

Recreation MANAGEMENT

IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR RECREATION, SPORTS AND FITNESS FACILITIES


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Feature Article - June 2021



Our 2021 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry

A Look at What's Happening in Recreation, Sports & Fitness Facilities

Survey Methodology

This report is based on a survey conducted for Recreation Management by Signet Research Inc., an independent research company. An email was broadcast and respondents were invited to participate. From the launch of the survey on Jan. 20, 2021, to the closing of the survey on Feb. 5, 2021, 1,387 returns were received. The findings of this survey may be accepted as accurate, at a 95 percent confidence level, within a sampling tolerance of approximately +/- 2.6 percent.

Over the now 15 years of the Industry Report, the data has reflected the ups and downs, as well as the challenges and triumphs, of the industry. We watched as the industry struggled to adapt and recover from the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009, and now we can see how the industry has felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years' worth of data. Despite these major—and many more minor—challenges, the industry has shown strong growth and innovation over the past decade-and-a-half. This year's report reveals an industry that has been hit hard—just like the rest of the world—but has shown its amazing adaptability and innovation and is pulling through with new ideas, programs and facilities to meet the needs of now and the demands of the future.

In these pages, we provide a closeup look at the responses collected via our annual 50-question survey sent to professionals working for parks, recreation, sports, fitness and aquatic facilities. We provide a deeper look into how things have been going for the long term, as well as over the past year, with detailed responses on topics from operations and budgets to construction, programming, staffing and more. In addition to the broad information offered up in these first pages, you'll find a deeper dive into the specifics for aquatic facilities, parks and recreation, colleges, schools, health clubs and Ys in the following pages. And if all that data doesn't satisfy your workish need for numbers, set down the pages and click over to the RecManagement.com website, where you'll find more detailed breakdowns for camp facilities and rec centers.



We'll begin in this section by talking about the responses from all 1,387 respondents, looking at how their facilities are doing, what initiatives they've undertaken and more, providing more detailed data where that's illustrative. Following this section, we'll get more granular, with individual discussions of specific cohorts within the survey population. That starts on page 36, where we begin a deep dive into the answers of respondents whose facilities include aquatic elements, such as indoor and outdoor pools. After that, we'll provide detailed analyses from each of the largest groups represented in the survey population, including parks and recreation departments and districts (see page 52), colleges and universities (see page 60), schools and school districts (see page 66), fitness facilities and health clubs (see page 72), and finally, the nonprofit organizations such as Ys, JCCs and Boys & Girls Clubs (see page 78).

As always we'll break out even more data on the RecManagement.com website, with a discussion of the responses of camp facilities, as well as community and private recreation and sports centers. And as usual, we'll keep delivering a weekly dose of data in our Rec Report newsletter, highlighting a different data point each week. If there's information you're looking for, but can't find in these pages, it never hurts to ask for more! Send a message to editor@recmanagement.com, and we'll see if we can dig deeper into the data to answer your question.

Finally, be sure to stay tuned for the July issue of Recreation Management, where we'll be reporting further on the data gleaned from this project in our annual Salary Survey, reporting on the career and salary trends for this year's respondents.

A Closer Look at Our Respondents

We'll have much more information about our respondents and their careers in our upcoming Salary Survey Report in the July 2021 issue of Recreation Management, but for our purposes here, let's take a closer look at the demographics of our respondent base.

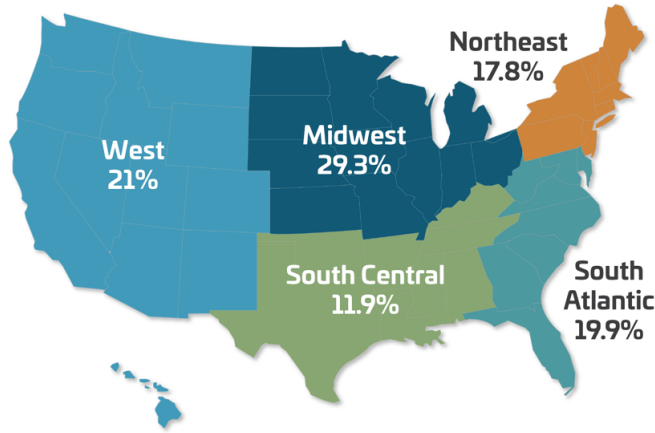
As usual, respondents to the Industry Report survey were dispersed through a range of roles within their organizations, with the largest number serving in higher-level roles, such as directors, and administrative management. The greatest number of respondents (38.8%) said their job title is "director." Another 19.8% serve in administrative and management positions, such as administrator, manager or superintendent. Some 14.8% work in operations and facility management, with titles including operations manager, facility manager, building manager or supervisor. More than one in 10 (10.8%) are in program and activity administration roles, such as activity or program director, manager, coordinator, specialist, coach and instructor. Another 9.4% of respondents said they are the chairman, CEO, president, vice president or owner of their organization or company. Some 1.4% are faculty or teachers, while 0.1% are in services, including

planners, designers, architects and consultants. Finally, 4.9% of respondents said they hold titles other than those listed.

Given that they tend to hold higher-level positions in their organizations, it should be no surprise that respondents to the Industry Report survey are highly experienced in the field of recreation, sports and fitness. On average, respondents have been in their current jobs for 11.7 years (no change from 2020), and have an average of 22.5 years of experience in the industry, up slightly from 22.3 years in 2020.

The greatest number of respondents in 2021 were from the Midwest, with 29.3% of respondents indicating they were from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota or Wisconsin. (See Figure 1.)

FIGURE 1: Regions Represented



The second largest group of respondents were from the West, with 21%. This includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Nearly one-fifth (19.9%) of survey respondents call the South Atlantic region home. This includes Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

Some 17.8% of respondents said they were from the Northeast, including the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Some 11.9% of respondents said they were from the South Central region, which includes Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.

