

# 2017 NEURISA Survey

The 2017 NEURISA Survey sought out its member's opinions on a number of different topics as we worked to enhance our educational offerings, upcoming events, potential membership changes and our members' overall NEURISA experience. The New England Chapter of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (NEURISA) is the professional association of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) practitioners in New England. NEURISA is a nonprofit 501(c)6 organization whose mission is to advance the effective and appropriate use of GIS and related information technologies to solve challenges throughout the region.

## To carry out our mission, we...

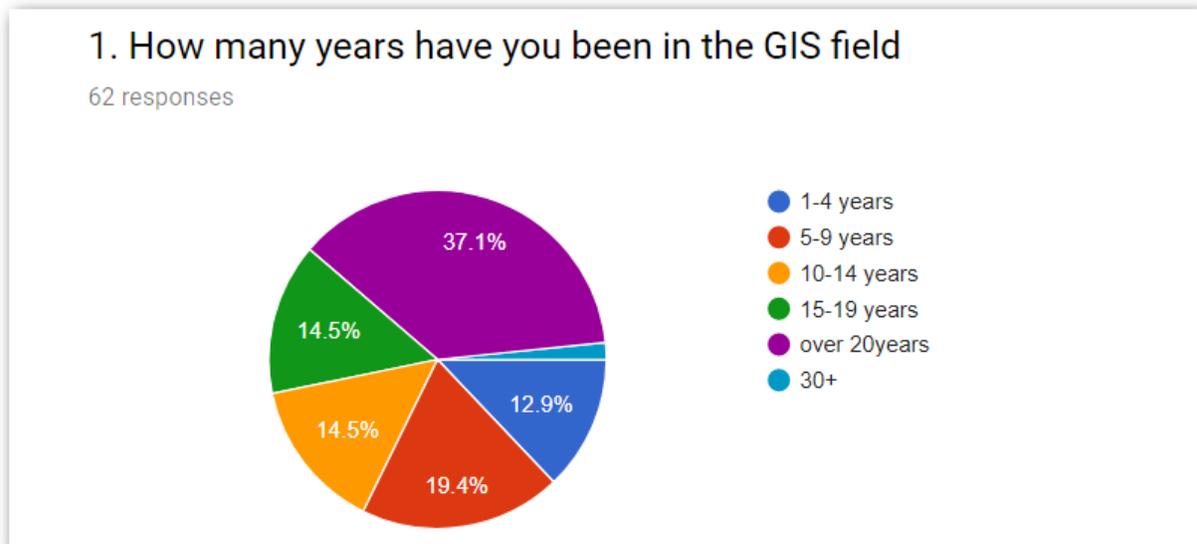
- **Educate** - Provide high quality learning opportunities for current and aspiring GIS professionals.
- **Advocate** - Represent the interests of GIS professionals and organizations.
- **Collaborate** - Foster relationships among professionals in the GIS community.
- **Cultivate** - Continue to position and grow NEURISA as an active and viable organization.

Thank you to everyone who responded and gave us invaluable feedback! The survey received sixty-two (62) responses. Here is a summary of the survey results:

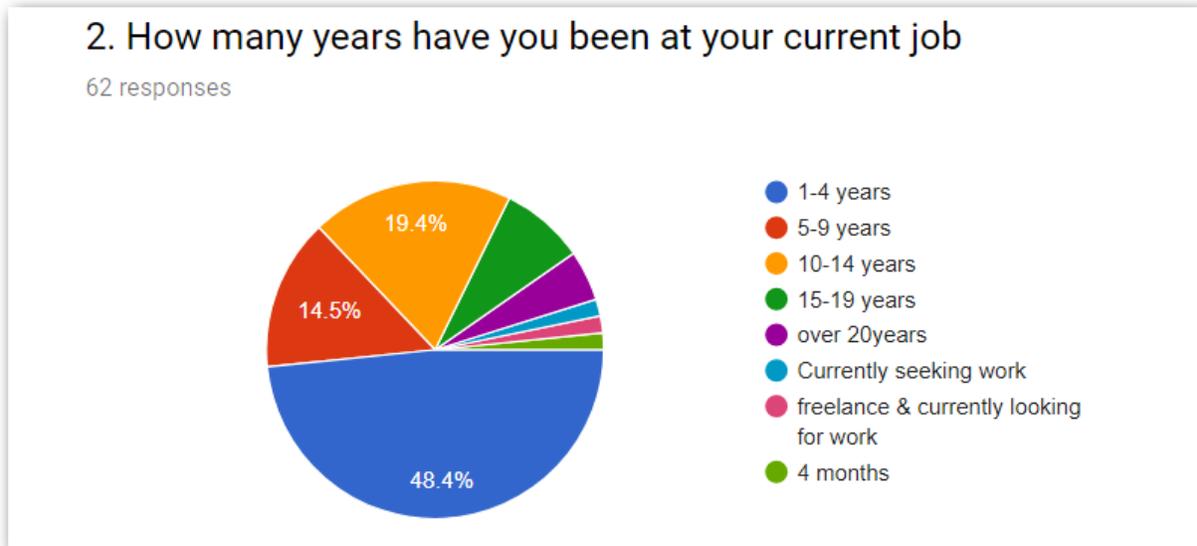
## Background Section:

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Overall the survey received sixty-two (62) responses. In the experience category, the largest percentage (37%) of survey takers have been in the GIS field for over 20 years, with one listed at over 30 years! The other responses are all spread evenly over the other choices. This indicates a healthy sampling across tenures within the industry.



Of the respondents, just shy of 50% have been in their current job between 1-4 years. Nearly 34% have current job tenures between 5-14 years. The remaining percentages fell to shorter or longer durations indicating a relatively stable workforce.



Interestingly of the 62 respondents 51 unique job titles were given. About half used the term “GIS” in the title whereas “Geospatial” showed up only twice. Is GIS a mainstream term now? The following is a sampling of provided titles:

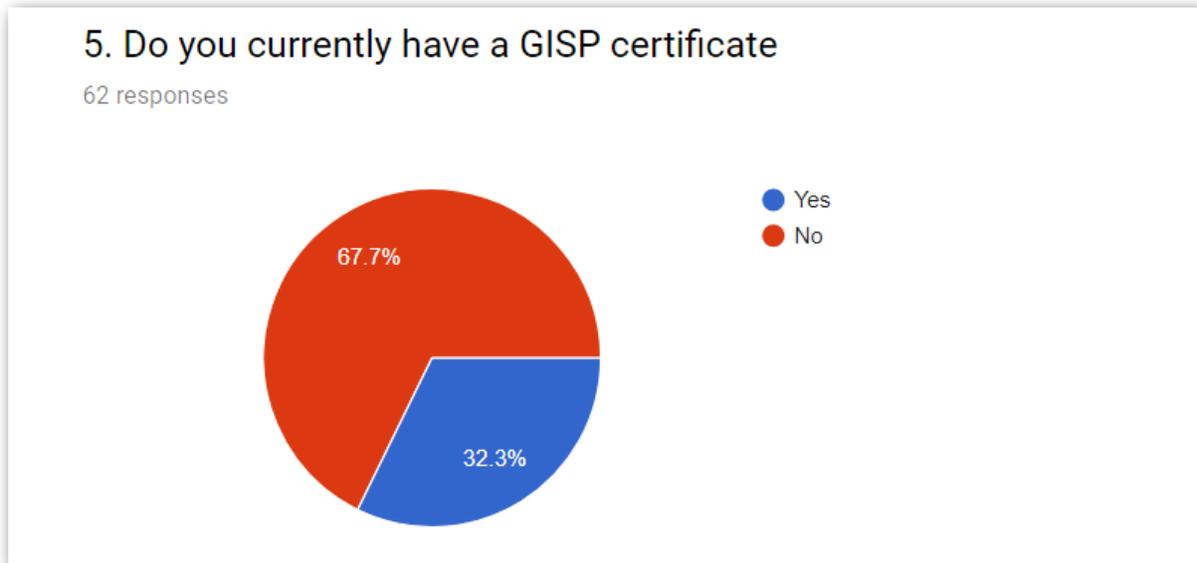
- ✓ GIS Coordinator
- ✓ GIS Analyst
- ✓ GIS Coordinator, Department of Public Works
- ✓ GIS Manager
- ✓ GIS & Database Administrator
- ✓ Senior Project Manager
- ✓ Adjunct Professor of Environmental Science/ Science & Technology
- ✓ GIS Coordinator / IT Department
- ✓ GIS Technician, Engineering Department
- ✓ GIS Manager, Information Technology and GIS Services
- ✓ Sr. GIS Specialist - Engineering
- ✓ Deputy Director, Geographic Systems Section
- ✓ Senior Transportation Planner
- ✓ GIS Manager, Information Technology Dept.
- ✓ GIS Analyst - Planning Dept.

When asked about one’s role in their respective departments the most common answer given by survey takers (nearly 39%) indicated they consider themselves a “GIS Analyst” with just over 32% indicating they are a “GIS Coordinator”. Following those are “GIS Administrator” and “GIS Manager” tied at 29%

each. "GIS User" then came in at 17% indicating a fair number of folk use GIS but do not consider it a primary function.

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Nearly one third (32%) of NEURISA respondents have their GISP. Even though GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) has been awarding GIS Professional Certifications (GISPs) for over a decade, a large portion of the GIS community is just now becoming aware of the program. With the implementation of the a more thorough certification process complete with a test, the GISP Certification will only increase in credibility.



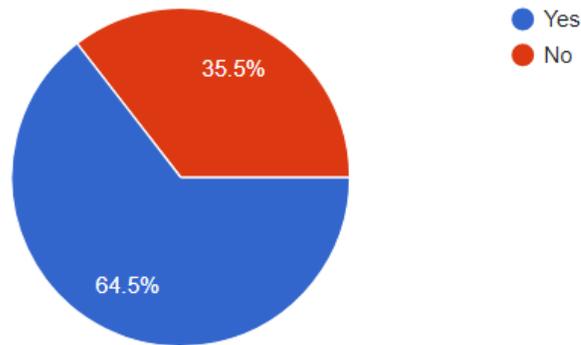
## Membership Section:

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Membership to NEURISA continues to be an enigma. Over one third (nearly 36%) of the respondents were not aware that being on the NEURISA email list made them a member of NEURISA. Well it does! And it is still free thanks to our annual conference and generous corporate sponsors.

## 6. Did you know that simply being on the NEURISA email list made you a member of NEURISA?

62 responses



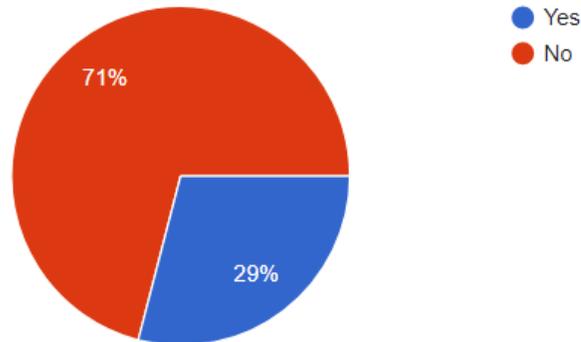
Of those that were aware just under 15% have been on the email list for more than 10 years with about half (47%) being on the list less than 5 years. Keeping people on the list, engaged in the conversation, and networking is important to NEURISA and we hope to flip those percentages over time as we increase the scope and quality of services we provide. With advice from the respondents this could be made more clear by having an annual roll call for member, increased visibility at universities, and – well... simply stating it more clearly up front! We will look to all these options as NEURISA evolves.

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On the flip side the URISA International membership percentages change places where just over 70% of respondents are not URISA members.

## 7. Are you a member of URISA International

62 responses



How could this change? Respondents indicated the following could entice them to become a URISA member:

- ✓ Free membership
- ✓ Cheaper dues
- ✓ More local opportunities
- ✓ More outreach
- ✓ More networking and job prospecting support

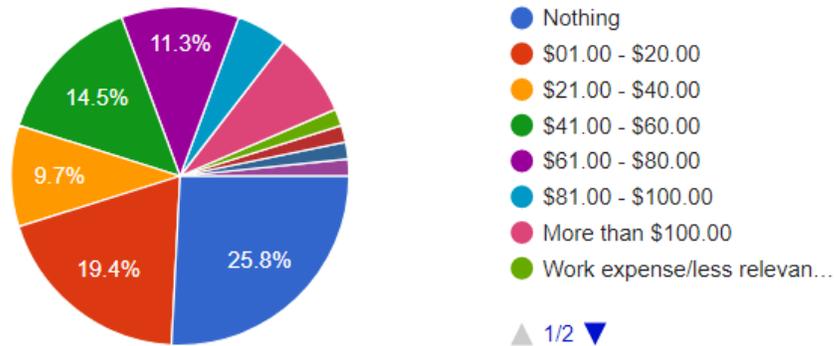
NEURISA is deeply interested in upping the ante in regard to services and is eager to see a heightened level of networking, mentorship, and support for new professionals in the GIS field.

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Assuming a unified membership model is deployed at URISA, respondents were asked about willingness to pay for the membership. The response varied widely with the largest percentage (over 25%) indicating “Nothing” would be an acceptable fee! With an increase in services across the board we are confident the membership can realize a healthy return on their investment, both indirectly to the profession and directly to the individual. Stay tuned for more as URISA explores its options.

8. URISA is moving toward a unified membership model, One URISA, with all of the Chapters. This may result in a consistent membership fee for all chapters. How much would you be willing to pay for a URISA/NEURISA membership fee?

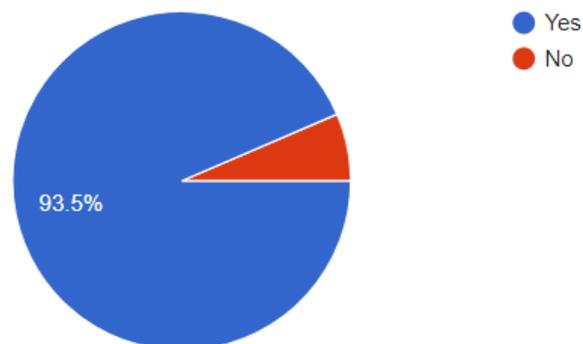
62 responses



With over 50% of respondents indicating they would likely need to pick up the membership tab it is critical to understand what would provide a healthy return on the investment. Being a technically advanced and rapidly changing field, continuing education was identified as a potential incentive. The respondents agreed indicating an increased likelihood of investment in membership (nearly 94%) if high quality educational and training opportunities were provided as part of the membership.

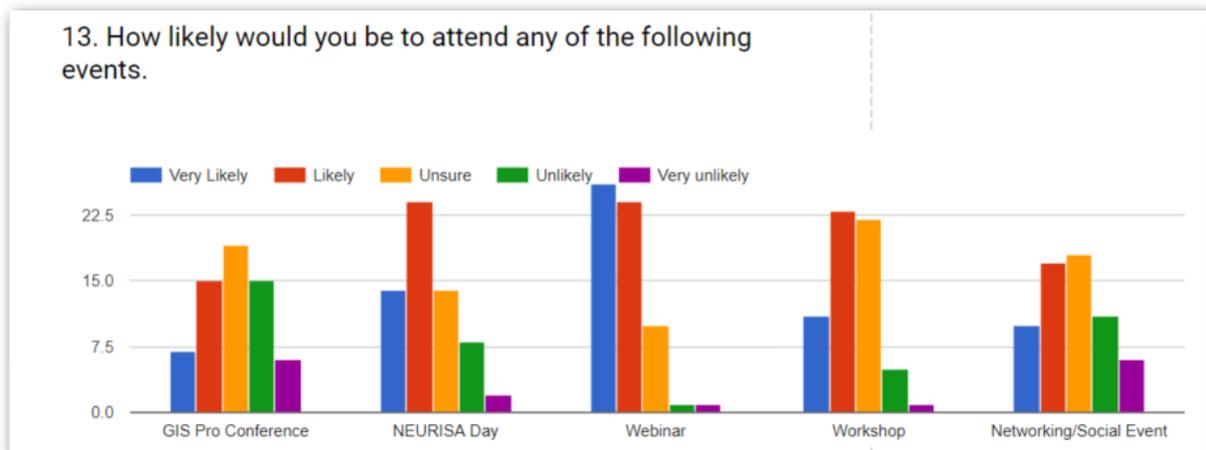
10. Would you be more likely to invest in a membership if accessible, low cost, quality continuing education and training opportunities in the GIS field were available as part of the membership package?

62 responses



## Conferences, Training, Workshops Section:

Participation was, as expected, relatively low for conferences outside our region with just over 3% headed to Jacksonville, FL in October for the URISA GIS-Pro conference. Almost 5% of respondents indicated that they plan to participate in the URISA Leadership Academy in Providence, RI in July. Then, asking to dig into the memory banks, the survey asked respondents to list the NEURISA events attended in the last three years. Interestingly over a third responded that they had attended “none”. Alas – this we hope to change. To do so, NEURISA wanted to understand what would entice folk the most to participate. Webinars were top of the list that people indicated they would likely attend with Workshops and NEURISA Day following closely. The GIS Pro conference and the Networking/Social Events seemed a bit more of a stretch for respondents.



Coupling a workshop with NEURISA Day indicated a reasonable level of participation could be expected with over one third of respondents being Very Likely or Likely to attend. This is something we will surely look at for future events. Interestingly 55% of respondents said they were likely or very likely to attend a workshop, but only 39% say the same for if it was in conjunction with NEURISA day. This suggests attendance for the workshop would be better if it was done separately from NEURISA day.

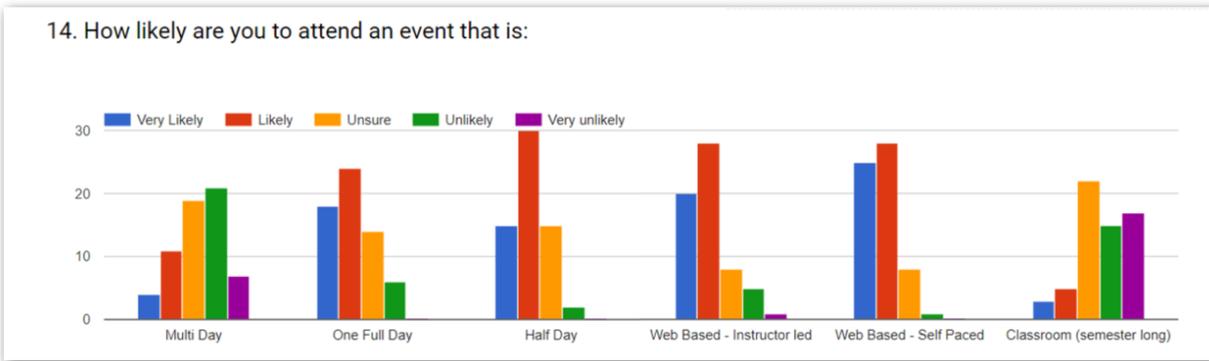
Of the URISA certified workshops, the following are the top 7 ordered by interest:

1. Cartography and Map Design (Full Day)
2. Asset Management: Planning, Strategy and Implementation (Full Day)
3. An Overview of Open Source GIS Software (Full Day)
4. Emergency Preparedness for GIS (Half Day)
5. GIS Program Management (Full Day)
6. GIS Return on investment (Half Day)
7. Introduction to Open Street Map for GIS Users (Full Day)

Given this list NEURISA will take into account the topics of most interest when considering NEURISA's niche in the New England geospatial community, other events/trainings (e.g. FOSS4G), NEURISA Day presenters and keynote speakers, and NEURISA overall path and plans for the future.

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But what kind of event (format) would the respondents most likely attend? Results indicate a web based half-day event is most tenable.



Survey results indicated that if we matched up the preferred topics with the preferred format it should result in reasonable attendance success. Respondents showed interest in a wide range of topics. The following are the top 5 sorted by interest:

1. Web Mapping Application (61%)
2. GIS in Government – Local (59%)
3. Enterprise GIS tied with GIS Certified Professional (GISP) Certification (46%)
4. Professional Networking (45%)
5. Open Source Software tied with Programming (41%)

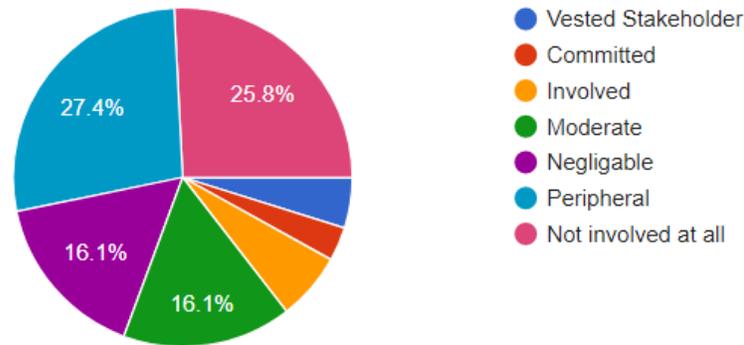
Again, NEURISA will use this information to guide future planning.

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In general, respondents are not overly participatory in the NEURISA community with only 50% indicating they would like to increase their participation. The hope is to change that by fostering networking, mentoring, and support of emergent professionals as well as targeting topics of interest and providing them in formats that work best for the most people. We really hope to change these numbers:

## 16. What is your current involvement with NEURISA

62 responses



Finally, the survey asked for input as to how NEURISA could better serve the GIS community in New England. The following are summarized from a fantastic list of items:

- ✓ Support students and emerging professionals
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Refresher courses
- ✓ More affordable conferences
- ✓ Live Webinars
- ✓ Fostering GIS in curricula including at the elementary level
- ✓ Keep a focus on technology
- ✓ GIS Professional development
- ✓ Provide elevated levels of services to municipalities
- ✓ Participate in town hall meetings and local events

## Conclusion:

We would like to thank each and every participant for taking the time to fill out our survey. The feedback that we received has proven to be invaluable in our future planning not on event offerings, but also our future as GIS Professional Organization.