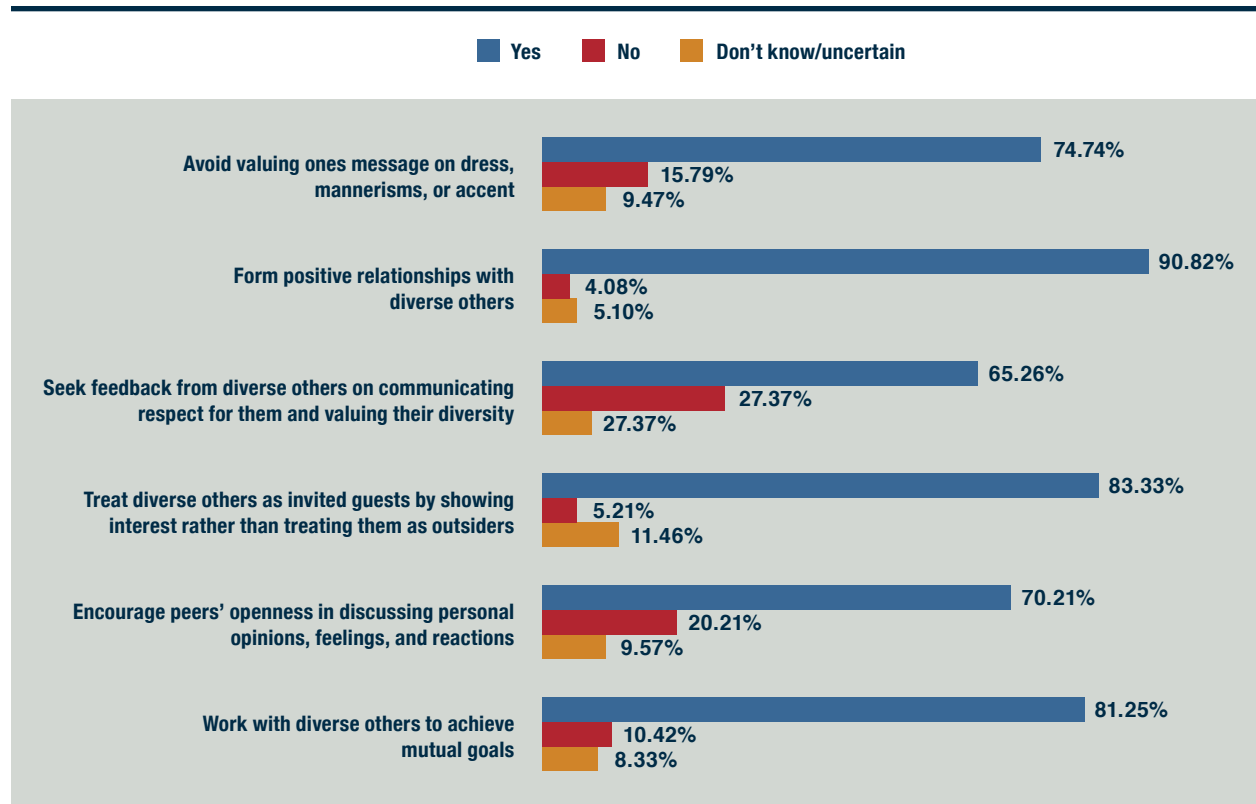
Figure 7. — **Do you currently undertake any of the following strategies to increase awareness about workplace diversity and inclusion?**



As a significant strength, almost two-thirds of the respondents admit to their own biases and have committed to reducing them. This can be challenging for explicit biases, and that becomes even more complicated when addressing the unconscious biases everyone carries. As two University of Florida psychologists have written, we cannot look inside our own minds to find our implicit biases, which stem from attitudes or stereotypes that occur largely outside of conscious awareness and control.³ Becoming aware of our implicit biases is a critical step to ensuring we moderate their effects because these biases impact everything from how job descriptions are drafted to the interview process to advancement and promotion.

In addition, a significant majority of responding executives are taking active steps to increase sensitivity to workplace D&I. This includes forming positive relationships, not treating diverse others as outsiders, and working with diverse others to achieve mutual goals.

Figure 8. — Do you currently undertake any of the following behaviors to increase sensitivity to workplace diversity and inclusion?



³ “Measuring the implicit biases we may not even be aware of,” by Kate Ratliff and Colin Smith. This article can be found at <http://news.ufl.edu/articles/2017/10/measuring-the-implicit-biases-we-may-not-even-be-aware-of.php>

Conclusion

Determine what success looks like.

A successful D&I strategy will vary from association to association. Does the board require greater diversity to better reflect the membership? Does the membership need to diversify for continuing ongoing support of the profession or association? Are volunteer leaders bringing a variety of opinions, experiences, and backgrounds to inform decisions? Do policies or strategies exist to drive and support the association's D&I efforts?

Some organizations are fortunate that D&I is currently part of their culture. However, this should be bolstered by an analysis of intentionality as the culture may change. Explicit strategies help ensure the continued commitment to diversity and inclusion. Other organizations have small staff numbers, which may require out-of-the-box thinking to support their D&I efforts — such as partnerships, programs, and volunteers.

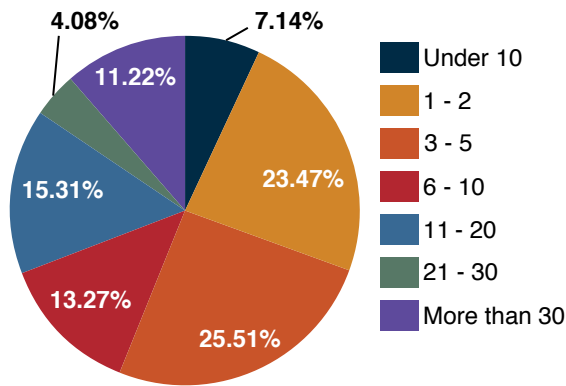
Continue to seek resources, develop strategies, and advance toward success.

This study is an important first step to benchmark diversity and inclusion efforts in Florida associations. Please reach out to FSAE's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force with your questions, which also will help it develop the resources and education FSAE members need. These are important conversations and endeavors since associations represent all demographics and every aspect of life.

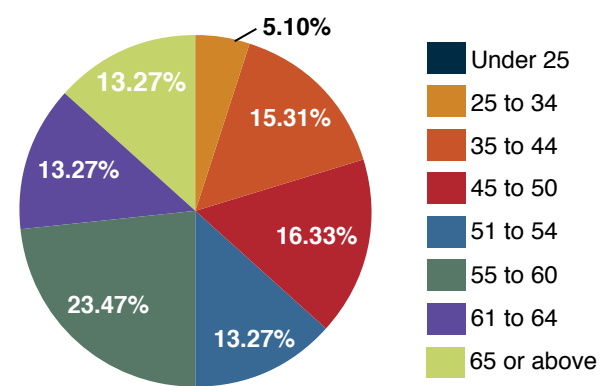
“Be open to differences and look forward to learning about others. Remember, no matter who you are, you are also a part of the diverse workforce. You are different from others around you, and what you do may be unique to them.”

Appendix: Respondent Profiles

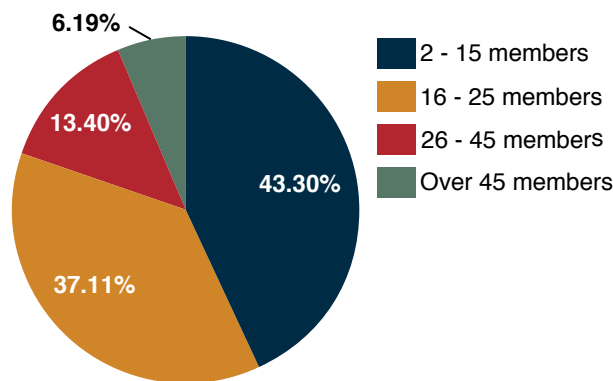
What is the number of employees of the organization?



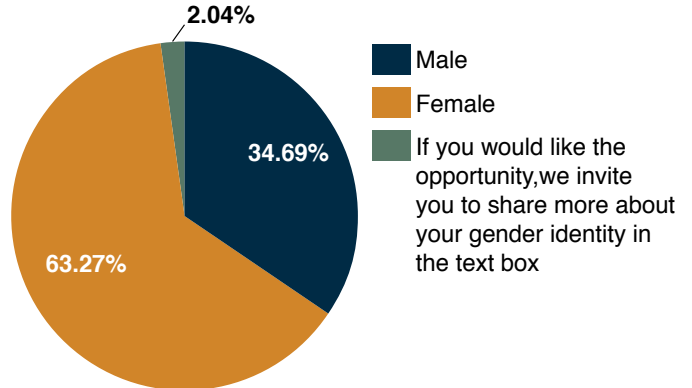
What is your age?



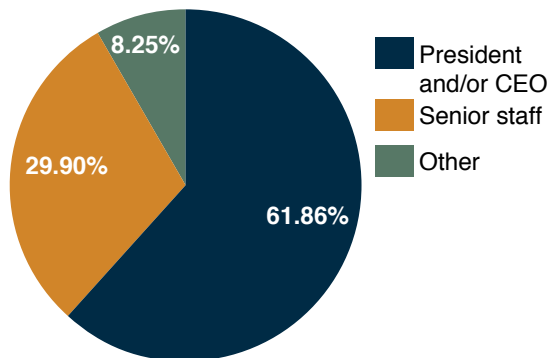
What is the size of your Board of Directors?



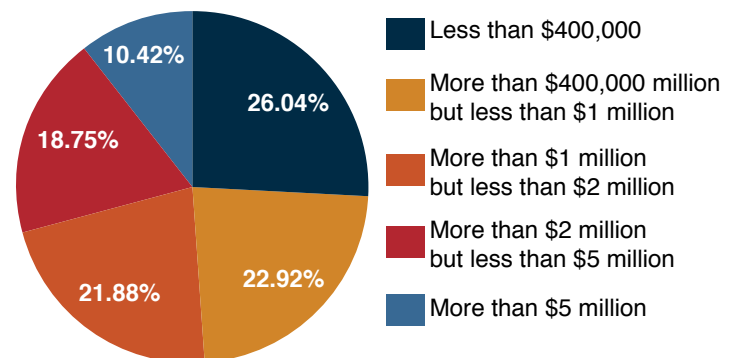
Sex assigned at birth?



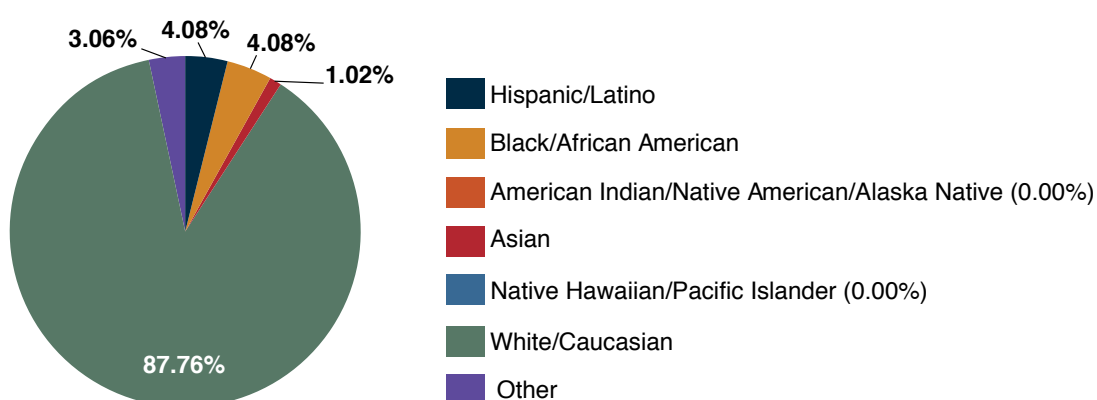
Please indicate your position within the association?



What was the 2017 annual revenue of your organization?



How would you describe yourself?



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