

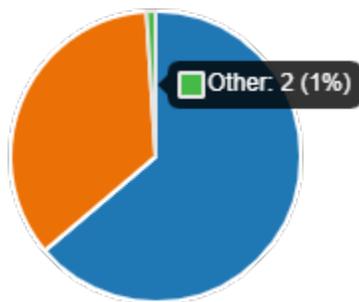
## 2021 WSFR Federal Aid Coordinators Workshop Questionnaire – 199 responses

I work for:

State 127

Federal 70

Other 2

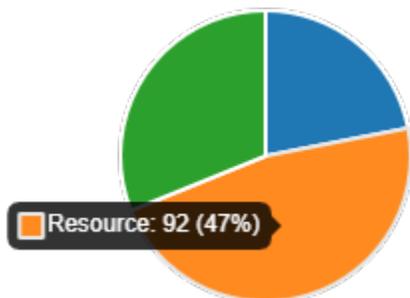


I work in:

Fiscal 43

Resource 92

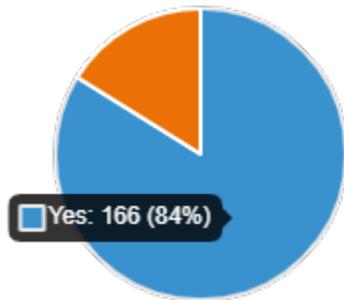
Admin 6



Did the conference meet your expectations?

Yes 166

No 32



**Was the conference well organized?**

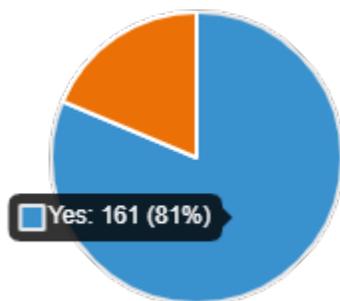
Yes 196

No 1

**Did the conference improve your knowledge base of Federal Aid?**

Yes 161

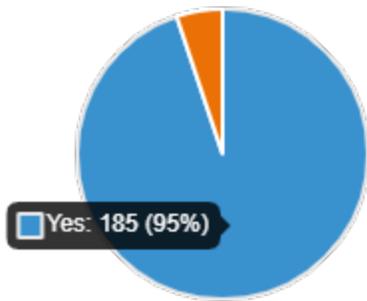
No 37



**Was Webex a useful delivery tool for providing this type of information?**

Yes 185

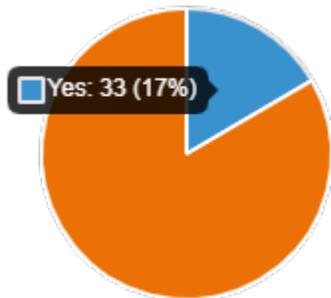
No 10



**Did you have any technical difficulties when joining or participating?**

**Yes 33**

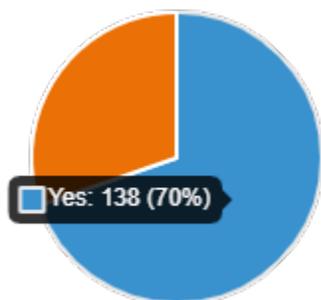
**No 166**



**Are you interested in viewing or sharing session recordings?**

**Yes 138**

**No 60**



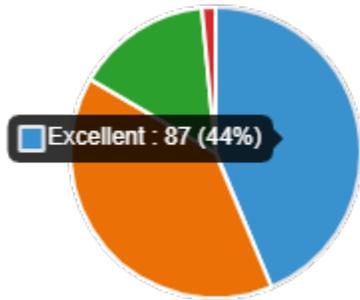
**How would you rate the conference?**

**Excellent 87**

**Good 79**

**Just okay 30**

**Poor 3**



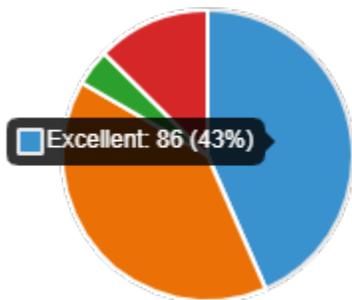
**How would you rate the date and time of the conference?**

**Excellent 86**

**Good 79**

**Just okay 8**

**Poor 25**



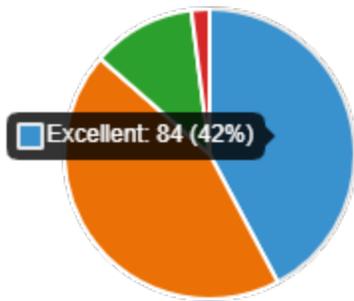
**How would you rate the Webex platform for conducting this conference?**

**Excellent 84**

**Good 88**

**Just okay 23**

**Poor 4**



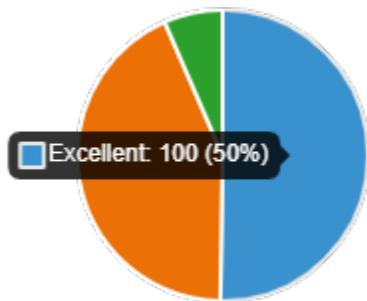
**How would you rate the programming?**

**Excellent 100**

**Good 86**

**Just okay 13**

**Poor 0**

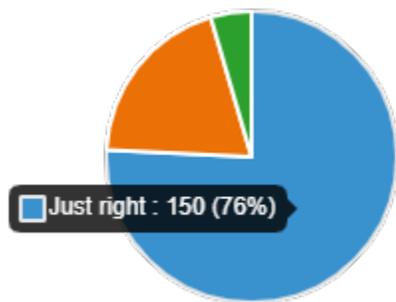


**Was the event length**

**Just right 150**

**Too long 39**

**Too short 9**



## Comments

### **What did you like about the conference?**

Success stories Industry perspective Paul's talk Scott being open and honest about the grantsolutions disaster

Ability to reach a broad spectrum of participants, particularly those that typically cannot attend our face-to-face meetings.

I'm biased! I thought it was well planned and well balanced. Kudos to Scott and his team. It was inspiring to have Ms. Williams join us and Ms. Pauley Parker. Paul Rauch set the tone and carried it through the whole workshop. I definitely demonstrated to state recipients that we are DEDICATED to serving them and we will NOT abandon our commitment to coordination and training, even if there is a Pandemic. Man, that's WORLD CLASS Service.

The information presented was relevant to the work that I do as a Grants Manager. The presenters were all very well informed and organized and encouraged engagement and participation.

We had great support from leadership, such as Martha and Sarah. In our breakout session we had Regional and Deputy Regional Directors give opening remarks. Virtual field trips and success stories are always nice to really see progress, as a reminder that administrative support is necessary to achieve on-the-ground results. Updates on policy development was nice, including Ryan O.'s explanation on timing from the moment the PR Mod Act was signed to present. Good partnership messaging from start to finish.

Well structured agenda and useful topics for all attendees. I liked that more people than usual could join, as the topics were important to more than F&W agency partners.

The success stories!

Convenience

I liked the discussion of audit high visibility areas and hearing some of the success stories

Appreciated the mix of State/Federal/Industry presenters.

Good agenda and schedule pace for virtual meetings. Presentations were great and informative. Intros by upper management were informative about the future direction of the program, e.g. 30/30.

The regional break out sessions

I enjoyed learning about some of the accomplishments made with grant money and the states.

The national perspective of the program and listening to presentations from states outside our region.

Presentations of different projects across the country, recent updates about admin procedures in WSFR - Ryan does a great job of presenting this info. Regional breakout

It went better than I expected since it was virtual. The presentations were good and very relevant. I especially enjoyed the breakout session with all the ignite presentations from our partners. It also gave people the opportunity to attend that may not be able to attend due to travel restrictions.

State Success Stories and Virtual Field Tours were the best part of the conference; the sharing was INSPIRING and the reason so many of us work so hard! Yonah Cohen did an excellent job with TRACS training as usual; she's so patient! Ryan Oster is a WSFR treasure; no one else could take 2 CFR 200 changes and keep us on point (and awake :))!

The turn out was very good, but the subject matter was not universally understood in the presentations. It was a good venue for everyone to hear and witness the same information. Thank you for putting this on.

A great balance of policy and heads up messages, focused training, and success stories.

having a conference at the National level was great. It was good to see what others outside our WSFR Region were up to.

I liked the opportunity to hear federal updates on funding and on legislation as well as on TRACS. The state presentations were also excellent.

I liked how it was a few hours over multiple days. The agenda items related well to my position. It was very well run and I didn't notice any technical difficulties like other large conferences have had. Great job.

Excellent job keeping on schedule.

It was a NATIONAL group, versus just our regional group, so very great to see what other states in other regions are doing yet talking about things we all share in common in regards to the process. Fantastic that this was put together virtually so that everyone interested could be involved despite pandemic and funding levels (or lack of)

I really enjoyed learning what the other states do with their WSFR funds. There were examples that are relevant to my program and give me ideas of how we could do things here.

The content of the first two days was great. The regional breakout was really great. The success stories shared during our breakout, using a short, concise 5 minute presentation was a great way to see what is/has been going on in other states in a "doable" amount of time.

I'm glad we could still have a conference with covid-19 going on. It was also great that the federal side got to take the reins and assume responsibility for the conference because that does not usually happen in my region.

I like the splitting of the three days with 3 different focus areas, that was great. The presentations on projects were wonderful! Appreciate the upfront work to get presenters used to the platform and for the assistance.

The format proved a useful way to transmit this type of information to a large audience (i.e. a "lecture" format) that was not unlike what typical would happen at a regional meeting. There was an ability to ask questions, which was good, though that aspect was a bit more difficult.

The information; and it was different throughout. Would have liked to see/hear about BIG/CVA.

I liked the fiscal info on the first day the most.

I appreciated that this was held virtually and would not normally be able to attend an in-person meeting due to travel expenses. The subject matter was very relevant and important to my work with WSFR grants and it was well presented. Also enjoyed the five minute success story presentations.

I was truly impressed at how smoothly the conference went, particularly given the short time-frame for organizing it. I really enjoyed the virtual field trip component of the regional breakouts

Provided an opportunity to participate in a meeting I would not normally be able to travel to because of funding.

Ryan Oster is full of fantastic information! He specifically clarified Program Income that we've had so much trouble with for years. I'm hoping the form can be improved with the next revision! You could include a refresher for this every single time. The example on the FWS website is rather confusing.

I think it was awesome to attend a Nation-wide conference from my computer & feel somewhat connected! It was a huge time & money saver for me in that respect, and it got more people from my state involved & connected, rather than just sending our 1 Federal Aid coordinator. Things were on-time and flowed well. I really dislike when someone goes too long & disrupts the flow of all subsequent events in that day. Good job on this! As a meeting organizer & facilitator, I know how hard that can be.

I thought that it was hugely beneficial for information related to National issues to be relayed to the National Program all at one time. I would never want to see this replace the FACs but I can see that this would be a beneficial supplement in future years.

## **What did you dislike about the conference?**

i agreed with the need to do sessions on audit findings, program income, regulation updates. Ryan is a superstar. I think those sessions should have focused on less information, only information that was definitely relevant to WSFR, and provide more examples and stories, and also have handouts

Not having the personal interaction; evening dinner and drinks to get to know folks better. Otherwise, the format and platform were perfect.

I had minor technical challenges with audio during video presentations in our break out session. I suspect that difficulties were on my end, so I can't really blame anyone else.

Using Webex for the conference was difficult for myself and others. Very few participants and presenters that I spoke to had prior knowledge or use of this platform. It was mentioned by many that TEAMS or ZOOM are more preferred for conducting conferences nowadays. I agree with others as I also had difficulties relearning Webex, even though I have used it in the past for webinars. The feedback I heard while on the practice sessions was that Webex was especially difficult to use for some who presented.

Face-to-face meetings are the way to go in order to build real relationships with people. However, the national perspective was rewarding. Maybe do a national virtual meeting once every five years?

We continue to speak volumes at the states that is overwhelming about requirements. We moved our normal format to present this to over 500 people in the same lecture (training staff, success story, TRAC (we think it is better than is was), now Grant Solutions (yes it is bad, we take some responsibility, but lets confirm for you how bad it was). This is not the way to inform or teach people. We really need to look at this and start from that premise, are we teaching, training, informing...what? The Partner with a Payer and industry segment were informative and uplifting, should have been in day 2.

Too many regulation updates. This venue is not the best place for these.

There should have been a break after the TRACS presentation since it was so long

Registration confirmation was confusing.

I didn't dislike anything. But two suggestions. Having a 5-8 minute break between presenters would have been nice. I sometimes missed the first few minutes of presentations doing a "bio-break" and getting coffee. I also very much missed our "hospitality suite" time with our regional State folks...

Tough to participate

I had some technical difficulties in the second day when a video was played, since I was viewing Web-EX from the browser and called in on a phone line I was not able to see or hear the video. I wasn't able to figure out how to get web-ex app to work until the third day. Once I got that figured out I was able to see and hear all videos and was able to use my computer for audio. Other then the one presentation I was able to see and hear everything else.

Conference was too long. Many presentations that were 45 minutes could've been easily paired down to 25 minutes. Grant Solutions presentation was disappointing and a lost training opportunity; let's do better next time!

There were many people and I am sure some of the presentations went over the head of some participants. Some of the explanations were the "old" way, but now.. "the new way". Might be clearer to talk about "the way".

Acronyms without decoding!

I like the regional conferences better at least on an annual basis. A national should not occur more frequently than every 5 years.

They are always geared so much toward wildlfie

it was too early in the year. Much of the upcoming apportionment predictions were not available

A lot of wasted time patting our backs. Wish there was more training/learning topics to engage with. Webex format was good but didn't like participant view- couldn't see how many people or who was online. We haven't heard back on any of the questions we asked. The Pacific Northwest/territory work group was horrible- nothing was planned really and it was just Jim and Larry talking about nothing, it was a waste of time other than the presentations from states.

Way too long for a virtual conference. Some of the sessions were too long. Some of the success stories were interesting, but it was difficult to see how this directly related to federal aid. Some of the topics presented aren't relative to everyone.

Intimidating to ask questions

There was a significant amount of time wasted with accolades that could have been given on CFR changes for a more in-depth conversation. The CFR discussion was so high level, it was difficult to know if I had questions or not. Group presentations by grant source and either offer breakout sessions or stand alone days on those programs. There was a lot of non-applicable time that I was wasting. Maximum time should not exceed 2 hours and needs to be kept bright, upbeat, fast moving, engaging otherwise you lose the audience. They work on other things.

Some portions were way too technical and acronyms were overused.

WebEx is not as user friendly as other platforms like Zoom

Presentations from federal staff outlining the steps they took to achieve an end product. I don't need to know how the process went behind the scenes as long as the finished product is adequate.

It was not inclusive to those that administer BIG/CVA. If you do this for state Federal Aid Coordinators you need to understand that other state agencies are also involved. I think there was over 500 participants.

Could have done without the epic pro-gun programming.

Would have liked to see our region meet as others did.

difficult to find the daily agenda. should have been more easily accessible. some technical issues with viewing videos that were part of presentations

Although it was great to see faces and have introductions - there was too much. The introductions were too long and there was too much pandering back and forth between the session lead and the speaker. If that were removed it would likely have taken a third of the time out. I am not trying to be unpleasant but we all have so much other work to do and far too many zoom calls in the current state of work. There was also a training on the Tracs system that could have been removed. We have all had the opportunity to go through training. Therefore there was significant duplication from other training sessions.

TERRIBLE choice of dates. April 1 is a massive deadline for states to submit performance reports and grant packages to USFWS, and this conference was planned on the last three days of March right before that deadline. Very disappointed in that decision. A lot of the information presented did not seem to be anything that state federal aid coordinators don't already know. I wasn't sure who the intended audience was actually supposed to be. I think more focused regional meetings are the way to go in the future.

The 1st day was a holiday in more than 1 state, apparently, not just mine, so I didn't attend the first day. Perhaps you should figure that out before you schedule the meeting. Second, the videos weren't coming in, so those were completely useless stretches. I've attended multiple meetings with video viewing, so I assume this was a technical issue on your end. Figure it out before hand & don't raise my expectations

only to waste my time. It was the same canned message we've been hearing for years. Even when specific questions were asked, the answers weren't forthcoming... unless they were from the canned delivery which frankly, is inside a pretty tiny box that is not relevant to what most people in agencies do. We got the message about Hunter Education & building fish weirs (again and again!) Move on to wildlife surveys & other kinds of fish examples that all state agencies also do.

## **Did the conference programming miss any relevant topics?**

I think more time could have been given to other WSFR funding opportunities currently available to States.

Contract versus Subaward is a repeated subject of confusion for our states. This topic just came up again in recent discussions. This is likely due to the administrative burden being much less for our states and sometimes there may be residence for subawards versus contracts.

I would have liked to see the apportionment/receipts speech.

It would have been nice to have a bigger discussion of GrantSolutions and processing times being extended, but I understand that could have opened a can of worms as well.

There could have been more discussions on regional differences in grant processing, compliance, timelines, and processing TRACS.

Too much from WSFR; let's hear more from States and Industry for more balance.

I would have liked to hear more about GrantSolutions or how to better use it, rather than how many service tickets were submitted. I didn't learn anything from that topic.

Discussions of what program funding will look like in the immediate future.

Yes, there could have been more time spent on subrecipients, this is where all states need help

I would have been interested in learning more or seeing examples of how other states do pass through grants, or if they collaborate with other entities to provide the match (cash, in-kind) rather than state match.

I would have liked more time for questions after some of the presentations.

More detail on TRACS and how it integrates (or doesn't) would have been nice, but time was limited.

The format didn't allow for enough detail and back and forth...most topics covered, just not in depth.

S&I examples that must be accounted for because of weather problems, etc. We only have X dollars & plan in priority order. If this can't be done, then we move to that. Show examples of how we can we correctly account for using those funds. What if we do surveys for disease? We don't think it's Direct Management (as you said), because, for the most part, we don't MANAGE disease in our state. We monitor it. But that's not the answer you folks keep giving us & you're not waiting for us to say "yeah, but..."

There is an awful lot always covered on acquisition of lands and that sort of thing in filling out performance however there are a lot of us that do nothing but CVA and would like to see that used in an example. Both for Tracs and performance reporting.

### **Is there anything else that you would like to share about the conference?**

we should do this every year, maybe 1 or 2 days, with the focus on sharing successes through stories from states, speakers like industry, DOI leadership inspirational talks, and some focus on the minutia of the work like regulation changes and audit findings but only key information there, with handout summaries for more information

Great conference! NCTC staff did an excellent job of facilitating the meeting and ensuring that there were no technical issues.

A huge thanks to HQ for dedication to make this happen! Big thanks to Bob for saving the day with agreement with NCTC. And a huge thanks to Scott Meister and his planning team. WOW.

The conference was a great way to virtually connect with others across the country and territories for the first time. I was very impressed with the content and delivery of both the National FAC Conference and the associated regional breakout sessions. All went well, and it was exciting to see the many WSFR/State & Territory success stories that were shared.

I thought it went great for NCTC to help with a webex platform. Some speakers did not have good internet connections and videos were broken at times. But we're all accustomed to those issues after teleworking for over a year. The bio-breaks were helpful. I suggest we schedule more of them. Thanks!

Thank you for your efforts, this did go well from a technology point of view. Something is wrong with the format however, when 500 people have NO questions for key note speakers, whom they seldom have access to or an opportunity to. You might want to consider "planted" questions for these speakers next time as well. I encourage you, we really need to develop a new model of information sharing. How about 1 day only events two months apart. Bitter pills are more palatable if you do not have to take them daily three days in a row. Thank you for taking the time to seek feedback.

I'm not sure of the logistics, but I would have been interested in having daily social sessions (the things where you move your avatar next to someone else's and get a chat room that others can visit - don't know what those are called/involve). I've seen them in other virtual conferences, and I would have loved the opportunity to do this particularly with this one.

A State person who attended told me it exceeded their expectations, and it was much better than the in-person meeting. They had stopped attending the in-person meeting as it was not an efficient use of their time. I agree - there is value to in-person meetings of course, but when considering the time and cost to travel these online meetings are a much better use of time and funds. I also like that I don't lose an entire day in the office as catching up after being out of the office for days is stressful.

I think it would have been helpful for the attendees to have access to "organizational" charts for HQ and maybe the Regions to put things in perspective as to "who is from which part of WSFR".

Great work putting together a national conference on such short notice. One suggestion to help improve - use the Wildlife and Sport Fish logo instead of the Sport Fish and Wildlife logo.

Overall, I was impressed by how smoothly it ran. I think in future, combining the in person experience with an online option for those who can't travel is a fine solution.

KUDOS to the PLANNING TEAM and the NCTC IT staff. These types of events require tons of hours of behind the scenes coordination and EXTRA WORK to pull them off so successfully! You all should take a bow! Thank you :)!!!

Some of the presentations about elements of the law or policy went right over the head of many people.

The regional breakout open floor discussion segment did not work out as well -- so conversation had a "forced" feel to some extent. Have no great ideas for alternative format but may be worth a brief assessment why that may be and whether some things could be adjusted if there are future similar sessions.

The organizers did an amazing job. We have all learned a lot about virtual meetings over the past year. This conference was by far the best organized and supported (technically) of the year.

It was hard to follow the chat box when everyone was asked to put in their name and location. That was a lot to scroll through with 500+ participants. It was also distracting because you'd look over to think a question was being asked, but it was just someone entering their name.

I have been excited about the idea of a national conference for many years, and thought it would be great. Was really disappointed and most of the folks I talked to from states thought this was a waste of time. Maybe the in person format in the future would be better for a national conference.

the only suggestions is to somehow require/highly suggest that ALL project staff of supervisory level or higher attend these conferences. my state agency failed at this. I do not believe that any of the actual project/program staff attended any part of this conference. the information is mostly geared to the program side. therefore, as much as it was interesting to me to listen to...it was not related to my function. which I did express to the program staff prior to the conference. I just wish our agency had more of a presents at the conference. it was well done!

It would be great to be able to see other regional breakout success presentations if they have them.

Some of the information was presented so quickly it was hard to absorb it, primarily the accountability initiative presentations. I was not included on the initial survey request, so I'm glad you were able to capture all of the participants!

Presenters and organizers did an exceptional job!

Amanda was so skilled at keeping everything going. Any problems with webex, she would find a solution. When my internet went out, she provided me with a phone number. I would love to do future meetings with NCTC hosting using webex.

Please keep it virtual, or at least send out recordings of sessions from in-person conferences in the future for those of us that are unable to travel. Now that I know what to expect from this conference, I would not want to miss out on the great topics being discussed.

Thanks for trying. I think this was probably helpful for new folks who've never done Federal Aid before, or for only a few years. Perhaps a 2-day conference with the first day being "old stuff" for new people & day 2 being "new stuff" for people who've been-there, done that for years. At least if I attended the 1st day of such a conference, I'd be forewarned that the 1st day is all review... it's largely about the expectations you build in your customers!

I would like the presentations and the recording of the conference made available to myself and others.

Much better than I'd anticipated, largely due to the quality of presenters and moderation. Overall, I think if done again in the future it should include very little (if any) training and then shorten the duration accordingly - only presenting on current and upcoming issues.

It would have been nice to have a little more time for questions and answers during some of the agenda items. Also, it was held during the same week as my children's spring break so maybe keep that in mind for the next time and have a week earlier possibly? I know some schools have spring break the week after we had the conference too. I know not everyone is a parent, but just something to consider I guess. Thanks so much for all efforts to make the virtual conference a success!