



Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC) Membership Outreach Consultancy Project

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Executive Summary

The Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC) partnered with the University of Oregon Nonprofit Consultancy Program to conduct a membership assessment, which is meant to determine the interests, needs and expectations of NOWC's members. The purpose of the assessment is to identify, gather, and analyze data in a way that supports the NOWC in providing its member organizations with useful, up-to-date resources and programming that improves outreach and better fulfills their needs of participation. The analysis of the findings in this Nonprofit Consultancy Report is guided by a number of interviews, surveys, content analysis, and non-narrative data analysis, conducted during this collaborative initiative.

Many NOWC members recognize some of the benefits or strengths of their membership service. For instance, members are very supportive of NOWC's advocacy work at the state level, and the opportunities it provides for networking and professional development. This includes opportunities for education regarding legal issues, procuring stable funding, training and managing staff (especially in the face of high turnover), managing finances, working with boards of directors, and communicating with their stakeholders (especially via newsletters and social media). Although members show a high level of education and understanding of topics related to ecology, many of them need more support around topics related to nonprofit management. In particular, the leadership staff at Oregon Watershed Councils would benefit from support around procuring and managing adequate manpower and funding.

Based on the strengths and limitations of NOWC membership, the Nonprofit Consultancy team identified various opportunities and actionable recommendations related to new program opportunities for NOWC to pursue. These recommendations include:

- Maintain its advocacy program for watershed interests at the legislative level;
- Continue offering conferences and networking activities that allows watershed councils to connect people and resources;
- Continue offering events and webinars focused on nonprofit organizational management;
- Offer discounted consultations with experts as well as informal events focused on nonprofit management, fundraising, and legal issues;
- Continually update and communicate information about NOWC membership benefits;
- Update NOWC's "Membership" and "Member Resources" website pages.



These recommendations will not only improve NOWC members services by supporting the programming that members already value, but will also strengthen the network by growing its focus on member interest and participation.



Overview of NOWC Mission and Programs

The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC) is a statewide nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the work of Oregon's watershed councils to enhance watershed health and benefit their local communities. The organization envisions increasingly strong, resilient watershed councils throughout Oregon sustaining healthy land, water, and economies.

NOWC works to achieve these goals by supporting community-based watershed councils in Oregon in building council capacity, improving key relationships among council partners, and promoting awareness and understanding of watershed restoration. As a public benefit membership corporation, NOWC offers trainings, opportunities for information sharing, conferences, and networking events to around 55 councils across the state, with the aim of empowering these councils to advocate for themselves to funding agencies, and to help councils share with one another their knowledge of successful strategies to increase efficiency and impact.

NOWC's board of directors is formed by two watershed council representatives from each of the six administrative regions of Oregon: North Coast, Southwest Oregon, Willamette Basin, Central Oregon, Eastern Oregon, and Mid-Columbia. NOWC also has a Business Development Committee, Government Relations Committee, and a Member Services Committee, which advise NOWC on issues related to finances, policy, and membership. NOWC's primary sources of funding are the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and membership fees.

Research Questions and Scope of Work

Currently, NOWC finds itself in a position to invest in its already strong relationships with NOWC member organizations, which prompted the organization to seek an independent, outside source to help identify ways that NOWC might increase the overall impact of NOWC's membership program. This Nonprofit Consultancy Report was a collaborative initiative with a team from the University of Oregon that identified, gathered, and analyzed information in order to assist NOWC in providing its member organizations with useful and up-to-date resources and programming that better fulfill their needs, and in improving outreach about, and participation in, NOWC's membership program. In order to gather the information that would be most pertinent to these goals, this team worked with NOWC stakeholders to identify the following research questions:

- Which membership benefits and supports interest NOWC member organizations?
- Which document templates do NOWC members need?
- What categorical gaps exist in NOWC's existing library of document templates?
- Which of NOWC's existing document templates require updating?
- What programs and activities may be new opportunities for NOWC to pursue?

Using the information gathered while pursuing answers to these research questions, this team developed actionable recommendations related to new program opportunities for NOWC to pursue, and accessing resources to assist NOWC in implementing those new program opportunities.

Additionally, this report provides NOWC with:

- A complete, updated template library, reconceptualized as an educational center with guidance, examples, and templates chosen and organized based on member needs;
- Redesigned Member Resources and Membership webpages, which include the updated template library, and which could be used by NOWC as a guide for updating the current webpages or as the base of a complete website redesign; and
- A graphic representation of this team's overall findings and recommendations.

Research Methodology

Because NOWC's membership is made up of a large network of around 55 independent organizations spread across the state, it was important to draw from the perspectives of as many organizations as possible while also assessing NOWC's needs and assets in a way that was relatively quick and efficient. So, the methods described in this section were selected in order to collect the largest amount of relevant data possible, at no cost, within the short timeframe of this project.

I. Preliminary Interviews

To begin collecting background information for this project, in February of 2021 this team conducted interviews with four NOWC stakeholders, including NOWC staff, NOWC Membership Services Committee members, and a NOWC member. Interview questions focused on NOWC's membership program, and the needs of NOWC members.

II. UO Team Survey

As Trochim (2020) points out, surveys can be an excellent way to gather reliable data from a wide audience in a relatively small amount of time, with limited to no cost to the research team. Therefore, in early April 2021, the consultancy team conducted an online survey, using Qualtrics, to be completed by leaders at NOWC member organizations. The survey gathered feedback from NOWC's Membership Services Committee and the Executive Director. The survey was sent on April 22, 2021 and closed on May 5th, 2021.

The sampling frame included 60 organizations. Ultimately, the survey achieved a return rate of 58.33%, with a sample size of 35 organizations. According to Baruch (1999, 421), a return rate of at least 55.6% "should be used as a norm for future studies", so this team is finds this response rate to be acceptable.

III. Content Analysis

In order to gather qualitative data in support of answering the research questions, in late April and in early May this team conducted a content analysis. Content analysis is well-suited to identifying trends, patterns, and differences across multiple systems (Krippendorff, 2012, 53-55), and, as an unobtrusive method of data collection (Krippendorff, 2012, 49). This team applied this method in the following items:

- NOWC survey conducted in March of 2020
- OrCP member survey conducted in May of 2020

- OrCP member survey conducted in November of 2020
- The UO team's four interviews conducted in February of 2021
- NOWC's Google forum (January 2019 - March 2021)
- The UO team's survey conducted in April and May of 2021

The content analysis was a crucial piece of data collection for this project, providing the UO team with valuable insight on NOWC's current programming and member's ongoing needs and interests. This team coded the responses related to the research questions, such as "identifies need for assistance/education around funding/fundraising", "identifies need for assistance/education around managing personnel", "expresses that they value NOWC's opportunities for networking among watershed councils", etc. The results of the content analysis were used to identify the concepts which appeared most often in the materials that were analyzed.

IV. Non-Narrative Survey Data Analysis

In order to gather quantitative data in support of answering the research questions, in early May this team conducted a data analysis of the following items:


- NOWC survey conducted in March of 2020
- OrCP member survey conducted in May of 2020
- OrCP member survey conducted in November of 2020
- UO team survey conducted in April and May of 2021

For this data analysis, the consultancy team identified the survey questions whose responses provided the most information related to the needs of NOWC members (for example, "What projects will your organization prioritize over the next 12 months?", "Which document templates would be most helpful?", and "Which topics would you like to see covered in upcoming informational events from NOWC?").

V. Literature Review

Finally, the UO team conducted a review of peer-reviewed literature on the topics of membership associations and communications. Following is a brief summary of that review.

In "Membership Programs for Nonprofits", Farkas, Jain, and de Lange (2020) explain how there's long been a stigma around nonprofits earning money, but that in recent years the nonprofit sphere has come to realize that revenue is crucial to the mission. The authors point out that membership programs are a great tool for strengthening revenue since



these funds are stable, and these programs help build member engagement. One key area where a membership association can optimize membership program revenue is by ensuring that all member benefits incentivize individuals to join, and that those benefits align with member attitudes.

In “Remissioning nonprofits: Two case studies of membership associations”, Rugh (1996) discusses the importance of membership associations clearly understanding their members. Rugh also argues that a membership association must communicate clearly to stakeholders why it exists. Additionally, Rugh argues that membership organizations must balance two primary strategies – representing their members, and serving their members. Finally, Rugh argues that a primary role of a membership association is to provide leadership for achieving collective interests that the organizations wouldn’t be able to provide on their own.

In “Nonprofit Membership Programs: A How-To Guide”, Trull (2019) explains that “special perks for members” should be designed to “keep them coming back every year”, and suggests starting with “discounts, special access to events, member-only newsletters and exclusive meetings”. Trull also points to the importance of clearly communicating membership benefits to both prospective and current members.

In “Website design: Viewing the web as a cognitive landscape”, Rosen (2004) writes about the importance of organizations having a web presence, and outlines several website design strategies from the perspective of cognitive psychology that can lead to visitors returning to the website repeatedly. Some of these strategies include visual simplicity, intuitive navigation, and maintaining a balance between coherence (or unity in design, to help the visitor understand what they’re seeing) and complexity (or richness of elements, to help maintain the visitor’s interest).

Findings

I. The Value of NOWC

The UO team found that, like NOWC, NOWC's member organizations tend to have small staffs. The average number of full-time staff at NOWC member organizations is three, and the most common number of full-time staff is only one employee. Given this number of smaller organizations, NOWC is adhering to best practices by offering programming that supports under-staffed organizations, such as NOWC's advocacy work, and the opportunities NOWC provides for watershed council leaders to connect with one another and share resources (such as events and the Google forum).


Generally, membership associations have two strategic orientations: member representation and member service. The representation orientation looks to collectively advance and influence the common interests of the external organization's members, while the service orientation looks internally to support its member's value-added benefits (Rugh 1997, 307). The nonprofit consultancy team identified that the NOWC balances its mission well between these two strategic orientations, as it advocates for its members' interests at the legislative level while also providing resources that support watershed council's work.

Overall, this team found that NOWC members are aware of the value of NOWC's work. Over 70% turn to NOWC resources in some way while working on projects. Members also expressed appreciation for the opportunities that NOWC provides for networking, pooling resources, and the general collective power that NOWC provides by simply being an active bridge between different watersheds. Effectively, members believe that they achieve more by cooperating, and NOWC is an important part of that.

NOWC's work with state legislators was also highly praised. Members made frequent comments in support of the advocacy work that NOWC does at the state level, as well as the legislative education and updates that NOWC provides to its members. This is work that many member organizations do not have the capacity to carry out on their own, and those members recognize the value in the work that NOWC does in this area.

II. NOWC Members' Values and Needs

In our qualitative analysis, we identified members' nine top needs, which you can see outlined in Figure 1 below. The topics appear here in order of most frequent appearances to least frequent appearances in this team's qualitative analysis (but do keep in mind that



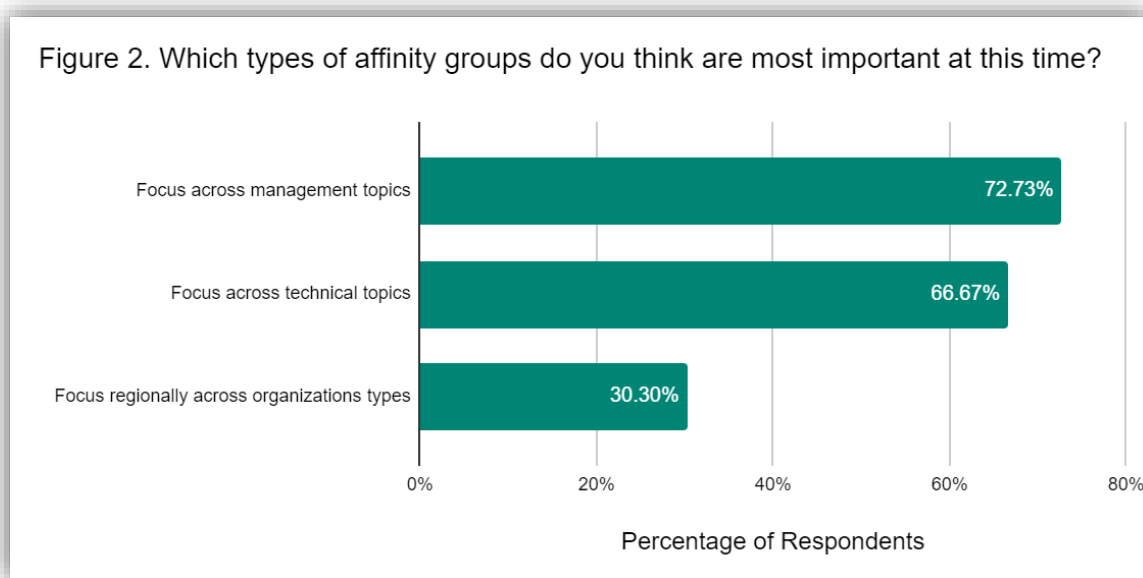
these are NOWC members' top identified needs and values out of many others for which we coded - even the "least" frequently appearing topics here are top priorities for NOWC members).

Figure 1. What NOWC Members Are Saying

	<p>Fundraising</p> <p>"[We would like NOWC to offer] assistance on building a successful fundraising program."</p>
	<p>Organizational Management</p> <p>"NOWC needs to serve as an entity like a council of small government entities; they provide a menu of services for small organizations: health insurance, bookkeeping, benefits packages. If we could pool our resources we would be able to have more resilience."</p>
	<p>Documents</p> <p>"I think [it would be helpful] if NOWC can provide information, resources, and templates to help us improve organizational management - especially as it relates to emerging issues that we all have to face, for example Oregon's paid leave act."</p>
	<p>Boards of Directors</p> <p>"Board training opportunities [are a new activity I would like NOWC to offer], because board development can be difficult and having access to resources on how boards work and a place for board members to ask questions would be valuable."</p>
	<p>Communications</p> <p>"I forget about NOWC sometimes because I don't have that type of regular engagement that is engaging me. In the same way, my stakeholders don't remember that I exist all the time because I'm not sending out a quarterly newsletter."</p>
	<p>Networking</p> <p>"I've identified more support networks in the form of information through NOWC events, and the emotional support to be a better advocate for myself."</p>
	<p>Legal Issues</p> <p>"Any help with occasional needs, such as legal review of documents, etc. would be helpful. Perhaps a few non-profit lawyers who might make up a pool that could be accessed to provide pro-bono expertise on one-time consultation needs?"</p>
	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>"Having that advocate at Salem is worth [the membership fees] to me on its own."</p>
	<p>DEI</p> <p>"We appreciate NOWC's focus on DEI. We are hopeful NOWC's role in DEI training will continue to expand in the years ahead."</p>

Organizational Management

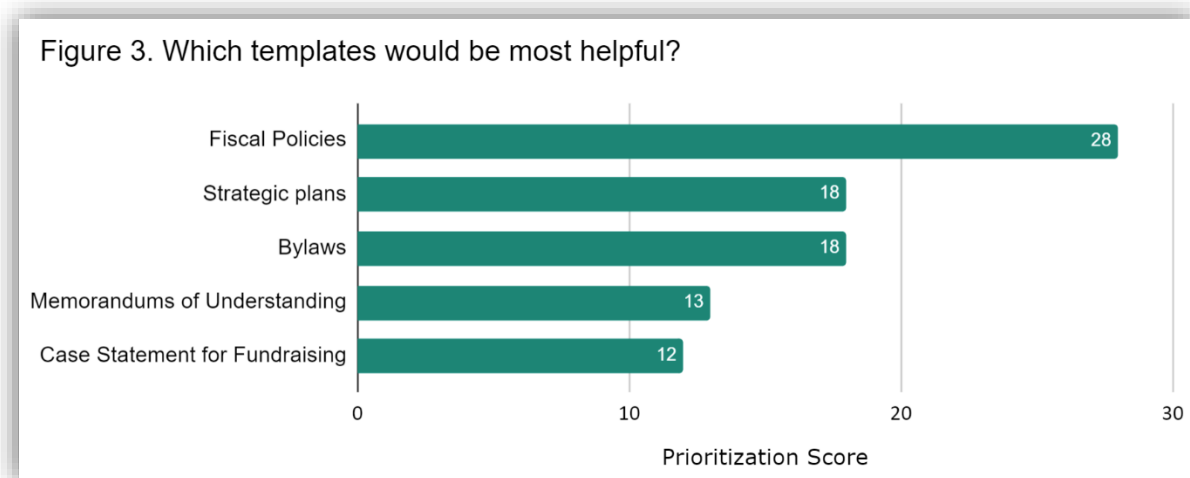
The UO team's survey found that while over 80% of NOWC's member organizations consider themselves to be operating in rural areas, members may not be very interested in receiving support based on their organization type, as indicated by the graph below which shows the results of a question in NOWC's November 2020 survey:



Instead, these results indicate a higher interest in management topics, which aligns with this team's overall findings that NOWC members are looking for support around organizational management.

Additionally, this team found that the leaders at NOWC member organizations tend to have educational backgrounds in ecology and conservation, rather than areas such as business or nonprofit management - which likely plays a role in this team's findings that NOWC members are primarily looking for support around organizational management.

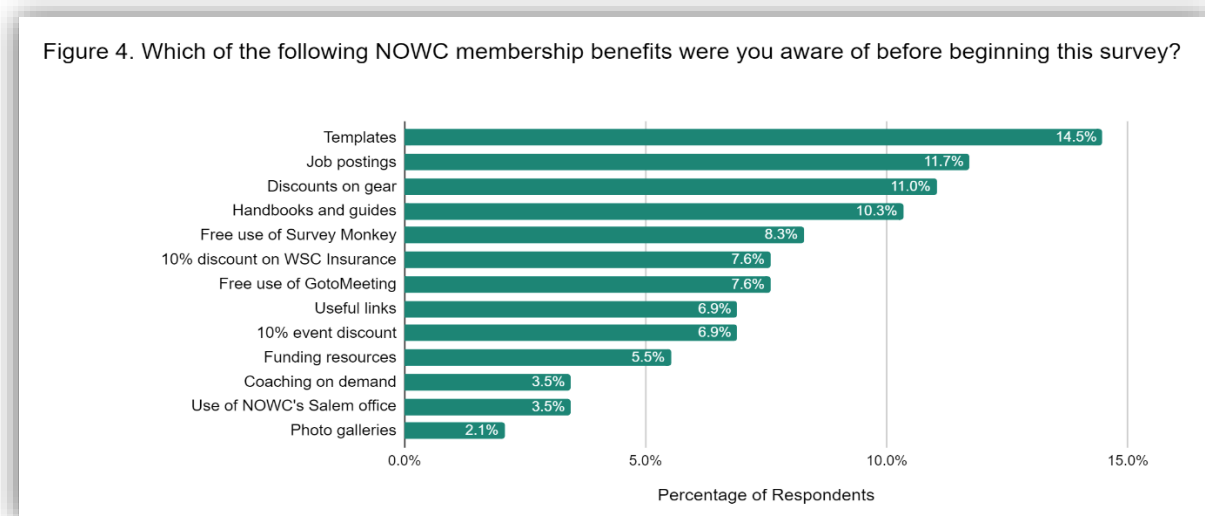
Another indication that NOWC members are looking for support around organizational management appeared when the UO team asked NOWC members which types of organizational management document templates would be most helpful:




This figure shows the ranked scores for the five most desired documents from members, using a ranked score where higher point totals equal stronger preferences. Respondents ranked their top five choices, and these choices were then added together to get the results you see here. As you can see, all of these have a strong theme of nonprofit management.

Communication of NOWC Member Benefits

The last finding we will highlight is that of a need for more communication around NOWC's member benefits. Many members seemed unaware of the full array of benefits available to them. The UO team's survey asked members which benefits they were aware of before beginning this survey (note: this list of member benefits is no longer up-to-date):





Notice that less than 15% of members are aware of any of the items listed in Figure 4, including document templates, which is one of the primary benefits that NOWC provides to its members.

In consideration of these findings, the UO team developed several recommendations on how NOWC could build on their strengths moving forward.

Recommendations

To keep NOWC members best interest as a central focus, it is important to identify a structured membership strategy that supports the areas of goal-setting and member interaction in its membership programming. For this reason, recommendations in this section are based primarily off of feedback obtained in the survey the research team carried out with the member organizations.

I. Continue Advocacy Work & Networking Opportunities


Again, Rugh (1996) argues that a primary role of a membership association is to provide leadership for achieving collective interests that the organizations wouldn't be able to provide on their own. The survey conducted by the research team showed that work around legislation and government regulations was the item mentioned most frequently by members as being highly valued. This information, as well as member comments reflecting a lack of capacity to do this independently, reflects a high degree of importance that warrant continued work in this area.

Rugh also argues that membership organizations must balance two primary strategies – representing their members, and serving their members. When offered in addition to NOWC's member benefits, NOWC's advocacy work helps maintain this balance.

Rugh (2016) writes that a membership association must communicate clearly to stakeholders why it exists. So, NOWC should also maintain high levels of communication and education for members regarding changes in legislation and their activities in this area, as it was also mentioned as being extremely valuable to members. This communication can take the form of webinars, Google Forum posts, or direct emails, all of which members indicated were useful areas of NOWC activity which members are attuned to and appreciate.

The CONNECT Conference provides consistent and powerful networking and group problem-solving opportunities, which the results of our survey show are features of NOWC that members consider especially valuable.

Training events and webinars focused on organizations management and nonprofit organizations: NOWC already offers various webinars and events on topics of watershed management. These events are valued by members, and the topics have a great deal of overlap with nonprofit organizational management, which is one of the areas where members expressed the need for additional support (see Figures 2 and 3). Additionally,



according to Trull (2016), special access to events is one membership benefit that can “keep them coming back every year”.

II. Provide Discounted Consultations with Nonprofit Experts

Farkas, Jain, and de Lange (2020) say that “benefits and perks vary from one membership type to another, but all should act as an incentive for individuals to join.” It is also suggested that the content of membership services and programming should be in line with member attitudes and perspectives towards their own needs. Therefore, the Nonprofit Consultancy team recommends that the NOWC ultimately strive to offer discounted consultations with experts in:

- Nonprofit management,
- Nonprofit fundraising, and
- Nonprofit legal issues.

These three areas are what NOWC members indicated as most needed for their organizations. Because areas such as fundraising and legal topics can be extremely complex and benefit from custom solutions for each individual organization, NOWC can best address these needs by negotiating group discount rates for members with consultations or experts who can work directly with each member organization as needed. The Planning, Public Policy, and Management (PPPM) department at the University of Oregon is a good starting point for identifying such experts, as is the Nonprofit Association of Oregon.

III. Offer More Educational Events on Topics Related to Nonprofit Management

The team recommends that NOWC provide more Informational events on topics related to nonprofit management, especially in the following areas:

- **Managing Personnel:** Structuring pay and benefits, managing turnover (especially onboarding new staff), and leadership/management training.
- **Project Management:** Project planning, project implementation, project evaluation, and time management.
- **Nonprofit Governance:** Working alongside boards of directors, strategic planning, and drafting documents related to governance (e.g. fiscal policies, bylaws, and volunteer job descriptions for boards of directors).
- **Nonprofit Financial Management:** Budgeting and accounting.

- **Nonprofit Development Work:** Different types of fundraising, the funding sources that are available to Oregon watershed councils, diversifying income streams, turning board members into fundraisers, and developing newsletters and a social media presence.


Our literature review highlighted the importance of understanding members, and offering membership benefits that align with the needs of those members – and our research revealed that the areas listed above are the key needs areas of NOWC members. Additionally, with the services that NOWC currently offers, NOWC is well-positioned to incorporate these topics into existing programming in order help individual member organizations and their employees to learn and improve their own levels of expertise and experience in nonprofit management. Members expressed appreciation for events, webinars, and learning opportunities that NOWC provides, as well as a desire to see expanded opportunities in this area. Members also appreciate the networking NOWC provides, and displayed consistent use of Google forums to learn from each other. By offering events and training opportunities for its members along these topics, NOWC will give members the ability to network and strengthen their capacity simultaneously.

IV. Improve Communication of Member Benefits by Updating Website

Both Rugh (1996) and Trull (2019) underscore the need for membership associations to clearly communicate membership benefits to both prospective and current members, and Rosen (2004) underscores the importance of organizations having a web presence. Along with our findings that NOWC members tend to lack awareness of the benefits that are available to them, the last major recommendation of this report is to enhance communication with current and potential members regarding the growing menu of benefits that NOWC offers.

Exploring NOWC’s “Membership” and “Member Resources” webpages is likely the first contact that many current and potential members will have with NOWC’s membership program and member benefits; so, this team recommends that NOWC update the website, beginning with the “Membership” and “Member Resources” pages.

Again, since these webpages are likely to be the first contact that many current and potential members will have with NOWC’s membership program and member benefits, it is important that the “Membership” page highlights the features that may be most attractive to potential members (advocacy, networking opportunities, funding resources, and support with organizational management and legal issues), and it is important that the “Member Resources” page is easily accessible, and organizes NOWC’s resources in such a way that



visitors will be able to navigate intuitively to the resources that will be most pertinent to their particular organization.

To assist NOWC in updating these webpages, this team designed new versions of these webpages (see appendices), using the website Weebly.com which provides website templates and user-friendly design tools.

“Membership” Page


According to Rosen (2004, 793) “make it simple. Adopting a minimalistic approach to the design of the home page with eye-catching but appropriate graphics and categories that draw the web surfer further into the site appears to be more effective. Web design should not result in information overload. The goal, rather, should be to give access to the information web surfers' desire in the most expedient way possible. Hence, the design goal should be access not abundance.”

In the interest of keeping the design eye-catching and minimalistic, those who are visiting the “Membership” page first see a large, beautiful image of the McKenzie River. Visitors are likely visiting this page for one of two reasons: either they are interested in possibly becoming members, or they are already members and are looking for member resources. Therefore, the page features a “Become a Member” button (which links to a payment page) and an “Access Member Resources” button (which links to the “Member Resources” page).

If a visitor is looking for more information about Membership, they'll find this information immediately below. Here, they'll see “Why become a member of NOWC?” followed by large text that highlights the member benefits which, according to our research, are likely to be most attractive to them. Below this text are eye-catching images to help visualize these benefits. To the right, visitors can read more details about NOWC's member benefits. Eventually, visitors will find information about the cost of membership, as well as a link to become a member, as mentioned above.

“Member Resources” Page

When a visitor clicks on the “Member Resources” tab or the “Access Member Resources” button, they'll be taken to the “Member Resources” page, where they'll be prompted to enter a password, which will be the same for all members. This will ease the burden of the current password system and simplify the process. They will then see 7 resource categories (Nonprofit Management, Watershed Management, Funding Resources, Job Postings, Organizational and Transitional Coaching, Discounts and Free Services, and Legal Resources) which were chosen by this team based on our research into the interests and



needs of NOWC members. The exact templates and examples for each section, as identified by the research team during the content analysis are included in the appendices.

When a visitor clicks on a category, they are taken to another page where they'll find any resource that NOWC currently offers which could be of assistance to them in that particular category (e.g. organizational and transitional coaching, discounts on events related to that category) as well as related new resources that this team recommends that NOWC eventually offer to its members (e.g. on the "Legal Resources" page, visitors will find pretend information on discounted legal consultation offered by NOWC to its members).

Visitors will also find guidance around each topic – for example, on the "Nonprofit Management" page, visitors will find section titled "Nonprofit 101" where they'll find a list of Nonprofit Management-related subtopics (e.g. "Governance" and "Financial Management"), and each of these subtopics includes a link to a new page that includes guidance, templates, and examples related to that subtopic. Again, this guidance and these templates and examples were chosen by this team based on our research into the interests and needs of NOWC members. The information is organized in this way in order to keep each page relatively minimal (preventing "information overload"), and to allow visitors to easily navigate to the particular topics that matter to them.

Using this Deliverable

These new webpages are fully functional and could be used in one of two ways: NOWC could simply use them as a guide for updating their existing webpage within WordPress, or NOWC could transfer their existing domain to the Weebly account that was created for this project. Transferring NOWC's existing domain to this account would mean that when visitors type "oregonwatersheds.org" into their browser, they are taken to the new website. Moving forward, NOWC would use the Weebly platform to update their website. Information which will provide NOWC with full ownership and access to the backend of the new pages, as well as information on the process of transferring an existing domain to Weebly, has been sent by this team directly to the executive director of NOWC.



Conclusion

Overall, the research team found that NOWC has a strong foundation of services to its members, and that the relationship with member organizations is strong. The research conducted for this report has shown that members appreciate NOWC's work with state legislation, as well as the networking and connections built between NOWC members. While members could use additional support in areas of nonprofit and organizational management, NOWC is in an excellent position to provide that support.

NOWC can begin the process of enhancing support for members by building on what it already offers. Continued work at the state level, as well as holding events and webinars that members appreciate, is an important first step. From there, by expanding events and webinars to include topics that members are requesting, the existing structure of NOWC programming can both continue past success and support the organizational management needs simultaneously. NOWC can further explore options for supporting its members by working with the PPPM department at the University of Oregon and with the Nonprofit Association of Oregon to identify the appropriate consultations which might be obtained at cost-effective rates for members. In addition, the resources, documents, and template relevant to these topics, as laid out in the Appendix, can be reorganized on the NOWC website. This reorganization will help ensure that current members are aware of all the benefits available to them and assist potential members in deciding if NOWC is right for them. The enhanced communication that this achieves on all fronts will benefit all parties involved, including NOWC itself.

This report can serve as a guide for NOWC as it looks to implement improvements in the suggested areas. As the research conducted was carried out specifically for the purpose of identifying and adjusting to member needs, NOWC can be confident in its approach based on these recommendations. In addition, this report is itself built on the strong foundation of success NOWC has already established. Therefore, the research team concludes that NOWC is and will remain in a strong position to serve watersheds across the state of Oregon.

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Appendices

I. Graphic representation of this team’s overall findings and recommendations



NETWORK of OREGON
WATERSHED COUNCILS



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

School of Planning, Public
Policy and Management

Organization Mission

The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils supports the work of watershed councils by increasing council capacity, representing councils with key partners and funders, and convening council staff and board members to learn from each other.

Research Team:
Amy Myers
Belen Vega
Paul Lord

Research Questions

The project aimed to determine which benefits interest NOWC members, which document templates are needed, what which programs or activities NOWC can or should pursue in the future.

Findings

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ NOWC’s Lobbying and work with State Government ▲ Networking with other Oregon Watersheds ▲ Education from NOWC on legislation and other topics 	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Enhanced support around Organizational Management ▲ Enhanced support in working with Boards of Directors ▲ Proactive communication about services available from NOWC
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Recommendations

Maintain work in the following areas:

- Representing watershed interests with State legislators
- CONNECT Conference and other networking opportunities
- Training events for managing nonprofit organizations

Expand services to member by:

- Working to establish discounted rates with consultants in Oregon
- Offering events on specific topics around governance and finances
- Focusing these offers on areas of personnel, project management, fundraising, and legal issues

Enhance communication with members and access to resources by:

- Updating the Member Resources page to be more user friendly
- Updating the Membership page to better attract new members

II. UO Survey Instrument

Thank you for taking our survey! NOWC is partnering with a research team from the University of Oregon to conduct this survey. The purpose of this survey is to assist NOWC in providing its member organizations with useful and up-to-date resources, and to assist NOWC in identifying opportunities to develop new programming that better fulfills the needs of its member organizations. There are 15 questions total. Outside of the research team from the University of Oregon, your responses to this survey will be kept confidential.

Your answers to this survey will provide valuable feedback which, we hope, will ultimately help strengthen watershed councils across Oregon - thank you!

Sincerely,

University of Oregon Research Team

Q1. To assist us in keeping track of who has completed the survey, what is the name of your organization? This information will not be shared with NOWC and will be kept confidential.

Q2. How many full-time employees does your organization have?

Full Time: _____

Part Time: _____

Other: _____

Q3. Do you consider your organization to be operating in a rural area, or an urban area? (Meyer Memorial Trust defines a rural area as an area with a population of 40,000 or less AND with a lack of proximity to any metro area with a population of 50,000 or greater.)

- Rural
- Urban

Q4. What projects will your organization prioritize over the next 12 months? (mark any that apply)

What projects will your organization prioritize over the next 12 months? (mark any that apply)

- Organizational development
- Project Design
- Project Implementation
- Monitoring
- Acquisition
- Fundraising
- Landowner outreach
- Public awareness/outreach
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Other:

Q5. How likely are you to use NOWC resources when working on a project for your organization?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

Q6. Which aspects of NOWC's work do you value most?

Q7. What new programs or activities would you like NOWC to offer and why?

Q8. What could NOWC do differently to be more helpful to your organization?

Q9. Which of the following NOWC membership benefits have you utilized within the past 12 months? (Mark all that apply)

- Document templates (e.g., sample strategic plans, sample bylaws, etc.)
- Funding resources
- Handbooks and guides
- Useful links
- Job postings
- Photo galleries
- Organizational and transition coaching on demand
- 10% discount on board and director's insurance with WSC Insurance
- 10% discounts for staff and board members for NOWC events
- Discounts on gear through Experticity
- Free use of GotoMeeting and GotoWebinar
- Free use of Survey Monkey Pro
- Use of NOWC's Salem office
- None of the above

Q10. Which of the following NOWC membership benefits were you aware of before beginning this survey? (mark all that apply)

- Document templates (e.g. sample strategic plans, sample bylaws, etc.)
- Funding resources
- Handbooks and guides
- Useful links
- Job postings
- Photo galleries
- Organizational and transition coaching on demand
- 10% discount on board and director's insurance with WSC Insurance
- 10% discounts for staff and board members for NOWC events
- Discounts on gear through Experticity
- Free use of GotoMeeting and GotoWebinar

- Free use of Survey Monkey Pro
- Use of NOWC's Salem office
- None of the above

Q11. Which document templates would be most helpful to you if they were up-to-date, legally vetted, and made available to you as part of NOWC's membership program? Please rank your top 5, 1 being highest priority.

- ___ Action plans/Strategic plans
- ___ Bylaws
- ___ Charters
- ___ Board member/Committee job descriptions
- ___ Employee job descriptions
- ___ Coordinator job description
- ___ Intern job announcement
- ___ Volunteer liability waiver
- ___ Case statement for fundraising
- ___ Annual membership letter
- ___ Memorandum of Understanding/agreements
- ___ Organizational chart
- ___ Vehicle use policy
- ___ Fiscal policies and procedures
- ___ PTO policy
- ___ Committee Charters
- ___ Tri-fold brochure for Watershed topics
- ___ Sample event postcards
- ___ Annual newsletter
- ___ Annual report
- ___ Surveys/evaluations (Please explain/provide examples: _____)
- ___ Other/Comments: _____

Q12. Which topics would you like to see covered in upcoming informational events from NOWC? Check all that apply.

- Fundraising
- Pay and benefits
- Personnel management (e.g., leadership structures, managing turnover)
- Project development and management
- Financial management (e.g., budgeting and accounting)
- Working with boards of directors
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Working with the general public and landowners
- Marketing and communications (e.g., social media, newsletters)
- Collaborating with other watershed councils
- Capacity building and strategic planning
- Other/comments: _____

Q13. On a scale of "Not at all useful" to "Extremely useful", how useful to your organization are each of the following NOWC events?

	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Annual Fall Gatherings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watershed Management Camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CONNECT Conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Webinars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14. Which of the following statements about NOWC's membership fees is most true for you?

- NOWC's membership fees are too high
- NOWC's membership fees seem appropriate
- NOWC's membership fees could be higher
- I'm not familiar with NOWC's membership fees

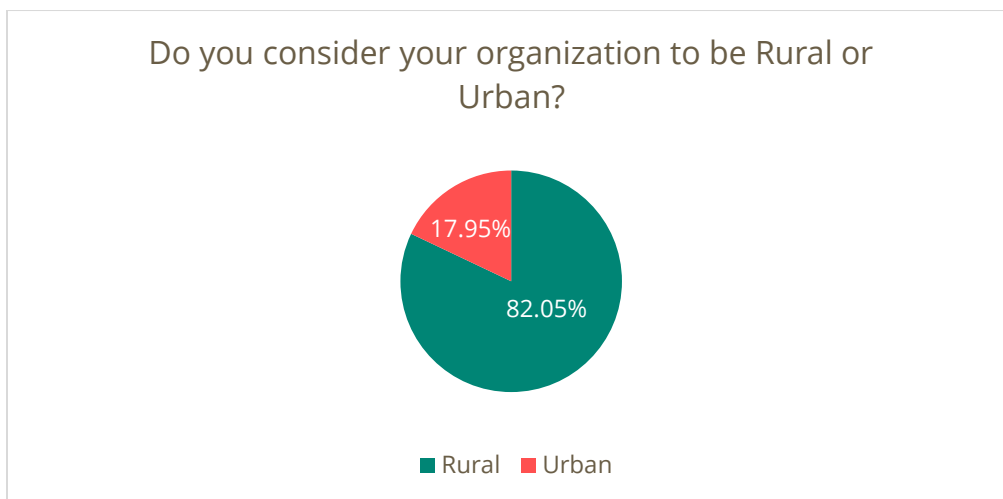
Q15. If you are willing to be contacted after this survey to discuss NOWC's member services further, please provide your contact information: _____

III. UO Survey Results

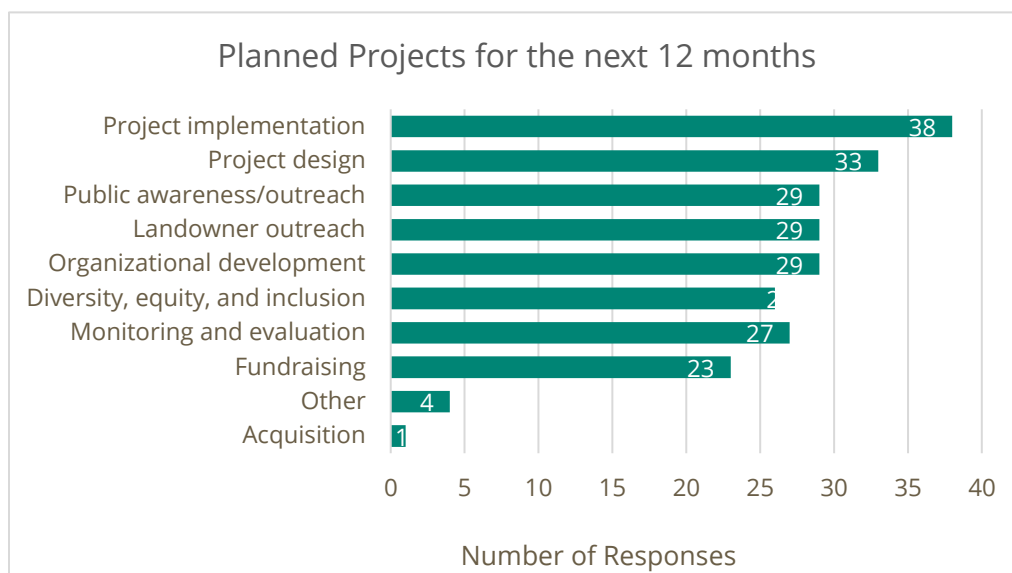
How many Employees does your organization have?

	Full Time	Part Time	Other
Average	3.00	0.87	0.33
5 or more	10	2	0

Do you consider your organization to be Rural or Urban?



What types of projects are you planning to undertake in the next 12 months?

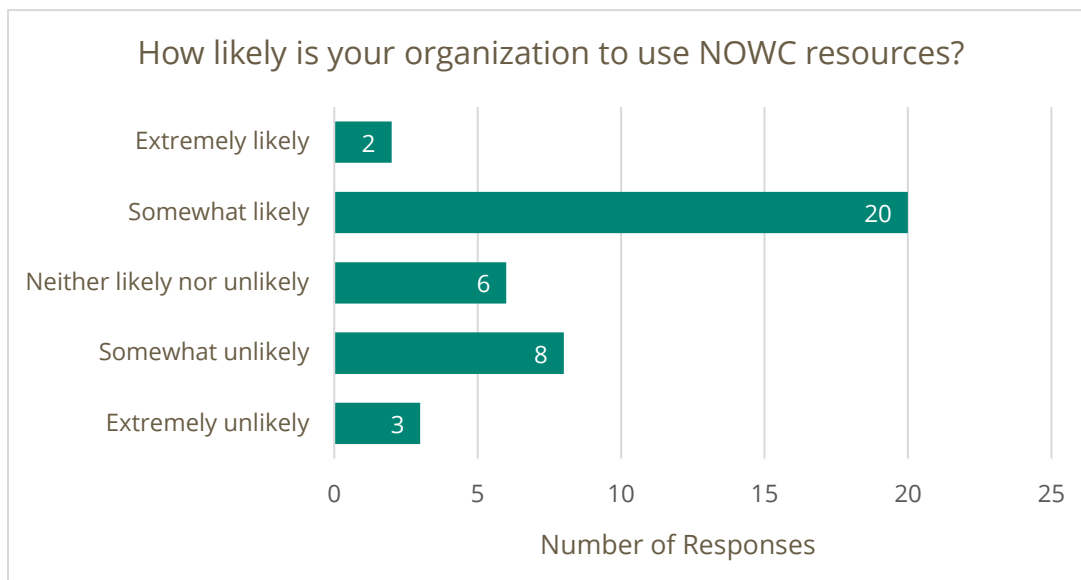


Other responses:

Youth education/watershed education

Stakeholder Engagement

Partnership development and facilitation

How likely are you to use NOWC resources while working on a project?**Which Aspects of NOWC's work do you value most?**

I appreciate NOWC being able to speak with one voice for all watershed councils and for example, put out a survey to all watershed councils and take that feedback and be able to communicate that feedback to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board or other

Networking with other Watershed Councils.

Government Relations work (voice with the agencies and at the legislature and communicating back to WCs what's going on); Connecting us to each other and others in the restoration community; and trainings (webinars, and others, hopefully in the future).

Ability to connect WCs across the state to work together to solve problems we all face/help all organizations improve (operationally and programmatically), be a united voice for our work in statewide, regional, national platforms (legislators, funders, et

Statewide representation and advocacy

Workshops put on by NOWC

We just joined and are eager to learn about all the ways NOWC provide assistance to watershed councils.

Connecting with other watershed councils

NOWC pays attention to issues that I do not have the time or ability to watch closely. They also provide training and coordination between groups that is helpful.

Connecting the councils into a united front, NOWC's work represents us as a whole.

Networking

Building connections between watershed councils and fostering connections/creating a favorable impression of watershed councils with agencies and decision makers

The email chain for asking questions is really helpful. I'm excited about the affinity groups. The networks advocacy on behalf of Watershed Councils is very important.

organizational support

The Council appreciates NOWC's focus on DEI. We are hopeful NOWC's role in DEI training will continue to expand in the years ahead.

Action in the legislature on behalf of watershed councils. This is a role that is not only foreign to many councils, but also risky and problematic as WC's try to balance multiple values - it's a necessary buffer to ensure WC priorities and interests are

Convening and connecting Councils. This should be something that happens between Councils all the time, but it doesn't seem to.

Being an available resource to ask questions to and get pointed in the right direction.

The connection they provide across the state between our organizations and priorities. I also value the statewide voice at the capitol, as this is something I do not have time for. I also value when they provide statewide training on certain topics that I

Shared templates, shared experiences, training, government relations

Legislative representation, connections to other watershed councils, training, clearinghouse for plan and policy templates and examples,

Networking opportunities, legislative tracking, educational seminars, organizational resources, email listserv to coordinators

Advocacy in state legislature, updates on issues affecting all Councils, networking with other council staff.

Collaborative connectedness.

Promoting the funding of watershed councils to the legislature

Watershed Coordinator meetings, updates from NOWC sub-committees, OrCP webinars

I believe the greatest strength of the Network is its ability to connect organizations across the state and to advocate for Councils and speak for them with one voice. The ability of the Network to bring educational programs and training to Councils is a

We really don't interact much with NOWC, and are unsure of what they do provide for WCs

I appreciate the legislative work, keeping councils up to date on what bills may affect our areas and our work.

I appreciate feeling part of a statewide organization that is interested in improving not only my council, but my skills as an employee

lobbyist, ear-to-the-ground, clearinghouse

Lobbying representing Council priorities and values is the most useful thing that the NOWC can provide.

Legislative updates

Education and advocacy- It's valuable to me to have someone I can rely on to provide a bird's eye view of what's happening across the state. The google list is also highly valuable to me, as it facilitates interaction with colleagues across the state.

The monthly webinars!

Currently - advocacy for all councils

Future - more direct services that have more tangible benefits and address our more mundane, practical, and day-to-day needs. Not glamorous, but much, much more important to getting our work done under very difficult

In-person resources/referrals

trainings

listserv for asking questions of other councils

I value that they advocate for the watershed councils and keep us informed of important issues. I value that they offer great training. I would utilize the services more if I understood what was available.

What new programs or activities would you like NOWC to offer and why?

I think it is difficult given that NOWC has just one part-time employee but here are a couple thoughts:

1) Are there ways we could pool the number of watershed council employees across the state or our resources and get a better deal on services that wate

Vetted policies and templates that have been reviewed by a qualified professional (attorney, CPA, risk insurance agent, etc.). The template library is helpful but how can we trust that these documents are sound when they are not actually vetted? Connect w

N/A

I'm still learning about NOWC so at this time don't have any requests

Right now our organization needs project management skills training.

NOWC needs to serve as an entity like a council of small government entities; they provide a menu of services for small organizations: health insurance, book keeping, benefits packages. If we could pool our resources we would be able to have more resilien

Shared grants

Continue and refine the affinity group offerings. I believe these can help watershed councils become more effective.

NOWC providing us with better access to academic journals would be helpful to our work. Likewise, templates that are annually updated for documents that are frequently used like contracts would be helpful.

More emphasis on operationalizing DEI with indigenous folks in this region

See above. This training is essential to Council operations.

I think the "new coordinators 101" type workshop at HJ Andrews a few years back was a great fit for NOWC - how to get new coordinators up to speed and help raise the overall capacity of councils by supporting the professionalizing the coordinator role. I

Any help with occasional needs, such as legal review of documents, etc. would be helpful. Perhaps a few non-profit lawyers who might make up a pool that could be accessed to provide pro-bono expertise on one-time consultation needs?

Resources/info that would be of use to all watershed councils. It's hard to know what other watershed councils are doing or what resources/info they've tapped into that are helpful to them and may be helpful to us as well.

DEI training & assistance to resources (as it is something the Network needs to work on as well); because all of our orgs are essentially working on this and I believe we could see some cost savings by providing resources to councils.

New Watershed Council staff training and resource sharing to assist with high turnover in Watershed Council staff.

Government relations and advocacy support to assist in shaping policy that benefits watershed management.

Shared legal council, HR resources, financial planning/budget resources, shared health insurance options. Similar to Special Districts Association of Oregon which provides 8 hours of consultant services per member for those services that all councils ne

Tools for more technical aspects of our work

Very specific guidance on technical aspects of this work: grant applications, permit applications

I'm hopeful the Network will secure the MMT grant for DEIJ and look forward to those trainings. Other CREST staff are participating in some of the affinity groups, which are a great idea.

Informational webinars (relevant to our area in Eastern OR)

Would love to be back to in person trainings and conferences

Unsure and not enough time to develop an answer now.

Potentially offering Board Training opportunities because Board development can be difficult and having access to resources on how Boards work and a place for board members to ask questions would be valuable.

Facilitating/organizing conversations (Zoom or other virtual) with other Councils' staff/coordinators on topics of common interest. Not sure if this is considered new, as I've read about the affinity groups. It would be nice to have more general topics I

More assistance on building a successful fundraising program.

I really like the collective model where many councils (already organized under the NOWC banner) have more buying power and should be able to leverage it into discounted rates for insurance (group policy approach), legal services, vehicle acquisition, and

Diversity and Inclusion training - it is needed

What could NOWC do differently to be more helpful to your organization?

I appreciate the outreach being done by NOWC's ED and the working being done by the NOWC board to try to expand their value and service.

I'm extremely new in my position - would be great to develop a better understanding for the different programs and activities available to Watershed Councils.

I think if NOWC can provide information, resources, and templates to help us improve organizational management - especially as it relates to emerging issues that we all have to face. For example, I just heard on the news that Oregon's paid leave act will

Better communicate what member services there are. I had no idea that most of the things below existed!

Continue to improve on advocacy and getting the word out about the great work of councils across the state. COLT is exemplary in their promotional mat

Newsletter- provide a focused platform to deliver resources, connections, updates, relevant topics

Website- provide a site that is updated useful resources, events, updates, etc

I think Vanessa is doing a great job getting the word out about NOWC and reaching out to get folks involved.

see above

I don't know. I just have not used any benefits at this time and don't even know how to log into the member section.

I just answered that in 7.

Offering DEI training (I know this is pending); providing guidance through links or other resources for effectively managing a 501c3; attempting to help improve the permitting/regulatory process for watershed restoration work

Letting councils know what resources are available more directly and suggesting ways that councils could make use of them. A lot of us are very small organizations and figuring out for ourselves how something could be useful is a time expenditure we don't

It would be great if NOWC conducted a watershed council needs assessment and then developed programs/resources to meet those needs.

We often have the need for skilled facilitators. It would be great if NOWC could support hiring (at a discount to members) facilitators skilled in all manner of strategic planning, org development/design, etc.

I asked a question via email that was never responded to (or maybe it was & I just never saw it). So, better communication of "busy, so will respond next week" or something like that would be helpful.

Communicate their achievements and needs to the member organizations (and funders). Help to promote our work on a statewide platform, and to funders. Shine the spotlight on WC's.

Updated website

Remind members annually the suite of services NOWC has to offer.

More outreach/interaction from regional representatives.

Continual reminder or brochure sharing the benefits of membership.

More frequent, but ****shorter**** meetings (or webinars) regarding technical guidance.

Vanessa is doing a great job of reinvigorating the Network. I'm looking forward to seeing how the resource library is updated and also looking forward to in person conferences in the future.

?? Again we really haven't utilized any services or heard much of what they provide from NOWC

not sure

Unsure and not enough time to develop an answer now.

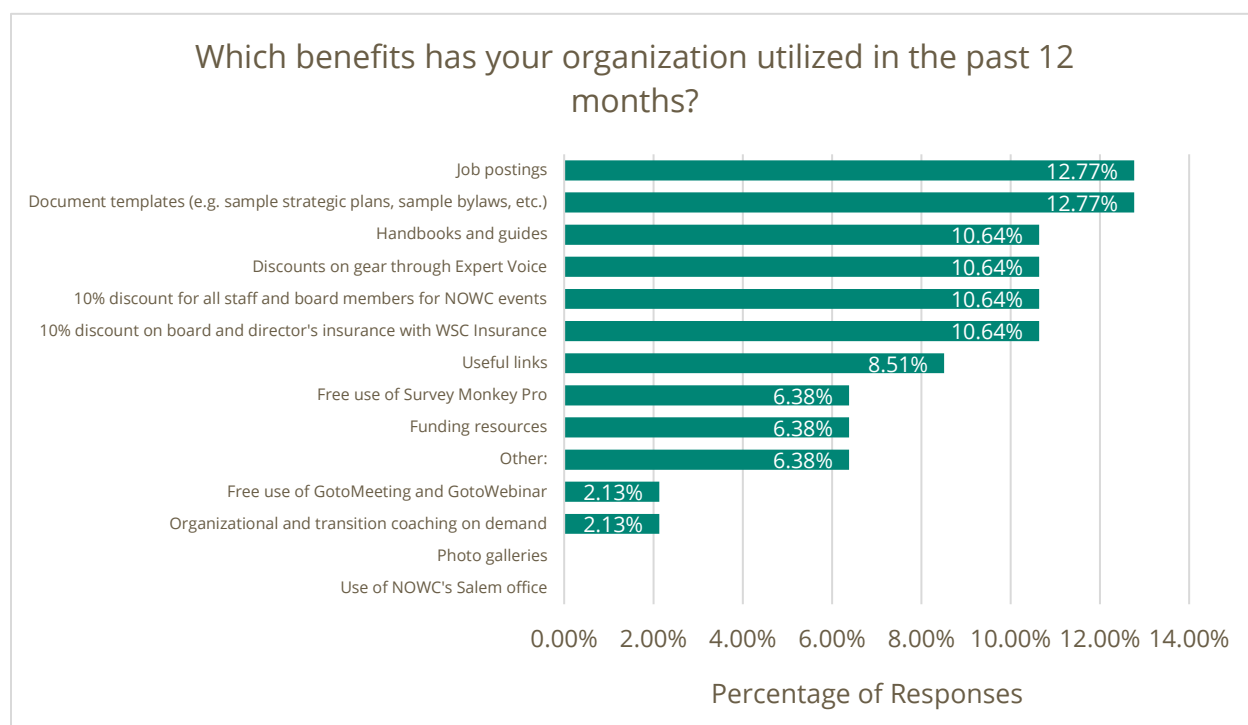
I'm not sure how it could be more helpful.

Tax preparation and audits are very problematic at this time. We could use a unified, group approach to solving these.

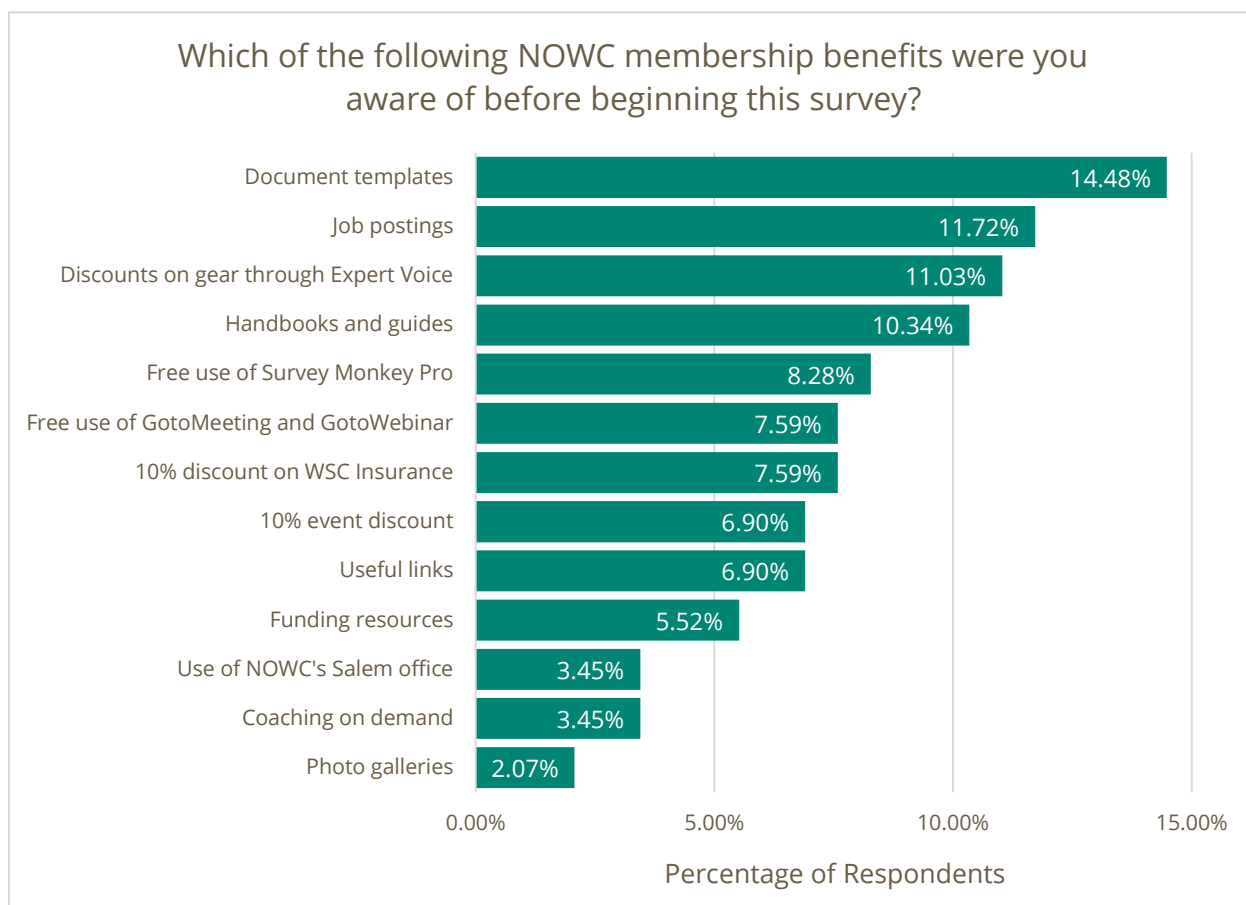
Staff retention - maybe this means using the WC community more openly to recruit, move staff to advancement opportunities or new locati

I think making us aware of what services they can help with and what resources are available. Looking at the following question - I wasn't aware that these services are offered (that's on my for not being more familiar with my member benefits :)

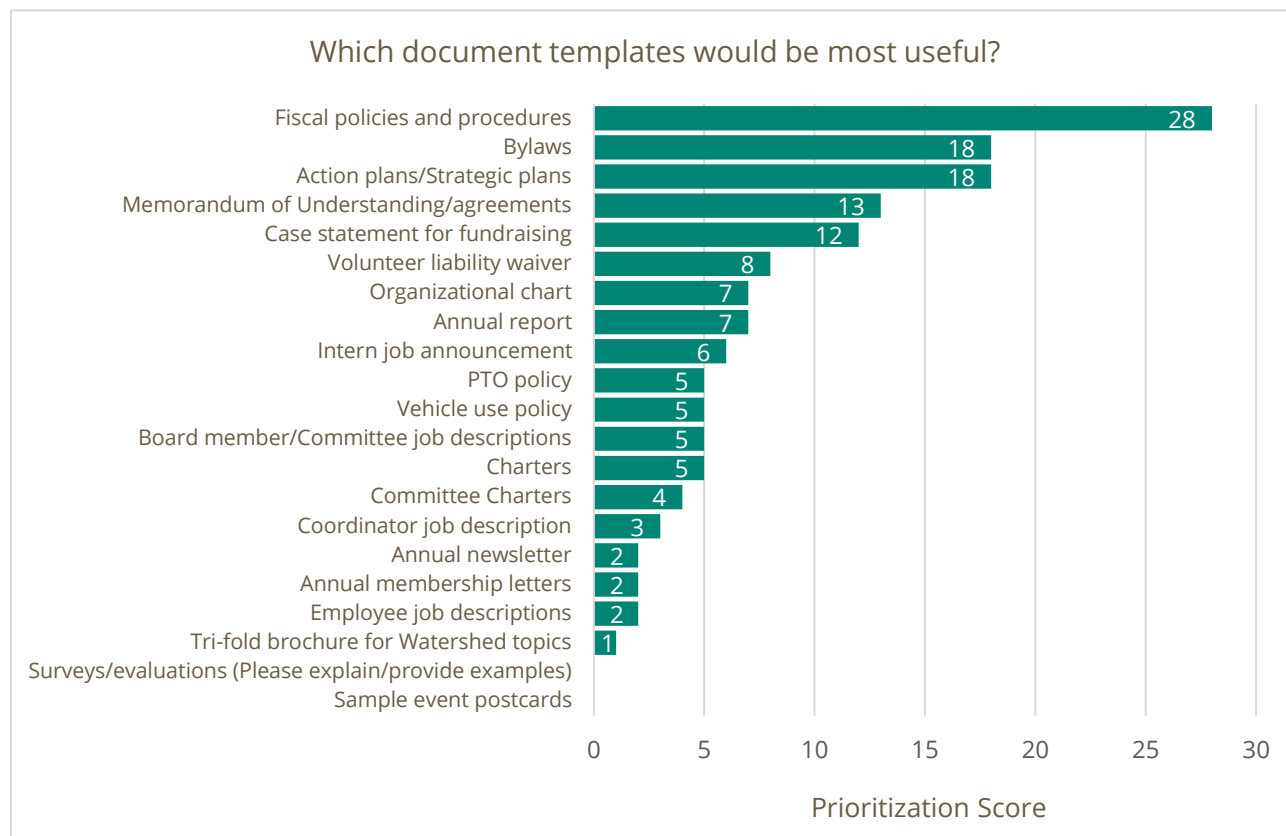
Which of the following NOWC membership benefits have you utilized within the past 12 months?



Which of the following NOWC membership benefits were you aware of before beginning this survey?



Which document templates would be most useful?



Note: These scores were calculated using a ranked score system. Respondents were asked to rank only their top 5 choices from the list available, with 1 being top priority, 2 being second priority, etc. These results were then given points based on their rank. Choices marked 1 were given 5 points, while choices marked 2 were given 4 points, choices marked 3 given 3 points, choices marked 4 given 2 points, and choices marked 5 given 1 point. The point totals from all respondents for each choice option were then added together.

Other responses:

Employee Handbook

Contracting Policies/Procedures

Budget template

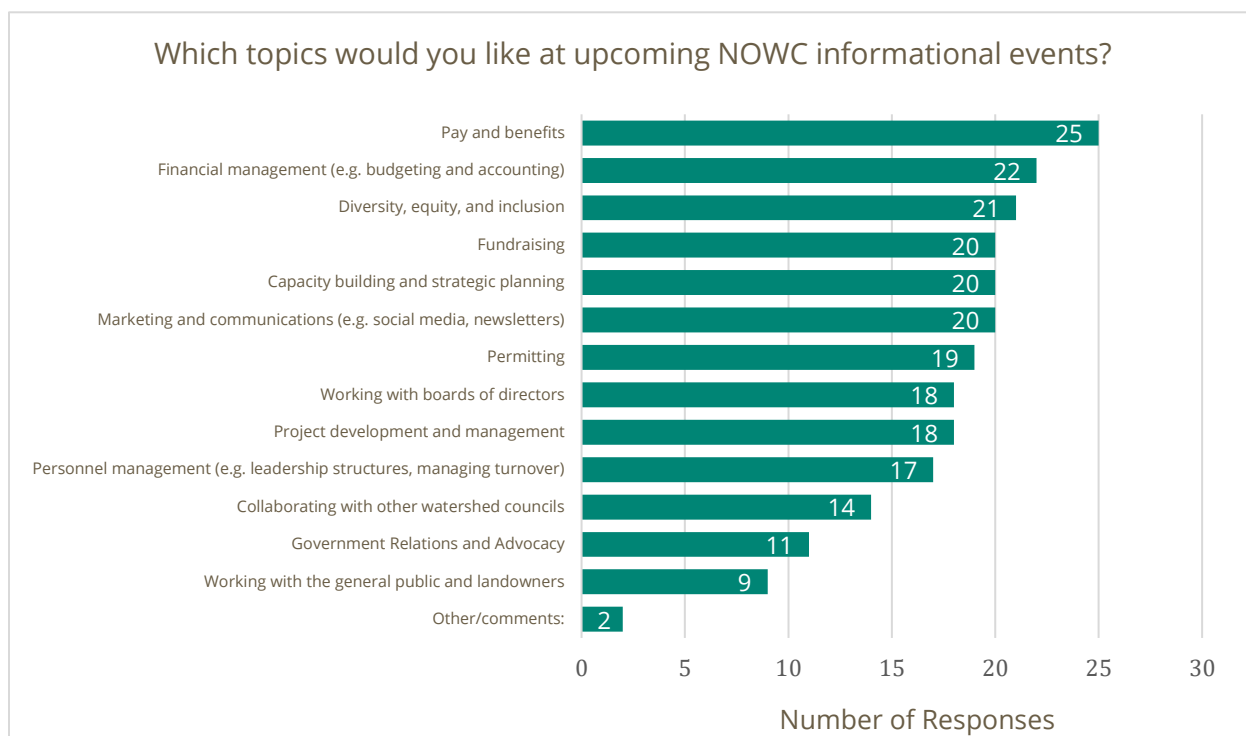
RFPs and contracts

Contracts for work

I think you're missing a lot of policy options that could be helpful to councils. Nonprofits are required by the state by law to have a Whistleblower Policy; the IRS strongly recommends a Conflict of interest policy. Records Retention & Destruction are im

Contracting templates

Which topics would you like to see covered in upcoming informational events from NOWC?

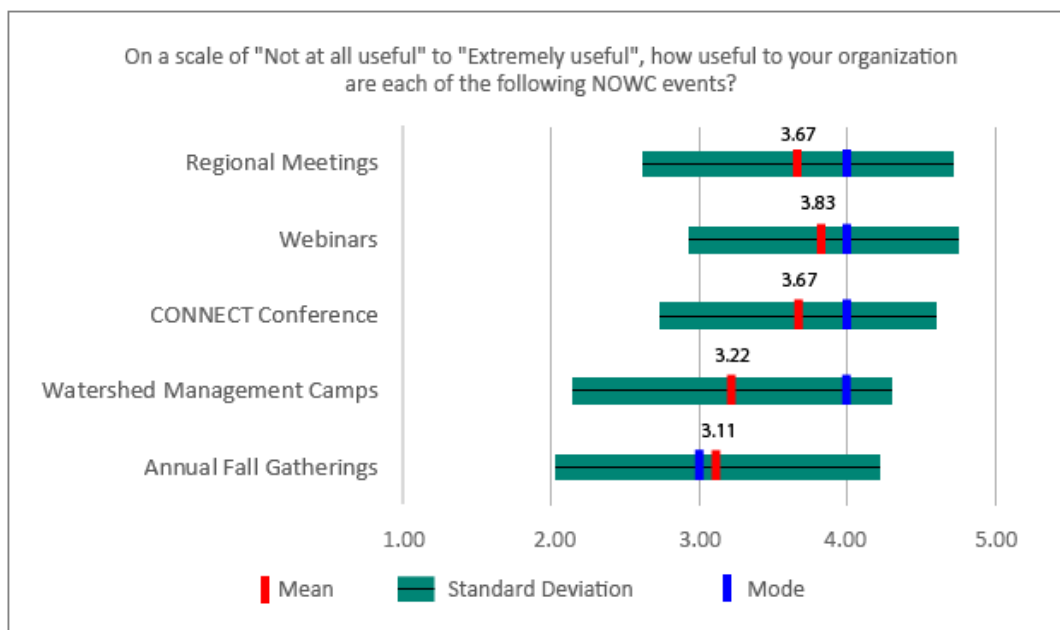


Other responses:

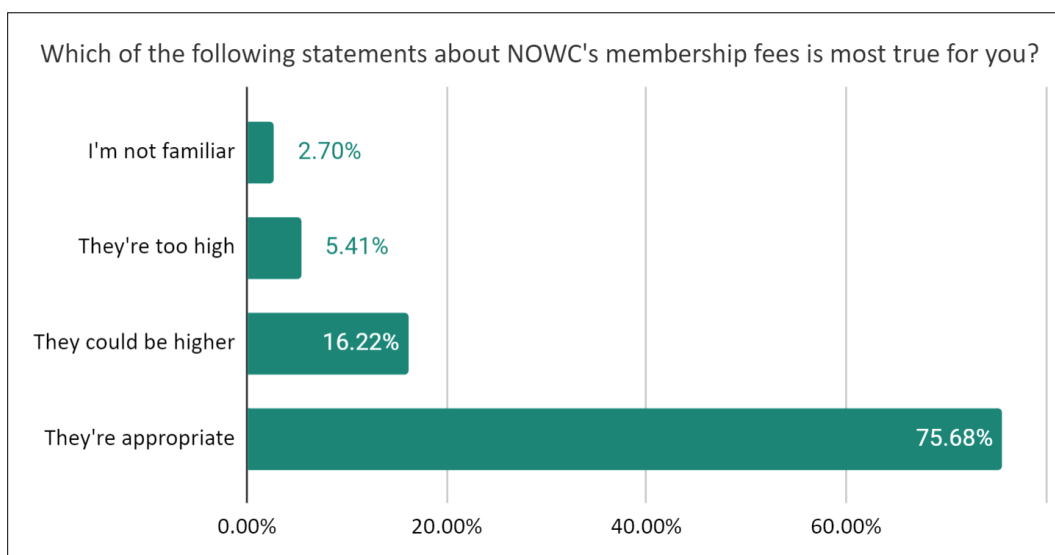
These are all really vague and generic. I would love to see training on Complying with Oregon's Pay Equity law - what we need to know.

Bidding and Contracting

On a scale of "Not at all useful" to "Extremely useful", how useful to your organization are each of the following NOWC events?



Which of the following statements about NOWC's membership fees is most true for you?



IV. Guides/Templates/Examples Library

General Nonprofit Management

Strategic Planning

[Create a Strategic Plan for Your Nonprofit](#)
[5 Phases of Strategic Planning](#)
[Strategic Planning Flowchart](#)

Samples:

[Timeline/Workplan for Strategic Planning](#)
[North Coast Watershed Association Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#)
[North Coast Watershed Association Workplan 2020-2023](#)
[NOWC Strategic Plan 2018- 2021](#)

Memorandums of Understanding

[Drafting a memorandum of understanding](#)

Samples:

[MOU](#)
[Partnership for the Umpqua MOU](#)

Bylaws

[Bylaws Do and Don'ts](#)
[Template of Bylaws for Watershed Organizations](#)

Samples:

[Lower Rogue Bylaws](#)
[South Fork John Day Watershed Bylaws & Operating Procedures](#)

Governance

[A guide to nonprofit Board Service in Oregon](#)
[15 Principles of Good Governance](#)
[BOD Job Description](#)
[BOD Strategic Agenda](#)
[BOD Meeting Minutes](#)
[Template Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)

Sample:

[South Fork John Day River Meeting Minutes Sample](#)

Financial Management

[Guide to Fiscal Policies and Procedures](#)
[Accounting Procedures Manual Template](#)
[Financial Policy Guide and Example](#)

[Glossary Financial Terms](#)

Samples:

[NOW Fiscal and Procedures Policy](#)

[Coquille Watershed Annual Budget](#)

[OWEB Project Expense Tracking Sheet](#)

Fundraising/Grants

[Types of Fundraising Campaigns](#)

[Fundraising Communications Toolkit](#)

[Fundraising Committee Role and Responsibilities](#)

[Grassroots Fundraising Journal](#), is a bimonthly magazine to help nonprofits raise funds. Their website also provides a Q&A column and articles on basic fundraising approaches.

[River Network](#) provides an online library with information on writing appeal letters.

Watershed Management Training and Education Organizations

[Center for Watershed Protection](#)

[EPA Watershed Academy](#)

[National NEMO Network \(Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials\)](#)

[River Network](#)

[Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board](#)

Nonprofit Management Online Assistance

[BoardSource](#) offers training, consulting, publications, and governance resources for nonprofit boards.

[National Council for Nonprofits](#) keeps nonprofits informed and empowered to create a positive public policy environment that best supports nonprofits in advancing their missions.


[The Center for Nonprofits](#) charitable umbrella organization serving NJ's nonprofit organizations that lists upcoming workshops, funding opportunities and job openings.

[Environmental Law Institute](#) offers seminars, training programs, reports, and policy recommendations on critical areas of environmental governance.

[Propel-nonprofits](#) provide capacity-building services and has a library to support nonprofits in achieving their missions including the ability to link strategy, governance, and finance.

Legal assistance

[Nolo, Law for All](#) An organization dedicated to explaining legal matter in common terms through publications, forms and their website. Provides a legal encyclopedia, law dictionary, legal research center, and more.



[The Pro Bono Partnership](#) Offers a complete legal resource center for nonprofits and attorneys, including free legal services to community-based nonprofit organizations, workshops, and materials.

Incorporation

[USA.Gov for Nonprofits](#) Highlights resources in numerous areas of running a nonprofit including tax-exempt status, incorporating, and more.

Governance

[Board Source](#) Develops publications on nonprofit governance and has numerous resources on board development.