

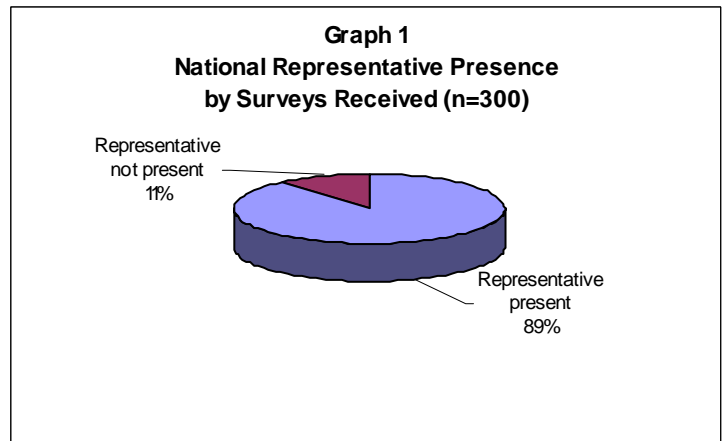


In the spring and early summer of each year, the state federations of Business and Professional Women/USA (BPW/USA) convene to conduct state business, select state legislative priorities for the year, elect new officers, and participate in professional development opportunities. Representatives of the national BPW/USA, which typically includes current or former national leadership, attend many of the State Conventions to update local members in each state on national activities and to act as a liaison between the state and national leadership.

To assess the value of the National Representative Program, BPW/USA developed and administered two surveys to attendees at each State Convention held in 2005. The first survey, comprising seven questions, was given to those states with a National Representative in attendance; the second survey, six questions, was given to those states without a National Representative in attendance.

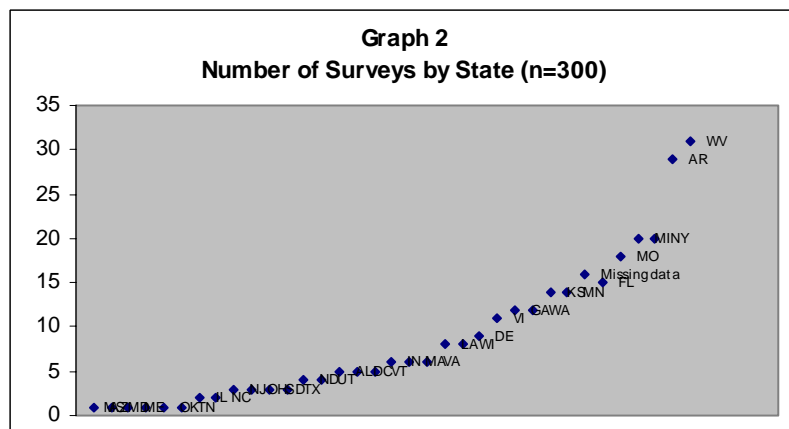
Distribution and collection of the surveys was not mandatory, and surveys were distributed in two ways. National Representatives handed out surveys to attendees at the conferences they attended; submission of the forms by participants was on a voluntary basis. At State Conventions without a National Representative, resource packets including copies of the survey were mailed to each State Convention organizer. Distribution and collection of the surveys was then voluntary per state.

BPW/USA and the BPW Foundation commissioned the Points of Light Foundation, a national nonprofit organization, to conduct the analysis of the survey data. This report details the findings from a combined analysis of the two surveys with a focus on group differences (national Representative present versus not present) when appropriate. However, because of the low response by states without a National Representative (n=33) and for many of the states in general, these findings must be interpreted with caution.



**Distribution of Surveys**

Completed surveys provide responses representing 34 states. The distribution of surveys by states ranges from a low of one survey in six states to a high of 31 surveys from one state. Graph 1 and Table 2 depict the distribution of survey responses by state. Only 11 states are represented by six or more surveys.



**Table 1**  
**Number of Surveys by State**

Minimum	1
25th Percentile	3
Median	6
75th Percentile	13
Maximum	31

**Comparing Different Surveys**

Because of the open-ended nature of the surveys (six of seven questions on the “Representative present” form and all six questions on the “Representative not present” form), Points of Light researchers developed a keyword database to catalogue responses for each question. Each respondent could list multiple responses for each question; thus, no total will equal exactly 100%.

The fundamental difference between the two surveys is the “Representative present” survey asks questions to assess the value of having a Representative present for the 2005 State Convention; the “Representative not present” survey requests respondent prospective opinions on the “expected” value a Representative “could” offer.

Because the two surveys differed, BPW developed a cross-comparison system to aid aggregate analysis. Table 2 exhibits the cross-comparison, showing which questions correspond to each other by survey.

Survey Type:	Representative Present	Representative Not Present
Question Number:	1	5
	2	3
	3	Not applicable
	4	4
	5	Not applicable
	6	1
	7	6
	Not applicable	2

**Results**

When asked the **main responsibility of the National Representative** at a State Convention (Representative present) and, for those without a Representative present, what they **hoped a Representative could offer**, respondents largely focused on the need for the Representative to connect National BPW to the local BPW groups in terms of national activities, accomplishments, goals and legislation. At least a majority of respondents mentioned these items, as depicted in the “Total” column in Table 3. When grouping by survey type (Representative present or not), similar responses appear. A larger proportion of the Representative not present respondents left the question blank.

	Total n=300	Representative Present n=267	Representative Not Present n=33
National activities	71.0%	75.3%	36.4%
National accomplishments	62.0%	68.2%	12.1%
National goals	60.3%	65.9%	15.2%
National legislation	56.0%	60.7%	18.2%
Inspire	19.7%	21.7%	3.0%
National vision	18.7%	18.0%	24.2%
Member concerns	12.0%	12.7%	6.1%
Link to grassroots members	7.7%	7.5%	9.1%
Member relationships (develop personal relationships with members; network, connect, and mingle with members)	3.7%	3.7%	3.0%
Events	2.3%	2.2%	3.0%
Officer installation	1.7%	1.9%	0.0%
Dues	1.3%	0.0%	12.1%
Awards	0.3%	0.0%	3.0%
<i>Left blank</i>	6.0%	3.7%	24.2%
<i>Not applicable</i>	0.7%	0.0%	6.1%

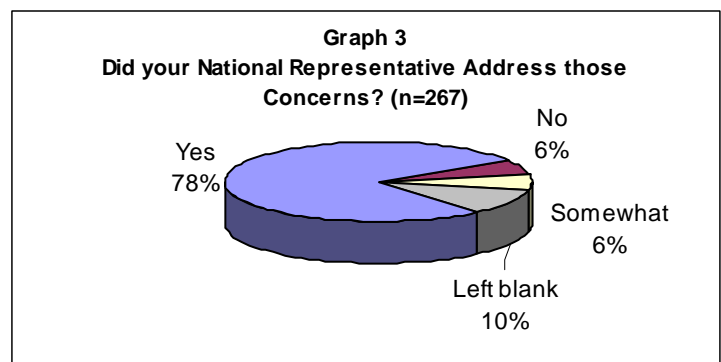
Respondents were asked to list the **top three issues or priorities of concern in their state**. Responses generally fell into the following broad categories: membership dues, BPW administrative issues, programming, visibility, membership, equal rights for women, and women’s health and well being. Each broad category is a compilation of multiple specific concerns. Table 4 delineates both the general and specific state concerns:

<b>Table 4</b> <b>State concerns (general)</b>	<b>State concerns (specific)</b>	<b>Total n=300</b>	<b>Representative Present n=267</b>	<b>Representative Not Present n=33</b>
Membership	Recruiting, retaining, developing, mentoring, IDPs	99.3%	103.4%	66.7%
Equal rights for women	Affirmative action, empowerment, child care, right to vote, sexual harassment, Equal Rights Amendment, equal pay, equity	52.3%	53.6%	42.4%
Other legislative issues	Advocacy, Social Security, education, environment, employment, family leave	32.0%	32.2%	30.3%
Dues	Increases, decreases, finances	25.7%	23.2%	45.5%
Women's Health & Wellbeing	Women's rights, reproductive rights, and healthcare issues, violence against women	18.3%	16.5%	33.3%
Visibility	Providing information, increasing visibility (general), generating enthusiasm, increasing attendance at conferences and meetings	13.7%	14.6%	6.1%
Progamming	Partnering with corporation and maintaining signature programs and Womenomics	9.0%	7.5%	21.2%
Administrative issues	Creating "how to" website section, providing travel funds, costs of national conference	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%
<i>Left blank</i>		4.7%	4.9%	3.0%
<i>Not applicable</i>		0.3%	0.0%	3.0%
<i>Do not know</i>		0.3%	0.4%	0.0%

*Each respondent could list multiple responses to each question; thus, does not total to 100%.*

A breakdown of the specific state concerns point to interesting themes. Of 298 responses dealing with membership, for example, 31% specifically pertained to retaining and 27% to recruiting members. Of the 77 individuals who reported a general issue with dues or finances, nearly 40% identified “increasing dues” as a top concern. A total of 12 states reported concern with increasing dues; West Virginia comprised 34% of these responses (10), and Kansas comprised 21% (6).

After identifying issues, respondents with a National Representative in attendance were asked **if these concerns were addressed**, and overall, it appears they were. **Nearly 80%** of respondents who had a National Representative at their State Convention reported that the Representative addressed the concerns the respondent identified as pertinent to their state (Graph 3).



Respondents in the group with a National Representative in attendance were asked to list **additional issues not covered** at the State Convention but of interest. Nearly 20% of respondents did not recommend changes and about 7.5% offered general praise (e.g., energizing, motivational) for the Representative. Table 5 details the response items stated by more than one person.

<b>Issues or concerns would have liked National Representative to address</b>	<b>Representative Present n=267</b>
No additional issues recommended	19.1%
More information on BPW/USA	9.0%
Political action (how BPW works with legislators and impacts legislation)	6.7%
Recruitment	2.8%
Networking and mentoring	2.6%
Budget	2.2%
New projects and goals	1.9%
Fundraising	1.5%
Best practices	1.5%
Affinity partnerships	0.7%
By-law changes	0.7%
<i>Left blank</i>	42.3%
<i>Not applicable</i>	7.5%

Respondents from the 27 states that had a National Representative in attendance at their State Convention were asked, “What **added value or benefit** did the National Representative bring to your State Convention?” Reciprocally, the seven states without a Representative were asked, “When there is a National Representative at your State Convention **what added value do you expect** the Representative should or will bring?” The responses, pictured in Table 6, reflect National Representative major responsibilities that the respondents identified in Table 3 (Main Responsibility of National Representative/What a National Representative can offer), including the need for a connection to national BPW issues. Of the total responses, 18.7% consisted of general praise for the National Representative. Some examples include, “[Representative name] brings passion to the causes of BPW and a warmth to her message from BPW/USA;” “She was approachable, knowledgeable, and extremely helpful;” “It is great to see their passion...and know how they got there and why;” “We are blessed to have her any time.”

<b>Value or benefit the Representative did (or should) add</b>	<b>Total n=300</b>	<b>Representative Present n=267</b>	<b>Representative Not Present n=33</b>
Provide information	36.0%	37.1%	27.3%
Link BPW National to BPW State	28.0%	28.5%	24.2%
Generate enthusiasm	17.0%	16.5%	21.2%
Provide time to answer questions	9.0%	7.5%	21.2%
Update national issues	5.0%	4.5%	9.1%
Update national goals	4.0%	3.7%	6.1%
Increase visibility	3.3%	2.6%	9.1%
Highlight value of BPW membership	2.7%	2.2%	6.1%
Officer installation	2.0%	2.2%	0.0%
Conduct IDP training	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%
Nothing is added	1.3%	1.1%	3.0%
Educate on by-law changes	1.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Provide humor	1.0%	0.7%	3.0%
Detail website information	1.0%	1.1%	0.0%
<i>Left blank</i>	14.3%	12.4%	30.3%
<i>Not applicable</i>	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%

On both surveys, BPW/USA included a question that gauged the impact that omitting National Representative participation in State Conventions might have on the event and its participants:

- Present: “If your state **did not receive a National Representative** next year for your State Convention, what, if anything, would you miss about not having her there?”
- Not Present: “What, if anything, do you feel your **State Convention missed or was lacking** by not having a National Representative in attendance?”

It is clear the largest concern when losing the presence of a National Representative is a weaker connection to the national office, as Table 7 depicts:

<b>Table 7</b> Items State Convention lack without Representative	Total n=300	Representative Present n=267	Representative Not Present n=33
Connection to BPW/USA	49.3%	50.9%	36.4%
Information provision	16.7%	17.2%	12.1%
Positive presence	7.0%	6.0%	15.2%
Everything Representative provides	5.7%	6.0%	3.0%
Remain the same	5.3%	2.6%	27.3%
Raising importance of event	5.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Communication with leadership	3.7%	2.2%	15.2%
Report on future goals	3.0%	2.6%	6.1%
New ideas	2.3%	1.5%	9.1%
Report on past activities	2.0%	1.9%	3.0%
Explaining need for event	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Prestigious office installation	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
<i>Left blank</i>	18.0%	19.9%	3.0%
<i>Not applicable</i>	7.0%	4.5%	27.3%
<i>Do not know</i>	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%

BPW/USA asked those State Convention attendees without a Representative to **identify the main responsibility of BPW/USA National Headquarters to the State Convention**. The responses follow in Table 8. Akin to the similar themes throughout the analysis, respondents focused on the connection to the national office and its political actions.

<b>Table 8</b> Responsibility of National Headquarters to State Convention	Representative Not Present n=33
Provide information on BPW/USA	69.7%
Link to political action	33.3%
Energize and inspire	21.2%
Update on new projects	9.1%
Provide national platform	3.0%
Provide networking and mentoring	3.0%
Conduct workshops for locals	3.0%

When asked to describe something that BPW/USA could provide in lieu of sending a National Representative, states with a Representative present provided a wide array of suggestions with technical resources as the most frequently cited response. It is noteworthy that 15.3% of respondents, more than any other suggestion category, commented that a Representative is a necessity or simply provided praise for the work of National Representatives. Other suggestions by respondents were:

<b>Table 9</b> <b>Items to provide in lieu of sending Representative</b>	<b>Representative Present n=267</b>
Technical resources (website, emails, CD Rom, video, conference calls)	12.3%
Standard training materials	10.9%
Seminars (exciting and informative)	5.3%
Improve communication from national	3.7%
National strategies / action plan	2.7%
Recruitment aids and member gift program	2.3%
Fundraising materials	2.3%
Legislative updates	2.0%
Dues remain stable	2.0%
Financial support for convention	1.3%
Best practices from other states	1.0%
Highlight BPW impact	1.0%
Online member registration	0.7%
Contact with members	0.3%
Visibility	0.3%
<i>Left blank</i>	<i>45.0%</i>
<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>4.0%</i>

## Conclusion

The majority of BPW members took advantage of the open-ended questions in the evaluation surveys, providing responses that reflect their personal and unique views on the National Representative program. It is apparent that BPW members feel a strong connection to the national office and its work, and it is the National Representative that seems to embody this connection. This is reflected throughout the large number of responses in nearly every question category that underscore respondent desire for updates on national activities, accomplishments, goals, and legislative activities (Table 3, 5) and linking of local BPW to national BPW (Table 3, 6).

To strengthen the evaluation in the future, it is suggested that BPW/USA refine the categories used throughout this analysis to create multiple choice questions. Although the nuances of individual perspectives will be impossible to collect in this way, finite parameters will enable researchers to draw quantitative conclusions based on categories provided in this evaluation.

**About Business and Professional Women/USA:** Founded in 1919, BPW/USA helps women achieve economic self-sufficiency by advancing careers, building businesses and advocating for workplace equity.

**About the BPW Foundation:** Founded in 1956, the BPW Foundation works to empower workingwomen to achieve their full potential and to partner with employers to build successful workplaces.

**About the Points of Light Foundation:** The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, supports and organizes the vital work of community volunteers who help solve our nation's most serious social problems by bringing people and resources together. The Foundation raises public awareness about the urgent need to solve serious social problems through volunteering; builds knowledge, skills and programs for volunteers to succeed; and provides leadership to mobilize volunteers in thousands of local communities across the country.