

# Strengthening State Museum Associations to Serve America's Museums



COSMA NEH Project 2022

## Survey Summary Results

*What are the NINE CHARACTERISTICS OF  
A SUCCESSFUL SMA?*



*How did we segment the survey?*

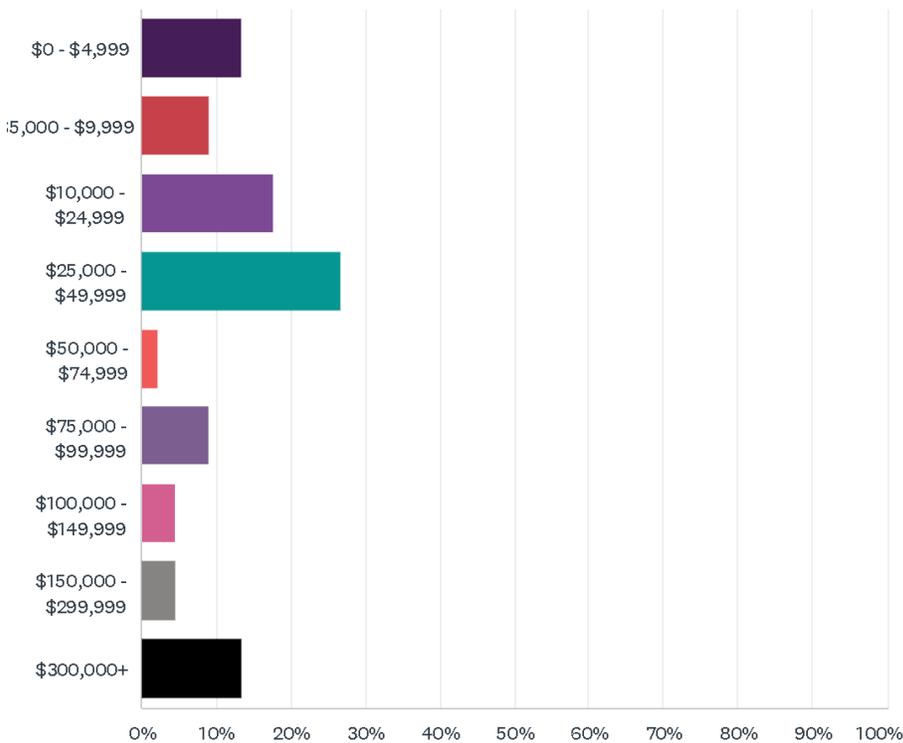


### Survey Responses:

We have received 45 responses out of 45 possible state museum organizations.

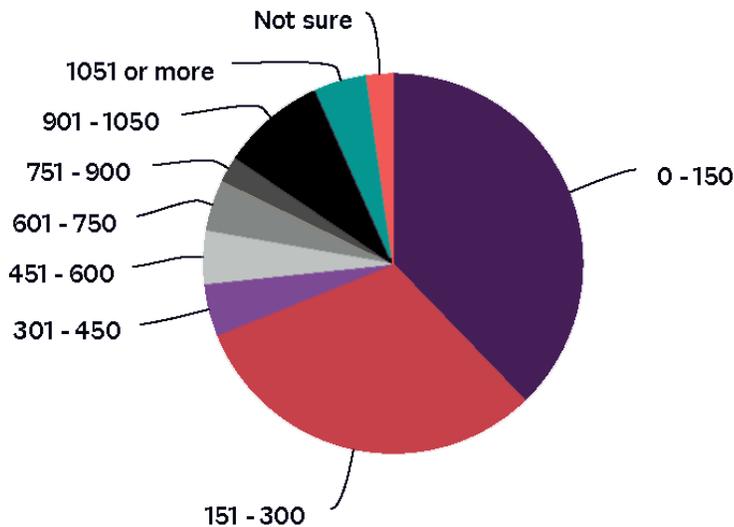
# Survey Demographics

Operating budgets for SMAs vary greatly. Here is the breakdown:



\$0 - \$4,999	(13.33%)	6 SMAs
\$5,000 - \$9,999	(8.89%)	4 SMAs
\$10,000 - \$24,999	(17.78%)	8 SMAs
\$25,000 - \$49,999	(26.67%)	12 SMAs
\$50,000 - \$74,999	(2.22%)	1 SMA
\$75,000 - \$99,999	(8.89%)	4 SMAs
\$100,000 - \$149,999	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
\$150,000 - \$299,999	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
\$300,000+	(13.33%)	6 SMAs

The number of SMA members varies greatly. Here is the breakdown:



Not sure	(2.22%)	1 SMA
0-150	(37.78%)	17 SMAs
151-300	(31.11%)	14 SMAs
301-450	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
451-600	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
601-750	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
751-900	(2.22%)	1 SMA
901-1050	(8.89%)	4 SMAs
1051 or more	(4.44%)	2 SMAs

60% report having at least one paid staff person (full or part time.)

# Survey Summary by Focus Area

## 1. Advocacy

Survey responses indicate that 25 SMAs (56%) provide advocacy updates to their members. Only 11 SMAs (25%) provide more substantial advocacy services, such as training or legislative days.

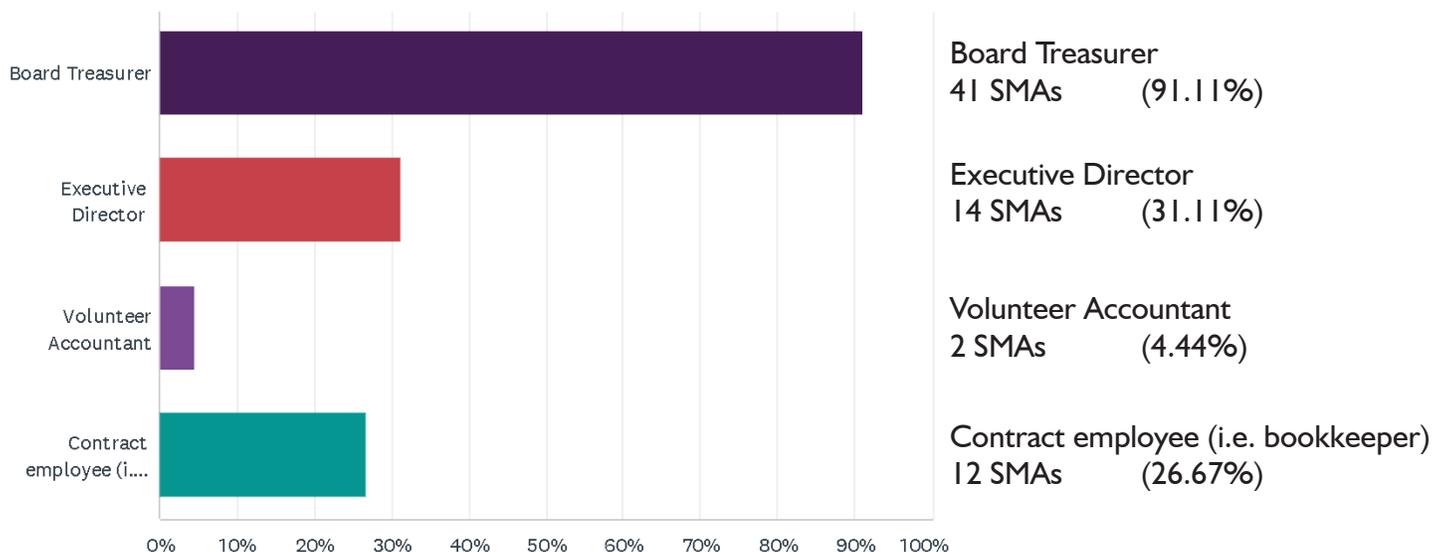
## 2. Communications

The most common way for SMAs to communicate with members is a website (100%). Other widespread avenues of communication include E-Newsletter for 34 SMAs (76%); Listserv for 12 SMAs (27%); and Printed Publication for 7 SMAs (16%).

## 3. Financial Stability

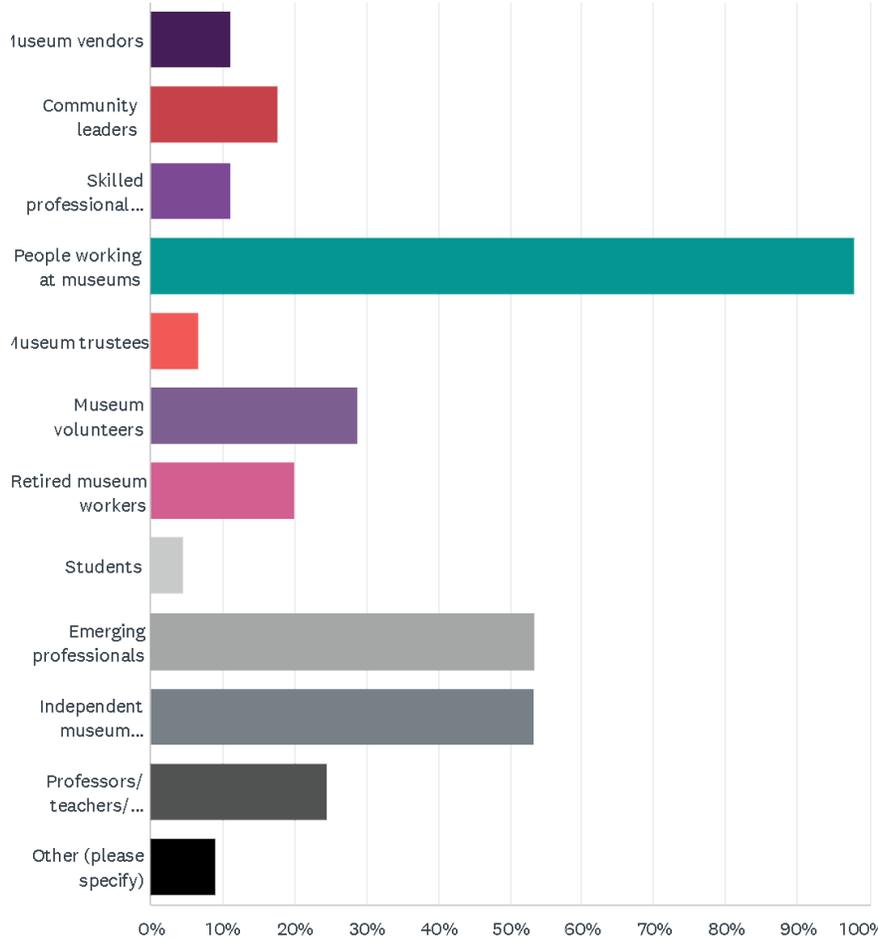
When it comes to managing finances, 28 SMAs (74%) use QuickBooks or another financial software. Board-approved financial policies guide 22 SMAs (58%) and 15 SMAs (40%) keep a reserve or investment account in addition to their general operating funds.

Who handles your finances? (select all that apply)



## 4. Governance

All SMAs (100%) have governing boards but they use different organizational structures. Most SMAs (91%) have standing committees; the most common is a programs committee used by 33 SMAs (80%). Only 2 SMAs (4%) described their governing board as disengaged. Composition of governing boards varies widely:



Museum vendors	(11.11%)	5 SMAs	Students	(4.44%)	2 SMAs
Community leaders	(17.78%)	8 SMAs	Emerging professionals	(53.33%)	24 SMAs
Skilled professionals that help with process on our board (i.e. lawyer, accountant)	(11.11%)	5 SMAs	Independent museum professionals / consultants	(53.33%)	24 SMAs
People working at museums	(97.78%)	44 SMAs	Professors / teachers / non-museum educators	(24.44%)	11 SMAs
Museum trustees	(6.67%)	3 SMA	Other (please specify)	(8.89%)	4 SMAs
Museum volunteers	(28.89%)	13 SMAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Professionals, Tourism Professionals</li> <li>A variety, but most are paid museum professionals</li> <li>Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities staff</li> <li>Only one non museum professional, marketing person</li> </ul>		
Retired museum workers	(20%)	9 SMAs			

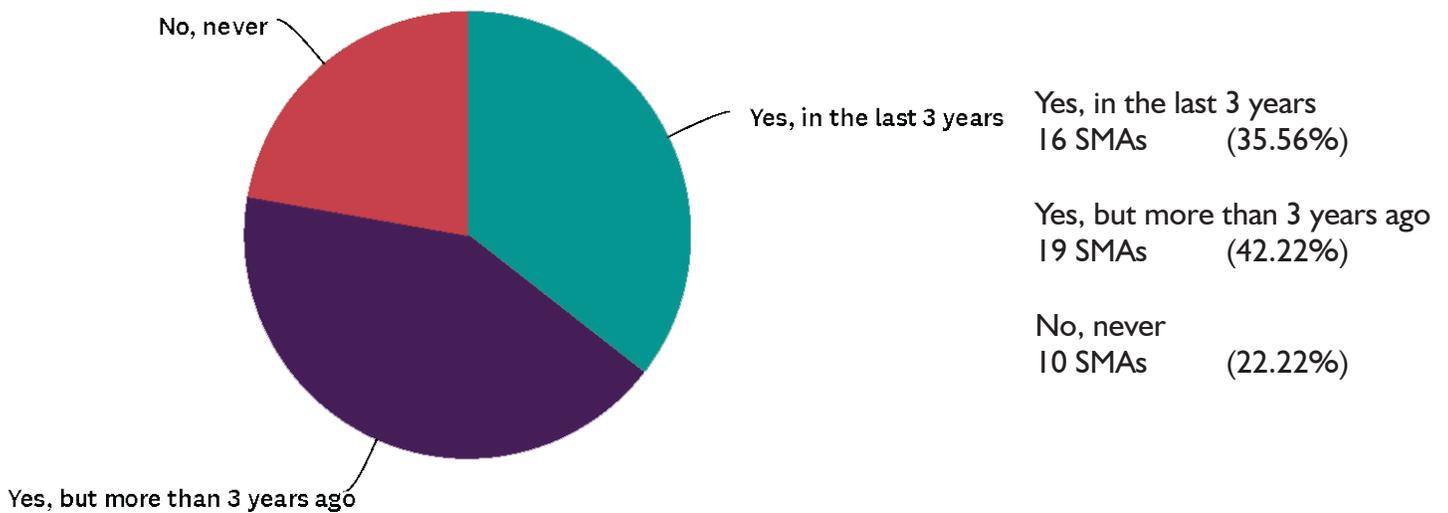
Although 25 SMAs (56%) conduct board orientation and onboarding, only 9 SMAs (20%) do board self-assessment activities.

## 5. Member Services

The most common service to members across all SMAs is an annual gathering or conference, with 40 SMAs (93%) offering this service. The question about “what member services would you like to offer” yielded answers including resume review, salary surveys, mentoring programs, and providing insurance for members.

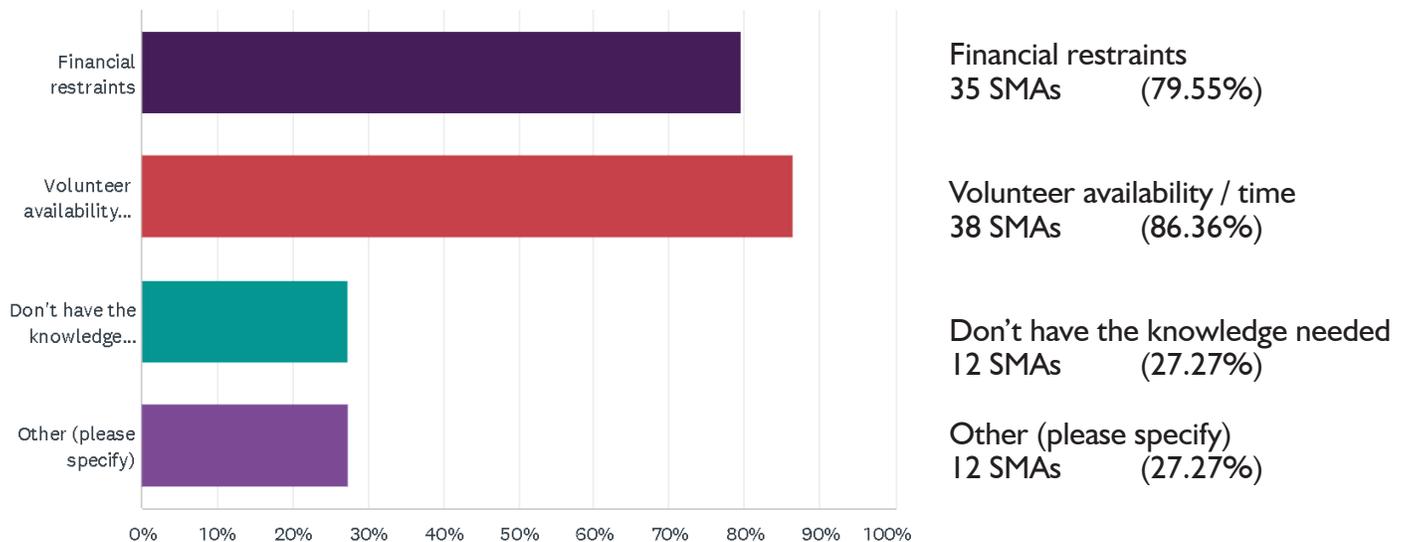
Only one SMA still relies on paper records, while 21 SMAs (47%) use an association management software to manage their membership. The remainder use a spreadsheet or database software to stay organized.

The majority of our SMAs have conducted a survey to learn more about their members:



Surveys indicate that the number one reason members join an SMA is networking.

There are several reasons why SMAs are unable to offer all the member services they wish they could offer.



Other:

- Need for strategic planning
- We want the programs/benefits that we do offer to be high quality and sustainable, so sometimes that means focusing on quality over quantity
- Bandwidth of current staff, especially the ED
- No professional staff
- Staff capacity to manage;
- Staff capacity
- I think the main reason includes the above but comes down to staff. We have one person for 10 hours a week. Our fabulous board members are full time staff at other organizations.
- We need dedicated personnel to help formulate and launch these programs
- Member participation
- More staff/board interest
- Offering insurance for our museum members would be fabulous, but it seems prohibitively expensive. Would love to discuss our options
- We have looked into how we could provide access to health insurance for members
- to provide to their staff and could not find a way to do it
- Other pressing needs

*This survey is a component of the NEH project that COSMA has undertaken in 2022. The goal of the project, Strengthening State Museum Associations to Serve America's Museums, is to create a common service model to help all SMAs operate more fully and inclusively in their state. The survey results will inform the content and structure of the common service model.*

*Representatives from all 45 state museum organizations will be meeting in September and December to review these results. Full participation will ensure that the common service model will be useful and will give all SMAs resources and information that can increase their ability to serve their members. Strengthening State Museum Associations to Serve America's Museums is made possible by the National Endowment for Humanities through the NEH American Rescue Plan: Humanities Organizations funds.*