

Survey Results: WSBA Volunteers: Impact of Virtual/Remote Work

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted how we work in ways that are expected to influence the organizations and its operations for the future. As important stakeholders, 740 WSBA volunteers were asked to complete a short survey to better understand how conducting volunteer work at WSBA has been positively or negatively impacted by the transition to virtual/remote. WSBA received 125 (17%). Responses are anonymous. The information below may be used both to inform the on-going organization-wide trends and assumptions for the upcoming fiscal year budget (FY22). The survey closed May 28, 2021.

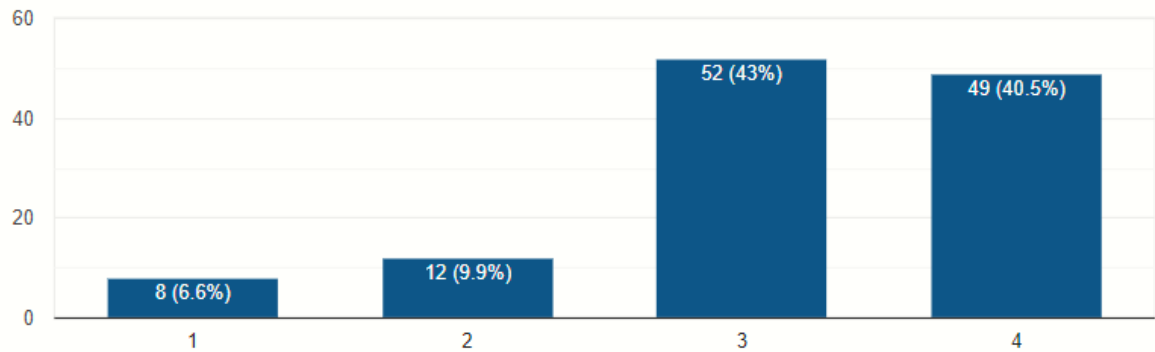
Results

1. Entities represented in survey results (respondents could select more than one)

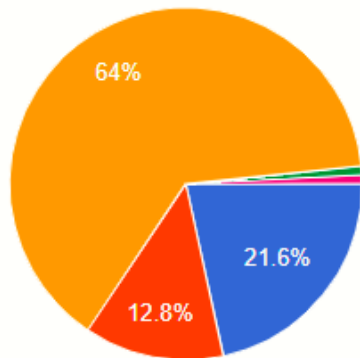
WSBA Section Executive Committees	30%
WSBA Committees & Council	26%
Supreme Court Boards & Panels	24%
WSBA Regulatory Boards & Panels	13%
Other (Bar News contributors, Foundation Trustees)	12%

2. How satisfied are you with remote meetings compared to in-person?

(1 is not satisfied, 4 is very satisfied)



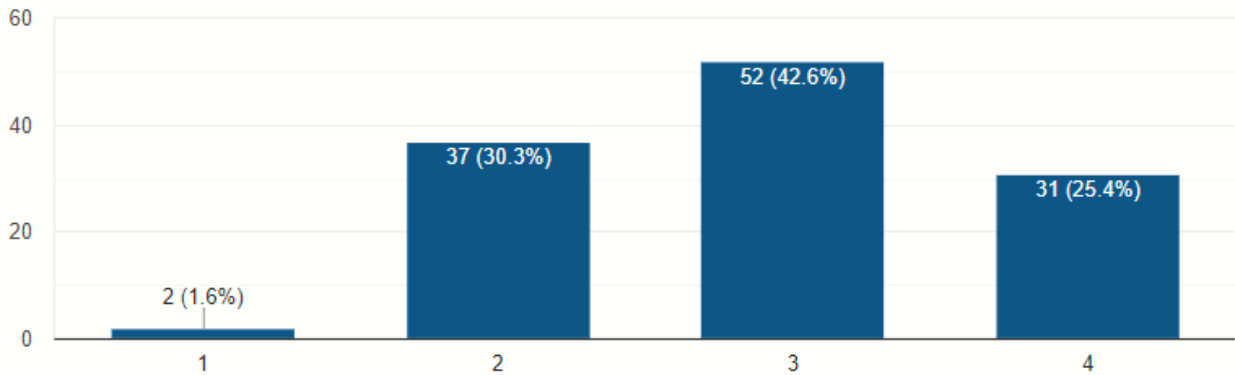
3. How do you prefer to participate in meetings?



- Always virtual
- Always in-person meetings
- A hybrid
- Phone
- During Covid: always virtual. After Covid: who knows? Perhaps a hybrid — will be easier for members from outside of Seattle Metro if we stay all virtual, tho. (I live in Seattle.)

4. Do you perceive that participants are more or less engaged in meetings?

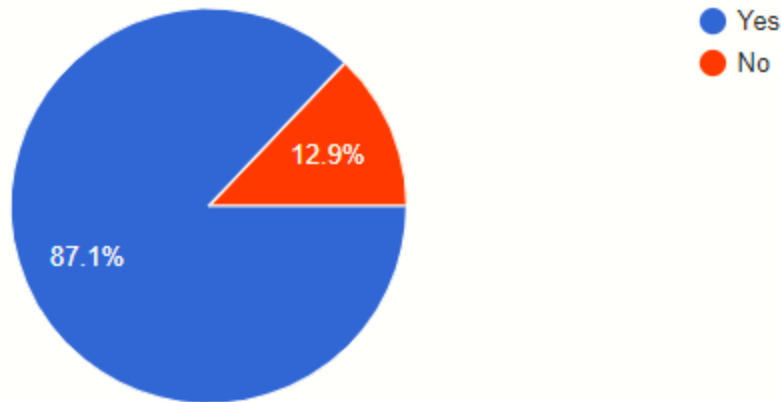
(1 is not engaged, 4 is very engaged)



5. Do you perceive that attendance has increased or decreased?

About the Same	41%
Increased	31%
Decreased	14%
I Don't Know/Nothing to Compare To	13%

6. Working remotely, are you able to accomplish your goals and get work done effectively?



7. Do you believe your meetings requires an in-person presence? If so, why?

104 respondents answered this open-ended question. Generally, responses fell into the following three categories:

Not required, but preferred occasionally and/or beneficial to building relationships: 38%

Examples:

An in-person meeting 1-2x per year is helpful to develop stronger working relationships.

We need occasional in person meetings to renew the social bonds that hold us together. But, we can hold are were already holding most of our meetings by telephone and now ZOOM. They help us to stay on budget, minimize volunteer time spent participating, and include members who are more geographically remote.

I think remote meetings make it easier for distant people to participate, and allow a wider representation of Washington lawyer, but I miss the change for group cohesiveness and the development of relationships that in person meetings allow. I don't feel that I've gotten to know anyone I've met with remotely, and feel the poorer for it.

No: 20%

Examples:

As an attorney based in Clark County, Washington, it is exceedingly difficult to regularly attend WSBA meetings in Seattle in-person. Taking essentially the entire day to travel back and forth would make participating in these meetings much less plausible for myself and other attorneys who are not based in the Seattle metro area. Though not personally applicable, I believe that

remote meetings also provide greater access to attorneys who are parents with childcare demands or with disabilities that make travel more difficult.

No. In fact, I think having them remotely allows us to recruit new members from other parts of the state. I am in Western Washington but, even before COVID, I did not participate in person because round trip from Tacoma to Seattle for a 1-hour meeting consumes an entire day. If it is that difficult even for those of us in the area, it makes participation from other parts of the state almost impossible.

No. For the first time our entire board appeared for a proceeding this month. We discussed that we are not in a rush to return to in person and in some ways feel like things are just as good, if not better, by Zoom; and in person appearances do not significantly increase quality.

Yes: 19%

Examples:

Yes. I think work is more productive and engaging in person cannot be replicated virtually.

Zoom calls are no substitute for face to face meetings. Not much engagement from the members present during Zoom calls. Also it is harder for the leader to hear everyone when people do not mute Zoom. Children crying in the background and televisions playing.

Part of the benefit of volunteering is getting to know other practitioners over lunch or on the breaks at the meetings and that just doesn't happen with remote meetings. I like how focused the remote meetings are but I really felt the loss of personal connection on the executive committee for the past year and a half and didn't personally get as much out of the experience as I would have in a normal year. We are still able to deliver quality CLEs and represent our section but if this was what it was always like, I'm not sure I would have volunteered for a commitment like the RPPT executive committee.

8. Do you have any suggestions for improving remote meetings?

72 respondents answered this open-ended question. Generally, responses fell into the following three categories:

Consistent access to technology, support (around technology but also improving engagement virtually), and online tools to enhance work. 40%

Examples:

It would be great to have some sort of general scheduling tool or file sharing program. I think everyone is using different tools and programs.

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Uniform best practice tips on participating equity and inclusion in remote meetings. For example, actively practicing inclusion and mindfulness of how much space and air time we take up and inviting others who may not readily partake (due perhaps to mental/physical limitations) to have opportunity to speak. Those leading the meetings should be aware and watch for equitable and inclusive participation in discussions.

Use a consistent videoconferencing technology, paid for and operated by WSBA, instead of relying on whatever members or their firms may be using.

No. 21%

No. (I do have suggestions for improving webcast CLEs, but that's a different topic. :)

Not at this time. It has been working very smoothly.

The remote meetings are fine. No reason to try to improve the meetings.

Other. 12%

Circulate agenda beforehand. Require cameras turned in to ensure participation.

Get rid of them.

Keep them short!