

## **Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations**

### **2006-2007 Annual Member Satisfaction Survey**

This year, as Maryland Nonprofits prepared its annual Member Satisfaction Survey, it changed the timing and the length of the survey in an effort to increase participation rates. The first change was to reduce the survey from four pages to two by separating out the 'State of the Industry' questions it had added to the survey over the last few years. The second change was to mail out the survey a whole month earlier, at the end of December rather than late January or early February. We also continued to accept completed surveys through March 31, 2007.

Despite altering the survey to increase the likelihood of participation, the response rate actually decreased to 18%, down from 22% in 2006 (290 respondents in 2007 vs. 357 in 2006). However, those who did respond tended to answer all the questions (except the self-identifying ones) more frequently than the 2006 respondents so we got cleaner, more complete results this year.

While fewer people actually returned the survey this year, the percentage of those completing the hard copy version of the survey increased this year, from 40% in 2006 to 47% in 2007 with a corresponding drop in the percentage of those responding via Survey Monkey from 60% to 53%. Forty-five of the hard-copy respondents replied anonymously (16%), while 70 online respondents chose to remain anonymous (24%). Although this is the same number (115) as the number who replied anonymously in 2006, it does represent a greater percentage of respondents. In addition, as in 2006 members from 22 of the 24 geographical jurisdictions responded, with budgets ranging from \$0 to \$15 billion (Foundation at NIH).

With few exceptions, the positive response to our programs and services continued to increase over the previous three years. Last year only two services broke the 4.0 level (on a scale of 1 to 5) but this year six topped that score. The top-rated programs/services were Legal Assistance and Paid Trainings with scores of 4.20 and 4.19 respectively. They were followed closely by Management Assistance, IWIF, Business Insurance, and General Website Information with scores of 4.16, 4.10, 4.07, and 4.01 respectively.

The scores of only four programs/services dropped from 2006 (each by 5.8% or less), three of which were publications and the fourth of which was the Advocacy Leaders Program. The Sector Connector registered the largest drop of 5.8%. However, there is reason to believe some of the drop may have been due to the name change since in previous years it was listed on the survey as the Member Monthly Mailing; respondents may not have realized that Sector Connector is the name of the publication. While the Standards for Excellence Ethics and Accountability Code Booklet registered a drop from last year of 3.8%, it still scored higher than it had in 2005 and 2004, as did Standards for Excellence Education Resource Packets. The same is true for the Advocacy Leadership program, which scored distinctly higher in 2007 (3.15) than it had in 2005 (2.68) and 2004 (2.99).

Nine programs/services jumped .25 or more in the value members placed on them: Standards Certification led the pack with a score of 3.97 up from 3.62 in 2006. The Online Consultant Databank and Free Meeting Rooms/Duplicating Equipment tied for second place, each with a .30 jump to 3.67 and 3.6 respectively. They were followed by the Library (.28), IWIF (.27), Joint Advertising Opportunities (.27), Business Insurance (.26), Employee Benefits (.26), and the Online Career Center/Job Bank (.25).

Significantly, no program or service received a score less than 3.15, beating last year's lowest score of 3.1; in 2005 nine scored below 3.0 and in 2004 four scored below 3.0. The average score was 3.81 – up from 3.67 in 2006.

In a section added to the survey last year, respondents rated their satisfaction levels with various aspects of Maryland Nonprofits on a scale of 1 to 5. Gratifyingly, our members rated the usefulness of the information we provide to their jobs at 4.15 (up from 4.07) and our trainer expertise at 4.13 (a slight drop from 4.18). They also rated staff responsiveness at 4.37 (up from 4.2) and knowledge at 4.46 (up from 4.2). Ability to find information on the website was rated at 3.99 (up from 3.93) and overall value of membership for the price paid scored 4.02 (up from 3.93).

When asked, on a scale of 1 to 7, how important their memberships are to their organizations, respondents scored it at 5.36. This was a drop from 2006 (5.47) but a slight increase over 2005 (5.34). Satisfaction with membership outscored 2006 with 5.51 while respondents rated Maryland Nonprofits value to the sector as a whole at 5.74. Interaction with staff was rated at 5.85, quite a jump from 5.55 in 2006.

Given the record ratings attained in almost every category it was a little surprising to see a drop from previous years on five questions. When asked if membership in Maryland Nonprofits had helped improve the operation of their organizations over the last year, only 74% responded Yes, down from 77% in 2006. Only 41% replied that membership had helped them save money (down from 50% in 2006), and 74% said it had made them more aware of legal requirements (down from 82% in 2006). Only 70% felt that membership had made them more aware of ethical issues (down from 72% in 2006). And 77% considered that membership had made them more aware of legislative and other governmental activity affecting nonprofits (down from 82% in 2006).

Fully 65% of our members said they use the Baltimore Office while 17% said they use the Silver Spring office. Ten percent said they use both offices. Gratifyingly, the number who said they use neither office dropped from 12% to 7%.

Perhaps the single most interesting information gathered by the survey was the seemingly high number of responses that indicated members had not used individual services or programs, on average 38.82% with a mean of 45%. Consulting Services was the least used with a high of 64% while E-Mail Updates in General were used by all but 9%. In most cases the percentage of respondents who have not used an individual service or benefit tracks quite closely with the results from 2006.

The results of the 2007 survey are energizing for Maryland Nonprofits. Not only do they demonstrate increased success but they also point to possible avenues for enhanced performance and utility. Member retention data demonstrate that those members with higher interaction rates are far more likely to renew their memberships; certainly, those members who responded with high numbers of "Have Not Used" or who filled in the open-ended questions with notes on the kinds of help they are seeking provide us with fertile ground for relationship cultivation. In addition, having laid the solid program/service groundwork demonstrated by the high scores, we can turn our attention to refining those products to provide even better quality programs and services in the coming year.