

The results of the membership survey conducted this past winter have been discussed by the Steering Committee, and made available for your use.

Here are some of the main takeaways from the responses we received.

Who we are

A member of the CAA is likely an archivist who has been in the profession for somewhere between 4-10 years, likely at an educational institution, museum or nonprofit and likely works in the city of Chicago (questions 1, 2 and 5). Each subcommittee is of course tasked with a different service to provide to our membership and the demographic information will probably inform their decisions differently.

The one recommendation to keep in mind is that while this above profile describes most members of CAA, it doesn't describe all the members. This information can be useful to keep in mind in the way that we address our members, and what issues are most important to them, but our messaging should not be to exclusion of members that don't fall into the most likely description.

Location

Generally speaking the survey supported what the assumptions we had been operating under. Members prefer events in the loop area or downtown which also happen to be where most of the respondents work, with many also working in nearby neighborhoods.

There were a couple of responses that specifically requested an even directed at suburban archivists, and there may be some opportunity for this, but the first suburban location was weighted behind every Chicago city location on questions 3 and 4.

Consider also that after scheduling difficulties the number one deterrent for members attending events is ease of access (question 8). So proximity to public transportation and the availability and cost of parking perhaps should be given more weight. Especially considering that the most preferred time for a member to attend an event is on a weeknight or weekday (question 7) when parking may be more difficult.

How we use CAA

83% of respondents attended at least one CAA event in the past year, (question 9) and 21% attended more than three events. By and large professional development events and information are desired strongly by our membership (questions 6 and 12).

Most members interact with CAA, hear about events, and stay informed by using the CAA listserv, and likewise this is their most preferred method of communication. This of course does not and should not dismiss other forms of communication and outreach to our members, but it should show

how vital a role that the listserv currently plays in our organization. Our communication should be considered effective overall, as only 3% of our members said that lack of communication or promotion was the main obstacle for attending events (question 8).

When we do receive information from the CAA, the members are interested in everything having to do with Chicago specific news and discussions, but less interested in national archival issues (question 12)

Conclusion

The information gathered from this survey is best used as a way to inform decisions made by subcommittees, but should not be used to stifle new ideas or dictate the actions subcommittees take. An idea does not necessarily have to fall in line with the results of this survey to a viable and good route to take.

This survey was intended to put into hard data what we thought we already knew about our membership and to dispel any assumptions that may have been incorrect. Hopefully what we have learned from this survey will help us as decision makers in the CAA to more fully fill the needs of our membership.

-CAA Steering Committee