



# 2017-2018 Donor and Volunteer Research

## Goal

Conduct audience research for effective communications about volunteering and donating to the Foundation.

## Research Objectives:

Among volunteers (who don't donate) and donors (\$100+) to determine:

- Perception of major benefits of donating and volunteering for Foundation programs.
- Measure perception of and agreement on Foundation messaging (key descriptive terms).
- Evaluate primary sources for information about the Foundation and their use to audience.

Note: Objectives limited due to budget, and respondents' time constraints on a research interview / questionnaire.

## Results from this research will be used to:

- Adjust messaging for 2018 to provide appropriate emphasis on Foundation mission and branding image and emphasize benefits of donating and volunteering.
- Adjust communication channels based on usage and preference of media.

## Survey Audience

Audience was purposefully limited to the following three categories:

1. Volunteers, including board and committee members
2. Donors who gave in 2016 and/or 2017, and
3. Fellows who don't currently volunteer.

The survey universe included 1,400 total persons comprised of:

- 700 volunteers (Mock Trial, We the People, current and former board members, and members of the Citizens Education Advisory, Development, Communications and Awards committees).
- 716 donors who gave in 2016 or 2017 and Fellows.

Fifteen percent (15%) responded to the survey over a two-week period.

The response rate was higher than anticipated, indicating we surveyed an interested audience and fulfilled our promise that it would be a brief survey to complete. A response rate of 1% - 5% is typical. Five percent is good.



*How would you rate the effectiveness of the communications from the Indiana Bar Foundation?*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Effective or Somewhat Effective</b>
Email	90%
Website	70%
Annual Report (by U.S. Mail)	65%
Quarterly Letters	60%
Phone Calls (from staff)	43%

*Caution: We conducted this survey by email link to a web-based product. We are missing a large audience because we don't have email addresses and we don't send print communications other than fundraising letters.*

Email is hotly debated in the Foundation's office. How many are too many and who should receive them gets a great deal of staff attention before communicating.



*On average, about how many emails from the Foundation have you received each month?*

More than 55% said they receive 1-2 emails a month and 11 percent indicated they received 3-5 emails a month. Twenty-six percent didn't know how many they received.

Fortunately, 70% thought they were receiving the "right amount" of emails from the Foundation.

Too Many	6%
Just About Right	70%
Too Few	3%
Don't Know	20%



*In 2016-2017, have you read the following publications at least once?*

<b>Media</b>	<b>Reading It</b>
<i>The Indiana Lawyer</i>	82%
<i>Res Gestae</i>	78%
County Bar Association (emails, newsletters or mailed items)	78%



### Message Recall

Recall of messages was consistent with 53% recalling seeing an ad or news in *Res Gestae* and 45% recall for *The Indiana Lawyer*.

This reflects the more frequent ads and longer period of advertising in *Res Gestae*.

More public relations/media relations has occurred with *The Indiana Lawyer* to compensate for no budgeted ads; more advertising in *The Indiana Lawyer* and *Res Gestae* would only help.



*The Foundation uses several short phrases to describe its mission. For each statement please indicate whether you have seen or heard these phrases.*

Phrase/Message	Recall
Educating Tomorrow's Leaders	66%
Expanding Civil Justice	60%
Aiding the Profession	46%

*How clearly does the phrase describe the mission statement?*

Phrase/Message	Very or Somewhat Clearly
Educating Tomorrow's Leaders	90%
Expanding Civil Justice	88%
Aiding the Profession	80%

The Foundation's board president has been advocating for more ad spending in *Res Gestae* for the dual purposes of branding/communications with donors, members and prospective volunteers and financially supporting our sister organization.

*Res Gestae*, as well as *The Indiana Lawyer*, remain vital tools. The Foundation needs to create consistency on its website to reinforce those tools.



When you consider volunteering or donating to the Foundation, how much influence do the following aspects have on your decision?

Influence	A lot	Some	None	Don't Know
Helping others	70%	28%	1.46%	0.98%
Civic participation	52%	36%	10%	2%
Impact on local community	50%	37%	8%	4%
Professional Responsibility	48%	37%	10%	5%
Being personally asked	39%	39%	19%	4%
Ease of signing up/volunteering	32%	42%	21%	6%
Ability to choose a specific project or direct the way the donation is spent	30%	34%	30%	7%
Tax credit	9%	34%	54%	4%
Pro bono reporting	9%	33%	52%	6%

Due to rounding, the figures in above table do not always equal 100.

What's interesting – even surprising – to staff in the above table is:

- “helping others” ranked so high. Anticipated “civic participation” or “impact” would;
- “being personally asked” category is so evenly matched in first two choices, with overall ranking of 80% total” We know that to be true for philanthropy, and are gratified to see it represented here as well; and
- “choosing a specific project or directing the way the donation is spent” was so even split among the three categories/choices. Best practices is to allow donor to do this easily.

What surprises you? What are we overlooking?



Which of the following areas best describes where you live?

Northern Indiana	27%
Central Indiana	60%
Southern Indiana	14%

Figures mirror Indiana's population and attorney population representation as well.





*What categories best describe your age?*

Under 25	0.49%
25-34	8%
35-44	13%
45-54	20%
55-64	32%
65-74	18%
75 and older	9%
Prefer not to answer	1%

### **SUMMARY - Communicating Results**

The Foundation intends to discuss the results with staff and the volunteer committee for development and communications.

Findings will be published in the e-newsletter in February 2018 with a link to this document on a hidden page on the Foundation's website. The link will remain active for two weeks.

Based on feedback from staff and the volunteer committee, staff will revise its communications and development planning. Plans are to analyze impact against fundraising results and again in the fall of 2018. Budget augmentation will improve the Foundation's communications effectiveness.

### **Background**

#### **Methodology:**

*Phase One:* Interviews with staff and committee to determine input and develop questions for quantitative phase, such as:

- Words used to describe benefits of donating.
- Words used to describe benefits of volunteering.
- Any major issues that have not been identified in pre-planning.

*Phase Two:* On-line quantitative questionnaire using database with respondent level data included for analysis. Professional research counsel advised on the questions, the process and the time-frame to ensure we had the best survey possible with the constrictions we had on time and funding. Survey was conducted over a two-week period. Distribution was meted to those on subsequent days who had not responded to prior surveys.

October 17, 2017: First distribution.

October 26, 2017: Third distribution.

October 24, 2017: Second distribution.

October 27, 2017: Survey closed.

*Phase Three:* Analysis and reporting with plan of action.