

7 november inc.



# **Membership survey**

## Findings and recommendations

4 January 2007

# Objectives

Survey NFPA current, former and prospective members to learn how the organization can best serve and represent their needs.

Develop recommendations for improving member services, and attracting new members, moving forward

# Methodology

Web survey of current membership base

- 210 participants out of 598 invited (35% response rate)

One-on-one telephone interviews with sampling of current, former and prospective members

- Responses unattributed to encourage candor

# Key Findings

Strong need for improved communications

- Between national and the membership
- To former and prospective members
- Among the members

Current members feel uninformed about the organization's offerings, developments, progress - and they would like more opportunities to connect with each other

Prospective members don't know of NFPA

*"I would like every foster parent to have your information more readily available. The average foster parent is not aware of NFPA and they do not know what you do."*

# Key Findings

NFPA members are engaged, vocal and largely supportive

Members are pleased with current benefits, and believe dues are fairly priced

Concern about lack of organizational diversity

*"The board of directors should reflect the diversity of the organization and the people that it serves."*

# Key Findings

Members would like NFPA to offer information on news, trends, developments in child welfare

Opportunity for NFPA to connect foster parents with each other, and with resources

*"It would be great to have a place for prospective foster parents to go to learn what you really need to know...a place to go to find out resources, like experts in their geographic area."*

# Findings: membership benefits

Members are by and large pleased with the current benefits menu

- Annual conference, National Advocate ranked highest

Additional benefits they would like to see:

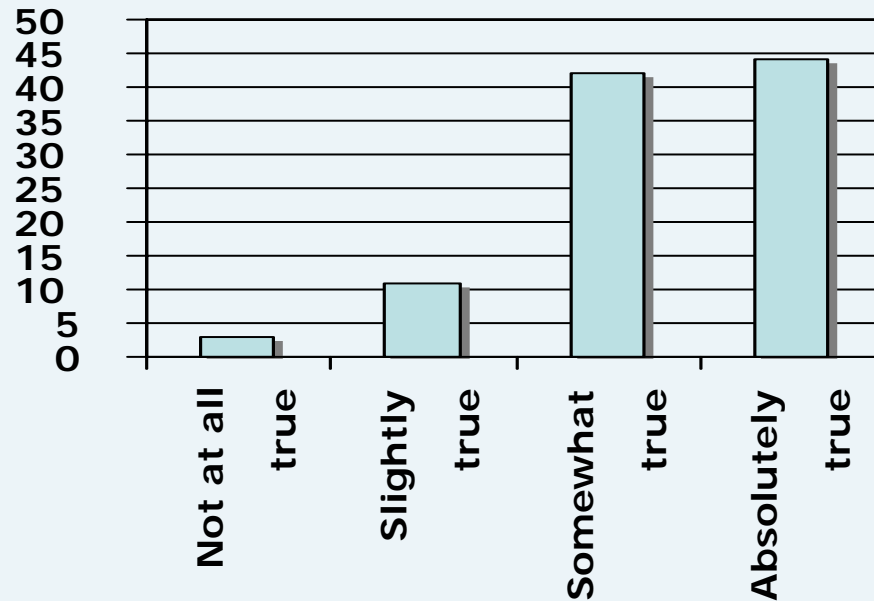
- More communication and networking
- Medical/Dental insurance
- Retirement plans
- A more robust website

Of those who have left NFPA, the most common reason is they are no longer fostering (50%), others have left due to poor communication

# Findings: membership benefits

NFPA represents the voices of foster parents on a national level

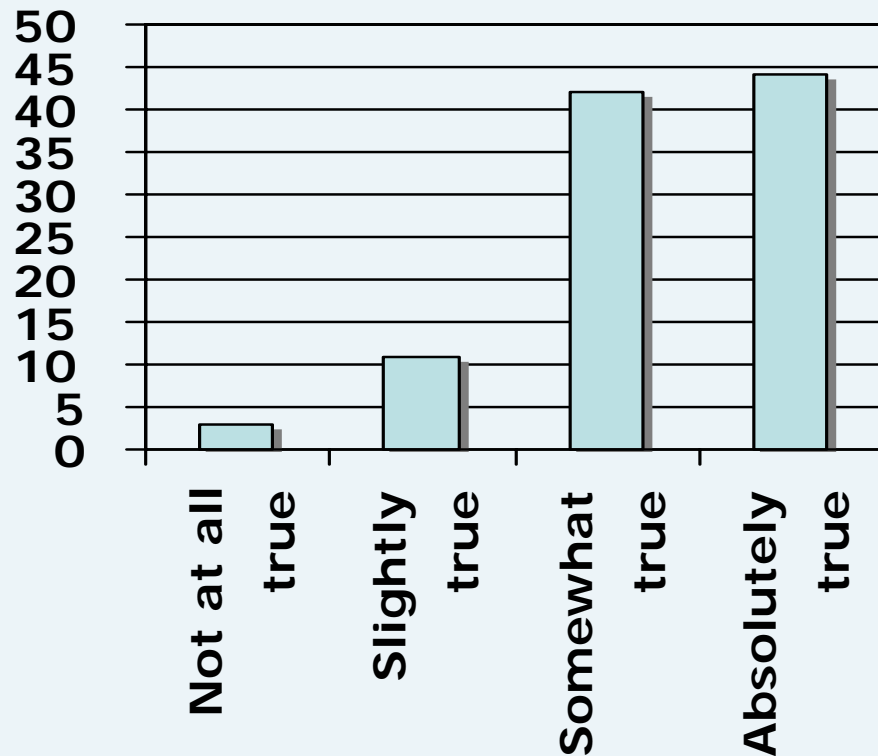
*"I would like to see more publicity at the national level on foster parent issues."*



# Findings: membership benefits

NFPA drives positive change for foster parents and families

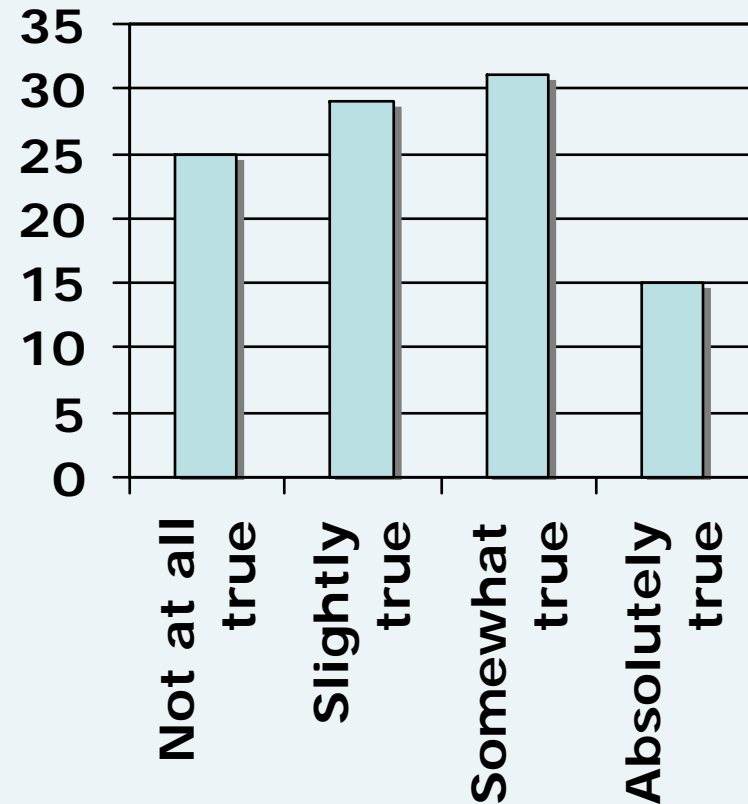
*"I would like NFPA to seriously step up to the challenge of advocating consistently at the national level. NFPA should be the frontrunner in any and all issues that have to do with foster parents and children."*



# Findings: membership benefits

My NFPA membership assists me in my day to day work as a foster parent.

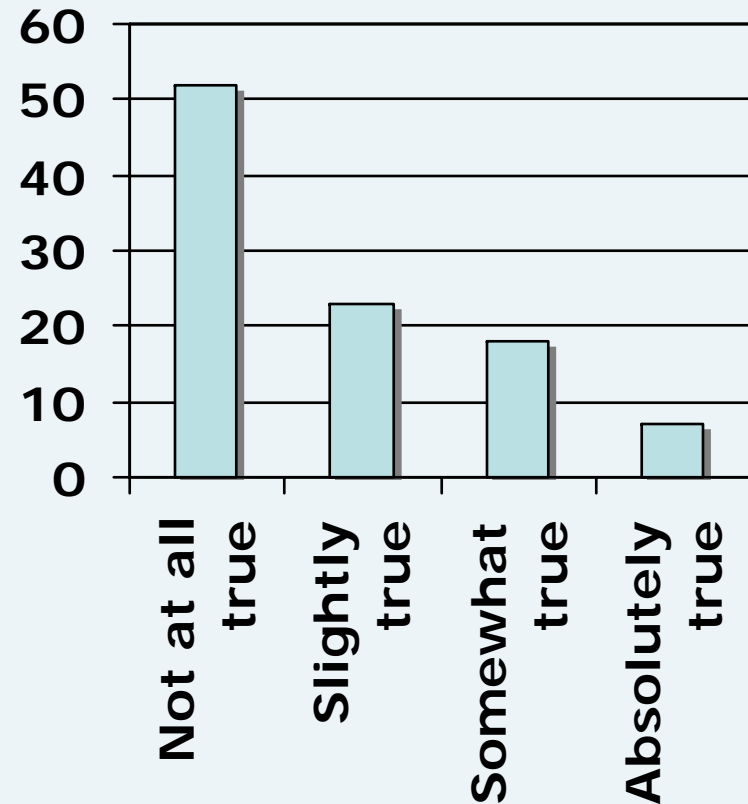
*"My foster son...has benefited beyond belief from the scholarships available, and the message of encouragement and support the scholarships give voice to."*



# Findings: membership benefits

I see little benefit from my NFPA membership.

*"The knowledge I received [from NFPA] has made my experiences of fostering children easier."*



# Findings: NFPA elections

57.5% of members surveyed had voted in an NFPA election or on an issue.

Majority of those (79.8%) voted because “it’s important to exercise our democratic rights.”

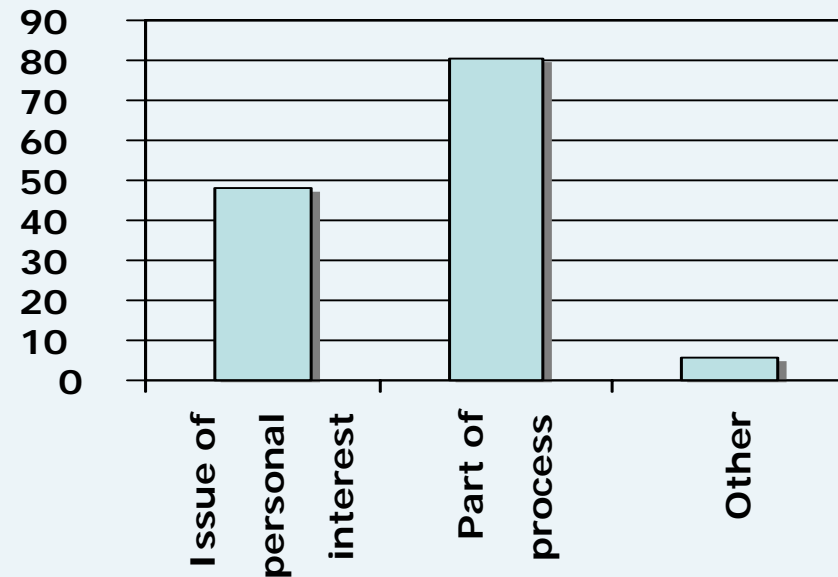
## Concerns:

- Limited number of members who currently vote - do their choices reflect membership?
- Prospective voters felt they did not have enough information to make informed choices

# Findings: NFPA elections

If you have voted,  
why?

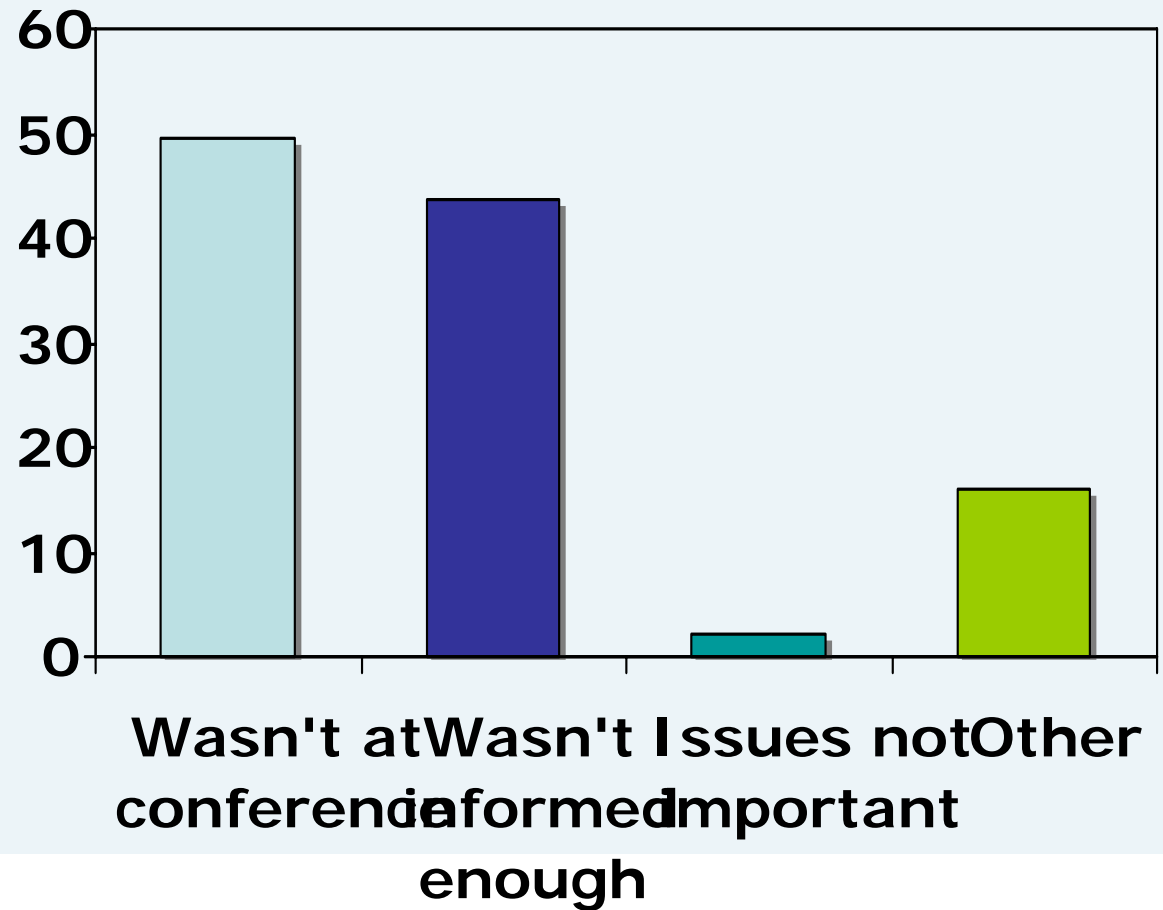
*"I feel if I belong to an organization, I feel obligated to help choose officers."*



# Findings: NFPA elections

If you have not voted, why not?

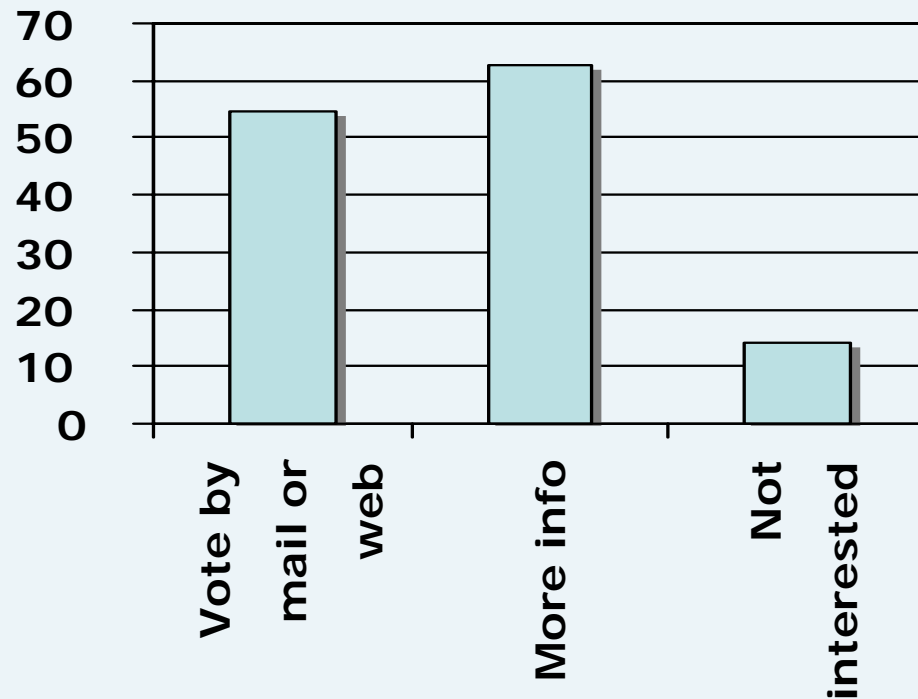
*"I did not feel I knew enough about it to vote."*



# Findings: NFPA elections

What would increase your likelihood of voting in future elections?

*"I don't feel reading their bios is enough for me to make an intelligent decision when I don't know any of the people at all."*



# Findings: organizational change

Majority of members surveyed (62%) would support changing to a representative form of governance.

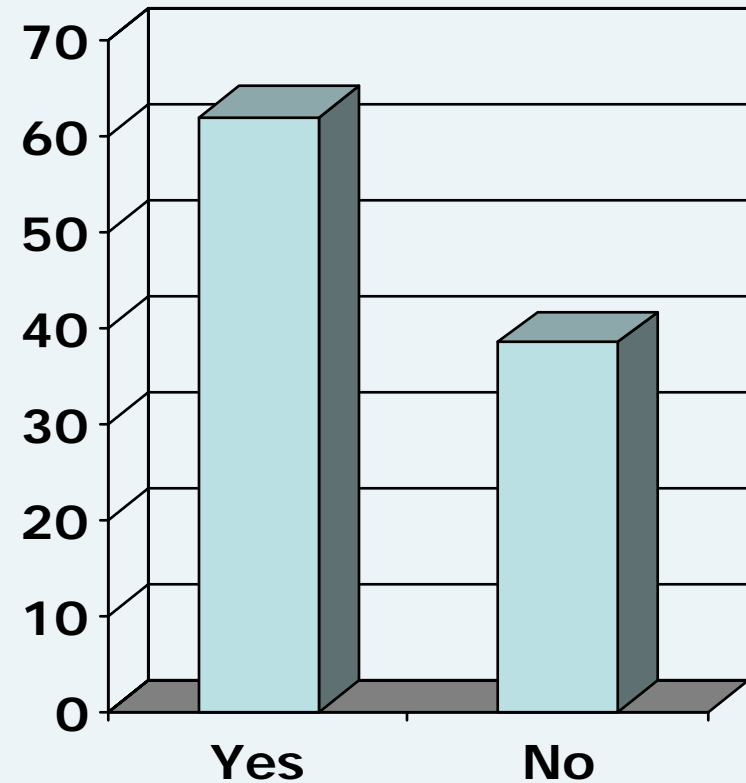
Of those not in favor, many of those are opposed simply because they do not have enough information on the change.

# Findings: organizational change

Would you be supportive of this change?

*"No, because I'm tired of organizations where power is held in the hands of a few."*

*"Yes...right now the NFPA swings and changes depending on who attends the annual meeting."*



# Findings: organizational change

## Why supportive:

- Those who would vote would be more informed than those who vote now
- Make NFPA more productive
- Many members don't vote anyway

## Why not supportive:

- Don't have enough information
- Everyone has a right to be heard
- If it's not broken, don't fix it

# Findings: prospective members

50% had not heard of NFPA

Of those who had heard of the organization,  
none were inspired to join

Barriers to joining:

- Cost/benefit
- Unclear on offerings
- Not enough communication

*"When I looked at it as a foster parent, I wasn't really blown away by the offerings. It didn't feel like a community like you would hope they would build so I could connect with foster parents all across the U.S."*

# Findings: prospective members

Opportunity: Become a national source for connecting and educating foster parents, and unifying their voices for positive change

*"I would like an association that was going to see me through. Part of fostering is helping people navigate...[I would like] online access to material that can help you sort out issues."*

# Recommendations

Evaluate and improve communications strategies to reach members more frequently, with more content, and through varied media

Make NFPA.org more robust and a “must go to” site for all foster parents

Develop specific communications plan to garner member support of organizational change

# Recommendations

Explore ways for members to vote via web and U.S. mail

Orchestrate a “welcome back” outreach plan to former members

Push NFPA information to all foster parents via local agencies, other existing networks

Publish results of this survey to members via National Advocate and web

# Recommendations

Create opportunities for more diversity on the board

- Racial/ethnic diversity as well as professional diversity
- Board members from outside of child welfare

Create opportunities for members with specific experiences to represent NFPA