

**Ad Hoc Committee on AWWA/Section Relations  
Major Issues/Key Findings/Primary Recommendations**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To arrive at the issues and recommendation encapsulated here, the committee reviewed a number of secondary and primary source materials whose topic addressed the relationship between the Sections and the Association. This included a number of surveys developed by the committee. The surveys outperformed expectations in the levels of participation. The survey of Section Directors and Chairs had a participation rate of 80%; Council Chairs, 71%; and Section Staff, 93%. A focus group of AWWA Staff was held, from which information of value was obtained. It bears pointing out that some information contained within the committee's work was anecdotal. While not scientific, that information could not be dismissed based on its significance and frequency.

Data taken from the surveys points to a number of topics of significance. First, overwhelmingly, respondents rate the overall relationship between their Section and AWWA as good to excellent at 88%.

We attribute the high response rate to the survey's high level of engagement, and a willingness to both provide input and see that our organization accomplishes its five-year goal of good to great.

Respondents provided feedback that addressed all areas of the Association's work. Of the data collected, a significant amount fell outside the charge of the committee's work. This data will be provided to both committees and staff that hold responsibility for these areas.

There is a seminal finding to report—the issue of communications is paramount to those surveyed. Over 62% of respondents expressed a desire to have communications between Sections and the Association improve.

**Issue 1: COMMUNICATION**

Key Finding: There is a need to improve communication between all units of the organization (Headquarters, Board of Directors, Association Staff, Sections, Section Leadership, Section Staff, AWWA Councils, AWWA Committees, and other volunteer units).

Primary Recommendation: Develop a new model for communication that provides for:

- a. An exchange of information that is actionable, inclusive (involves all appropriate stakeholders), multi-lateral (information flows to and from all parties), appropriate (timely, topical, and targeted), and that includes the delivery mechanism that is appropriate to what is being communicated.
- b. The ability to provide input (stakeholders are advised of issues at their genesis and allowed to weigh in).
- c. A mechanism for greater involvement (create a process where stakeholders contribute more directly to the work of the Association at all levels).

**Issue 2: EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Key Finding: There is a need for improved educational content and delivery of AWWA educational products.

Primary Recommendation: Develop a system that provides Sections input, from the beginning of development to end product, and provides for elasticity to accommodate regional needs and efficient delivery mechanisms at affordable rates.

**Issue 3: FINANCE (Major subcategory relates to membership)**

Key Finding: There is a need for a business model that financially rewards sections.

Primary Recommendation: Examine the AWWA financial business model to assure that allotments are adequate; that products, programs, and memberships are affordable; and that additional revenue-sharing opportunities are created.

**Issue 4: TECHNOLOGY**

Key Finding: AWWA technology needs to be improved to increase accessibility and reliability, and to become more innovative and user-friendly.

Primary Recommendation: Improve the web site and explore technologies through which AWWA and sections can collaborate and benefit.

**Issue 5: BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP SUPPORT**

Key Finding: AWWA, the Board of Directors, and Sections need to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities; and Sections need assistance on business and volunteer management issues.

Primary Recommendation: AWWA should develop a process to clarify and memorialize AWWA and section roles, as well as implement ongoing trainings and other appropriate support mechanisms to assist sections in the successful management of their business and volunteer operations. Additionally, the Board of Directors desires more comprehensive involvement in the decision-making processes of the Association.