



ACRA 2021 Call for Issues Results and Analysis

January 2022

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Protecting and strengthening Secs. 106/110 and NEPA are the highest priorities among respondents.
- ▶ Firm owners and partners rated business options higher than employees did, but not higher than protecting Sec. 106.
- ▶ A majority of respondents believe the Section 106 process works well, but most believe it can be improved.
- ▶ Two-thirds of respondents said they took part in the Paycheck Protection Program during the pandemic, with a strong majority reporting that it was beneficial to their firms.
- ▶ Respondents are generally split on changing the Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualifications Standards and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements for federal archaeologists.
- ▶ A majority of respondents expressed interest in taking part in ACRA grassroots activities but also wanted to learn more about them and how they can get involved.

ACRA 2021 CALL FOR ISSUES

- ▶ The ACRA 2021 Call for Issues surveyed ACRA members in December 2021 about their top federal government policy priorities.
 - ▶ Survey dates: Dec. 8-22, 2021
- ▶ 63 participants answered the survey.



ACRA 2021 Call for Issues

Thank you for taking part in ACRA's 2021 Call for Issues. Your views will help ACRA develop its federal policy agenda for the next two years.

CRM practitioners play a unique, facilitating role in historic preservation, and therefore are able to expertly speak to these issues from the perspectives of their businesses and the communities they serve. ACRA communicates with federal policymakers in Congress and regulatory agencies to ensure that the voice of the CRM industry is heard. We help elected officials and other policymakers understand the scope of our business, the importance of historic preservation, and the impact of the cultural resource management industry on the economy.

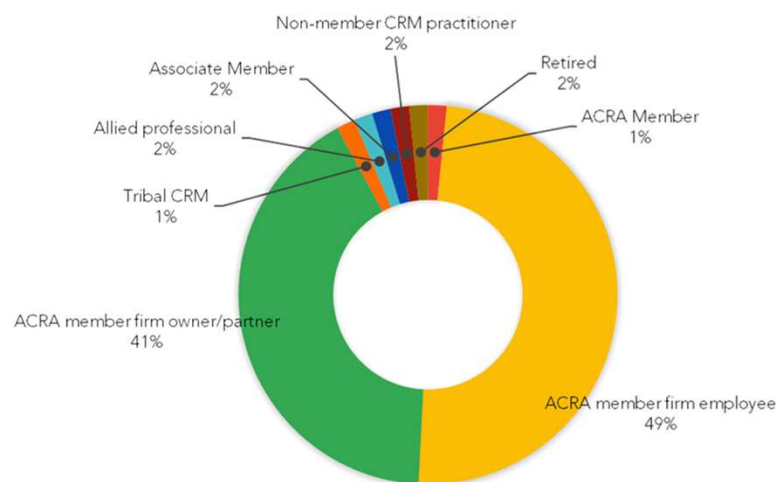
With major debates on the horizon on issues that affect the industry, it is more important than ever that ACRA speak with a clear voice about the priorities and values of CRM. Your feedback as part of this survey will help ACRA's Government Relations Committee make sure our policy agenda best reflects our members' views.

Responses to the survey are confidential. If you have questions, please contact Amanda Stratton at amanda@acra-crm.org.



RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

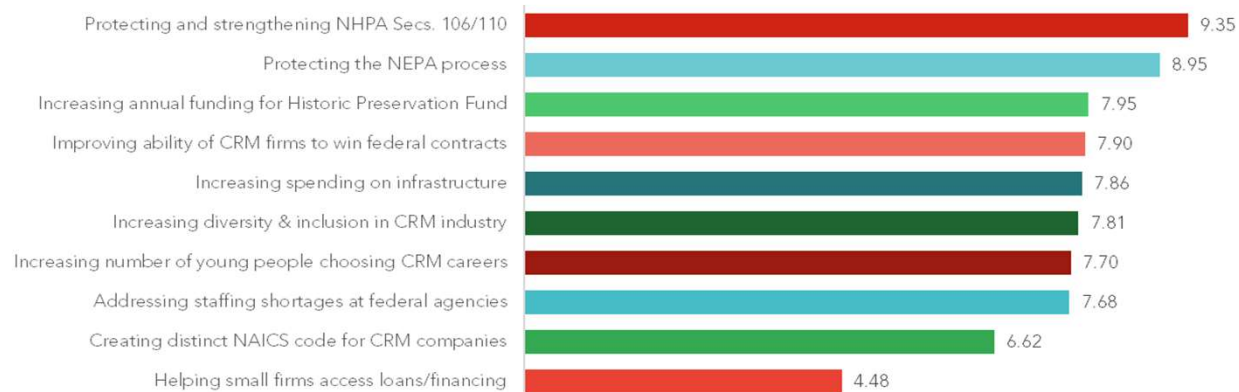
- Roughly half of respondents are CRM firm employees, and another 40% are firm owners/partners.
- Respondents were evenly divided among small, medium and large firms.
- The vast majority of respondents self-identified as archaeologists.



ISSUE PRIORITIZATION

Respondents were asked to rate 10 policy issues in terms of their importance.

Average Score



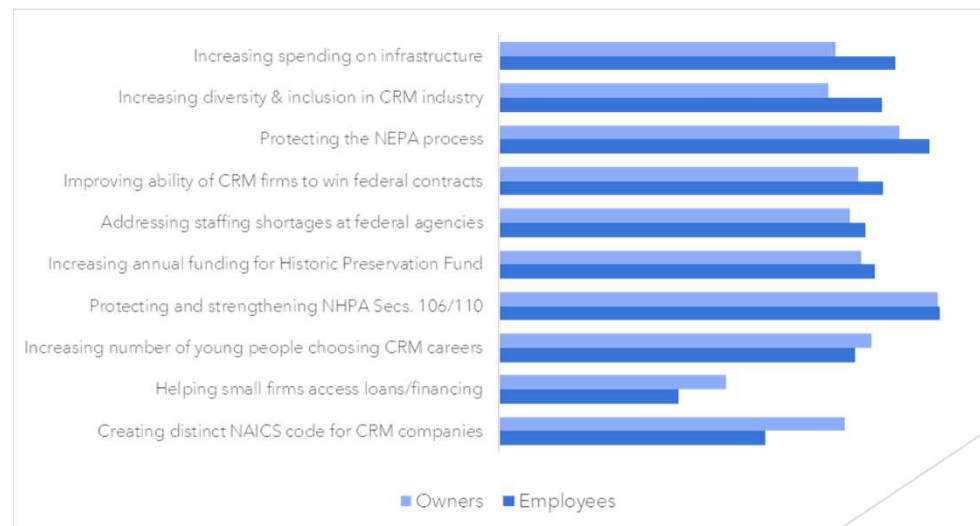
Median Score



ISSUE PRIORITIZATION

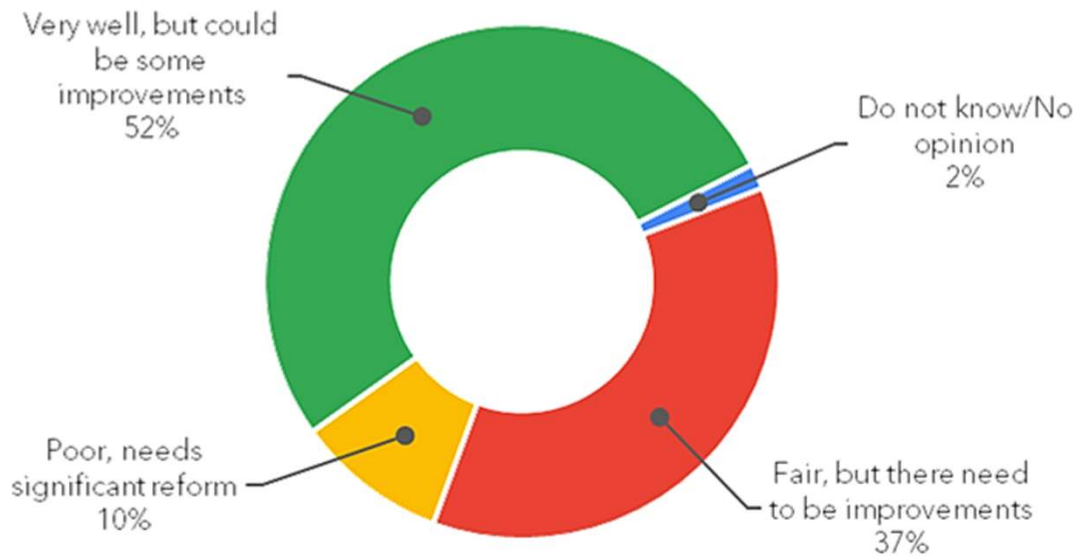
- Protecting/strengthening Secs. 106/110 and NEPA scored the highest among respondents – and received by far the most 10s (i.e., top priority)
- Business issues – like small business loans and financing – scored lower overall. While firm owners/partners rated them higher than employees, owners/partners did not rate them higher than other issues like protecting Sec. 106.
- Although “increasing diversity and inclusion” rated in the middle in terms of its average score, its higher median score suggests that members who prioritize it feel strongly about it. Employees rated it higher as a priority than owners.

Priorities for owners/partners vs. for employees



SECTION 106

- More than half of respondents said that Sec. 106 works “very well,” but could use improvements.
- Only 10% percent rated the process as poor.



SECTION 106

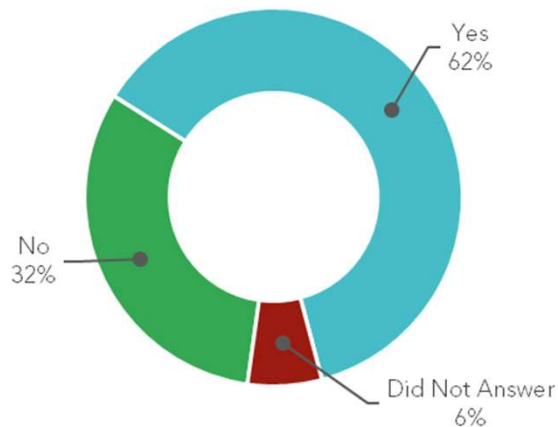
Issues and challenges with Sec. 106 that respondents noted include:

- "Not designed to work with NEPA"
- "Little meaningful consultation outside of just a letter."
- "Agency reviewers are unqualified to do reviews"
- "Inconsistency among/throughout agencies and states regarding compliance and requirements application of NRHP criteria"
- "Lack of consultation with tribes and stakeholder communities"
- "An escalation in requirements for studies by SHPOs and agencies."
- "Inflexible use of the regulation by states (and some federal agencies)"
- "It takes a long time it takes to complete"
- "Lack of true public involvement"
- "Lack of funding for SHPOs"
- "A shortage of federal and state agency personnel"

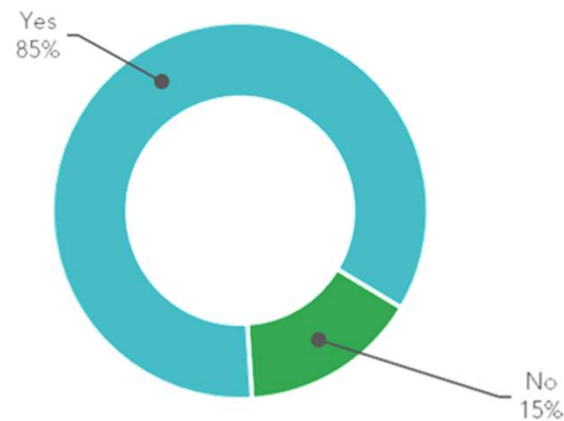
PAYCHECK PROTECTION (PPP)

- During the pandemic, 62% of respondents said their firm received a PPP loans or other federal emergency support.
- Of those who received a loan, 85% said it provided measurable support to their firm.

During the pandemic, did your firm receive PPP loans or other federal emergency support?



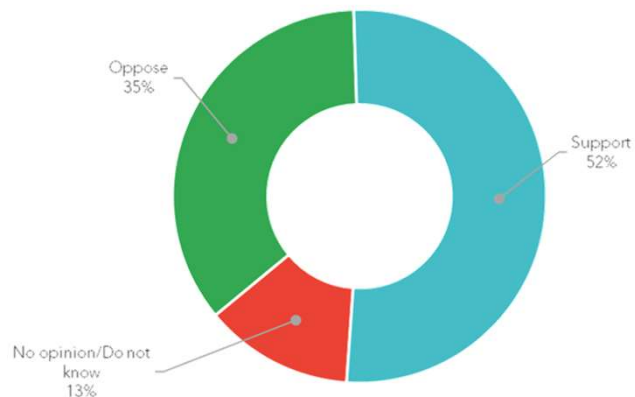
If yes, did the loan provide measurable help to your firm during the crisis?



PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

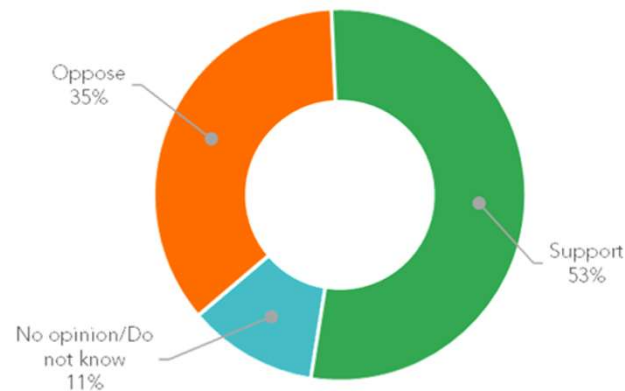
- A narrow majority of respondents support amending the Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualifications Standards to allow for people with an undergraduate degree, plus a greater level of experience, to meet the minimum qualifications.
- A similar proportion support amending Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements for federally employed archaeologists to require graduate degrees.

Do you support amending the Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualifications Standards to allow for people with an undergraduate degree, plus a greater level of experience, to meet the minimum qualifications?



ACRA
American Cultural Resources Association

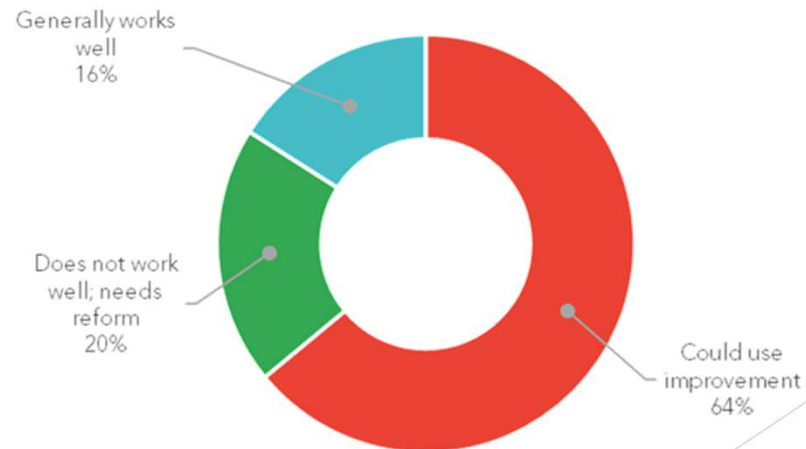
Do you support amending OPM requirements for archaeologists employed by the federal government to require a graduate degree and align them with the Secretary Standards?



FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

- 82% of respondents said their firms compete for federal contracts.
- Of those who do, almost two-thirds said the federal procurement process could be improved, and another fifth said the process needs reform.
- When asked what the most pressing issues were in procurement policy, the top two responses were "Inconsistent rules and guidelines between agencies" and "Contracting officers do not understand the CRM industry."

Do you believe the federal procurement process...



OTHER ISSUES

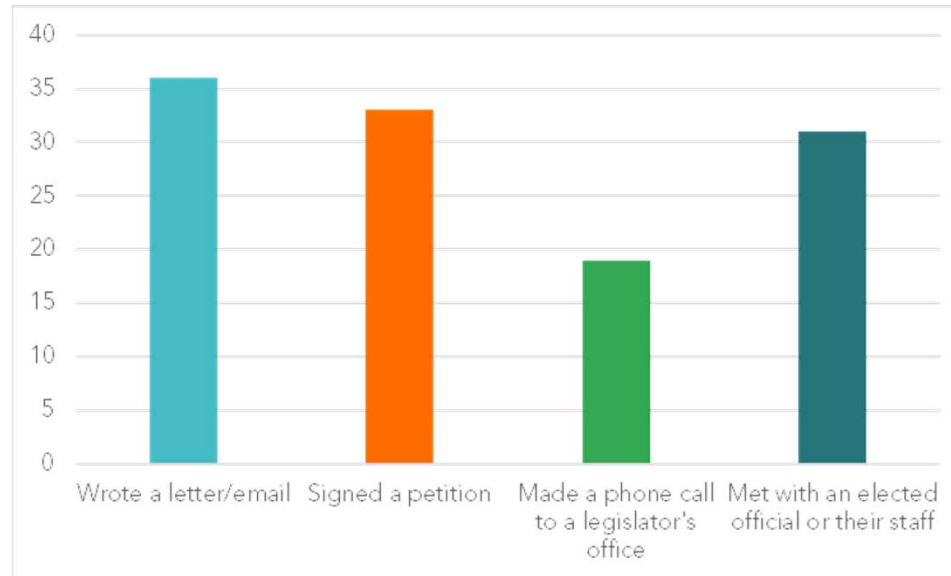
The survey asked respondents, “What is the one thing that ACRA can ask Congress and the Administration to do that will help the CRM industry?” The answers included:

- “Continue to protect the spirit of NEPA and Section 106. I think finding ways to streamline certain projects is fine, but don't rip the guts out.”
- “Continue to support and expand tribal engagement, involvement, inclusion in government actions, with more funding to tribes for same.”
- “Digitization of site files on a national basis.”
- “Fully and permanently fund the HPF.”
- “Help them understand how many people the industry employees and how it helps support development while also upholding national values to preserve cultural resources and honor indigenous group's right to protect their past.”
- “Properly fund the agency staff required for us to do our jobs.”
- “Provide greater funding to the SHPO and THPOs to allow them to hire and retain the staff needed to address the work volume from the Infrastructure Bill.”
- “Specify a single agency in a given state or subdivision of a state/nation to establish the guidelines and standards for that jurisdiction instead of the total patchwork that currently exists making planning and compliance excessively difficult and complicated.”
- “Work on the integration between protection of cultural resources and environmental resources. Recognize that history is a resource, to be protected, along with the environment.”
- “Ensure that all consulting parties have their concerns documented and addressed.”

GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT

Three-quarters of respondents said they have contacted their federal elected representatives to advocate on a policy issue.

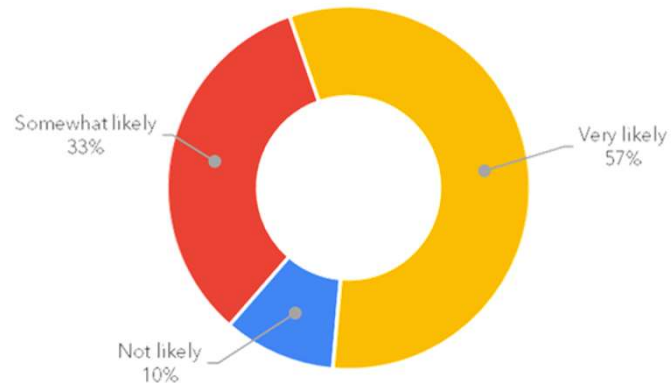
**How did you contact
your elected
representatives?**



GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT

- 90 percent of respondents said they would be “likely” or “very likely” to consider taking part if ACRA organized a meeting with their federal representative in their district/state.
- Almost half of respondents said they would be interested in joining a nationwide network of advocates, with another third saying they might but would like more information about it.

If ACRA organized a meeting with your elected federal representative in your district/state, how likely would you be to consider taking part?



Would you be interested in joining a nationwide network of advocates to help CRM practitioners coordinate efforts across the country?

