IMLS National Museum Survey Pilot Summary Findings Webinar Transcript

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I'm Crosby Kemper, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the nation's largest cultural agency. Which is why we've been working on a National Museum survey.

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We've been working on this for a long time, actually.

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We've tried, made, made one or two attempts in the past and and had some difficulties to overcome because of the heterogeneity of the museum universe, the breadth and depth of the museum universe, which is quite extraordinary as many of you know, but it's necessary for us to do this.

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It's important for us to do this because of the huge cultural impact of the museum world, broadly conceived.

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Art museums, science museums, science and technology centers, history museums, history sites, aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, The cultural center of the United States is centered in what we refer to as museums and there's been no good, credible, professional level national survey of all of this cultural activity.

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And we hope our National Museum survey will be that. We hope that it will represent, as our Public Library survey has of the library world, the extent, the cultural impact, the economic impact, the impact on our social lives that museums represent.

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Museums and libraries together have over 2 billion visitations a year and that makes us bigger than professional sports.

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It makes us the most important public spaces in America and so we need the incredible professional review and database of this cultural infrastructure that that you represent and in all its heterogeneous extensive glory, and we've been working on this for a while. We we think we're we're finally about there, but we need your ongoing participation to make this an instrument of knowledge.

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And as an instrument of knowledge, an instrument of change, instrument of change based on a huge impact that you have in our world, an impact on education, an impact on professions and professional development for the public, for our civic leadership, for the media, for our political leaders, for effect on policy.

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So you are a pillar of our culture, pillars plural of course, and we want to demonstrate that to the world.

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So welcome.

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And I'm now going to turn it over to Laura.

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Great.

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Well, thank you all.

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Thank you Crosby for that warm welcome.

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And we are so excited to have such a broad and rich attendance for today's webinar.

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As Crosby mentioned, I'm Laura Huerta Migus.

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I am the Deputy Director for the Office of Museum Services here at IMLS and I am so happy to be emceeing this presentation of the summary findings of our National Museum Survey pilot.

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I will be joined on this call by a number of colleagues from IMLS, including Doctor Matthew Birnbaum, the Director of our Office of Research and Evaluation, Jake Soffronoff, who is our Survey Statistician and project lead for the National Museum Survey effort, as well as Helen Wechsler who is a Supervisory Senior Program Officer here in the Office of Museum Services.

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But before we jump into the findings, I want to reiterate a really important messagefrom Crosby's opening comments.

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And that is how integral relationship with so many of you on this call has been over the last two years to plan, launch and implement this pilot survey project.

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We were informed throughout our project by a group of 10 subject matter experts that represent a

variety of demographics of the museum community from respected researchers and data scientists to field based practitioners.

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We also highly engaged our association partners who helped put us in touch with many museum professionals that provided field testing and input that informed the design of the pilot survey.

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And so many, many thanks to all of you who provided great public service to help us launch this successful pilot.

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And with that, I'm actually going to hand the screen and presentation over to my colleague, Dr.

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Matt Birnbaum to start taking us through the findings from our pilot.

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Matt.

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Yeah, Thank you, Laura and Dorothy, can you move to the next slide, please?

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Thank you.

6:02
So welcome everybody.

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On behalf of my colleagues, I am humbled by the opportunity to represent the agency to present the findings here.

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What you're looking at are all the pieces that went into the survey and that we're going to summarize in the next 10 minutes.

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For simplicity, perhaps oversimplifying.

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In designing the survey, we were looking at three particular pieces.

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We had to develop a questionnaire.

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We had to figure out who is the population of people to participate in this survey.

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And three, we needed an approach to actually administer the survey.

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So a lot of what we're going to be talking about, it's about all of it.

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It's going to be looking at these three parts to this survey design, the questionnaire, the approach for administering the survey and the population frame.

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And we're setting it up because to be successful it's going to be based on that design we we set together and how well we can implement that design.

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7:17
Matt, my apologies, can I interrupt one piece of housekeeping that I forgot to share with our group.

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We are in webinar mode on Zoom and so the chat function is not enabled for participants.

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But you can feel free to submit questions throughout the webinar via the Q&A function that you will see at the bottom of your screen.

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We will be monitoring that and saving time for a Q and A at the end of the presentation.

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Thank you.

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Thanks Matt.

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Yeah, you bet.

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Thanks Laura.

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You're looking here at some of the punch lines, some of the highlights and I want to just jump quickly to that last bullet which is to announce here.

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We're about 12 months away from launching a new annual survey that will add to the nation's federal statistical system.

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And we're going to be talking about all the things that we've achieved to get to this point.

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We're 12 months away.

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And what I just mentioned earlier about us putting the design together based on the questionnaire, the approach for administering the survey in the population of frame, how well it succeeds.

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is going to be based on a whole array of factors.

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And in this case, we've tried to be as scientifically robust as possible, but at the same time being responsive to the audience of the wide diversity of the museum sector and thinking about those who want to contribute an influence to a healthy sector in this country.

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8:57
So in the pilot overview, if you look at the left column, when we talk about a museum,

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we want to recognize the breadth and variety of what it means to be a museum in this country.

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There are multiple disciplines, from botanical gardens to planetariums to children's museums to art museums, all types of museums.

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All of these museums were considered and tried to be counted on in thinking about who would be participating in the survey altogether.

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When we ran the survey in the depth of August, we had approximately sent invitations out to 7050 and that deep part of August when a lot of us are on vacation, are thinking about other things,

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we had a 17% response rate

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who responded to the survey and answering the need and demonstration that we can get enough to participate just from the get go to get us to a reliable statistically valid count of measuring what is going on with our nation's museums.

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10:16
The next two slides are going to be sharing you basically the same information in different ways.

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This is a visual and if we can go back several years ago when we first started to launch this current effort of the National Museum Survey,

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we started with background research, lit reviews, landscaping, benchmarking of who already was collecting information about our nation's museum.

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If we were to begin to do one, how can we do one?

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How can we add the most value?

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And so like a funnel, we went from these large issues and trying to conceptualize what would this survey look like all the way down to finer and finer details and homing in for the point when we got to doing a pilot to then looking at those who didn't respond to the pilot.

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So it was a very deliberate, scientifically driven approach using the engagement of hundreds, thousands of people across the country's museum sector.

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Next slide please.

11:26
And again, this is basically the same information you saw on the prior slide, presented it in a slightly different, form.

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I want to just highlight here that one that when we started that lit review it started to drive what the

intent and purpose would be to make sure that any data that we had would be meaningful, useful and in ways that could help people make more informed decision making.

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12:00
Indeed engagement was the key to success.

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From the very, very get go, we've been thinking of how we can best collaborate and partner and make this statistical survey a useful product, a tool, a process to enable those in the museum sector to use that data to make more informed decisions, more informed plans.

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As well as investors, public and private, who also have an interest in strengthening the capacity of our country's museum sectors.

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And to do so, engagement was key from the get go.

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It started with interviews and focus groups, moved all the way to 7 experiments that we ran with a pilot, surveys all the different ways and then having additional communications education, outgoing in the field as well as actively using some very valued subject matter experts who were part of this process and with us through the whole time.

13:02
And we also were very thankful for having the American Institutes of a Research as one of our partners for helping administer and drive this whole endeavour.

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We particularly want to focus on that last bullet that makes it clear of trying to reach some of the small museums and hard to reach institutions to make sure that those their voices were heard just as loudly as others.

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13:30
So in developing the questionnaire survey topics, this was nothing that if not wasn't done by a few of us in and around Washington DC developed.

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It was instead informed by the extensive engagement with the hundreds and thousands from the museum sector and it led to us, developing a questionnaire that addressed what we heard were the

key essential topics that we didn't have hard evidence about and that if they had, that evidence could make a meaningful difference.

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So you see it here on the slide.

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Institutional characteristics, facilities, finances, human resources, admissions, visitors and outreach, digital presence, diversity, equity, inclusion, as well as for those participating in the pilot, the experience of actually trying to complete the questionnaire and being part of that survey.

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14:35
So in developing the questionnaire, we used the preliminary research and cognitive interviews with hundreds of museum administrators, supplemented with the subject matter experts who were part of us, to shape the development of that questionnaire.

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In running the pilot, we didn't try to use the pilot to give national estimates on any of these questionnaire items.

15:04
Still too early.

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It instead was to really figure out how to make this survey as most responsive, least burden, getting the most credible data possible.

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And then the things that we've learned was that a majority of people, about 60%, had a hard time answering questions related to the finances of their museum.

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And that will be a piece for follow up research over the next year to try to get a better handle on some of the issues of this cultural change.

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So suddenly trying to throw financial information out there that can be used for things such as benchmarking for help, and trying to think about what peers might be doing and ways in which certain types of museums are investing in their resources.

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For the large museums, it also turned out to be a challenge to provide report on facilities data and frequently, maybe it was just the complexity of their institution, maybe it was multiple locations, maybe it was different people covering different areas.

16:05
And so that provided a little bit of a hiccup for them.

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In looking at the respondents survey taking experience, that first bullet of trying to find ways to reduce the burden, and we did so through multiple ways in how we designed the online survey questionnaire and that was the mode in which we administered it.

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We also found out that as much as we had expected it in terms of implementing the pilot, it seemed that we had large success with the majority of folks being able to finish it in under an hour.

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And that includes the time they had to gather the requested information to answer the questions.

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And that they reported back that the survey was relatively easy to complete, and the instrument was fairly easy to navigate on the web.

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17:08
But that response rate, 17% participated, therefore 83% didn't.

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And we know we did it the dead of summer, which is possibly the time when it would be hardest for many to participate in a survey.

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But we were nonetheless finding some other issues that we will need to work on.

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We ran 7 experiments to figure out what's the best way for a person to participate in the survey.

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And it turned out that if we administered it with giving contacting people by phone at some point to tell them to go online and complete the survey,

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that that was a very effective probe to induce people to complete the survey, and moving forward, we know we need to do a lot more outreach in terms of raising awareness about the survey and the benefits and uses for individual institutions and the museum sector as a whole.

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18:13
OK, uncovering the intended audience.

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So one of the challenges we had about 10 years ago when we last tried to really develop this survey was to get an estimate, a credible estimate of who are the actual museums in the United States.

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And that was a long standing challenge.

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And to break the hurdle, this time, using the expertise and wisdom and creativity and acumen of Jake Soffronoff and some of our colleagues at AIR.

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That we really moved to the pioneer threshold of data science, where we collected data using Crowdsource data from Yelp and supplemented from the official museum directory.

19:00
And from that, we used a number of innovative approaches and data science, including ChatGPT, web scraping and Amazon Turk to take those lists into something that was credible and valid, coming up with a current estimate of about 20,000 museums across all the disciplines of the museum sector in the country.

19:21
Moving ahead.

19:22
Over the next year, we'll be refining that list and working to update it so that a year from now when we're ready to launch, the annual survey will have a very robust, credible estimate of the size of the museum sector in the country.

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Next slide please.

19:41
And my last point is now looking ahead to the next 12 months, the good news is the reception has been relatively positive.

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The survey was quick and easy to take.

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The content is going to remain largely intact.

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Based on the feedback that we've gotten from the pilot, we'll be doing some tweaking, but we've largely scoped it just about right.

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But one of our challenges will now will be trying to improve our outreach in letting people know about the National Museum Survey, what it means to participate in it,

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and helping them ease that experience of being a partner in this.

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It'll include phone calls to museums, more conference presentations, and us continuing to do education through communications, both social and traditional media engagement.

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I'm going to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to present.

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Laura, I'm going to turn it back over to you.

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Great.

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Thank you, Matt.

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Thank you for that high level overview of some of the lessons learned from this endeavor as which, as Crosby,

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Matt, myself and I think you'll hear others from IMLS on the call, is really the culmination of more than two decades worth of efforts from IMLS to move this effort forward.

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So we are so excited to have gotten through this phase of the development and piloting of a National Museum survey.

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And so now we are going to move into our Q&A section.

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And so Dorothy, if I could have you maybe take down the slides and I'll invite my colleagues Helen and Jake to come on camera as we enter into this part of our presentation.

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I will remind folks online that this is your opportunity to start populating that Q&A function.

21:49
And as we are settling in, we have multiple questions regarding the ability to access a recording or the slides of this presentation.

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While we will not be sharing this themselves, the recording of this session will be posted to imls.gov as will the actual summary report, which is going to be available on our website at imls.gov for you to dive into these findings in a more substantive way.

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And so with that, I am going to move into some of your great questions.

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And Jake, I think that this question is for you.

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We have a question from Janice Klein around creating the population frame and how did we involve different museum associations in developing some of that frame.

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So we started the we started the population frame by looking through every available sort of public resource that we could find.

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One of the concerns that we had was trying to make sure that it was not duplicative, which has been, you know, an issue that IMLS has been working through in the past.

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When you grab information from one list, it may be written up in one way and then in another list it's a different way.

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And the next thing you know, you've got five different lists with five different versions of the name for one museum.

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So what we wanted was effectively a phone book as much as we could have.

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And so we started, after talking to a large number of vendors in the private sector, talking to colleagues across the public sector from the, you know, the, the types of resources that you would

expect, census, BLS, that kind of stuff, going back through IRS990 forms for non profits, talking to a good 10 private vendors.

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The vendor that we finally chose was Yelp, which we selected because it serves more as a phone book.

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It's very location based and that's really useful for reaching out to the museums.

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If you go into some of those other data sources you end up with, for example, from 990 forms you might you might get a business address that's separate from the physical address.

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You also, if you go through a lot of those other resources, you are constrained to the people who are opting in to be in being in those resources.

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So you miss a lot of the ones that aren't members of the different associations.

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So we started with national Yelp data and then did our best to find the needles in that haystack of all of the different disciplines, which is another sort of complicating factor, and used all of the methods that were talked about.

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We used ChatGPT to try and assign them to different disciplines.

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We used some web scraping to try and get any missing business addresses.

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We used M Turk prominently for a lot of the work that would have been normally manual work for individuals.

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Because we had a list of, even using the categories available from Yelp, we had well over 100,000 that we started with and had to pair that down.

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We also married all of this data to data wherever we could find it, so that included our past museum data files.

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It also included the OMD, the Official Museum directory in order to try and get as many contacts as we could.

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Even through all that effort, we still had trouble reaching everybody.

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So one of the one of the main issues was finding the specific person inside of the specific institution.

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And so I'm hopeful that maybe when we reach out later this year, everyone will take our phone calls and make sure we get the right person as we try and reinforce that list.

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26:46
We did interact some with some state museum organizations, particularly New York, because they have a a centralized body, the different methods of defining museums.

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Ours is a very, very broad tent.

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Doesn't necessarily make that the approach that's going to ensure that everyone gets in, but it's one of the approaches that we're going to continue to triangulate as we move forward in solidifying the the frame that we've got.

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Thank you, Jake.

27:21
And I think the other thing perhaps to mention and I'm going to move to Helen with some of these eligibility questions is that because this was a pilot, we were also experimenting and sort of the most rigorous way that we might have to reach out and sample the field and there were some pretty rigorous experiments in that that that shaped our approaches as well

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for creating the frame. Right, we included seven separate field experiments, each had its own sample.

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They were all based around different ways of contacting institutions.

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So they included pre mailers, reminder mailers, sending a pre Mailer that includes all of the information around the survey, sending a pre Mailer that's a a postcard and phone calls, both pre fields and midfield to, you know, reminder emails, reminder phone calls, rather.

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We did find that phone calls were the most effective method for driving people to take the survey and we feel, looking at the data now that a big reason for that is the difficulty finding the specific person inside the specific institution as opposed to saying, for example, sending an e-mail to info at Jake's Good Museum.

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It seems like you may need to send it to Jake at Jake's Good Museum in order to really hit the mark.

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Great.

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Thanks, Jake.

29:02
And I think I want to remind folks that in the pilot survey what we were the big questions we were trying to answer Is, is it feasible to to launch a survey and and what would those mechanisms look like?

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And so Helen, we have a number of questions in the queue here that all revolve around what's a museum.

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And so I'd love if you could share the some of the framework that we used and again more detail will be in the report, but just for for folks asking that question, how we approached that concept, absolutely.

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Thanks Laura.

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So as Jake said, we wanted to build a great big tent.

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We know our field is extremely diverse and we do, at IMLS, have experience in having criteria that help us determine eligibility for applying to a grant program.

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So we started with those pieces which helped us put together a series of questions that allowed people or institutions to be screened and to move through the questionnaire.

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And those involved having or using collections, being educational, being in a facility that's owned or operated, being open to the public, you know for a period of time every year.

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So those types of questions that are probably very familiar to anybody who's applied for a grant at IMLS

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Great, thank you.

30:41
And you know, we had some questions here also about looking at the response rate from small institutions and rural institutions.

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And Matt talked about this a bit in his summary of the findings,

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but I'm wondering, Jake, if you can talk about our sampling and the attention we were paying, you know, as we in this experiment and how we looked at different parts of the museum field for testing.

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Sure.

31:22
So if you got four or five hours, I can talk about this, but I'll do my best to give the high level version knowing that I'm verbose on topics like this.

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So the sampling was based around #1 discipline was the largest sort of sorting factor.

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The way that we had to go about that because that this was our first run was to collapse a number of those different groups into sort of larger groups.

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For example, some of the types of museums that have animate collections where they kind of grouped together, the the history museums with the historical societies, those kinds of groups because before the field we had never asked everybody exactly how they would categorize themselves and their discipline.

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The survey itself gets that information from you, the practitioner.

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And so in the future we're going to have much better statistics and ability to do that.

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That'll probably also be a part of our outreach later this year to to learn more and make sure that we're able to really draw the kinds of statistics that everybody's going to want out of this effort.

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The segmenting was also done by geography to try and make sure that we had everybody in their own geographic mix.

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And there was, there were the seven experimental groups which effectively were trying to look like the main sample.

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And then we had the much larger main sample which is what we compared each experimental group to.

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So the response rate from the experiment Group One against the control group, that's the main sample.

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We don't want those differences to be based on, you know if experiment Group One has a whole lot of a certain type of museum.

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We don't want it to be disproportionate, which could end up skewing the results.

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And then the the big measure that we would really like to implement and hopefully will come out of the outreach that we do this year, we would love to have a measure of size.

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We didn't have that from any of the available data sources, but we really want to make sure that we include as many small museums as we possibly can get a hold of and they can be a little bit of a challenge to reach.

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So I'm hoping in the future we'll be more able to make sure that that outreach is effective after we've reached out to everybody in the interim, very good.

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You know, I think I want to move this next set of questions moving forward into just tying up this pilot a little bit.

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There are some some juicy questions in here and I'm actually going to invite Helen or Matt or Jake to respond to this, who'd ever whoever would like to go first.

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But you know, there are questions about response data from this pilot survey and whether that will be made available.

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And I'd love to let Matt or Jake respond to that and then talk.

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And there are questions about then the intention of availability of data for the future.

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Matt's muted.

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Do you want me to handle that Matt?

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Sure.

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So because this was a pilot we weren't able to draw the kinds of statistics that the federal government requires you to be able to draw to report out the data, which is one of the downsides.

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The upside is that we were able to get, I feel, all of the process based information that we needed in order to run the survey.

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One of those things that we got is about how we want to disseminate the data when we do run the full survey.

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So when we do run the full survey, we plan on having a data portal where respondents in particular will be able to go in and check their data, check the data of other similar types of institutions, go and find the particular pieces of information that may be relevant, whether they're a museum administrator, member of the media, member of the public, and get really solid national statistics, regional statistics, discipline based statistics, whichever ones you might need for your use.

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In our research, we found that access to data was the number one driver for people to participate in the survey.

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And so we're really putting a very strong emphasis on that.

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We're also putting an emphasis on trying to get that data out within six months of field.

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So we're trying to be timely, we're trying to be complete and we're most of all trying to be useful so that everyone who participates really feels buy in and that the survey that we're running is a survey that they need in terms of response rates.

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We have the number that's been published the 17% national.

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We have done analysis on how that breaks out by for example discipline.

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I don't know that we're going to be doing a lot more reporting from that on the pilot, but when we do get to national data, I think that IMLS has a strong commitment to being as transparent as we can and trying to provide as much as we can within the boundaries of the federal statistical system.

37:39
So, you know, we probably won't be able to send you the individual response from a specific museum that's not yours, but we will be able to provide you data that's been aggregated up to a level that protects your institution and anyone else's institution from getting sort of outed.

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Just briefly to add to what Jake said, this survey, IMLS is doing this survey and putting the public first.

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The data is going to be free and accessible.

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There will be no special permissions.

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We're not going to be trying to make money on this.

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This is to improve the larger public well-being.

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Over the next 12 months, I anticipate that we'll be doing a lot of additional research and engaging people in different museums at different types of museums about how to make the data and the

associated products of that data such as reports, analytical tools, etcetera, most meaningful and useful and actionable.

38:41
That's a that's a great point and if we do reach out, I hope you'll participate.

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So if we reach out for people to help us with our user experience testing, we really hope that people will answer the call. And our approach is going to be able to be much more expansive and organic in this launch phase

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than it was in this pilot phase, which was a pretty tightly controlled experiment.

39:02
Helen, I would like to move to you because there are a number of questions here.

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We know, you and I both know, being in the Office of Museum Services, you have been the program officer for many of these efforts, that there are a number of existing data collection activities in the field from the different service organizations, consultancies, etcetera.

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And we have a number of questions about where we see the NMS fitting in that landscape.

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And so I'd love for you to respond to that set of questions please.

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I think that's a great question and one that has future legs and a real future to talk about and to think about how these integrate.

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We we looked very carefully at all the other data collection that was going on as part of the preliminary research.

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And we tried hard when we did duplicate a question or or or ask this about the same topic to use language that people were familiar with to structure questions in similar ways to other data collection efforts.

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And we think as we continue this effort, we'd like very much to start, as this

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material becomes, and the data becomes, accessible to everybody to be able to meld efforts together.

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So that you can focus on the kinds of things that your discipline that you need to find out from your discipline while we're doing some core work that will be accessible and available for everybody.

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So you know that's the that's the hope for the future.

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It is the first time that all the disciplines are asked this together.

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So we can compare on the same questions.

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So I think it will be very valuable and we really look forward to collaborating with the other associations of the other data collection efforts in the future.

41:02
Thank you.

41:03
You know, there are a number of questions about access to different parts of both the survey pilot and then future data sets.

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I'll let everybody know that the current questionnaire is actually available right now on the IMLS website and so you can download, if you search on our website imls.gov for National Museum survey,

41:29
there is a page for that survey for this effort and a link to the actual questionnaire and definitions.

41:37
So that is already available.

41:40
I do want to move forward.

41:45
There are some future facing questions about more detailed and topical investigations beyond our current foundational set of questions.

42:00
And so Matt or Jake, if you'd like to speak briefly to that 'cause then I have a juicy question after they've all been juicy, but a really juicy question after this.

42:09
Jake, I'll let you take the lead on additional questions.

42:15
So one of the things that we want to do methodologically is make sure that the main body of the survey stays as stable as possible so that variations in response aren't due to variations in the instrument effectively.

42:32
So one of our ideas moving forward is that we'll probably run what we're calling offshoot topical surveys, which will give us a special place to put surveys that cover material that either doesn't make sense to ask annually or material that may be responsive to a specific situation that occurs, for example, when the COVID outbreak took place.

42:58
We might use an offshoot topical survey, or for issues that only affect a specific subset, so maybe a specific discipline, we may do an offshoot topical survey.

43:12
Those are going to be, as we currently envision them, most likely to be put out right after the survey is done to a select sub sample of respondents so that they don't burden everybody.

43:32
It's not a matter of, like, this year the survey is this much longer for everyone.

43:36
It'll only be on a a smaller group and hopefully will not be overly burdensome, but will allow us to hit those topical issues as useful or needed kind of as we move forward while allowing us to maintain the fidelity of the original instrument.

44:00
Great.

44:00
And I there's some follow on questions and it it melds a little bit with Helen's response about you know, do we think about this effort replacing other field efforts.

44:15
I might be so bold as to maybe answer that question if I could.

44:19
I think our intention is no.

44:21
And I would actually point folks if you're not familiar with the work that IMLS has done for more than 40 years on the Public Library survey, the PLS, which is a very rigorous data collection on our sibling

community here at IMLS I think you can be assured that there is still plenty of field driven data collection in the Public Library sector, but it is driven and accelerated by the PLS.

44:51
And Matt, you sat up straight if you wanted to share anything about that.

44:55
Yeah, I would Now using Jake's example of COVID because we've been collecting the Public Library survey for 40 years,

45:03
when we went to introduce two years of special topical surveys about COVID, it was supplemented by a wealth of data going back 40 years on key core parts of public libraries, finances, staffing, other operational issues.

45:21
That allowed us to get the real full picture of the extent of the disruption.

45:26
We had something similar a decade earlier, 15 years earlier when we were looking at the aftermath of the Great Recession, particularly in how that shuffled federal and state spending patterns for those, for those libraries.

45:39
So I would anticipate a very similar strategy here for the museum sector and keeping those core questions that Jake talked about so that we could be looking at things over time and for our space.

45:53
Thank you.

45:55
So I do want to move to the juicy question that I alluded to earlier that has come up in a couple of different ways and I think you can, I'll offer both adjectives and you all can respond as you are so moved.

46:11
But there were a couple of questions around what were the most surprising or provocative findings from this experience that we found.

46:23
I'll let you all cogitate and whoever would like to go first.

46:28
I mean one of one of the things that I felt like we needed to be particularly responsive to and was... I don't know if it's not... I don't know if it's surprising is necessarily the word.

46:45

But very early was driven home to me through our research and outreach to the field were the great differences between the different disciplines and between the different sizes of institutions.

47:03
Understanding in as deep a way as we can, where those differences occur and how they affect people's responses to our outreach was a very...

47:16
I mean it was provocative in that it really drove home how important it was.

47:21
For example, a lot of institutions aren't going to call themselves necessarily museums.

47:26
A Botanical Garden, if they get outreach for a National Museum survey, may not know that we want to talk to them.

47:34
And so making sure that we do everything we can to reach those institutions.

47:40
You know, if you look at any of our lists, they're always listed first because we want to make sure that if somebody's perusing the paragraph, they stick out.

47:50
So there's a lot of intentionality around size and discipline that came out of our research that I'm sure those in the field might know, but that we really work to be as sensitive to as we can.

48:06
Thanks, Jake, Matt, Helen.

48:10
Yeah, it's not surprising, but I'll say challenging the finding that financial data was a real challenge for many museums participate that on its surface doesn't surprise me.

48:25
What I'm stuck with is still the uncertainty of what it means for going forward to try to lower those hurdles.

48:33
Because I think that that data will be so important and valuable for all museums to be able to use to benchmark their own growth and development and to be able to tell collective stories to policy makers.

48:48

48:49
And I'll add on to that because we did have a question about how the financial data was collected and it was self-reported and we didn't collect it from any other source but we did try to link what we were asking for to 990 items so that if you filled out your 990 you know where to how to answer the question.

49:15
We tried to structure it the way others might ask for financial information so that you weren't digging up different numbers for different surveys you're filling out.

49:24
So that is a big question that how to make it even easier or what's how how do we get to those answers?

49:31
Because that data is super, super important.

49:34
And what, what's most surprising, I guess not surprising, but sobering, was familiarity with IMLS, which you know is going to be important.

49:46
We have to be that the organization that's asking for all this information should be trusted.

49:51
And if you don't know who we are, it's hard to trust us.

49:54
So we've got some heavy lifting to do in that regard.

49:58
So that the part of the field that isn't familiar with us will feel welcome and comfortable.

50:06
Laura, how about you?

50:08
Oh, I feel like the jaded person here as a former association person who has mounted these data collections.

50:18
I felt like this two years was I told you so.

50:21
I see it's not just us, but I think that the opportunity, all these challenges I think are lived experiences from folks who've been doing this kind of data collection in the field.

50:34
And this opportunity gave us a chance to modify that as a public serving agency and organization.

50:42
You know, we have a existential mandate to be stewards of this kind of data at the national level.

50:52
And so I think bringing together a lot of lived experience from museums to this work and even documenting what the challenges are are going to be very cathartic for the field and help us move forward together.

51:11
I also think that it's a call to some solidarity across our differences for museums.

51:21
If we want to be able to tell, particularly a policy narrative in times of crisis, as well as times of bounty, about our presence and impact of this sector, there is going to need to be some uniformity and in some basic reporting and figures.

51:43
And hopefully the future of this effort can help provide a clear path not to define it, but provide a common reference point to to keep us all iterating going forward.

51:59
I will say that I am.

52:02
I was happily surprised at the overall positive feedback that we received for the effort and the amount of engagement and interest that there's been in a time of such a busyness and and a crowded landscape for museum leaders and practitioners.

52:22
So I think there's a real positive, positive story moving forward.

52:29
I am looking at our time.

52:36

52:37
I'm also checking in on our energy and I'd love to give my colleagues a last chance.

52:46
I know that you can see Matt, I think that we answered that question if you can.

52:56
But if you do see any other stragglers that we didn't capture or you want to share some final thoughts as we close out our time together.

53:12
I'd just like to give another plug.

53:13
If if you do see us looking for helpers between now and the full survey, please participate.

53:23
And then I saw one or two questions about us presenting.

53:27
We're going to be out there and presenting. We'll be happy to talk to people when we do that about what we've done here and what we're doing moving forward.

53:40
The last thing I guess would be, if you haven't, I think I answered one question in the chat itself about having not been contacted or having not participated in the pilot.

53:58
While the pilot is over.

53:59
We do want everybody we can possibly get to participate when we run the full survey.

54:05
And so if anybody is in a situation where you're not sure that we have the right contact information for your institution,

54:16
I would be thrilled if you would send emails to nms@imls.gov to pass along that information and we'll make sure it, you know, gets in the right place so that you get the outreach for the full survey.

54:34
Helen, any parting thoughts?

54:37
Well, echoing Jake that our engagement with the field is not at all over after this pilot.

54:44
We've got a lot of work to do between now and the 2025 launch.

54:48

So we're going to be knocking on doors and associations are going to be with us, we hope and others in the field.

54:57
We really are relying on you to make it something that works for everybody.

55:04
And Matt, any final thoughts before final housekeeping, I'll just say that we we have an open door.

55:10
We we are here to learn and share.

55:12
So please don't hesitate to connect us.

55:15
And you can already see what a force Jake and Helen are and we are fully confident they can answer everything and I'll conflate it and then Laura can come and correct it.

55:28
Well, thank you for that.

55:29
I think Dorothy, we can move to our last slide which is the most important one, which is really expressing our thanks to all of you for joining us on this call.

55:41
As a reminder, if you want to be in touch with IMLS in general for this effort and future efforts, you can always subscribe to our mailing list via our website at imls.gov/news/subscribe.

56:00
If you would like to follow up directly around the National Museum survey with some of the more fine grained details that Jake mentioned, you can e-mail us at N ms@imls.gov The report that we highlighted today is actually available right now on IML s s website.

56:22
There is a press release at the very top of our home page and you can access that report now.

56:29
We look forward to engaging with all of you in the future to help us ensure that our full NMS survey data collection in 2025 is a success.

56:43
And we are also going to be looking for field experts to join us in advisory capacities.

56:50

And so again, if that is something that you are interested in or have expertise, please do e-mail us at nms@imls.gov In the meantime, please look for more updates from us and solicitations.

57:05
Thank you again for your partnership and your interest and we look forward to talking to you about the full survey launch in 2025.

57:13
Thank you.

57:15
Thank you everybody.