



american
institute for
conservation

**Preserving Cultural
Heritage**

Accessibility in Conservation

Survey Results

Contents

- Executive Summary 2
- Background and Objectives..... 3
- Methodology 4
 - Distribution and Accessibility 4
 - Representativeness of the Sample 5
 - Recognized Weaknesses of the Survey 5
 - Data Synthesis 6
- Data Interpretation..... 7
 - Response Population 7
 - Disability Awareness & Support.....10
 - Access to Conservation Resources14
- Discussion & Analysis25
 - Possible Correlative Data27
- Conclusions/Next steps30
- Appendices32
 - Appendix A: AIC Accessibility Survey of Continuing Education in the Field of Cultural Heritage Conservation33
 - Appendix B: People and Organizations Who Provided Feedback57
 - Appendix C: Supplementary Data.....58
 - Appendix D: EIC Recommendations.....67

Executive Summary

The Equity & Inclusion Committee (EIC) of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) conducted a survey in 2021 to provide baseline data on disabilities and accessibility in the field of cultural heritage conservation. The areas covered by the survey and report include demographics, disability awareness, personal experiences of those with disabilities, disability rights and accommodations, and experiences accessing conservation information and events.

The survey, titled “AIC Accessibility Survey of Continuing Education in the Field of Cultural Heritage Conservation,” was distributed to AIC members and allied professionals.¹ There were 558 complete responses to the survey, and of these responses, 162 respondents (29%) identified as having a disability or disabilities. Many respondents identified as having invisible disabilities (including psychological and chronic health conditions) and respondents also reported multiple disabilities. A small percentage of respondents identified as having visible disabilities.

Overall, 41% of those who identify as having disabilities reported feeling understood and supported by their colleagues. Notably, those who reported as blind/low vision or as having psychological conditions appear to feel more understood and supported. Those identifying within the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) reported feeling less understood. The survey established that a majority of respondents, regardless of disability status, lack understanding of disability awareness and disability rights.

In workplace and education settings, the most common needs reported by respondents with disabilities were for a flexible schedule, accommodations for chronic pain and computer related issues, and support for telecommuting. Many workplace and education adaptations adopted during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic made these accommodations available more broadly. Respondents with disabilities also reported challenges accessing conservation, professional development, and education opportunities. Some examples include conferences, lectures, grant and scholarship applications, webinars, and hands-on workshops.

The survey included specific questions about respondents' attendance and experience of F/AIC² events, including annual meetings, virtual programs, and workshops. Many respondents expressed appreciation for clear, easy-to-read slides, advance distribution of transcripts and/or presentation notes and closed/live captioning. Feedback specific to the accessibility of F/AIC events and resources will be used to help increase accessibility of future efforts.

¹ The title of this report has been changed to “Accessibility in Conservation” to reflect the diversity in the questions asked in the survey.

² “F/AIC” is an acronym used for AIC and FAIC collectively. “FAIC” refers only to the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation.

From the survey data collected and analysis, several themes were identified for future topics and areas of focus for the Equity and Inclusion Committee and the larger F/AIC. These include:

- Lack of awareness of existing resources: many people are not aware of existing resources that may help create more accessible opportunities and spaces, including information already provided on the AIC webpages.
- Lack of awareness of challenges for colleagues with disabilities: those who identify as not having disabilities are neither fully aware of the challenges faced by their colleagues nor the number of AIC members who identify as having disabilities.
- Hybrid and virtual events provide opportunities for greater accessibility for members with disabilities. It is possible that some of these practices could be incorporated to make in-person events more accessible for the field.
- People with disabilities need to feel heard and their challenges recognized even if they cannot be fully addressed.

The Equity and Inclusion Committee has drafted specific recommendations for F/AIC Boards, staff, and members based on this survey. These recommendations accompany this report. Successful tracking of shifts in disabilities and accessibility in the field will require gathering information on these topics at specific intervals in the future.

Background and Objectives

In May 2020, the newly formed Equity & Inclusion Committee (EIC) of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) created a Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. One goal of the plan was to examine the structural and systemic barriers to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) within AIC. The focus for the committee's first five years is on changing the AIC culture and building a strong foundation to ensure that future DEIA efforts are successful, measurable, and sustainable. The first step in addressing the accessibility efforts was to gather baseline data against which to measure future change.

In 2020 and 2021, the EIC³, in conjunction with AIC member Sally G. Kim, undertook an accessibility survey of the field of cultural heritage conservation.⁴ The survey was designed to collect data from AIC members, affiliated professionals, and students pertaining to their perceptions of, and experiences with, accessibility in the field of conservation. The ultimate goal of the survey was to better understand the accessibility needs and challenges of the conservation and collections care community, including

³ The EIC committee members during the years 2020 and 2021 included Anya Dani, Samantha Emmanuel, Nora Frankel, Anisha Gupta, Kristin Holder, Josie Maldonado, Ronel Namde, Rebecca Anne Rushfield, Jennifer Hain Teper, AIC Board liaison Molly Gleeson, and staff liaison Katelin Lee.

⁴ See [Appendix A](#) for the survey titled "AIC Accessibility Survey of Continuing Education in the Field of Cultural Heritage Conservation."

prospective students and other users of programming and materials produced by F/AIC. A future goal is to use the survey data to raise awareness of disability-related issues in the conservation community and to provide resources to address these issues. This survey is the first known effort to collect data on accessibility in the field of conservation in North America.

Methodology

The survey was developed and designed to obtain data representative of AIC members and frequent users of F/AIC resources. To assess the overall state of the field, it was important to gather responses from both those who do and those who do not identify as having disabilities. The survey included questions about barriers/experiences encountered by those who identify as having disabilities and views held by those who do not.

The initial survey questions were drafted by Kim and further developed in collaboration of EIC members Jennifer Hain Teper and Ronel Namde with assistance from Joshua Valentine, a library science student at the University of Illinois. The survey questions were reviewed by EIC and then passed on to F/AIC staff, Art-Reach employees, and others working in disability advocacy for input and feedback. The list of people and organizations who provided invaluable feedback on the questions and report is provided in [Appendix B](#). The final survey questions are provided in [Appendix A](#).

The survey was programmed using the Qualtrics survey software and was designed using skip logic (also called conditional branching). Skip logic ensured that a customized and relevant path of questioning was created for each respondent based upon their specific answers to prior questions. The number of responses per question varies throughout the survey as a result. Respondents were not required to provide an answer in order to move to the next question, and in many instances multiple responses could be selected.

Since the study involved questions about the personal experiences of human subjects, all primary investigators completed Institutional Review Board (IRB) training. The primary purpose of the IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of the human subjects, which the committee thought was particularly important when asking for data from/about a protected group of individuals. The final survey protocol was reviewed and exempted from ongoing IRB oversight by the University of Illinois IRB (approved protocol IRB #21369). Research can be qualified as “exempt” by the IRB if it is of no risk or minimal risk to subjects and all of the research procedures fit within at least one exemption category in the federal IRB regulations.

Distribution and Accessibility

The survey was available for voluntary participation for 25 days from January 11 to February 5, 2021. It was disseminated via email to various groups including the AIC

Member Community, the Global Conservation Forum (ConsDistList), and allied professional lists such as the Society of American Archivists Preservation Forum, the Preservation Administrators Discussion Group of the American Library Association, and the Conservation DistList Canada. The survey was also promoted through the AIC's social media channels and website, as well as those of Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (CAC-ACCR) and Institute of Conservation (ICON). Efforts for maximum participation included offering the survey through an online survey tool, in a mobile-friendly format, requestable hardcopy paper form, fillable and printable PDF, and screen-reader-enabled PDF.

Representativeness of the Sample

The survey collected 558 complete responses, of which 162 identified as having a disability. This response rate is similar to other "successful" surveys of the general membership within the AIC.⁵

At the time of the survey, AIC had approximately 3,200 members. Of the 405 respondents to the question about membership, 297 indicated that they were AIC members. This represents approximately 9% of the total AIC membership. 153 of the 558 people chose not to respond to the question about membership status. Furthermore, some respondents were members of other conservation communities, for example, CAC-ACCR and ICON who also regularly utilize F/AIC resources. Of the 404 who provided their current professional status, respondents identified representing a range of careers including:

- 279 identified as conservators
- 36 as collections care professionals
- 40 as graduate students

Recognized Weaknesses of the Survey

Despite multiple rounds of editing and feedback from varied stakeholders, the final survey had some significant weaknesses that were not fully recognized until after the close of the survey period. Best efforts were made to utilize language that was accessible and widely used through existing research. Feedback from different members of the disability community was solicited. However, some terms used may not have been consistent with how all individuals identify. For instance, some respondents thought "having a disability" denoted victimhood and others did not agree with separating "Autism Spectrum Disorder" from "Neurological Condition." Individuals may have chosen to use the "other" option to write in a response. Not all individuals with disabilities construct self-identity based on "disabilities" and may be independent of it or categorize their disability identity as belonging to different types. This became clearer as we attempted to aggregate data submitted by individuals.

⁵ Other surveys with a similar response rate include the 2014 AIC/FAIC Conservation Compensation Research and the first iteration of the AIC Membership COVID-19 Impact Survey.

Although the survey was intended to gather information from anybody interested in responding, and particularly those who utilize F/AIC resources, some groups found the survey did not reflect their experiences. Specifically, some questions were worded in ways that were hard for individuals to answer, such as sole-proprietors, individuals on long-term contracts, and those located outside the United States. Lastly, the survey was primarily designed to gather information about the experience of AIC members. However, many respondents provided additional feedback about larger systemic or institutional issues. Although this information is critical to understanding accessibility as a whole, the information provided did not fit easily into the data collection schema.

Data Synthesis

After the survey closed, the data was processed and organized. This included filtering and editing for readability, aggregating answers where appropriate, and moving data that did not answer the question or answered a different question. Many of the open text answers contained useful feedback or experiences shared that are incorporated throughout this report. There was also redundancy in answers, which were aggregated into a category that would best represent them. For example, if someone wrote in the text box for “Other” that they “had depression”, the answer was added to “psychological condition” which was available as an option in the same question.

Several challenges emerged when trying to represent the data. First, none of the survey questions required responses in order to move to the next question. This flexibility offered respondents a choice to skip questions that could not or chose not to answer. This option also meant that the number of respondents per question varied. Thus, the percentage of total respondents (as opposed to number of responses) is provided throughout this report to provide more consistency in data interpretation.

Another challenge was identifying and isolating hardships due to factors such as technical competency or lack of access to resources due to economics. An example would be a respondent reporting having negative experiences at virtual events because of technical issues on the user’s end as opposed to issues related to accessibility of the content.

Respondents were specifically asked to relate their positive and negative experiences at in-person and virtual events hosted by F/AIC to their disability/disabilities, though this guidance was not always followed. Still, most feedback was retained and categorized in accordance with the most relevant question.

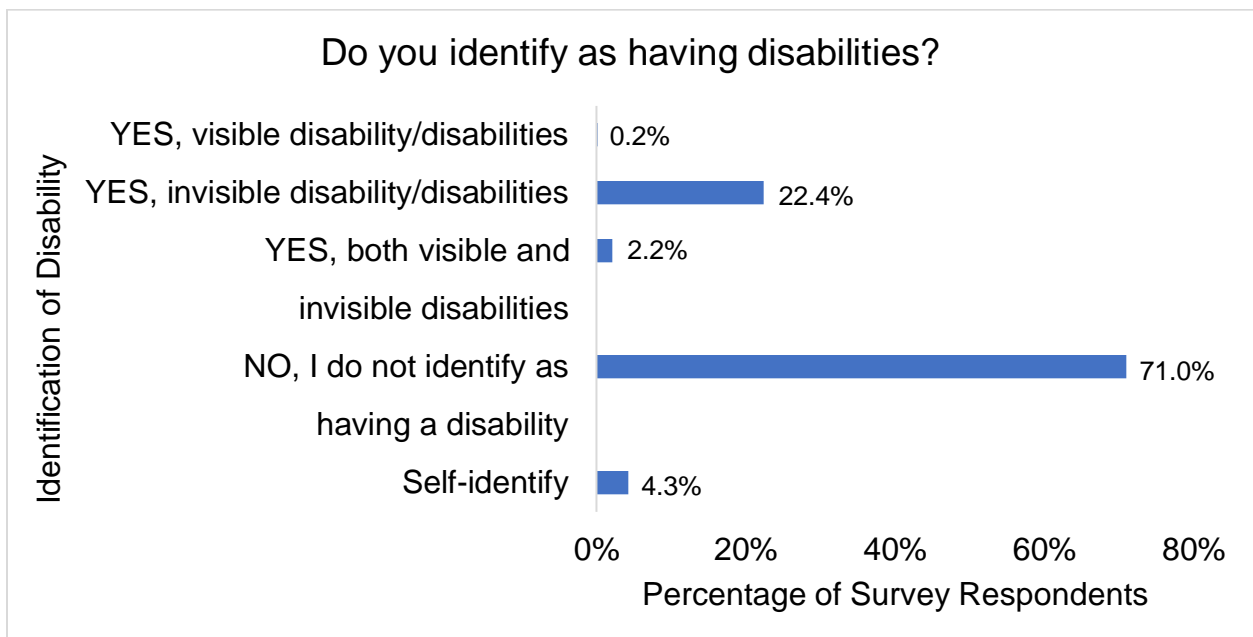
Lastly, some respondents skipped many questions or started the survey without completing it, resulting in incomplete responses. For the purposes of this report, incomplete responses were defined as those respondents who did not complete the survey at least to the demographics section or those for which over 50% of the responses were left blank. Therefore, the 109 responses deemed incomplete were not included in any of the ensuing data interpretation.

In deciding how to represent the data gathered in the survey, the survey team chose to have data that is graphically represented in bar graphs also be presented as a table to provide the most accessible information. Notably, screen readers cannot read bar graphs, but bar graphs are generally more helpful to people with dyslexia than tables. All of the bar graphs also contain alt text that provides a full description of the bar graph information.

Data Interpretation

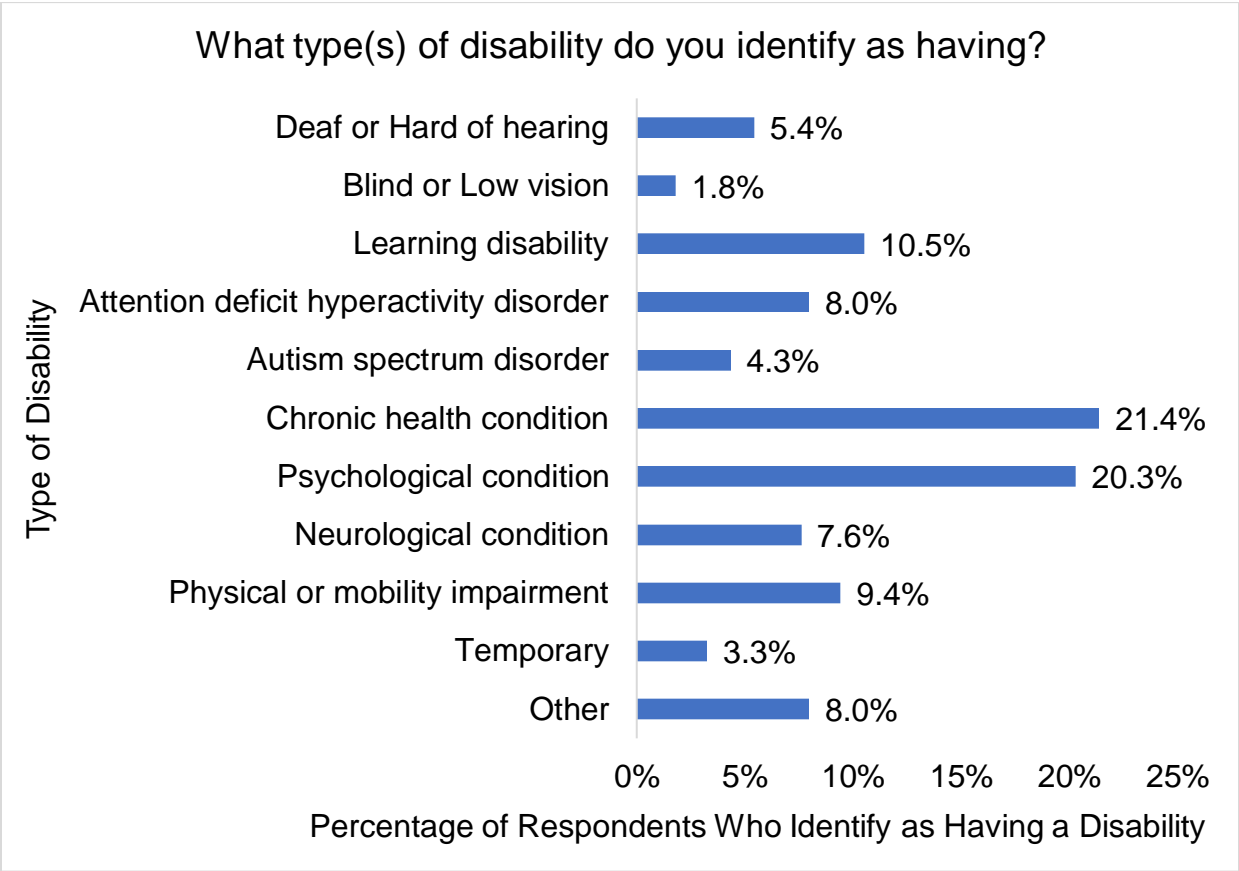
Response Population

There were 558 respondents, 162 of whom identified as having disabilities (29%). Many respondents identified as having invisible disabilities with the largest number identifying as having psychological or chronic health conditions. See Figures 1 and 2 for total response distribution and types of disabilities reported.



Survey Question Options	Percent of Survey Respondents
YES, visible disability/disabilities	0.2%
YES, invisible disability/disabilities	22.4%
YES, both visible and invisible disabilities	2.2%
NO, I do not identify as having a disability	71.0%
Self-identify	4.3%

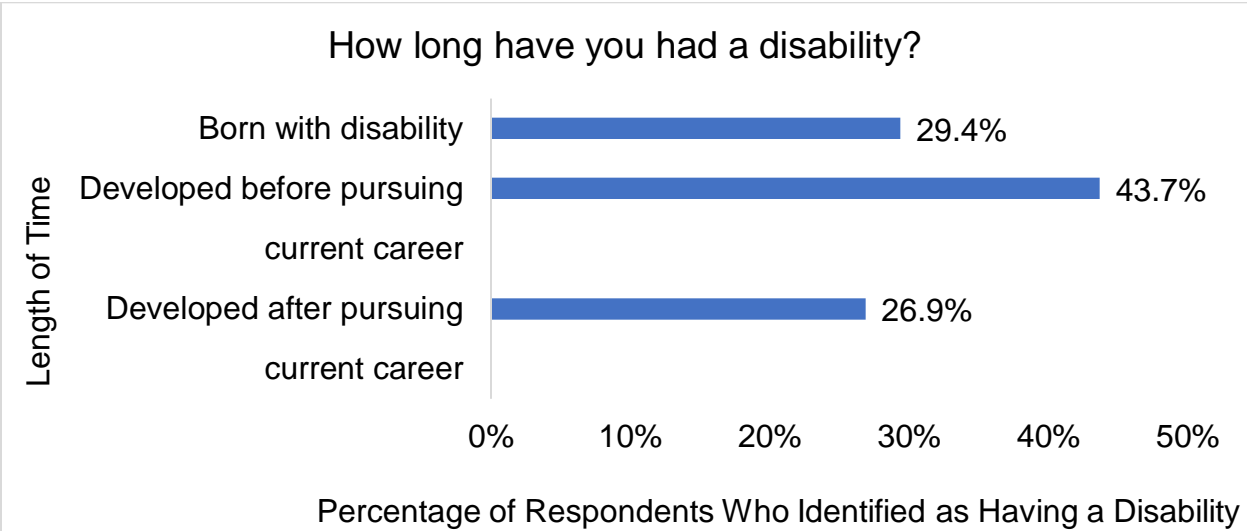
Figure 1. Total distribution of responses regarding self-identification of disability or disabilities



Type of Disability	Percentage of Respondents Who Identify as Having a Disability
Deaf or Hard of hearing	5.4%
Blind or Low vision	1.8%
Learning disability	10.5%
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	8.0%
Autism spectrum disorder	4.3%
Chronic health condition	21.4%
Psychological condition	20.3%
Neurological condition	7.6%
Physical or mobility impairment	9.4%
Temporary	3.3%
Other	8.0%

Figure 2. Total number of responses on self-identified types of disabilities

Of those who identified as having a disability, more than two thirds stated that their disability developed before pursuing their current career, and less than one third reported being born with their disabilities, see Figure 3.



Length of Time	Percentage of Respondents Who Identified as Having a Disability
Born with disability	29.4%
Developed before pursuing current career	43.7%
Developed after pursuing current career	26.9%

Figure 3. Total distribution of responses on the length of time the respondents have had disability or disabilities

Broader demographic information of respondents was also collected at the end of the survey.⁶ The majority of respondents were white females (78% white, 86% female). Other respondents were 7% Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin, 6% Asian or Asian American, 2% Black or African American, and 2% mixed race. While the majority of respondents were female, 8% percent of respondents were male, with the remaining 2% reporting as non-binary and 3% preferring not to answer. Ages of respondents skewed younger, with 35% being between 25-34 years of age and 29% being 35-44 years. Unsurprisingly, many of responses came from the Northeast U.S. (37%), with the next-highest percentage from Ontario, Canada (14.9%) and the Western U.S. (13.9%). Forty-one percent (41%) reported working in “museums or historic houses”, 17% working in “library or archives”, and 9% working in private practice, while 5% or less work in other organizations or are self-employed, retired, or unemployed. The vast majority (69%) of respondents self-reported as conservators, while 10% reported as graduate students or recent grads, and 9% reported as collections care professionals. Those who responded were largely mid-career or younger, with 19% being in the field less than five years. The remaining 39% were largely those with less than 20 years in the field (10%), less than 25 years (7%) or less than 30 years (9%). Given the target audience of the survey, most respondents were AIC members (73%), while 24% were not and 3% were unsure of their membership status. Of those who responded that they were AIC members, 11% were students, 7% were post-graduates, 28% were associate members, 34% were professional associate members, 14% were fellows, and 2% were institutional members (for representations of full demographic data, see [Appendix C](#)).

Disability Awareness & Support

The second survey section focused on disability awareness and institutional practices and policies. When asked about compliance and accommodations offered by their workplace, more than half (52%) responded that their workplace was compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)⁷, whereas 39% were unsure. Only 9% reported that they believed their workplace was non-compliant with the ADA. Of those, 28% reported working in a “museum or historic house” and 17% reported working in private practice (all other responses were left blank or were less than 10% of the total negative

⁶ See [Appendix C](#).

⁷ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): [ADA.gov](#)

responses). Additionally, the majority (71%) reported that their workplaces or classrooms provided reasonable accommodations. Of those who responded negatively, 21% reported working in a “museum or historic house”, and 18% reported working in private practice.

Beyond worksite compliance and provision of accommodations, respondents knew less about other means of support for those with disabilities. Only 14% of respondents knew if their employer/institutional website was compliant with the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), whereas 77% were unsure. Nine percent (9%) reported that their websites were non-compliant. Only 37% of respondents reported being aware of disability legislation in their state. Forty-four percent (44%) knew if they were covered by disability insurance or benefits, whereas 19% did not know and 37% reported that they were not covered. Lastly, only 16% of respondents stated that their employer or institution provided disability awareness materials, whereas 50% replied that these materials were not supplied and 34% were unsure.

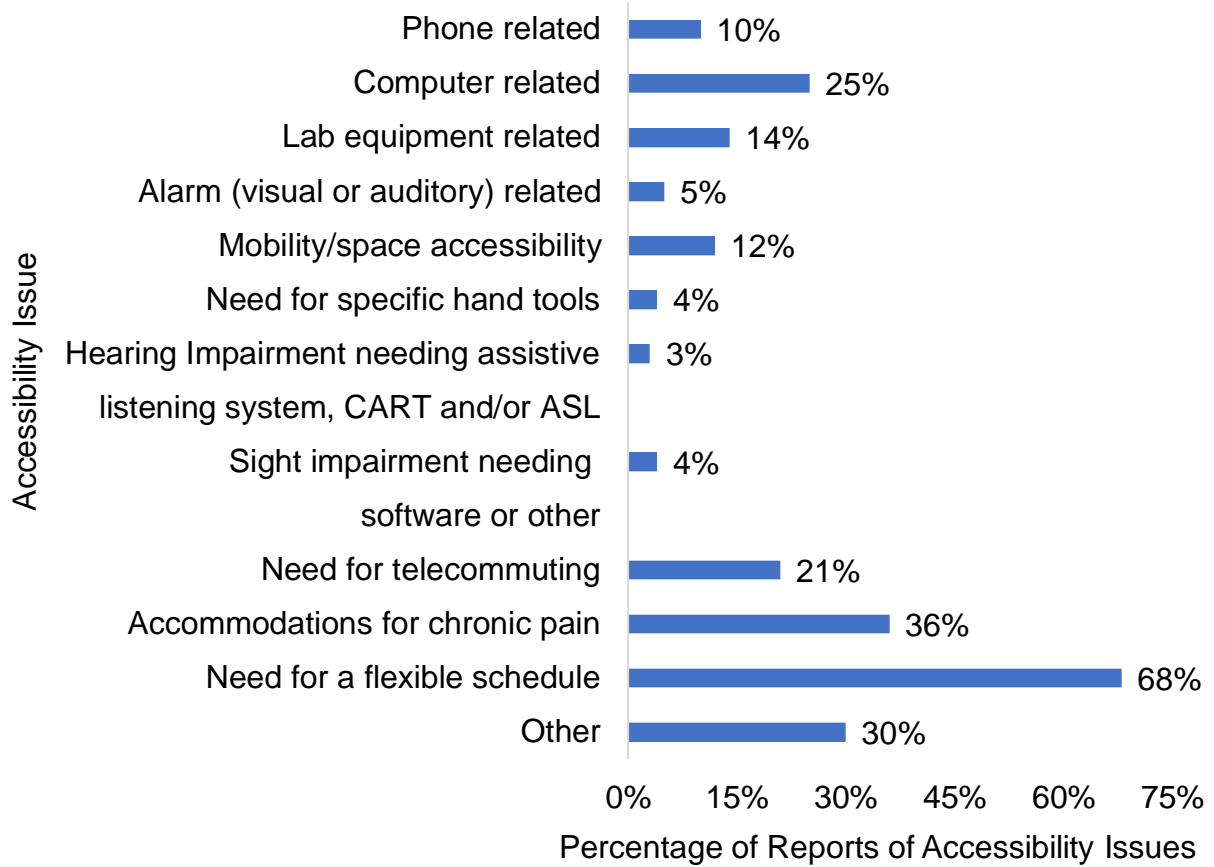
The next survey section focused on the experiences of the 162 respondents who replied that they have a disability. When asked if they had ever disclosed their disabilities to their supervisor or employer, 29% reported that they had disclosed their disability to their direct supervisor and 28% had disclosed to both their direct supervisor as well as their Human Resources office; however, 40% had not disclosed their disabilities. When those who had not disclosed their disabilities were asked why, 22% feared that they would be seen as less capable, 20% were uncomfortable sharing that information, 16% did not feel it was necessary, and 14.7% were concerned that the information would not stay privileged (Figure 4). Respondents could select more than one option.

Selected Choices	# of Respondents	% of Total Responses
Did not feel it was necessary	24	16.0%
Accommodations could be made without disclosure	17	11.3%
Was uncomfortable sharing	30	20.0%
Concerns that direct supervisor will see me as less capable	33	22.0%
Fear of harassment	5	3.3%
Concern that it would not remain privileged information	22	14.7%
Prefer not to share	12	8.0%
Other	7	4.7%

Figure 4. Total number and distribution of responses to the question on why the respondents did not disclose disabilities to their supervisor or employer

The next series of questions related to those who have requested or received accommodations in their workplace or classroom. When asked if they had received accommodations, 27% replied that they had received accommodations in their place of work, 11% in the classroom, and 15% had received accommodations in both. While the needs for accommodations varied, the most common needs were for a flexible schedule (68%), accommodations for chronic pain (36%) and computer-related issues (25%), and support for telecommuting (21%) (Figure 5). Forty-seven percent (47%) replied that they had not received accommodations, though by the wording of the question it is unclear if requests were not made or if they were made but not granted. For those who received accommodations, 72% reported that it was as a result of a direct request, with 55% reporting that all their requests were met completely, 21% reporting that requests were met only partially and 10% reporting that requests were not met. Of the 21%, it is unclear if all requests were partially met or only some of the requests were met. Most accommodations were not paid for by those making the request (55%); however, 15% of requests were paid in part by those making the request and 4% paid out of pocket entirely for their own accommodation. Of the requests that were not met as well as the requests that were paid completely out of pocket, no trends in type of accommodation met, nor type of employer were identifiable.

Accessibility Issues in the Classroom or Workplace



Accessibility Issues in the Classroom or Workplace	Percentage of Reports of Accessibility Issues
Phone related	10%
Computer related	25%
Lab equipment related	14%
Alarm (visual or auditory) related	5%
Mobility/space accessibility	12%
Need for specific hand tools	4%
Hearing Impairment needing assistive listening system, CART and/or ASL	3%
Sight impairment needing software or other	4%
Need for telecommuting	21%
Accommodations for chronic pain	36%
Need for a flexible schedule	68%
Other	30%

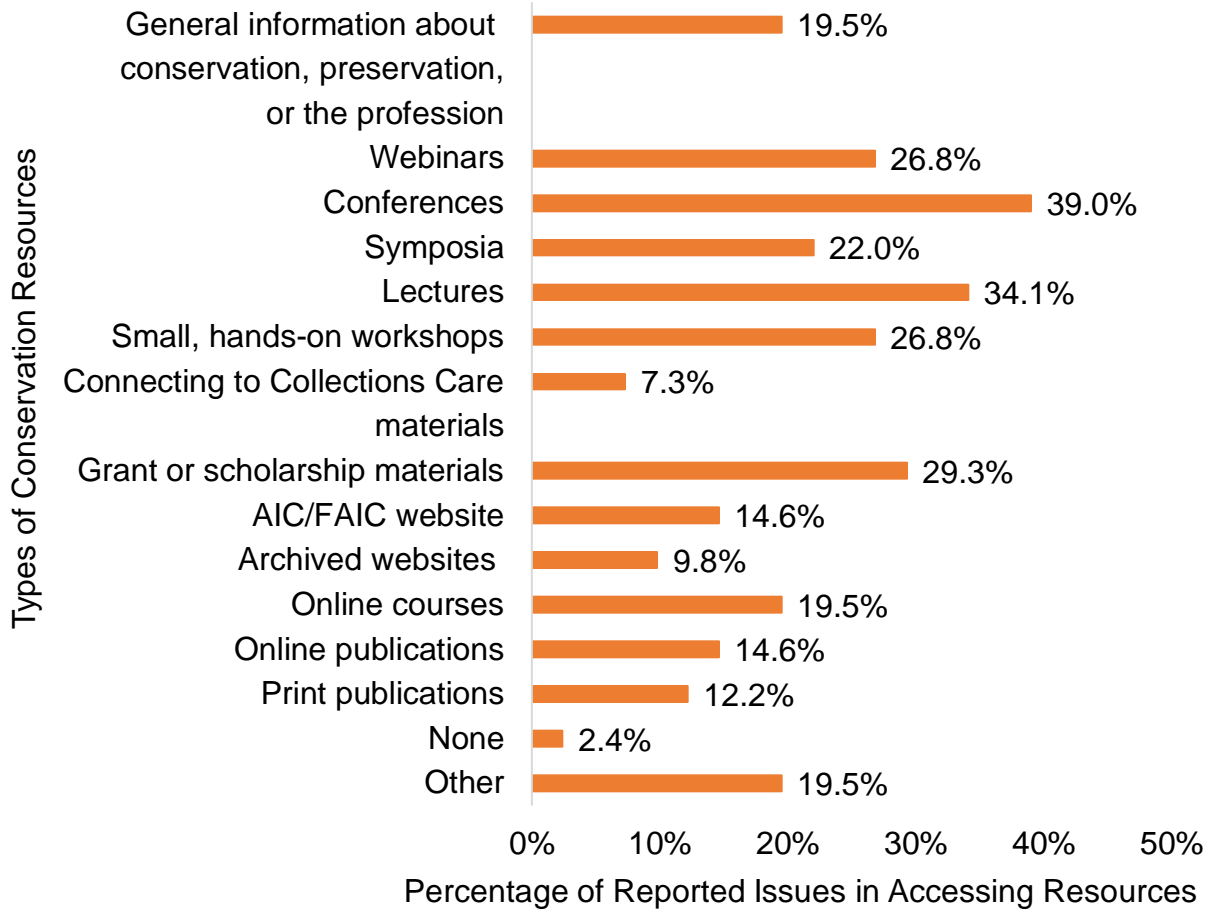
Figure 5. Total number of responses to the accessibility issues the respondents had in the classroom or workplace

When those who disclosed having a disability were asked if they felt their colleagues or classmates were understanding of their disabilities and supportive of their needs, 23% responded in the affirmative, 41% replied somewhat/partially, 8% replied they did not feel supported or understood, and 28% replied “Not Applicable.” Lastly, 75% of those surveyed did not report experiencing harassment due to their disability or that the question was not applicable. Twenty-five percent (25%) replied that they had experienced harassment and that their supervisor/employer/Human Resources Office was unable to resolve the issue. Of the 25%, 6% felt the issue was partially resolved, 6% did not feel the issue was resolved, and 13% did not go to their supervisor/employer/HR office when they experienced harassment. None of the respondents reported experiencing harassment that was fully resolved by a supervisor/Human Resources Office.

Access to Conservation Resources

Almost 30% of all respondents reported that in the past five years, they have had difficulty learning about conservation or using resources provided by the general conservation community due to disabilities and/or unmet requests for accommodations. The most frequent challenges were at conferences (39%), lectures (34.1%), grant and scholarship applications (29.3%), webinars (26.8%), and hands-on workshops (26.8%) (Figure 6).

Challenges in Accessing Conservation Resources



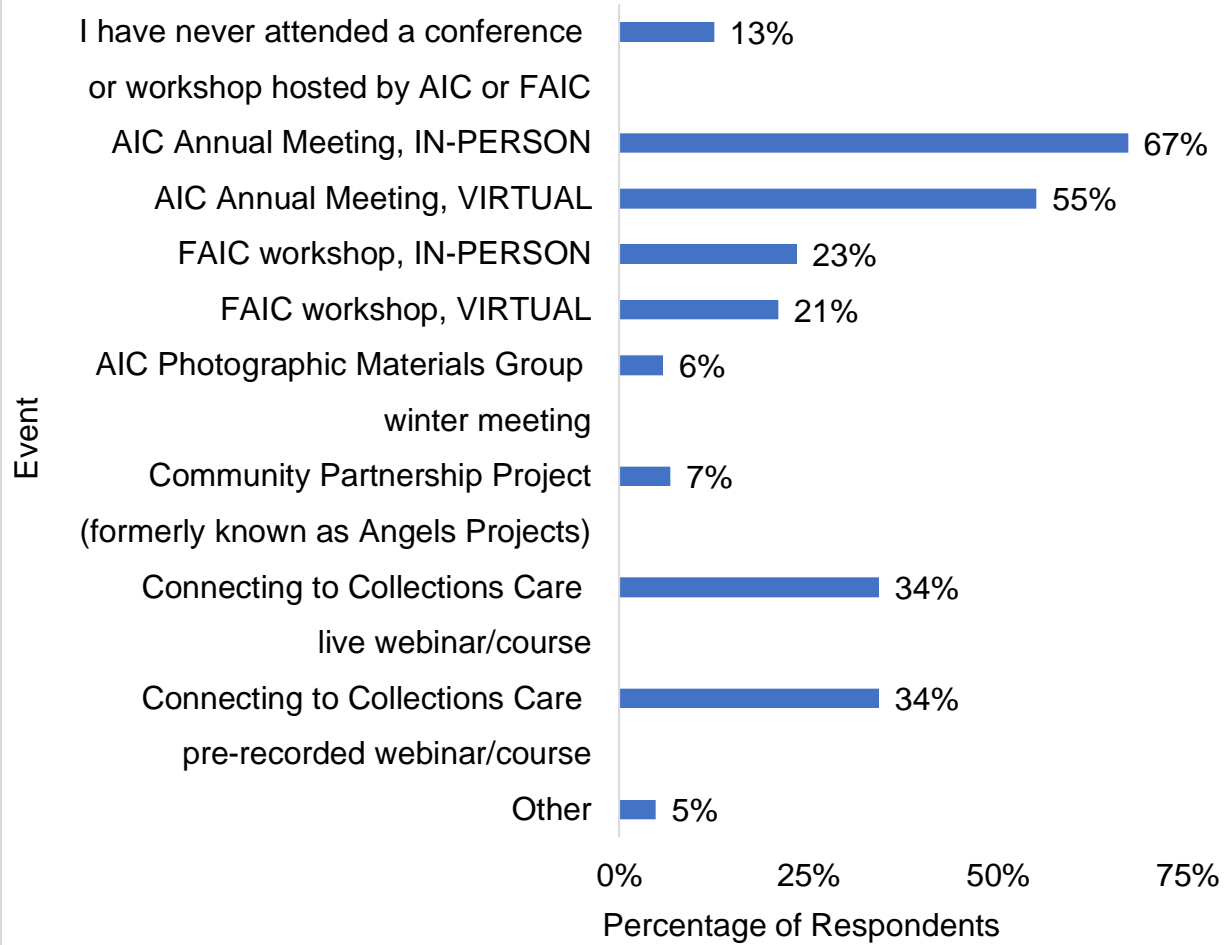
Types of Conservation Resources	Percentage of Reported Issues in Accessing Resources
General information about conservation, preservation, or the profession	19.5%
Webinars	26.8%
Conferences	39%
Symposia	22%
Lectures	34.1%
Small, hands-on workshops	26.8%
Connecting to Collections Care materials	7.3%
Grant or scholarship materials	29.3%
AIC/FAIC website	14.6%
Archived websites	9.8%
Online courses	19.5%
Online publications	14.6%
Print publications	12.2%
None	2.4%
Other	19.5%

Figure 6. Total distribution of responses to the accessibility challenges the respondents have had in the past five years in the general conservation community

From this point forward, questions about attendance and accessibility focused specifically on F/AIC supported resources.

When asked if, in the past five years, respondents had attended a conference, workshop, or presentation hosted by the AIC or FAIC, 87% replied that they had attended at least one of these programs. The most attended programs were in-person AIC Annual Meetings (67%), the virtual AIC Annual meeting (55%), and live or pre-recorded Connecting to Collections Care webinars/courses (34%) (Figure 7).

Events Attended by Respondents in the Last Five Years



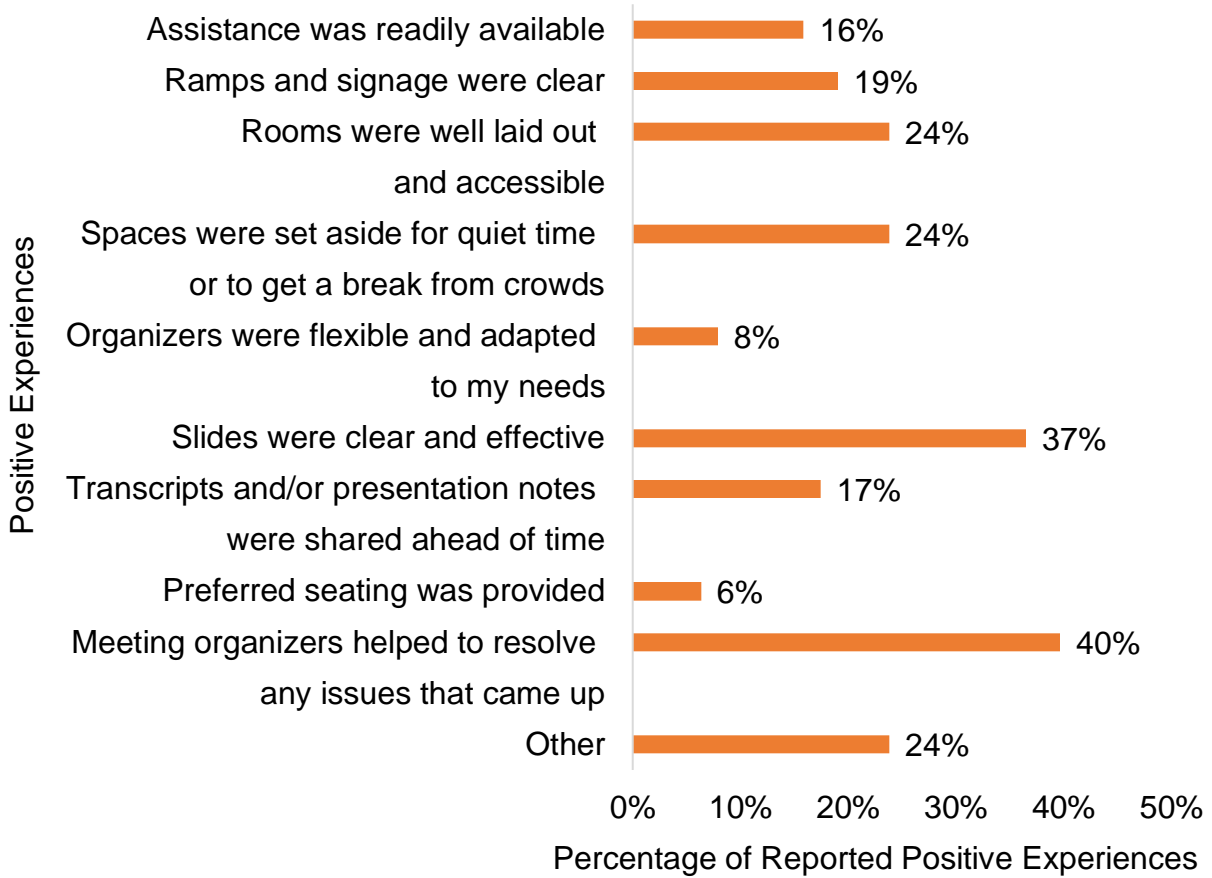
Event	Percentage of Respondents
I have never attended a conference or workshop hosted by AIC or FAIC	13%
AIC Annual Meeting, IN-PERSON	67%
AIC Annual Meeting, VIRTUAL	55%
FAIC workshop, IN-PERSON	23%
FAIC workshop, VIRTUAL	21%
AIC Photographic Materials Group Winter Meeting	6%
Community Partnership Project (formerly known as “Angels Projects”)	7%
Connecting to Collections Care live webinar/course	34%
Connecting to Collections Care pre-recorded webinar/course	34%
Other	5%

Figure 7. Total distribution of responses on types of F/AIC events attended by the respondents in the last five years

Of those who responded that they had not participated in any of the F/AIC events, 48 provided reasons, the most common of which were that they did not have sufficient funds (48%), or that they did not have time (33%). Only 10% of those who did not attend events cited “worried about accommodations” as a factor.

The next series of questions related to specific positive and negative experiences at in-person and virtual events. These questions were specifically geared towards respondents with disabilities who answered they had attended events. The questions were meant to gauge positive and negative experiences at in-person and virtual events related to disabilities. Sixty-three (63) respondents had positive experiences at in-person events. Forty percent (40%) cited that “meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up” and 37% cited that “slides were clear and effective” (Figure 8).

Positive Experiences at In-person Events

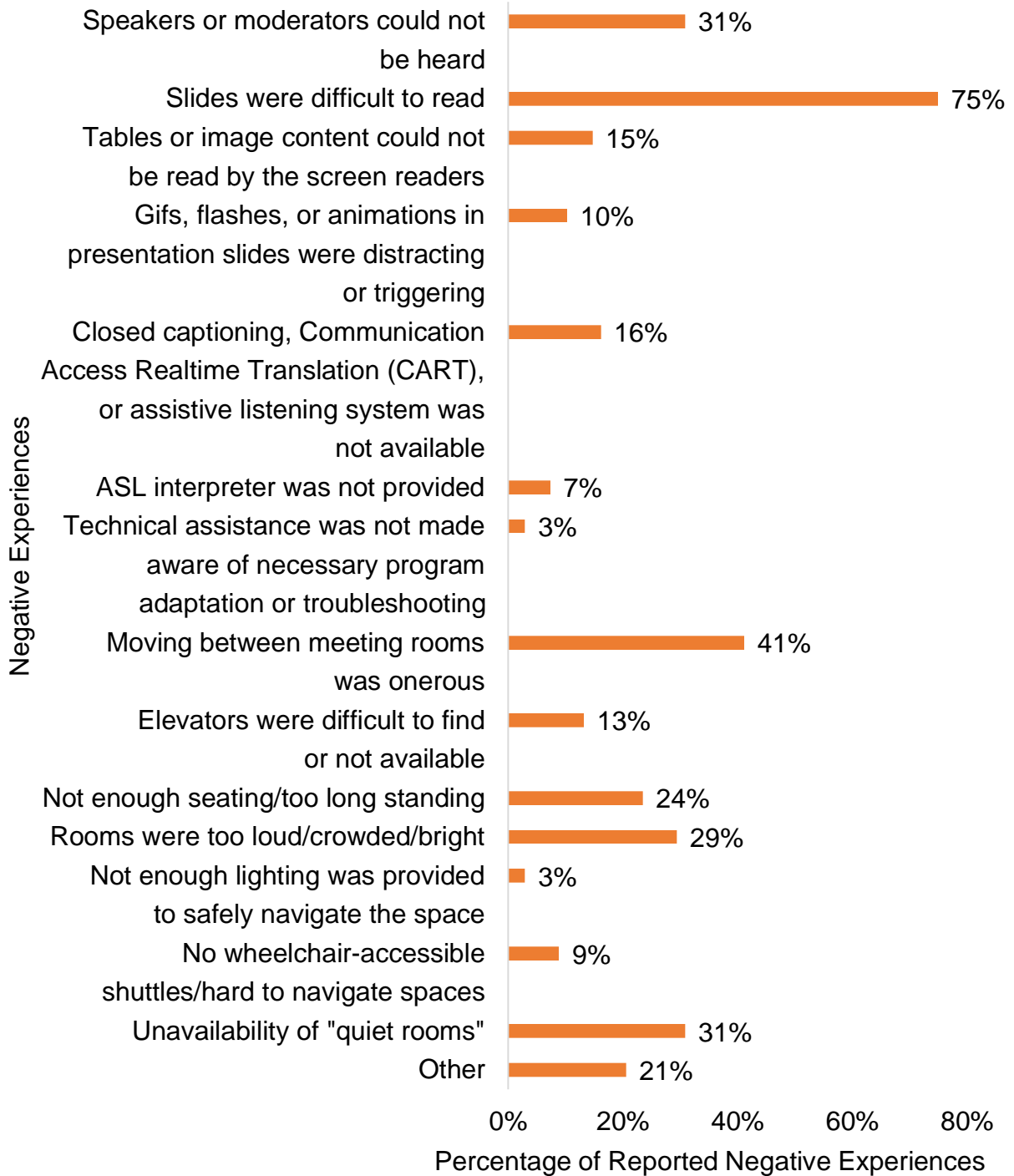


Positive Experiences	Percentage of Reported Positive Experiences
Assistance was readily available	16%
Ramps and signage were clear	19%
Rooms were well laid out and accessible	24%
Spaces were set aside for quiet time or to get a break from crowds	24%
Organizers were flexible and adapted to my needs	8%
Slides were clear and effective	37%
Transcripts and/or presentation notes were shared ahead of time	17%
Preferred seating was provided	6%
Meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up	40%
Other	24%

Figure 8. Total distribution of types of positive experiences at the F/AIC in-person events

Sixty-eight (68) respondents reported negative experiences at in-person events, with the most common negative experiences being that “slides were difficult to read” (75%), that “moving between meeting rooms was onerous” (41%), that there was an “unavailability of ‘quiet rooms’” (31%), and that “speakers or moderators could not be heard” (31%) (Figure 9). While it may seem that some of the survey choice options received low response rates, that must be contextualized with the number of people who have that disability or can be impacted by that experience. For example, “Closed captioning, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or assistive listening system was not available” was selected by 11 respondents (16%). Three of the 15 respondents reporting that they were deaf or hard of hearing selected this option. Providing accommodations disproportionately impacts individuals’ ability to participate. Not having closed captioning may make some individuals’ experience challenging, but for those three individuals it may mean that they cannot participate at all.

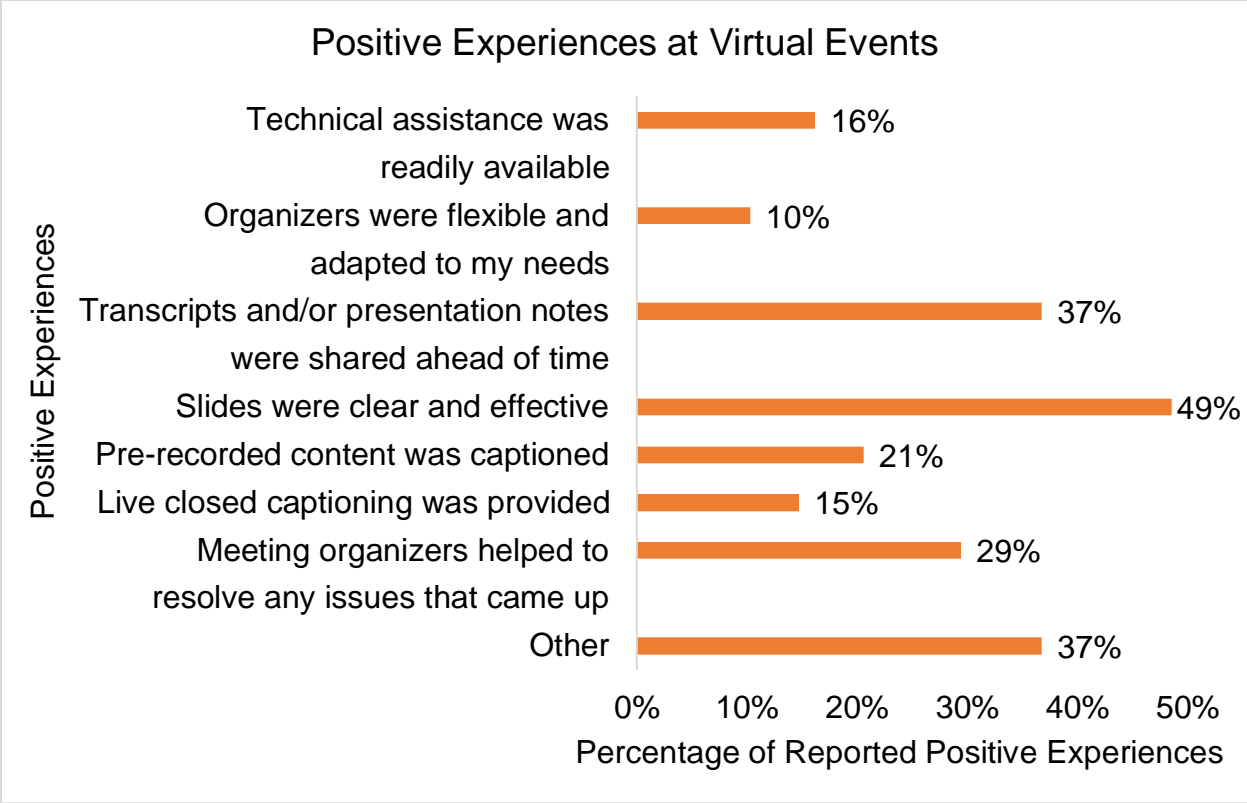
Negative Experiences at In-person Events



Negative Experiences	Percentage of Reported Negative Experiences
Speakers or moderators could not be heard	31%
Slides were difficult to read	75%
Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers	15%
Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering	10%
Closed captioning, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or assistive listening system was not available	16%
ASL interpreter was not provided	7%
Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting	3%
Moving between meeting rooms was onerous	41%
Elevators were difficult to find or not available	13%
Not enough seating/too long standing	24%
Rooms were too loud/crowded/bright	29%
Not enough lighting was provided to safely navigate the space	3%
No wheelchair-accessible shuttles/hard to navigate spaces	9%
Unavailability of "quiet rooms"	31%
Other	21%

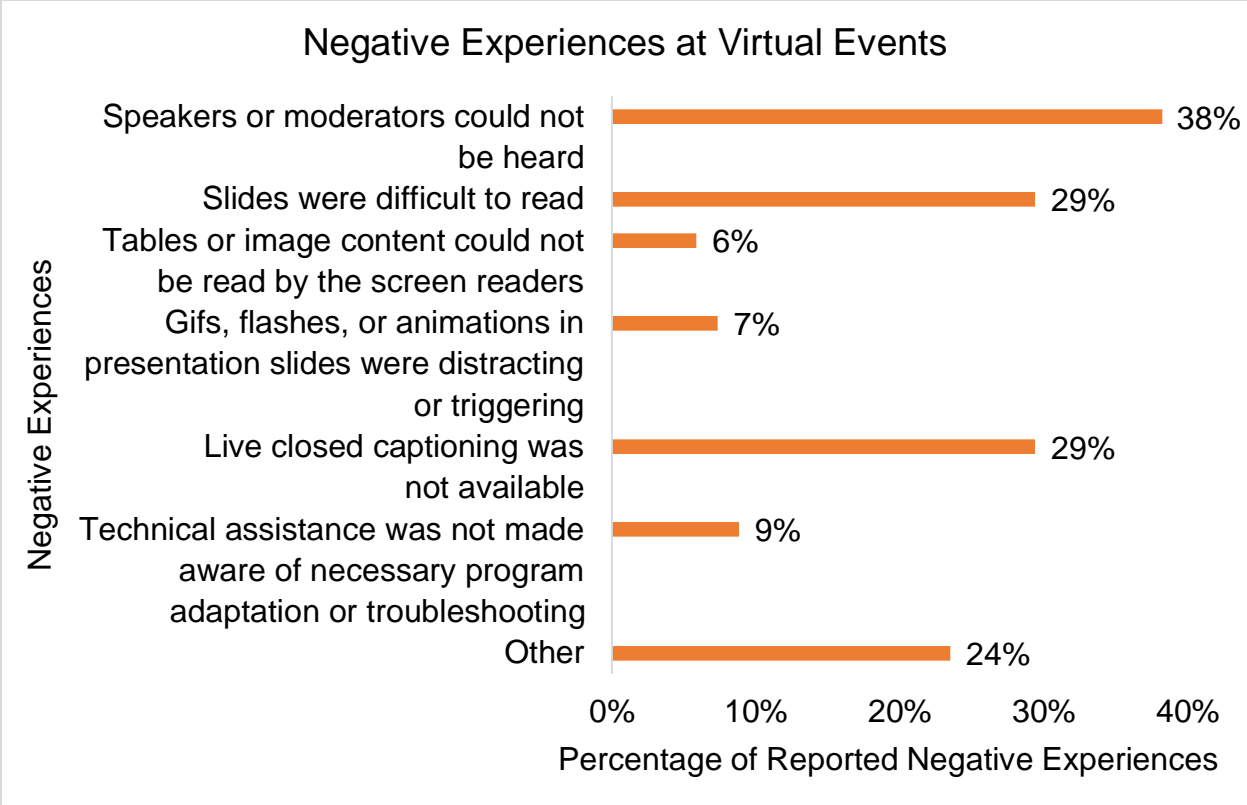
Figure 9. Total distribution of types of negative experiences at the F/AIC in-person events

The survey also asked questions about both positive and negative experiences specific to virtual events. Both questions received 68 responses. For positive experiences, most people responded that “slides were clear and effective” (49%), that “transcripts and/or presentation notes were shared ahead of time” (37%), and that the “meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up” (29%) (Figure 10). For negative experiences, 38% reported that “speakers or moderators could not be heard”, 29% replied that “slides were difficult to read”, and another 29% responded that “live closed captioning was not available”. This emphasizes the importance of clear, accessible slides and closed captioning in virtual events (Figure 11).



Positive Experiences	Percentage of Reported Positive Experiences
Technical assistance was readily available	16%
Organizers were flexible and adapted to my needs	10%
Transcripts and/or presentation notes were shared ahead of time	37%
Slides were clear and effective	49%
Pre-recorded content was captioned	21%
Live closed captioning was provided	15%
Meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up	29%
Other	37%

Figure 10. Total distribution of types of positive experiences at the F/AIC virtual events



Negative Experiences	Percentage of Reported Negative Experiences
Speakers or moderators could not be heard	38%
Slides were difficult to read	29%
Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers	6%
Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering	7%
Live closed captioning was not available	29%
Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting	9%
Other	24%

Figure 11. Total distribution of types of negative experiences at the F/AIC virtual events

Finally, the survey asked participants about their comfort level in approaching the F/AIC for accommodations. On a positive note, the majority of respondents felt comfortable (50%) or somewhat comfortable (35%) about reaching out to the F/AIC for accommodations, while only 14% reported that they would not feel comfortable approaching the F/AIC.

The last question on the survey was open-ended and asked for suggestions for improving accessibility from respondents. There were many diverse responses, which

can be grouped into several themes. There was resounding support for closed/live captioning for all presentations, particularly for online content where audio quality was frequently noted as being unreliable. Captioning for in-person presentations (or an ASL interpreter at in-person events) was also requested repeatedly. Similarly, online events in which the presenters provided slides and a transcript ahead of time were appreciated and a desire to see this required more universally for both virtual and in-person sessions, when possible, was expressed. There were multiple requests for presenters to receive more information on making presentations more universally accessible. There were also requests for guidance on making presentations and web resources accessible to those with colorblindness.

Multiple comments were made regarding accessibility during the Annual Meeting. The EIC drafted accessibility guidelines for presenters and moderators prior to the 2019 AIC Annual Meeting. These guidelines are available on the [AIC Wiki pages](#). In 2020, guidelines were shared with participants, and as part of the 2021 and 2022 Annual Meetings, subpages were set up with resources pertinent to that year's meeting after the close of the survey. In addition to creating resources, additional efforts must be made to make attendees and presenters aware of them.

Comments also cited the distance between meeting rooms, availability of seating, gender-neutral bathroom accessibility (no specifics were given as to whether this was related to number available, proximity, or ease to find them), and availability of quiet spaces to get away from the crowds. Accessibility for speakers was noted, including rehearsal using the speakers' dais, removal of bright spotlights, etc. Lastly, there were requests for the F/AIC to consider more hybrid events and to more clearly provide information on how to request accommodations.

Discussion & Analysis

This survey provided a more concrete overview of accessibility in the field of conservation in North America. The number of conservation professionals who self-identified as having disabilities was higher than previously projected by the authors. One hundred and sixty-two (162) of survey respondents (29%) identified as having disabilities. This can then be compared to other survey reports that provide statistics on individuals with disabilities.⁸ The survey also confirmed and highlighted several concerns of the authors regarding accessibility and helped formulate concrete recommendations to F/AIC and the field as a whole.

It was disheartening, however, to learn that a majority of respondents (63%) are not aware of disability rights laws in their states and thus remain unsure about compliance of their workplaces or classrooms with either ADA or WCAG 2.0, which are fundamental to providing reasonable accommodations.

⁸ [Americans With Disabilities: 2010](#), [Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#), [Disability Impacts All of Us](#)

Even where disability rights laws exist to protect rights of people with disabilities, 40% of respondents who identify as having disabilities chose not to disclose their disabilities to either a supervisor or Human Resources. In the provided text box, there were several keywords that demonstrate how inaccessible and ableist the field is as a profession:

- “Opposite of support when I went to first my supervisor”, “complete lack of support”
- “Impact on my morale, my dedication to the institution...my self worth and self value”
- “Unsupportive colleagues”
- “Repetitive motions and physical labor”
- “Constant exposure to solvents, mold, lead and other toxic substances”

These concerns are not unfounded. In the U.S., the ADA and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973 prohibit discrimination and bias against people with disabilities in employment and the hiring process. Title 1 of the ADA on “equal employment opportunity and full inclusion” for people with disabilities is only enforced for “private employers with 15 or more employees, State and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions.”⁹ Despite these anti-discrimination laws, many people with disabilities experience stigma and bias in the hiring process, workplace, and classroom.¹⁰ It was observed from Disability Attitudes Implicit Association Test (DA-IAT) and Project Implicit data gathered from all 50 states and the District of Columbia that states in the U.S. with higher scores in disability prejudices have lower disability employment rates.¹¹ Two comparable examples are West Virginia with a disability employment rate of 27.4% and disability prejudice score of +0.52 from the scale of -0.14 (no prejudice) to +0.65 (strong preference for people without disabilities) and North Dakota with a disability employment rate of 54% and prejudice score of lower than +0.49; this shows that there is an interrelationship between disability prejudice and disability employment.¹² The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics notes that since the beginning of the pandemic, one in five workers with disabilities have been disproportionately laid off or furloughed from employment, compared with one in seven in the general population.¹³

It is also worthwhile to note that what was considered a ‘reasonable accommodation’ in the 1990s has changed in 2020s. Some examples are phones with volume controls and ergonomic chairs which are now parts of everyday life for many people. While the global pandemic has negatively affected many people’s lives, one positive outcome is that flexible work schedules are now a more widely acceptable accommodation in the

⁹ [What is the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)? | ADA National Network](#)

¹⁰ [Why Employers Don’t Hire People With Disabilities: A Survey of the Literature and Persons With a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics — 2021](#)

¹¹ Friedman, Carli. “The relationship between disability prejudice and disability employment rates.” In *Work* 65, no.3 (2020): p.591-598. DOI:10.3233/WOR-203113

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [A Million People with Disabilities Have Lost Jobs During the Pandemic](#)

workplace, often without the need to justify it as a ‘reasonable accommodation’. F/AIC is also making changes. F/AIC staff and volunteers have worked hard to resolve many issues that came up during in-person meetings in recent years and provided transcripts and/or presentation notes for virtual meetings either ahead of time or following the presentation. Automated, live captioning is now available on all F/AIC online courses and workshops and was recognized as an asset by survey respondents.

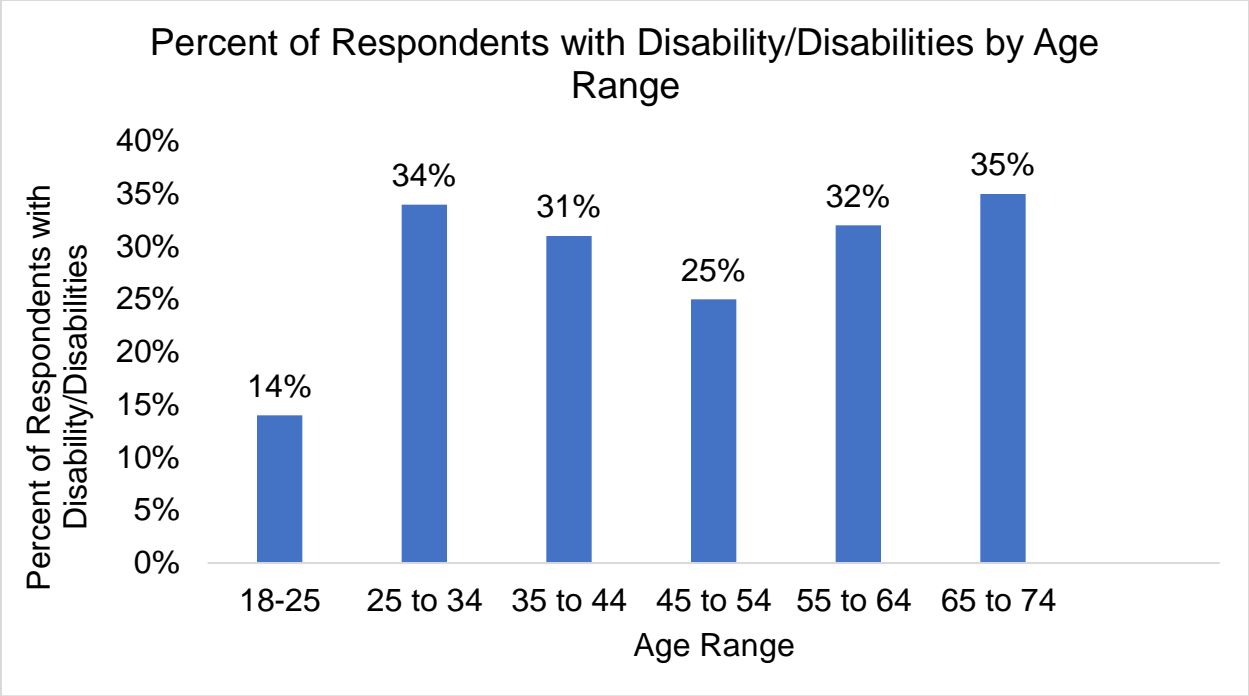
Possible Correlative Data

While not all data proved useful when correlated with other responses for deeper analysis, some cross comparisons did provide possible valuable insight. However, any conclusions drawn from cross comparisons must be taken with some caution. For instance, earlier in this report, it was noted that the majority of those responding that their institutions did not meet ADA requirements and/or did not provide reasonable accommodations were found in “museums or historic houses” or working in private practice. However, the plurality of respondents (38%) were from museums or historic houses, so this correlation may simply reflect the response pool distribution. Therefore, while some possible correlations are presented below which may help to focus future efforts, these correlations are subject to interpretation, due to the nature and size of the survey sample.

One revealing perspective is to compare the age range of respondents to the type of disabilities reported. Overall, it was surprising to find that younger respondents, age ranges 25-34 and 35-44, were just as likely to report having disabilities as older cohorts, with a lesser tendency for self-identifying as having a disability for the middle age range of 45-54, forming an inverse bell-curve (Figure 12). One possible explanation may be that those conservators in the younger age ranges feel more confident about identifying their own invisible disabilities. This demonstrates that disability status does not necessarily correlate with age, as might be expected based on information from groups such as the United Nations and Center for Disease Control and Prevention.¹⁴ For example, it was observed in the 2018 survey conducted by the *American Psychological Association* that adults are becoming more open about mental health; 87% of the respondents stated that identifying as having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of and 84% of them believe that people who identify as having mental health disorders can live normal lives.¹⁵

¹⁴ [Ageing and disability | United Nations Enable](#), [Prevalence of Disabilities and Health Care Access by Disability Status and Type Among Adults | CDC](#)

¹⁵ [Survey: Americans becoming more open about mental health](#)



Age Range	Percent of Respondents with Disability/Disabilities
18-25	14%
25 to 34	34%
35 to 44	31%
45 to 54	25%
55 to 64	32%
65 to 74	35%

Figure 12. Total distribution of respondents with disability/disabilities by age range

The authors tried to see if there were correlations between the age of respondents and the challenges posed to respondents with disabilities. Graphic representations of the data were difficult and confusing to create, so the data is presented in table form in [Appendix C](#), Figures 21 and 22. For most age groups at in-person events, the most commonly noted challenges were that slides were difficult to read, quiet rooms were unavailable, moving between meeting rooms was onerous, and speakers or moderators could not be heard. Less common challenges across age groups included that closed captioning was not available, there was not enough seating or tables, image content was not readable by screen readers, and ASL interpreters were not provided. While these challenges were selected less often, the people impacted by the lack of accommodation may be more acutely impacted and unable to participate.

However, there were sharp discrepancies between some challenges by age, such as difference in the challenge presented in “Rooms were too loud/crowded/bright” which

was not an issue at all for older respondents, but frequently a concern with younger respondents.

For virtual events, challenges were more aligned across different age groups. Overall, more challenges were noted by the youngest age demographic than the oldest, which was unexpected. The reason for this is unknown but merits further investigation.

Lastly, types of disability versus feelings of unacceptance were analyzed. Trends here are tentative at best, as the numbers in each area were relatively small. In most classes of disability respondents self-identified (learning disability, ADHD, neurological condition, etc.) there were no discernable trends in whether respondents felt understood and supported by their colleagues and peers. However, there are possible trends for those who self-reported as having autism spectrum disorder, were blind/low vision, or had psychological conditions. While those self-reporting as blind/low vision or having a psychological condition generally appeared to feel more understood and supported, those falling somewhere within the Autism spectrum appear to have felt the least understood (Figure 13).

Type of Disability	Feel Understood & Supported	Feel Somewhat Understood & Supported	Do Not Feel Understood & Supported
Autism Spectrum Disorder	0%	3%	16%
Blind/low vision	4%	1%	0%
Learning disability	4%	14%	13%
Deaf/hard of hearing	6%	5%	6%
ADHD	8%	11%	10%
Neurological condition	8%	4%	13%
Temporary	10%	3%	0%
Physical/mobility impairment	12%	11%	10%
Chronic health condition	20%	30%	16%
Psychological condition	20%	14%	13%
Other	6%	5%	3%

Figure 13. Types of disabilities versus noted feelings of understanding and support

The small number of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) respondents, the high number of respondents who have invisible disabilities, and the large number who did not disclose their disabilities renders it very difficult to draw conclusions about BIPOC members of the conservation community who identify as having disabilities. It is likely that challenges faced by BIPOC communities with disabilities are compounded, but further conclusions cannot be drawn from this data. The intersectionality of disabilities and marginalized communities is addressed in the 2017 *National Disability Institute* report, which found that, overall, 13% of adults who identify as having

disabilities have obtained bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 31% of those who do not identify as having disabilities.¹⁶ Within BIPOC communities, fewer individuals receive college degrees than in the overall population, and similarly, even fewer individuals with disabilities obtain college degrees. For example, 9% of Black people with disabilities obtained college degrees in comparison to 20% of Black people without disabilities. Even after obtaining the degrees, people continue to face challenges of disability and race in finding employment that correlates with their level of skills and experiences.

Conclusions/Next steps

From the data collected in the survey and the presented interpretation, several themes can be identified for future topics or areas of focus for the EIC and the larger F/AIC. These themes can easily be tied back to the EIC strategic plan as well, therefore building on areas already identified as priorities for the committee, such as:

- Goal I: Change Our Organizational Culture
- Goal II: Improve Training and Resources Available to the AIC Community
- Goal IV: Integration of DEIA into Other Aspects of AIC

One clear theme that comes forward is that many are not aware of existing resources. While availability and awareness of resources in their educational or workplace may be addressed through stronger education and outreach about disability rights and laws, F/AIC can also make changes to better promote and make available the myriad resources that already exist on the AIC website.

It is evident that those who identify as not having disabilities are neither fully aware of the challenges faced by their colleagues nor the number of AIC members who identify as having disabilities. Raising awareness of these issues is another possible area for F/AIC to focus on.

Another theme is enhancing and expanding accessibility in virtual and hybrid events. Many respondents were either grateful for or conversely in need of more accessible and clearer slides at both in-person and virtual events. They also want presentation materials to be available ahead of time and closed captioning during events. These practices could make in-person events more accessible for the field. It is also important to recognize that positive steps for one group may prove problematic for another. While some survey respondents commented on the positive nature of asynchronous virtual meetings, the added technical issues and extra screen time created further challenges for others.

Lastly, there is a clear need for people to feel heard and their challenges recognized even if they cannot be fully addressed. Guidance on negotiation for reasonable

¹⁶ [FINANCIAL INEQUALITY: Disability, Race and Poverty in America](#)

accommodations should be created/identified and made available. While not all accommodation needs can be met for all people, clear lines of communication and availability of AIC committees, leadership, and staff to hear concerns for those who are facing challenges is critical and requires a change in organizational culture. Survey respondents expressed an appreciation for EIC taking the time to ask their opinions and to address concerns. Continued receptivity and steady, positive momentum forward will further reinforce a commitment to increasing accessibility of F/AIC resources.

This report is offered for broader consideration to the conservation and preservation community. It is the hope of the authors that the data presented here will help focus future DEIA efforts to improve accessibility and foster a sense of belonging for AIC members and all conservation and collections care colleagues. The EIC has provided recommendations for action by individuals and F/AIC leadership, which accompany this document in [Appendix D](#).

Appendices

Appendix A: AIC Accessibility Survey of Continuing Education in the Field of Cultural Heritage Conservation

Appendix B: People and Organizations who Provided Feedback

Appendix C: Supplementary Data

Appendix D: Equity and Inclusion Committee Recommendations

Appendix A: AIC Accessibility Survey of Continuing Education in the Field of Cultural Heritage Conservation

Why are we doing this survey?

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey, organized by the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Equity & Inclusion Committee and AIC member Sally G. Kim. We are very interested in better understanding the needs of the conservation and collections care community, prospective conservation students, and users of programming and materials produced by both AIC and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC). To our knowledge there is currently no data on accessibility in the field of American conservation, and we hope to collect this information in order to raise awareness of issues our community is facing, provide pertinent resources, and better meet the needs of our community.

EIC is also exploring the formation of an affinity group for people with disabilities (PWD).

Though the data from the survey will be kept anonymous, we hope to publish the results to further educate the field and improve inclusion.

****You do not need to be an AIC member or identify as having a disability to complete this survey.****

If you would prefer to complete this survey in hardcopy or using a screen-readable PDF, please email eic@culturalheritage.org for the PDF.

The survey was made possible thanks to help and feedback from Joshua Valentine, Catherine Axe, ArtReach, Hilary Kaplan and members of the FAIC/AIC staff.

Assessing Accessibility of Continuing Education in the Field of Conservation

You are being asked to participate in a voluntary research study. The purpose of this study is to build awareness of challenges faced by conservation and preservation professionals with disabilities in accessing continuing education offerings. Participating in this study will involve participation in an online survey and your participation will last approximately 15-30 minutes. Risks related to this research include no risk beyond those of filling out a web-based survey on a computer; benefits related to this research include helping guide future work towards increasing accessibility within the American Institute for Conservation. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Jennifer Hain Teper, Velde
Professor and Head, Preservation Services
Department and Institution: University Library, University of Illinois
Contact Information: jhain@illinois.edu, (217) 244-5689

What procedures are involved?

This research will be performed via an online survey form available at: **January 11, 2021** which will be openly available to voluntary participation until **February 5, 2021**.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Faculty, staff, students, and others with permission or authority to see your study information will maintain its confidentiality to the extent permitted and required by laws and university policies. The names or personal identifiers of participants will not be published or presented. Any identifying information voluntarily submitted to the survey will be deleted.

Will I be reimbursed for any expenses or paid for my participation in this research?

You will not be offered payment for being in this study.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and dis-continue participation at any time. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate, or to withdraw after beginning participation, will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Will data collected from me be used for any other research?

Your de-identified information could be used for future research without additional informed consent.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Jennifer Hain Teper at (217) 244-5689 or jhain@illinois.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at (217)-333-2670 or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

Please print this consent form if you would like to retain a copy for your records.

I have read and understand the above consent form. I certify that I am 18 years old or older. By clicking the “Continue” button to enter the survey, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in this study.

Continue

End survey

Do you identify as having disabilities?

- Yes, I have a visible disability/disabilities
- Yes, I have an invisible disability/disabilities
- Yes, I have both visible and invisible disabilities
- I self-identify as _____
- I do not identify as having a disability

If you feel comfortable doing so, please select all that apply or describe your disability.

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Blind or Low Vision
- Learning Disability
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Chronic Health Condition
- Psychological Condition
- Neurological Condition
- Physical or Mobility Impairment
- Temporary
- Other _____

How long have you had a disability?

- Born with disability
- Developed before pursuing current career
- Developed after pursuing current career

Is your workplace/classroom compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Under the ADA it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment, schooling, and public accommodations. The ADA protects employees and job seekers, and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for employees and job seekers with disabilities. It also requires schools to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be found here: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>

- Yes, it is compliant
- No, it is not compliant
- Unsure

Does your workplace/school provide reasonable accommodations? These might include assistive technologies, ramps, accessible restrooms, or flexible work schedules.

Information about reasonable accommodations can be found here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/accommodations>

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If your workplace/school provides reasonable accommodations, please select the examples of provided accommodations:

- Installation of ramps or modification of a restroom
- Modification of the layout of a workspace/classroom/lab
- Adjustment of lighting
- Installation of accessible softwares (e.g. screen reader, voice dictation)
- Use of live closed captioning service at meetings
- Use of sign language interpreter at meetings
- Adjustment of work schedules for flexibility
- Extended exam/test times
- Allowing a service animal in a business setting
- Other _____

Does the website of your institution or employer meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 set out by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)?

WCAG requires websites are 1) perceivable, 2) operable, 3) understandable, and 4) robust. This means websites can be used, effectively operated, understood, and do not lose meaning by people using assistive technologies of all types, such as screen readers or braille outputs, and by people with different abilities and learning styles. WCAG also makes websites easy to use for all users with different devices including smartphones, tablets or laptops. Learn more about website accessibility at the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#), [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#), [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

- Yes
- Some
- No
- Unsure

Are you aware of the disability rights laws in your state?

Yes

No

Are you covered by Disability Insurance and/or Disability Benefits?

Yes, self-provided

Yes, employer-provided

No

Unsure

Does your workplace/classroom have “disability awareness” materials?

Yes

No

Unsure

If yes, could you provide examples of the “disability awareness” materials?

In the past 5 years, have you had difficulty learning about conservation or using resources provided by the conservation community due to disabilities and/or unmet requests for accommodation?

Examples might include graduate programs, workshops, webinars, online courses, conferences, Connecting to Collections Care resources, or specific platforms used by AIC/FAIC.

Yes

No

If yes, which type of resource(s) have you found particularly challenging to access because of a disability or unmet request for accommodation?

Please select all that apply

- General information about conservation, preservation, or the profession
- Webinars
- Conferences
- Symposia
- Lectures
- Small, hands-on workshops
- Connecting to Collections Care materials
- Grant or scholarship materials, such as application materials or criteria
- AIC/FAIC website
- Archived websites such as Conservation OnLine (CoOL)
- Online courses
- Online Publications
- Print Publications
- None
- Other _____

Have you ever disclosed your disabilities to your supervisor or employer?

- Yes, direct supervisor only
- Yes, employer/Human Resources only
- Yes, both
- No

If no, can you share why you have not disclosed your disability?
Please select all that apply

- Did not feel it was necessary
- Accommodations could be made without disclosure
- Was uncomfortable sharing
- Concerns that direct supervisor will see me as less capable
- Fear of harassment
- Concern that it would not remain privileged information
- Prefer not to share
- Other _____

Have you received accommodations in your classroom or workplace?

- Yes, workplace only
- Yes, classroom only
- Yes, both
- No, neither

Was this a result of a direct request from you?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Were all requests met?

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Not applicable

Did you have to pay out of pocket for the accommodations?

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Not applicable

Please select the accessibility issues you have faced in the classroom or workplace.

- Phone related
- Computer related
- Lab equipment related
- Alarm (visual or auditory) related
- Mobility/space accessibility
- Need for specific hand tools
- Hearing Impairment needing assistive listening system, CART and/or ASL
- Sight impairment needing software or other
- Need for telecommuting
- Accommodations for chronic pain
- Need for a flexible schedule
- Other _____

Were the accessibility issues you have faced resolved? If you feel comfortable, please share how.

Did you perceive that your colleagues and/or classmates were understanding of your disabilities and supportive of your needs?

- Yes
- Somewhat/Partially
- No
- Not applicable

If you experienced harassment because of your disability, was your supervisor/ employer/HR able to resolve the issue?

- Yes
- Yes, partially
- No, it was not resolved
- I didn't go to supervisor/employer/HR
- I have not experienced harassment because of my disability
- Not applicable

In the past 5 years, have you attended a conference, workshop, or presentation hosted by the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) or the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC)? Select all that apply.

- No, I have never attended a conference or workshop hosted by AIC or FAIC
- AIC Annual Meeting, IN-PERSON
- AIC Annual Meeting, VIRTUAL
- FAIC workshop, IN-PERSON
- FAIC workshop, VIRTUAL
- AIC Photographic Materials Group winter meeting
- Community Partnership Project (formerly known as Angels Projects)
- Connecting to Collections Care live webinar/course
- Connecting to Collections Care pre-recorded webinar/course
- Other _____

If no, can you explain why you have not attended an event in the last 5 years?

- Have not had the available time
- Have not had funds
- Worried about accommodations
- Sufficient accommodations could not be guaranteed
- Other _____

Relating to your disability, what are the most common positive and negative experiences you have had at the IN-PERSON conferences, workshops, and events hosted by AIC/FAIC?

This question has been split into parts to provide information for both IN-PERSON, and VIRTUAL events.

Positive experiences at IN-PERSON events? Please select all that apply

- Assistance was readily available
- Ramps and signage were clear
- Rooms were well laid out and accessible
- Spaces were set aside for quiet time or to get a break from crowds
- Organizers were flexible and adapted to my needs
- Slides were clear and effective
- Transcripts and/or presentation notes were shared ahead of time
- Preferred seating was provided
- Meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up
- Other _____

Negative experiences at IN-PERSON events? Please select all that apply

- Speakers or moderators could not be heard
- Slides were difficult to read
- Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers
- Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering
- Closed captioning, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or assistive listening system was not available
- ASL interpreter was not provided
- Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting
- Moving between meeting rooms was onerous
- Elevators were difficult to find or not available
- Not enough seating/too long standing
- Rooms were too loud/crowded/bright
- Not enough lighting was provided to safely navigate the space
- No wheelchair-accessible shuttles/hard to navigate spaces
- Unavailability of "quiet rooms"
- Other _____

Relating to your disability, what are the most common positive and negative experiences you have had at the VIRTUAL conferences, workshops, and events hosted by AIC/FAIC?

Positive experiences at VIRTUAL events? Please select all that apply

- Technical assistance was readily available
- Organizers were flexible and adapted to my needs
- Transcripts and/or presentation notes were shared ahead of time
- Slides were clear and effective
- Pre-recorded content was captioned
- Live closed captioning was provided
- Meeting organizers helped to resolve any issues that came up
- Other _____

Negative experiences at VIRTUAL events? Please select all that apply

- Speakers or moderators could not be heard
- Slides were difficult to read
- Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers
- Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering
- Live closed captioning was not available
- Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting
- Other _____

Would you feel comfortable approaching AIC/FAIC for accommodations, if needed?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

Do you have suggestions for improving the accessibility of AIC/FAIC conferences, events, or materials, either IN-PERSON or VIRTUAL?

Is there anything else you would like to share with the committee?

The following are standard questions that were written for the AIC Conservation Compensation Survey. We are replicating these questions so they are in line with other data the AIC collects to create a more comprehensive picture of the conservation field.

I identify my race or ethnicity as (select all that apply):

- Alaskan Native or Native American
- Asian, or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Prefer to self-identify _____
- Prefer not to answer

I identify as:

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/Third gender
- Prefer to self-identify _____
- Prefer not to answer

My age:

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 plus

- Prefer not to answer

My geographic location (leave blank if you prefer not to answer):

City/Town _____

State/Province/Territory _____

Country _____

I work in a:

- Museum or historic house
- Library or Archives
- Independent contractor/self-employed
- Private practice
- Regional conservation lab
- Other _____

- Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your current professional career status?

- Collections care professional
- Conservator
- Pre-program
- Graduate student
- Retired
- Scientist
- Other _____
- Prefer not to answer

Years in field (including pre-program experience, if applicable):

- 0 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- 26 to 30 years
- 31 to 35 years
- 36 to 40 years
- 41 to 45 years
- 46 to 50 years
- 50 plus years
- Prefer not to answer

Are you a current AIC member?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What is your current membership status?

- Associate
- Fellow
- Institutional Member
- Professional Associate
- Postgraduate
- Student
- Prefer not to answer

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey.

If you wish to further discuss accessibility issues in the field of conservation or help with the formation/administration of the affinity group for people with disabilities, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Committee at:

eic@culturalheritage.org.

We would love to hear from you!

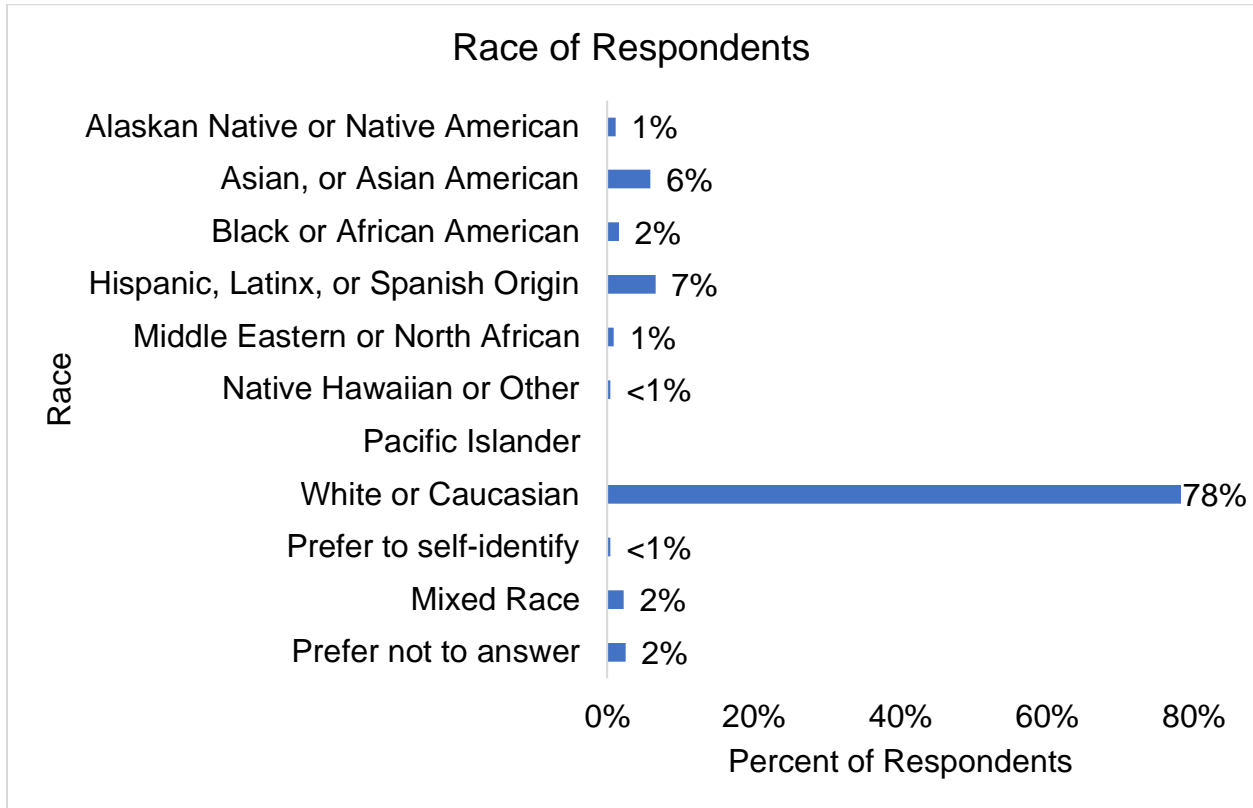
Appendix B: People and Organizations Who Provided Feedback

Multiple people and organizations provided input and feedback on the questions and report based on their work or areas of expertise.

These include:

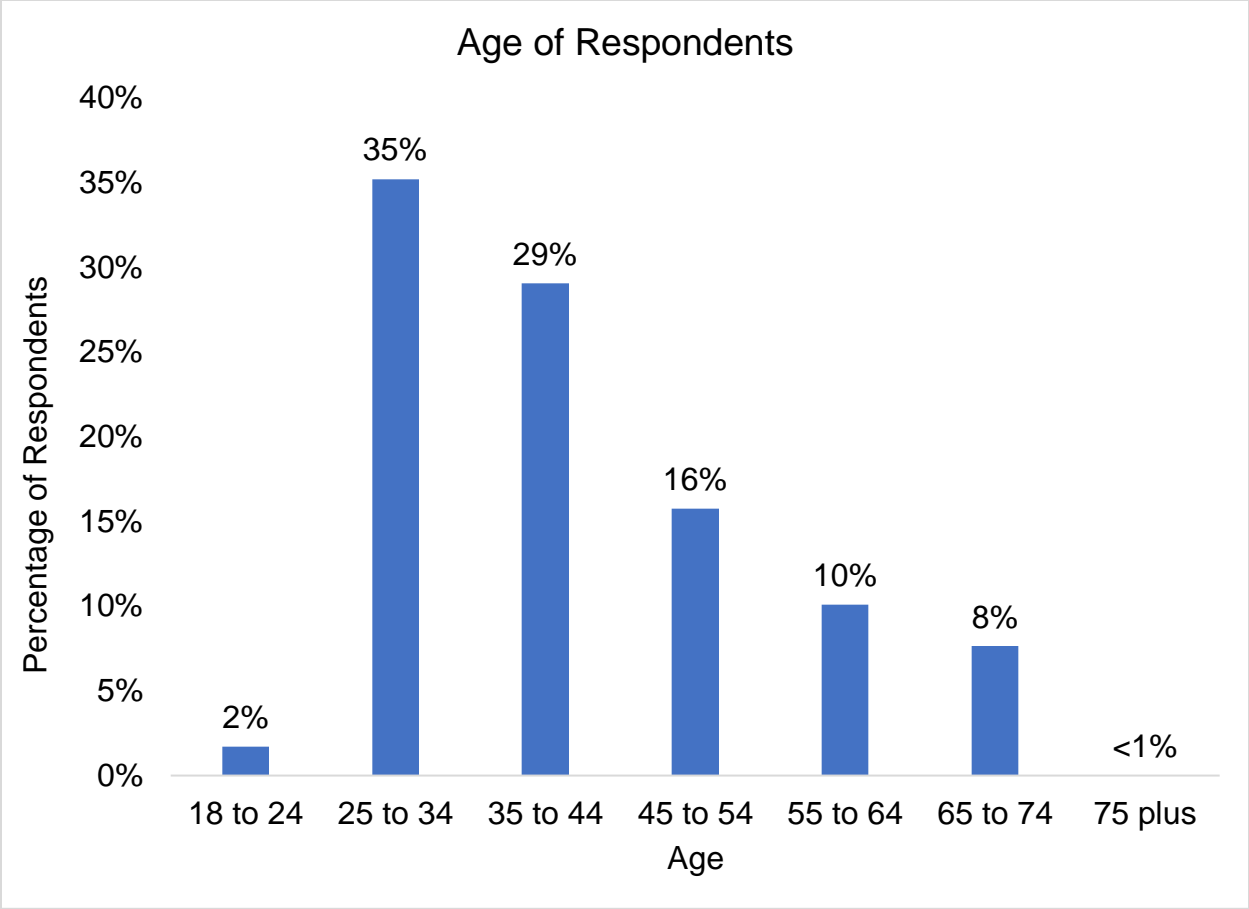
- The Equity and Inclusion Committee, including:
 - Anya Dani, Anita Dey, Samantha Emmanuel, Nora Frankel, Bianca Garcia, Anisha Gupta, Kayla Henry-Griffin, Kristin Holder, Josie Maldonado, Ronel Namde, Rebecca Anne Rushfield, Jennifer Hain Teper, AIC Board liaison Molly Gleeson, and staff liaison Katelin Lee.
- F/AIC staff working with outreach, external partnerships, grant writing/fundraising, programming, meetings, workshops, and online events
 - Eric Pourchot, Institutional Advancement Director (retired)
 - Katelin Lee, Outreach Coordinator
 - Ruth Seyler, Meetings & Advocacy Director
 - Tiffani Emig, Programs & Operations Director
 - Sarah Saetren, Education Manager
- [Art-Reach](#), Philadelphia-based nonprofit that works to provide people with disabilities and from low-income communities' equitable access to the arts.
- Catherine Axe, Consultant with background in disability services
- Hilary Kaplan, AIC member, Training Specialist at National Archives and Records Administration, disability advocate

Appendix C: Supplementary Data



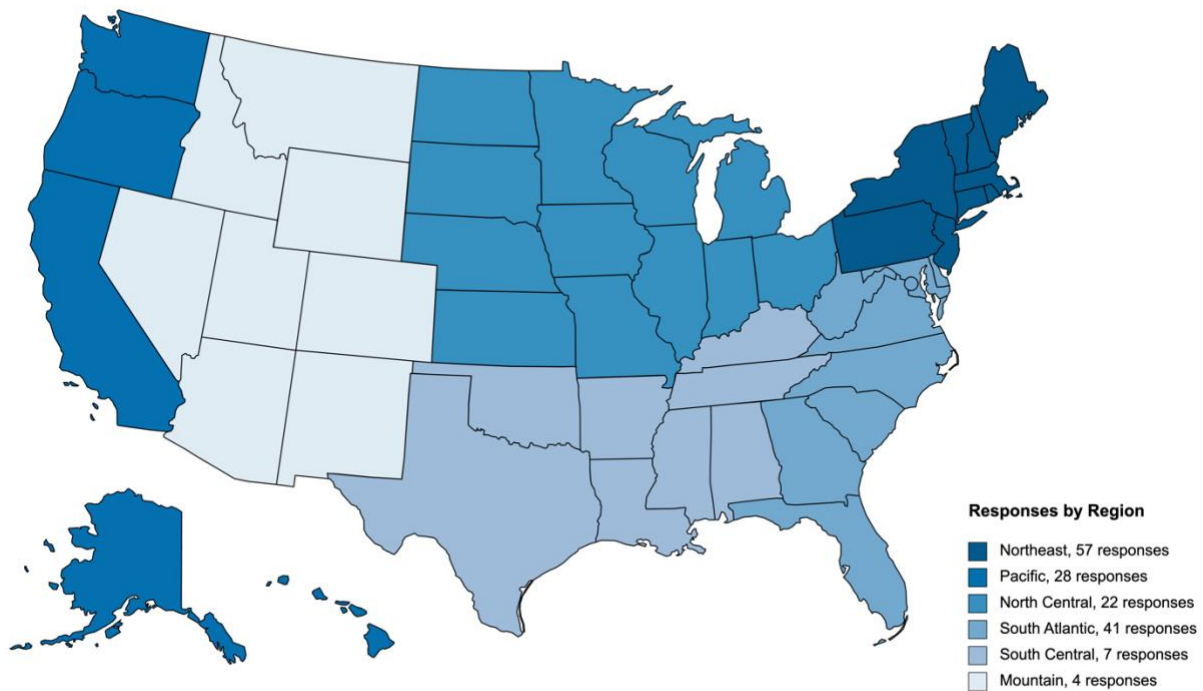
Race	Percentage of Respondents
Alaskan Native or Native American	1%
Asian or Asian American	6%
Black or African American	2%
Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin	7%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Less than 1%
White or Caucasian	78%
Prefer to self-identify	Less than 1%
Mixed Race	2%
Prefer not to answer	2%

Figure 14. Race of respondents



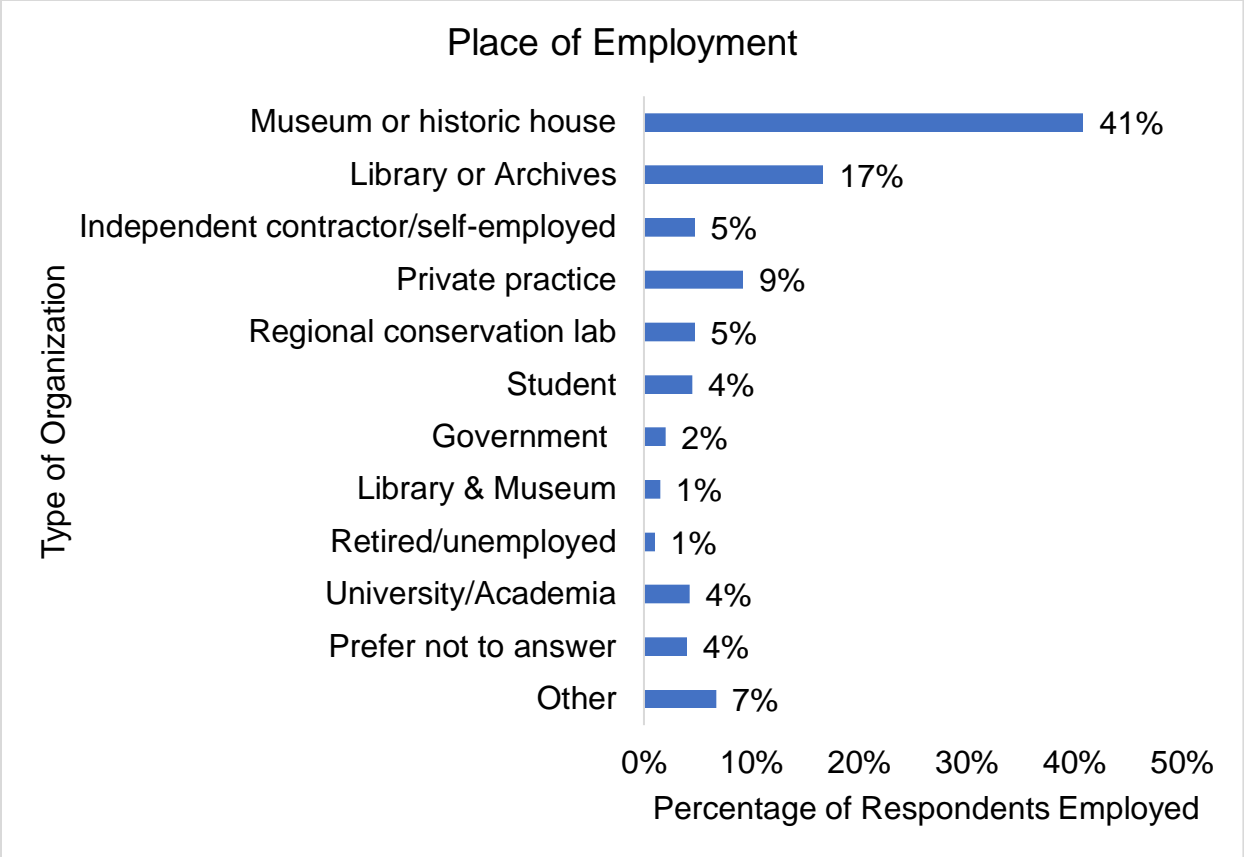
Age	Percentage of Respondents
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	35%
35 to 44	29%
45 to 54	16%
55 to 64	10%
65 to 74	8%
75 plus	Less than 1%

Figure 15. Age of respondents



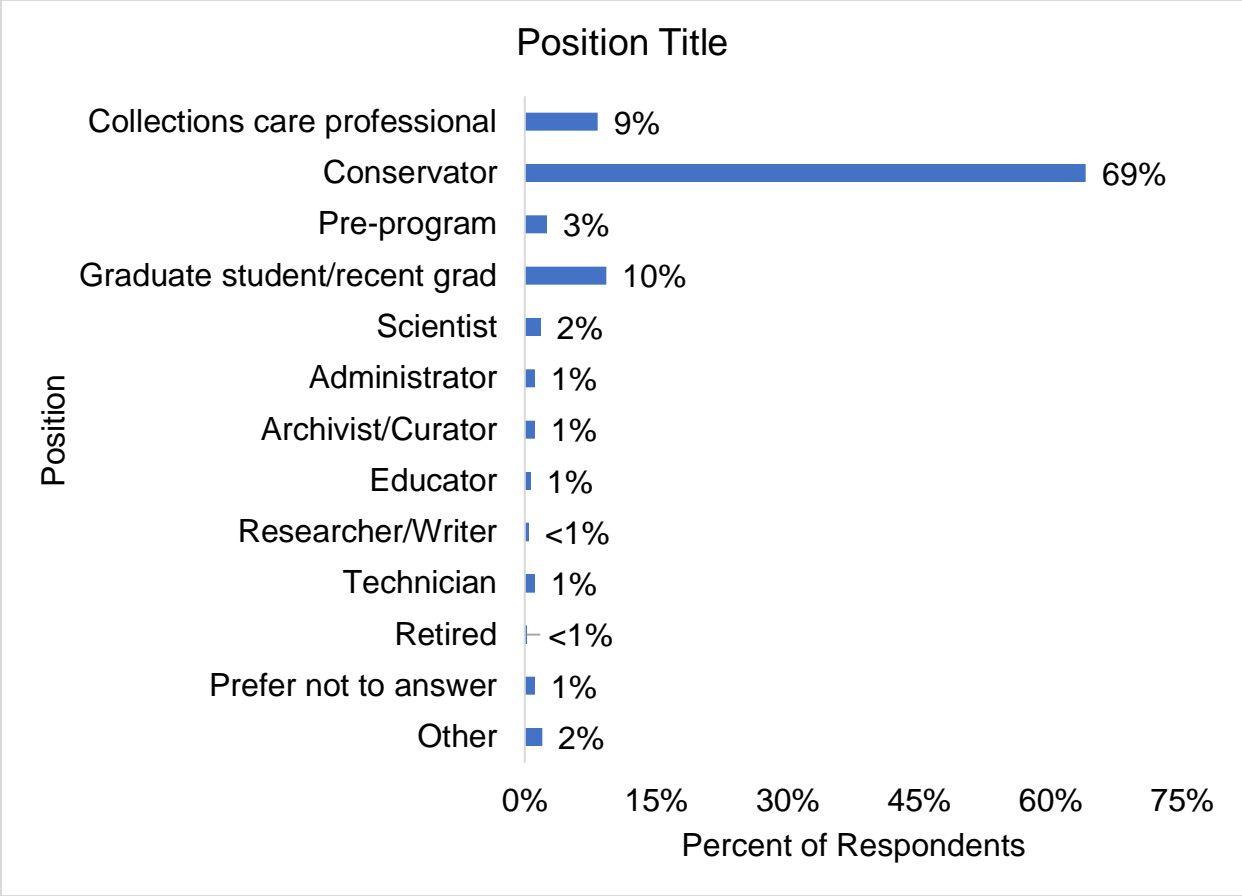
Region	Number of Responses
Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont)	57
Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington)	28
North Central (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin)	22
South Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia)	41
South Central (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas)	7
Mountain (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming)	4

Figure 16. Responses by region



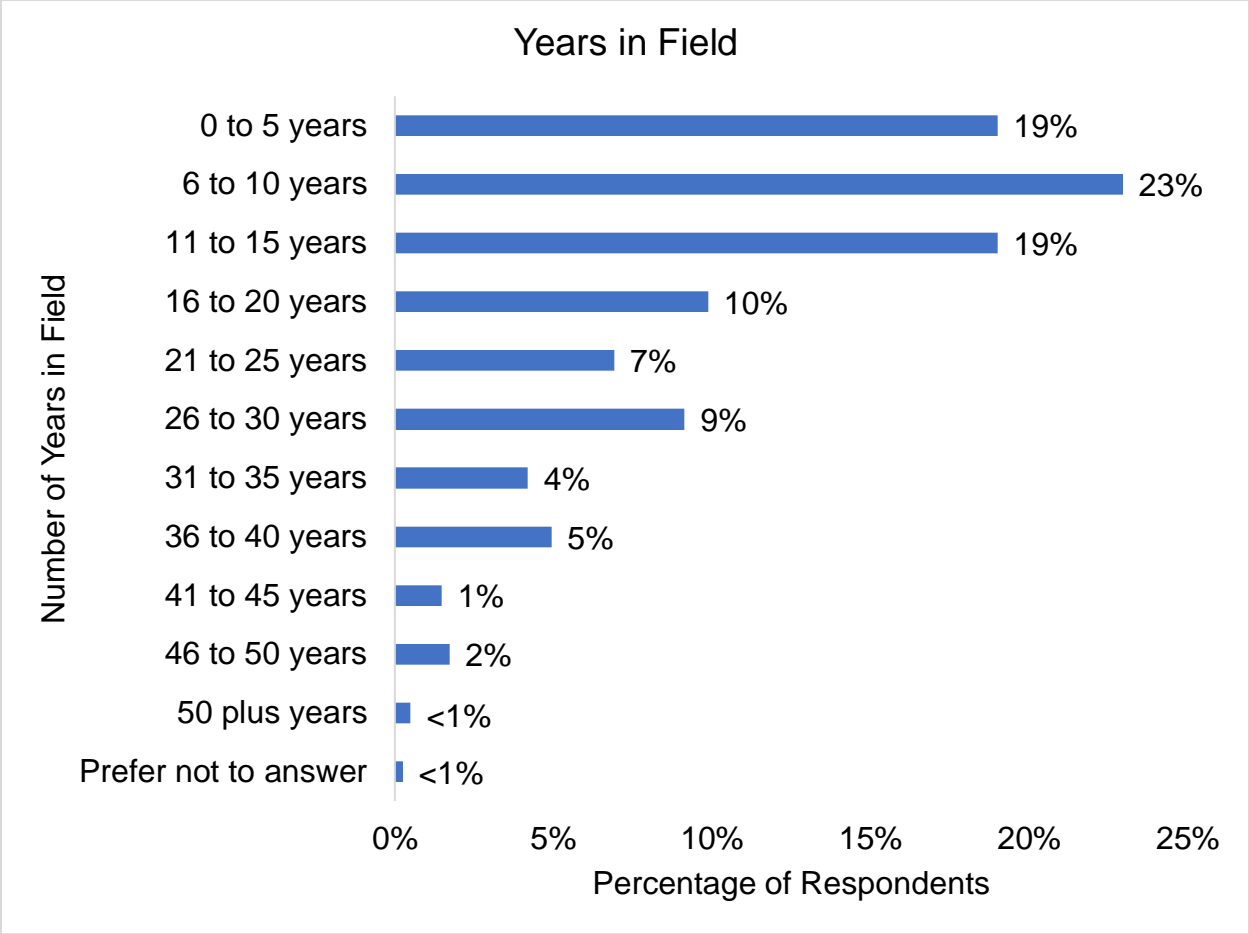
Type of Organization	Percentage of Respondents Employed
Museum or historic house	41%
Library or Archives	17%
Independent contractor/self-employed	5%
Private practice	9%
Regional conservation lab	5%
Student	4%
Government	2%
Library & Museum	1%
Retired/unemployed	1%
University/Academia	4%
Prefer not to answer	4%
Other	7%

Figure 17. Place of employment



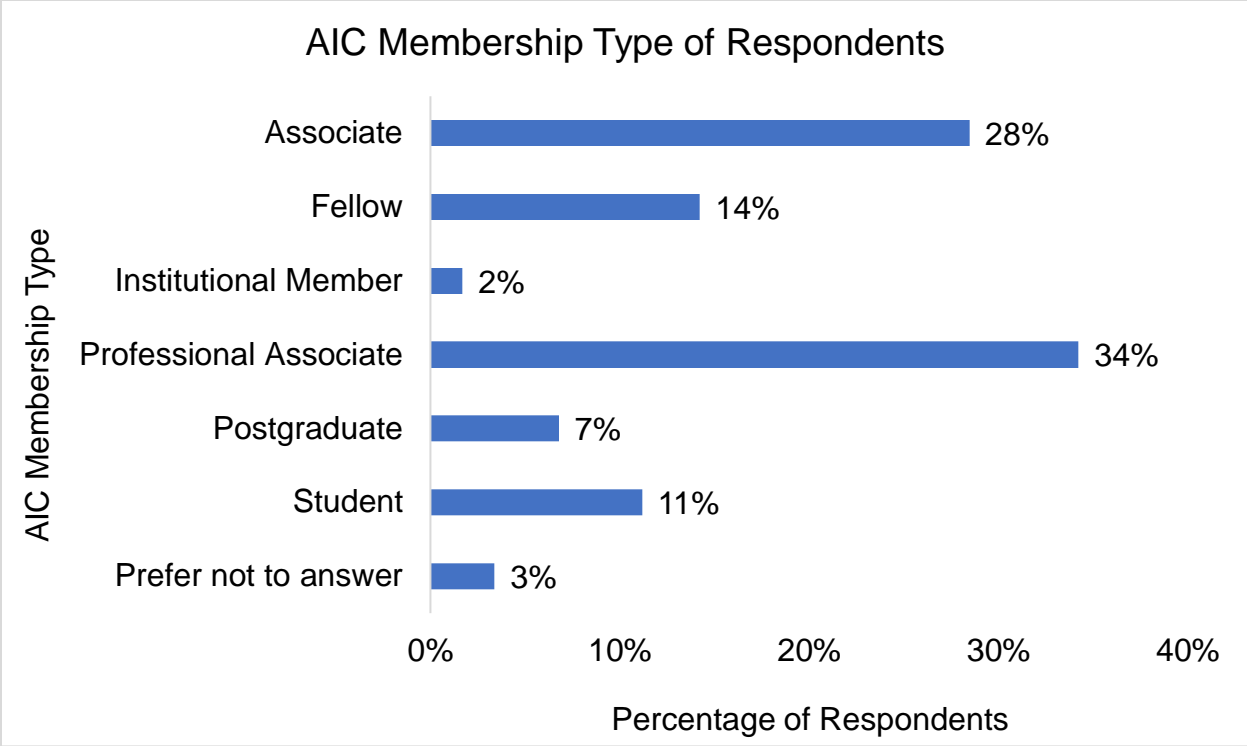
Position	Percentage of Respondents
Collections care professional	9%
Conservator	69%
Pre-program	3%
Graduate student/recent grad	10%
Scientist	2%
Administrator	1%
Archivist/Curator	1%
Educator	1%
Researcher/Writer	Less than 1%
Technician	1%
Retired	Less than 1%
Prefer not to answer	1%
Other	2%

Figure 18. Position title



Number of Years in the Field	Percentage of Respondents
0 to 5 years	19%
6 to 10 years	23%
11 to 15 years	19%
16 to 20 years	10%
21 to 25 years	7%
26 to 30 years	9%
31 to 35 years	4%
36 to 40 years	5%
41 to 45 years	1%
46 to 50 years	2%
50 plus years	Less than 1%
Prefer not to answer	Less than 1%

Figure 19. Years in field



AIC Membership Type	Percentage of Respondents
Associate	28%
Fellow	14%
Institutional Member	2%
Professional Associate	34%
Postgraduate	7%
Student	11%
Prefer not to answer	3%

Figure 20. AIC membership type of respondents

Accessibility Challenge	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74
Speakers or moderators could not be heard	18%	15%	18%	17%	25%
Slides were difficult to read	22%	32%	12%	8%	33%
Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers	11%	3%	0%	8%	17%
Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering	4%	3%	6%	0%	8%
Closed captioning, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or assistive listening system was not available	13%	9%	0%	0%	8%
ASL interpreter was not provided	7%	3%	6%	0%	0%
Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Moving between meeting rooms was onerous	20%	29%	29%	17%	17%
Elevators were difficult to find or not available	4%	6%	12%	0%	8%
Not enough seating/too long standing	13%	12%	12%	0%	8%
Rooms were too loud/crowded/bright	24%	6%	18%	8%	0%
Not enough lighting was provided to safely navigate the space	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%
No wheelchair-accessible shuttles/hard to navigate spaces	4%	0%	12%	0%	8%
Unavailability of "quiet rooms"	20%	15%	18%	17%	8%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 21. Accessibility challenges at in-person events by age range

Accessibility Challenge	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74
Speakers or moderators could not be heard	29%	21%	6%	25%	17%
Slides were difficult to read	22%	21%	0%	0%	17%
Tables or image content could not be read by the screen readers	7%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Gifs, flashes, or animations in presentation slides were distracting or triggering	4%	0%	6%	0%	8%
Live closed captioning was not available	27%	9%	6%	17%	17%
Technical assistance was not made aware of necessary program adaptation or troubleshooting	7%	3%	0%	8%	8%
Other	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 22. Accessibility challenges at virtual events by age range

Appendix D: EIC Recommendations

The Equity and Inclusion Committee has drafted recommendations based on the “Accessibility in Conservation” report. These include recommendations to the boards and staff of AIC and FAIC, networks and specialty groups, as well as for the general AIC membership.

Key takeaways from the survey point to a lack of knowledge and familiarity around accessibility issues, laws, and rights. Because of this, some suggestions are based on individuals increasing their knowledge and are not enforceable for us as an organization.

It must be emphasized that the work of creating a more accessible organization is not an ‘add-on.’ It is an issue that touches on the health, safety, and sustainability of our field and must be incorporated into all aspects of our work. Considering the high number of survey respondents who identified as having psychological and chronic health conditions, both invisible and visible disabilities need to be considered when creating accommodations.

F/AIC Boards and Staff

- Conduct an ‘Accessibility Audit’ of the organization as part of a larger DEIA audit.
 - Hire a professional accessibility firm to audit F/AIC and possibly provide an accessibility or inclusive design roadmap for F/AIC to follow in the future
 - Include all communications and internet ‘properties’ such as the Website, Wiki, Connecting to Collections Care, and Higher Logic Platform.
 - Conduct the audit at regular and specific intervals.
- Incorporate accessibility goals into the upcoming F/AIC Strategic Planning cycle
 - Include accessibility goals/practices in the F/AIC Strategic Plans and operating budgets. This may include looking for funds for Closed Captioning (CC) on all recorded and virtual programs, sign language interpretation, and Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation (CART) contingencies.
 - Ensure that the strategic planning itself is accessible and inclusive.
- Regularly gather information about disabilities, accessibility accommodations, as well as other pertinent demographic information.
- Require accessibility accommodations be incorporated into all grant and funding applications, within F/AIC and when F/AIC is applying for funding - this should be done with an eye towards greater inclusion.
- Establish a baseline of accessibility for all events and workshops, including a checklist for all organizers and hosts of F/AIC events

- Consider venues with a wider range of other accommodations and flexibility.
- Plan for trainings and presentations to include accessible options. Budgets and spaces need to reflect these options, i.e. closed captioning, quiet spaces, a variety of accessible seating and floor plans, etc.
- Continue to create clear lines of communication and availability of AIC committees, leadership, and staff to hear concerns for those who are facing challenges.
- Offer training and/or resources for presenters and moderators.
 - Continue to improve on resources for presenters and moderators that are already available.
 - Build better systems for presenters and moderators. This includes learning to design inclusive talks, present in accessible ways, and moderation policies that create safe and inclusive discussion spaces.

Networks and Specialty Groups

- Create a course/program (or programs) that focuses on empowering individuals regarding their rights and teaching supervisors/workplaces about their responsibilities.
 - The course could be modeled on the salary negotiation course “Making the Ask: Developing Negotiation Tactics in the Field of Conservation.”
- Improve awareness of existing Specialty Group and Network resources. Better publicize available resources that highlight accommodations. Some examples are those about workplace safety, accessibility in the workplace, and ergonomics:
 - Health & Safety Network Conservation Wiki: ‘ergonomics’ and ‘eye health’
 - https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Workplace_Safety#Ergonomics
 - https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Workplace_Safety#Eye_Health
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility Conservation Wiki
 - https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Accessibility_Issues_in_Conservation

Individual Members

The following recommendations are important for shifting F/AIC towards a more accessible and inclusive organization. They may be difficult to measure or quantify on an individual basis but add to the necessary transformation of the field.

- Learn more about existing disability legislation, locally and nationally.
 - Incorporate accessibility education into the upcoming Continuing Professional Development requirement for members.
 - These include but are not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and disability rights laws.
- Examine and challenge our own views, practices, and language regarding disabilities.
- Acknowledge that colleagues may be uncomfortable sharing their experiences, worry they will be seen as less capable, fear harassment, and are concerned their privileged information will not stay private.
- Advocate for and be receptive to accommodations requested by colleagues: the most common needs identified in the survey were for a flexible schedule, accommodations for chronic pain, computer related issues, and support for telecommuting.
- Support the introduction of disability awareness training and materials from Human Resources or owners as well as the benefits from disability insurance and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), where available.