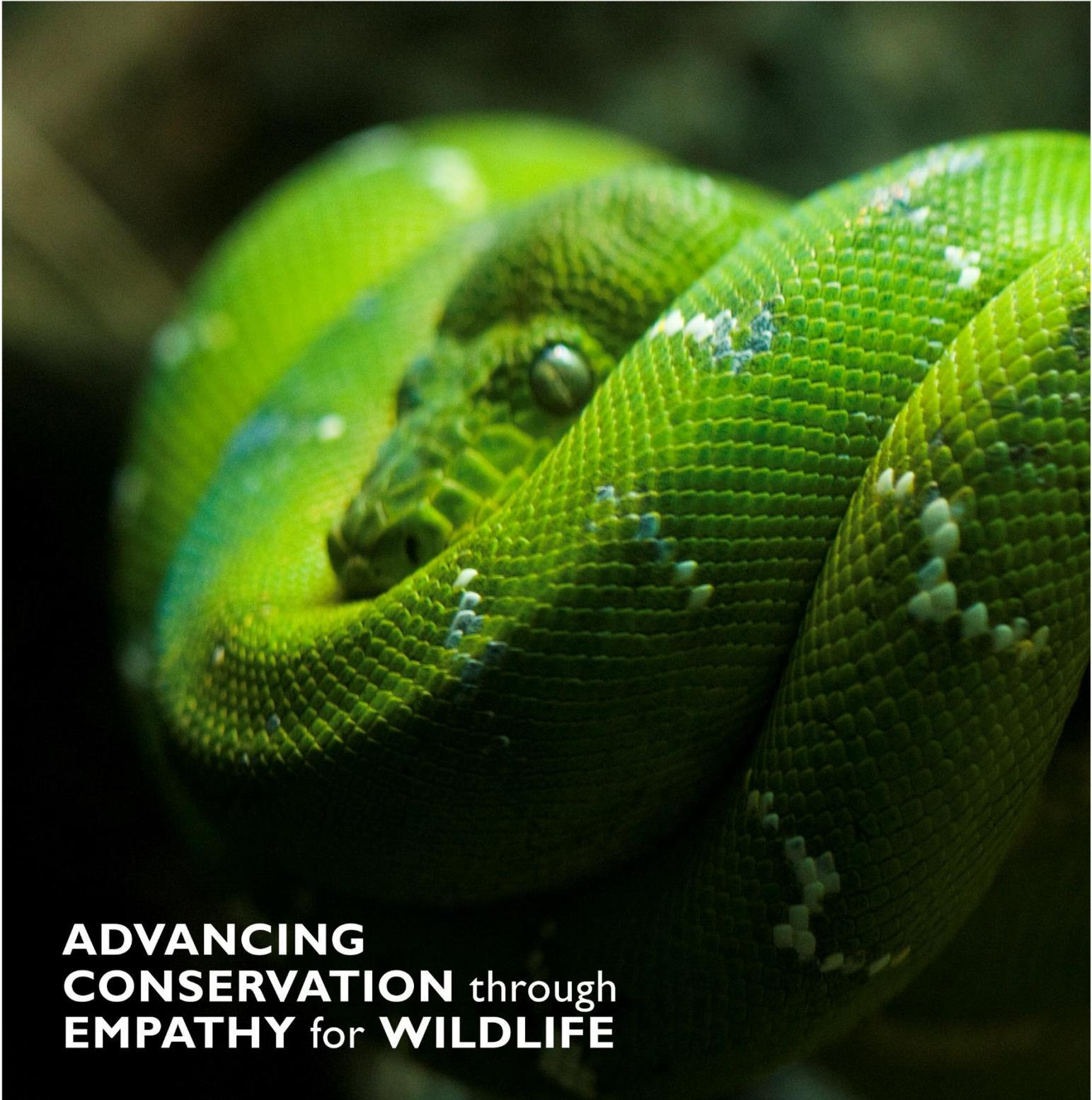




NEEDS ASSESSMENT SITE VISITS 2019

THE EMPATHY PROJECT

By Nicole Reed, Audience Researcher; Woodland Park Zoo, December 2019



**ADVANCING
CONSERVATION** through
EMPATHY for **WILDLIFE**

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Executive Summary

As a part of developing the network Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife, a needs assessment was completed during day-long site visits at each of the 19 partner organizations. Two project staff from Woodland Park Zoo spent a full day at each site engaged in conversations with staff members in various roles around the topic of empathy. Conversations revolved around how organizations are currently using empathy practices in their work and what areas they want to improve on in order to continue to foster empathy in their guests. This report compiles the de-identified findings from these site visits, arranged by recurring themes across all partner organizations.

These 19 partner sites represent a varied landscape of organizations in size, reach, governance, culture, communities, priorities, current work and organizational strengths. Understanding the wide diversity of experiences, perspectives, needs and goals provides unique opportunities to foster empathy in guests.

The overarching theme across all conversations was that while these sites are interested in doing this work, limitations to their capacity will affect their ability to implement changes or new ideas. Primary concerns around capacity consist of having enough time or staff in order to effectively engage with this work, learning how to prioritize this work, and having the ability to measure their impact on their community. In order to be more effective in doing this work, these sites are looking for: additional staff, more funding, a deeper understanding of evaluation methods, ready-made resources at their disposal, and opportunities to collaborate with other organizations. While these identified needs may not be the only solutions, they are a starting point for building the capacity of partner organizations to effectively incorporate empathy into their work.

There were several other resources mentioned that would increase the sites' ability to implement empathy practices at their organizations. Across sites, the most common phrase was that they did not want to "reinvent the wheel," and therefore would like access to existing resources or to create resources that meet everyone's needs. Broadly, partner sites are interested in resources around communication, training, implementation for programs, implementation on-grounds, evaluation, and access to support. The specific resources within these categories are varied and have the potential to address many of their capacity concerns. While several ideas for resources were identified through this needs assessment, the lists included are not exhaustive. It is expected that additional ideas and resources will be thought of as the ACE for Wildlife network continues to evolve.

During the visits, staff were also asked about how visitors perceive animal welfare at their organization. These discussions provided insight into whether sites are connecting guest perceptions of animal well-being with empathy. Through making these connections, sites can begin to prioritize not only animal welfare, but also how it is portrayed in order to more effectively foster empathy in their guests.

Finally, a portion of the visit was dedicated to discussing the formation of the network and the best ways to communicate across the network. During these conversations, sites identified logistical items such as existing network models, useful platforms and preferred ways of contact. Additionally, sites also discussed important functions for the network around developing ways to collaborate, establishing a shared vision and goal, importance of travel and meetings, as well as how to ensure the sustainability of the network. These conversations have informed the foundation of ACE for Wildlife, and will continue to inform decisions as the network develops.

Overall, the needs assessment serves as an important baseline in demonstrating the stages of empathy work in which partners are currently engaged. It was evident that sites are coming from a variety of starting points and that there are many different perspectives represented within this network, though these varied sites shared several main concerns. Over time, this work will continue to evolve as sites begin to change their current practices and implement new practices. The information presented in this report serves as an initial reflection from the partners on what empathy means at their organization and what it might look like to foster empathy in their guests. This report will be used as a reference to inform the initial structure and plans of the learning network, as well as additional funding to support its development.

Glossary

AAZK – American Association of Zoo Keepers

ACE for Wildlife – Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife

AZA – Association of Zoos & Aquariums

CELC – Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center

COSI – Center of Science and Industry

CYCLIST – Capacity-building for Youth Civic Leadership for Issues in Science and Society

NAI – National Association for Interpretation

NNOCCI – National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation

MECAP – Measuring Empathy: Collaborative Assessment Project

OCCI – Ocean and Climate Change Institute

PNW – Pacific Northwest

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

SWIDOVS – Southwestern Idaho Directors of Volunteer Services

1. Introduction

As part of Woodland Park Zoo's grant-funded activities for "The Empathy Project," a needs assessment was conducted by two project staff to fulfill *Objective #1, Part 1: Learning Network Needs Assessment*. This consisted of four main areas of work:

1. *Design survey and needs assessment instruments to determine institutional needs of AZA institutions to advance work on empathy-based programming and to develop/integrate empathy-building capacity into their programming and business model, as well as gather data on current practice or research on animal welfare and perceptions of animal welfare*
2. *Conduct interviews and site visits with 20 AZA institutions in seven target states*
3. *Review findings with each institution to ensure alignment between their self-reported and assessed needs*
4. *Analyze results of needs assessment and summarize findings and identified areas of greatest need/opportunity*

This document describes the information gathered during the needs assessment and serves as a guide for future work. The report reflects the conversations had during each needs assessment site visit and has been reviewed for alignment by all participating 19 partner organizations.

The needs assessment was conducted in order to fulfill the above grant objective, as well as provide context for the development of the learning network: Advancing Conservation through Empathy (ACE) for Wildlife. This learning network is at the beginning stages of development and through involving the partner organizations from the outset, the goal is to build the network to meet the needs of all organizations and craft a unified vision for moving forward.

A logic model was created to guide the design of this needs assessment and identify potential outcomes for all stakeholders (see Appendix A). The goal for the needs assessment was: *to better understand each site's individual needs around implementing and measuring best practices to foster empathy for animals*. Then a plan and agenda draft were created for the visits (see Appendix B).

To complete this needs assessment, site visits were conducted with 19 organizations from February 5 to April 17, 2019. Participating sites included:

1. Alaska SeaLife Center, Seward, AK
2. Chahinkapa Zoo, Wahpeton, ND
3. Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, Saint Paul, MN
4. Dakota Zoo, Bismarck, ND
5. Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison, WI
6. Idaho Falls Zoo, Idaho Falls, ID
7. International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI
8. Lake Superior Zoological Society, Duluth, MN

9. Minnesota Zoo, Apple Valley, MN
10. NEW Zoo & Adventure Park, Green Bay, WI
11. Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Eatonville, WA
12. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma, WA
13. Racine Zoo, Racine, WI
14. Red River Zoo, Fargo, ND
15. Roosevelt Park Zoo, Minot, ND
16. Seattle Aquarium, Seattle, WA
17. Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, WA
18. Zoo Boise, Boise, ID
19. Zoological Society of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

Prior to site visits, preliminary data was collected to understand sites' current view of empathy work and other general information about each organization. Introductory phone calls took place during the months of November and December 2018 in order to better understand what type of empathy work sites were doing, as well as to inform the agenda for the Creating Change Symposium hosted in Seattle on January 22-24, 2019. Additionally, 18 out of 19 sites completed a pre-visit survey via SurveyMonkey prior to the visits to provide background information and inform conversations during the needs assessment.

Woodland Park Zoo's working definition of empathy was presented to all sites at the beginning of the visit: *Empathy is a stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand, and care about the experiences or perspectives of another person or animal.* The definition was presented to guide conversations and ensure that all attendees understood our working definition of empathy. Sites were encouraged to adopt this definition if they did not have one of their own. Based on the pre-visit survey data, five sites are currently using this definition, one site had their own definition, and the remaining sites did not currently have a definition of empathy for their organization.

The site visits were structured as a full day visit with two Woodland Park Zoo "Empathy Project" staff. Each visit was structured with slight differences due to timing and availability of site staff. Additionally, the number and job roles of attendees from each site varied, as sites were encouraged to select the staff best suited to each meeting topic. There were eight separate conversations had throughout each site visit (see Appendix B). At the end of each conversation, quantitative measurements were collected (see Appendix C) to have a baseline of sites' understanding and readiness to incorporate empathy.

Based on these conversations, the following sections emerged consistently during analysis and serve as the structure of this report:

1. A Closer Look at the Network Partners: which includes a landscape of the sites that describes who they are, what they do, and their unique opportunities and challenges

2. Sites Capacity to do Empathy Work: which describes the largest challenge as lack of capacity at sites
3. Resources Necessary for Empathy Work: which describes the resources needed to be successful in this work
4. Perspectives on Animal Welfare
5. Considerations for the Learning Network Structure: which describes the elements needed to build an ideal learning network structure and sites' communication preferences

This report serves as a reference for the numerous conversations had across partner organizations. Each chapter is focused on a primary theme (listed above) and can be referenced as a standalone document or comprehensively depending on needs or interest.

2. A Closer Look at the Network Partners

The data that informed the following landscape of the 19 partner organizations in ACE for Wildlife was gathered through the pre-visit survey, on-site conversations and quantitative scales collected during the site visits. Based on the information collected, six major themes emerged: organization size, organizational culture, community and regional considerations, previous granting priorities, current status of empathy work, and organizational strengths. This information provides an overall picture of the ACE for Wildlife partners and what unique opportunities and strengths they might bring to the network.

2.1. *Organization Size*

Sites are of varying sizes, which is captured through number of full-time employees, number of volunteers and annual volunteer hours, acreage of their organization, number of annual visitors, and governing structure (Table 1).

Table 1. ACE for Wildlife network partners' organization make-up

Number of Full-time Employees	<20	20-50	50-100	100+	Did not report
# of sites	4	6	4	4	1
Number of Volunteers	≤100	101-499	500-999	1,000+	Did not report
# of sites	7	6	1	4	1
Number of Volunteer Hours	<5,000	5,000 – 30,000	30,001- 90,000	90,000+	Did not report
# of sites	6	5	4	2	2
Number of Acres	<25	25-49	50-100	Several hundred	Did not report
# of sites	7	5	1	4	2
Number of Annual Visitors	<100,000	100,000 – 500,000	500,001 – 1 million	Over 1 million	Did not report
# of sites	4	7	3	4	1
Governing Structure	Nonprofit	Municipality run	Mixed		Did not report
# of sites	8	7	3		1

- There are three aquariums and one zoo with an aquarium component in this group of sites.
- Two of the 19 sites have free admission to the public.

These numbers show that there is a wide variety within the 19 partner organizations, with different capacities, reach and physical size that can all impact how they operate as

an organization. Having so many unique organizations in one network will provide varied perspectives and resources to help all organizations grow by participating in ACE for Wildlife.

2.2. *Organizational Culture*

Throughout the needs assessment, several of the sites referenced aspects of their organizational culture. These comments were pulled out because they represent how these various sites see themselves and function as an organization.

- Five sites see their small size as an asset because it allows them to make changes quickly.
- Two sites describe their culture as being like a family.
- Two sites strongly identify with being research institutions.
- Three sites identified transparency as a key factor.
- Five sites identified having excellent communication across their organizations, while four sites identified communication across the organization as a point of difficulty.
- Six sites have new leaders or are going through a leadership transition which affects their culture.
- Seven sites believe their organizations are undergoing a cultural shift that will align with and highlight the importance of empathy.
- One site's culture was described by staff as undergoing significant change and turmoil that has been affecting staff morale.
- A pattern that emerged where some sites in specific regions all described their organizational culture similarly:
 - The North Dakota zoos often described themselves as small, but creative (that they think like a big zoo).
 - The Wisconsin zoos often described themselves as not afraid of a challenge.

Each site, as expected, also described unique positive and negative aspects of their culture. Sites often described their culture as dynamic and undergoing frequent changes either due to leadership transitions or overall cultural shifts happening within the organization. The sites that view their small size as an asset, say it also allows them flexibility and comradery amongst staff. Finally, communication was seen as a point of divergence with an equal number of sites identifying this as a strength or a challenge. Having a better understanding of the organizational cultures across sites paints a broad picture of the types of organizations represented within this network.

With the variations in organizational culture across sites, it was also important to consider who has bought into the idea of empathy. A site may be represented in more than one of the below categories (i.e. they may have leadership support, but concerns about staff buy-in; or they have concerns about this work being restricted to education and concerns about developing staff buy-in).

- Five sites are thinking organization-wide around empathy and have buy-in across the organization.

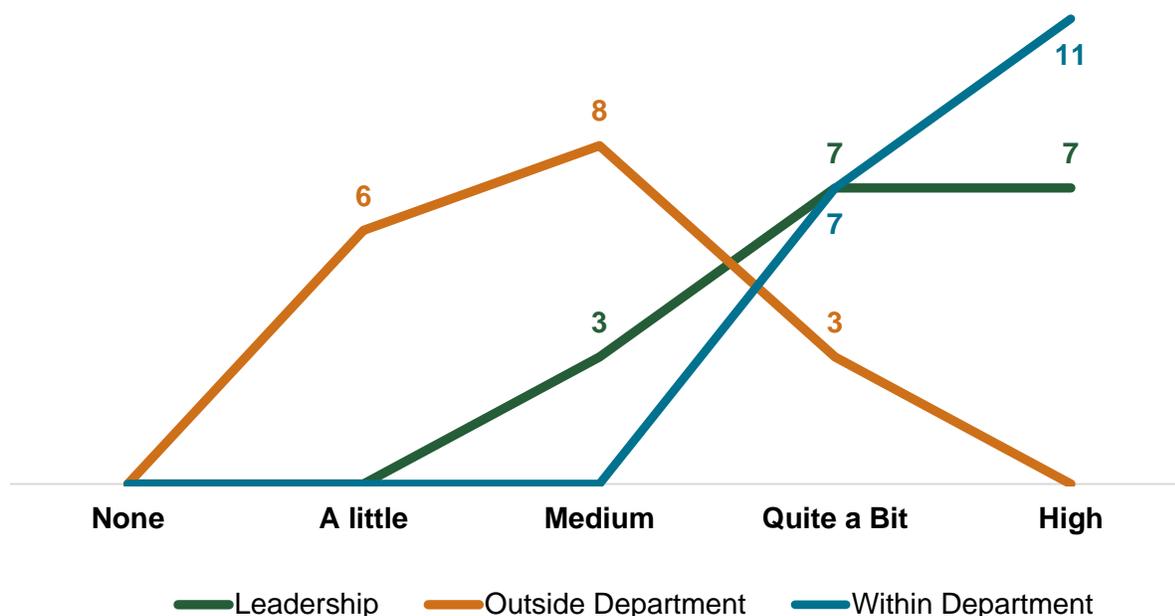
- Four sites mentioned that their leadership has bought in and understands the importance of empathy. (This does not mean that leadership at more sites has not bought in, just that it was directly identified at these sites).
- At three sites, empathy is predominantly thought of as something that is part of the education department, but they are trying to move towards more organization-wide buy-in.
- Eight sites identified concerns around buy-in and getting staff on board; four of these sites have an emphasis around getting animal care or keeper staff to embrace the practices and understand how empathy is related to their work.
- Three sites identified concerns around getting volunteers comfortable with the practices and being able to continue to provide updates.

In the pre-visit survey, sites were asked to rate a series of questions around buy-in at their organization (Table 2, Figure 1). These values help inform the degree of buy-in for empathy work at different levels of the organization to determine where training and implementation may be best focused.

Table 2. Self-identified degree of buy-in across the organizations

<i>Amount of buy-in from leadership to incorporate empathy</i>				
None	A little	Medium	Quite a bit	High
0	0	3	7	7
<i>Amount of buy-in from other staff outside your department to incorporate empathy</i>				
None	A little	Medium	Quite a bit	High
0	6	8	3	0
<i>Amount of buy-in from other staff in your department to incorporate empathy</i>				
None	A little	Medium	Quite a bit	High
0	0	0	7	11

Figure 1. Number of sites with self-identified degree of perceived buy-in is highest within respondents' own departments



These values show that leadership buy-in at sites trends towards high, while buy-in from staff outside their departments is perceived to be lower. The highest amount of perceived buy-in is amongst staff in their department.

Additionally, sites were asked during the *Wrap up* conversation to rate the following question on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much): *I have interest from a diversity of departments at my organization to incorporate empathy best practices*. This question was completed by a total of 81 attendees, with an average of four people per site. The average score for each site ranged from 2.85 to 4.67, with a mean of 4.06 (SD±0.474). This is reflective of the above numbers where some sites feel they have buy-in from numerous members of their organization (a higher rating) versus other sites that feel they still need to increase buy-in, especially from specific departments (a lower rating).

Overall, buy-in across organizations was mixed, with a few mentioning organization-wide buy-in and leadership support while others expressed concerns about empathy practices being seen as only part of education or having difficulty with staff buy-in, specifically by keeper staff.

2.3. Community and Regional Considerations

Positive community relationships are essential in helping organizations continue to thrive, since the visitors, employees and partners on which they depend come from the community that surrounds them. Several sites identified a strong relationship or unique aspects of their community.

- Ten sites have a supportive community, as well as loyal, involved fans who continue to back and invest in the organization.
- Six sites have a good reputation within their community.
- Four sites think that their community is more laid back and more accepting of zoos and aquariums since they do not get much “push back” or “negative vibes.”
- Two sites have good community buy-in and excitement around their work.
- Two sites see their communities as more conservation-focused; while one site did not think their community saw them as a conservation organization.
- Unique ways that five sites think their communities see them are: as “a conservation institution first,” “a fun [and] entertaining place to see animals,” “a community place,” “a really good resource for recreation, education, [and] events,” or a place for wildlife rehabilitation.
- One site is “reestablishing [and] rebuilding [their] relationship with the community.”

Overall, sites have positive relationships with their communities. They have strong community support and buy-in and are seen as reputable organizations. Some organizations’ communities were also identified as conservation-minded, which is a benefit for zoos and aquariums focused on conservation.

Beyond the sites’ immediate communities, they are also affected by various regional attributes. These differences can influence how the organization operates, as well as how they are perceived.

- Six sites described their communities and region as more rural, focusing on farming or agriculture, hunting or fishing, and/or oil.
- Four sites expressed the need to be sensitive to their communities’ perspectives and take care in how things are worded since they do not want to offend their community or turn off their visitors.
- Four sites recognized that their community and visitors assume they are “doing right by the animals” and that they know what the animals need. Two North Dakota zoos also pointed out that they do not have much animal rights activism in their region.
- Two sites are in liberal-leaning communities surrounded by conservative areas.
- Two sites discussed their relationships with other large community industries (professional sports leagues and a large number of manufacturing facilities).

Specific regional similarities or experiences were also discussed by sites in North Dakota, Minnesota and Washington. These experiences highlight important relationships that these sites currently have that affect how they conduct their work.

- The North Dakota zoos have strong relationships with each other through their regional AAZK chapter, which was mentioned at each of the four sites. They also each described other unique partnerships they have with local municipalities and colleges.
- The Minnesota zoos are establishing a working group around empathy with other cultural organizations in their region.

- Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium have a unique relationship with the Metro Parks.

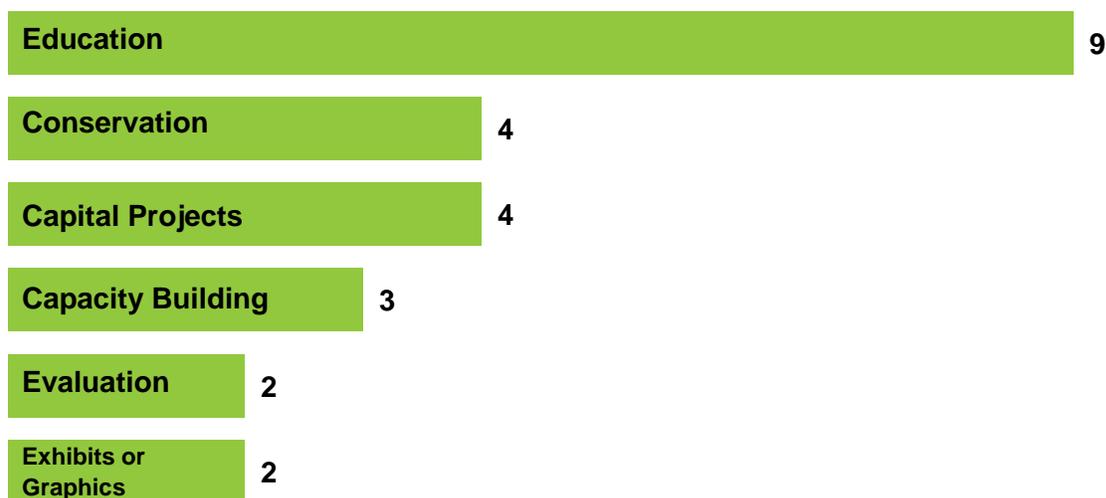
The organizations that discussed their regional differences mostly pointed out how they are located in areas that value rural, agricultural and subsistence attitudes. The people in these regions are generally supportive of the organizations, but organizations are cognizant of being sensitive to their unique perspectives. Organizations located in more urban settings did not focus on their communities as much during discussions.

2.4. Previous Granting Priorities

Sites were asked what their priorities have been in previously awarded grants (not specific to empathy) to determine the types of grants they typically pursue. Most sites fall into multiple categories (Figure 2).

- Five sites did not specify their previous granting priorities.
- Nine sites identified education or programming. Two of these sites specifically called out STEM based education.
- Four sites identified work related to conservation or their mission.
- Four sites identified capital projects.
- Three sites identified capacity building (i.e. more staff).
- Two sites identified exhibits or graphics.
- Two sites identified evaluation.
- Two sites said that their grants are usually not for operating costs.

Figure 2. Education was the most frequently self-identified previous granting priority at sites.



There are many types of prior grants awarded, which shows that sites are interested and capable of pursuing multiple types of projects. To ensure that education as a previous granting priority wasn't identified most frequently due to the presence of majority educators during the conversations, the attendee composition for these

conversations was considered. The attendee makeup during this conversation was as follows: at 11 out of 14 sites conversation was with symposium attendees, at eight out of 14 sites conversation was with organization leadership, at three out of 14 sites conversation was with education department leadership, and at three out of 14 sites conversation was with combined education leadership and organization leadership. So, even though nine sites mentioned education as a previous granting priority, it should be noted that this was mentioned by sites regardless of who was part of these conversations. These insights will be important to consider moving forward in this network as future funding is planned.

Sites were also asked who typically writes and manages grants to get a better idea of their capacity for future grant management.

- Three sites rely on their Education Directors to write and manage their grants.
- Five sites' Executive Directors write or manage their grants.
- Six sites have a development department, committee or a separate nonprofit society who writes and manages grants.
- Two sites rely on other staff to write and manage grants.
- Seven sites did not provide information on who writes and manages their grants.

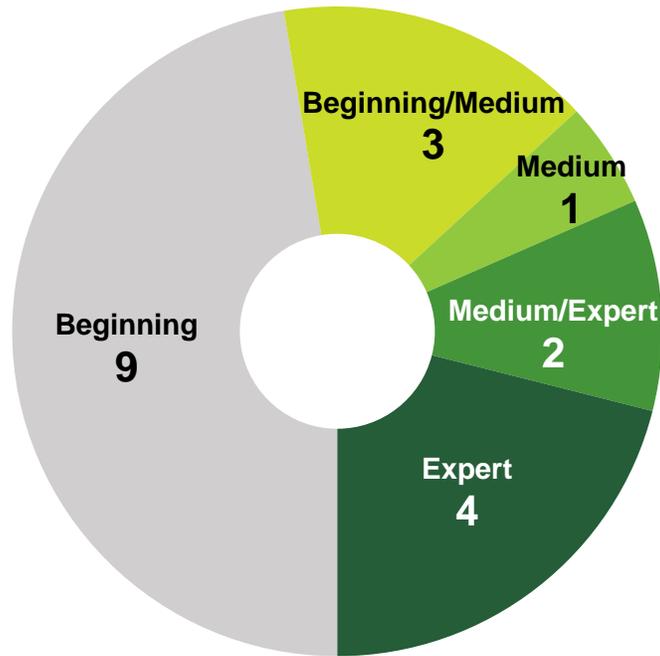
2.5. Current Status of Empathy Work

At the time of the needs assessment, sites were loosely classified by Woodland Park Zoo's "Empathy Project" staff into categories based on their experience with empathy (Figure 3).

- Nine sites were classified as "Beginning" which means that they are just starting to think and talk about empathy and identify areas where they could be more intentional.
- Three sites were classified as "Beginning/Medium" in which they have tried a few things with intentionality, but are similar to the beginners in that they are just starting to think about empathy work.
- One site was classified as "Medium" where they have undertaken a specific project around empathy, but are just starting to think more broadly about empathy at their organization.
- Two sites were classified as "Medium/Expert" in which empathy has been an ongoing conversation at their organization and they are just now incorporating it into areas across the organization.
- Four sites were classified as "Expert" in which they have been working on embedding empathy into their culture and have a firm grasp of what this looks like across their organization.

The expectation is that as this work proceeds, sites will continue to grow in their ability to do empathy work at their organization and will move up through the classifications listed above.

Figure 3. Approximately half of sites were classified at a “Beginning” status of empathy work based on the classifications by project staff from “Beginning” to “Expert.”



These classifications generally aligned with how sites self-identified on the pre-visit survey through their response to the question “my organization’s understanding of empathy is...”. In response to this question, sites rated their organization’s level of understanding of empathy on a scale from 1 (none) to 5 (high) (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison between project staff classification and organizations' self-identified level of understanding of empathy. (colors for ease of comparison across categories; lighter colors = less experience, darker colors = more experience)

Status of Empathy Work	My organization's level of understanding of empathy is...
Beginning	N/A
Beginning	A little
Beginning	Medium
Beginning	Quite a Bit
Beginning/Medium	A little
Beginning/Medium	Medium
Beginning/Medium	Quite a Bit
Medium	A little
Medium/Expert	A little
Medium/Expert	Medium
Expert	Medium
Expert	Medium
Expert	Quite a Bit
Expert	High

During the *Welcome and goals* discussion, sites were asked to rate two questions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) (See Appendix C):

- *I feel confident articulating my organization's priorities for incorporating empathy*
- *Our organization has identified opportunities to be more intentional about incorporating empathy practices*

These questions were completed by a total of 94 attendees, with an average of five people per site (Table 4). Additionally, the following question was asked during the *Wrap up* discussion:

- *I feel confident in my knowledge to take next steps to incorporate empathy best practices at my organization*

This question was completed by 81 attendees with an average of four people per site (Table 4).

Table 4. Attendees' responses to quantitative measurements after Welcome and Goals discussion and Wrap up discussion.

Question	<i>I feel confident articulating my organization's priorities</i>	<i>Our organization has identified opportunities to be more intentional</i>	<i>I feel confident in my knowledge to take next steps</i>
Range of Site Averages	2.50-5.00	2.60-5.00	3.33-5.00
Mean	3.86	3.75	3.91
Standard Deviation	0.699	0.688	0.443

These ratings were also compared with how sites' status of empathy work was classified. For the question around *articulating priorities*, those that were classified as "Medium" or above tended to have higher ratings (3.96 to 5), however five out of 12 sites classified as "Beginning" or "Beginning/Medium" still had average scores of 4 or above. There were no obvious patterns when classifications of empathy status were compared with the question on *identifying opportunities to be intentional*. The question asked at the end of the visit around *feeling confident in their knowledge to take next steps* showed a narrower range and a smaller standard deviation which suggests that sites' responses had less variation and therefore were perhaps feeling more ready to incorporate empathy into their work after our visits than at the beginning of the visit. Overall, these questions were intended to give insight into sites' readiness to incorporate empathy into their work, and as expected, there is a wide range of scores across sites showing that everyone is at a different stage in figuring out what this work looks like at their organization.

Sites were also loosely categorized based on perceived areas of interest or goals for future empathy work (Figure 4). Sites may have more than one area of interest and the areas represented below do not include all possible opportunities for application. This may change as the network grows and sites increase implementation of empathy work.

- Twelve sites may be interested in incorporating empathy into their external communications (i.e. marketing, social media, etc.).
- Twelve sites may be interested in incorporating empathy into programs.
- Eight sites may be interested in incorporating empathy into interpretation.
- Five sites may be interested in incorporating empathy into exhibits.
- For one site, it was unclear what their future directions might be.

Figure 4. Sites most frequently self-identified External Communications and Programs as potential areas of interest for future empathy work.



The classifications of current empathy status and future directions are limited because they are derived from the project staff's overall impression of the sites' work upon reflection of our conversations. Additionally, the pre-visit surveys that informed the rating of an organization's level of understanding of empathy were completed by either a symposium attendee or someone who works directly with the attendee. This could have resulted in bias in their estimation due to exposure to empathy practices through the symposium or influence from using empathy directly in their day-to-day work.

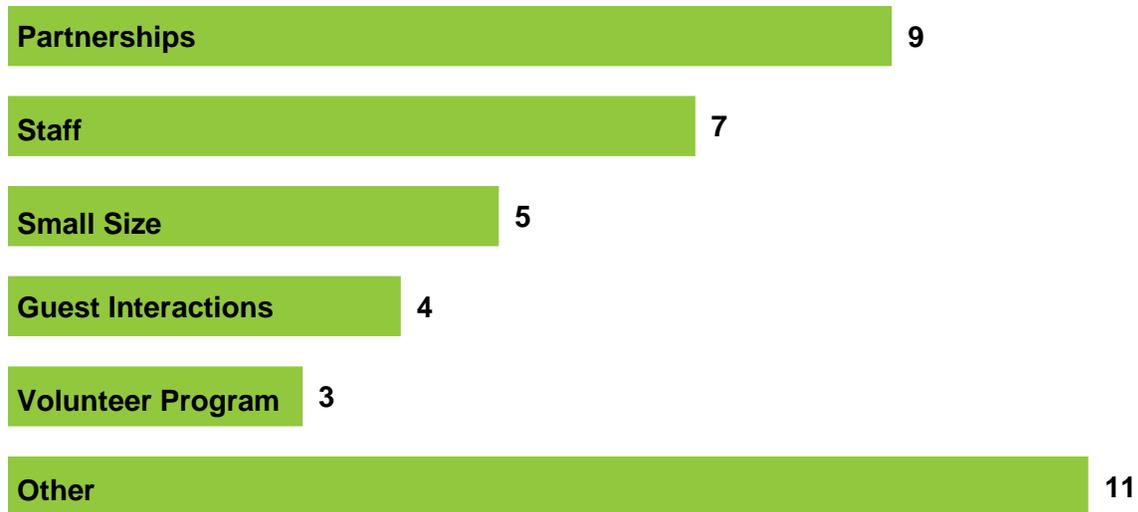
2.6. Organizational Strengths

While there were unique strengths mentioned by all sites, there were a few overlapping strengths that were mentioned by multiple sites (Figure 5):

- Nine sites mentioned partnerships which cover external relationships with the community and with other organizations (five out of nine), as well as internal collaboration (four out of nine).
- At seven sites, they recognize that their staff is a strength because of their passion and knowledge.
- Five sites mentioned that their small size is a strength because it allows them to make change quickly and try new things.
- Four sites mentioned that how they interact with their guests is a strength.
- Three sites have a strong volunteer program which they consider a strength.
- Other strengths that were mentioned: high quality education programming with a focus on empathy; being a conservation organization; having zoo-wide negativity training; access to other sites' members and visitors since many of their guests are people who are on vacation; "audience research capacity;" naturalistic exhibits with

a separate exhibits department; no “counter culture” to empathy and striving to make it sustainable; focusing on cold climate animals; being able to make their own signs; guests loving the “intimate feeling of [their] zoo;” and being passionate about the “creepy, little, weird animals.”

Figure 5. Partnerships were the most common organizational strength mentioned by ACE for Wildlife partner sites.



Eleven of the sites also mentioned things that they would want to bring to the learning network:

- Two sites would be willing to host future gatherings.
- Four sites could provide “man-power” by sharing expertise, being test sites that implement things quickly, or have staff and volunteers who are willing to experiment.
- Five sites are willing to share resources such as training and education materials.
- One site would infuse conservation into the network and one site would bring the “small zoo perspective” to help other sites think big with limited budgets.

Having a better understanding of sites’ strengths and opportunities for contribution allows the network and other sites to know who could be a useful resource for specific issues.

The organizations involved in the ACE for Wildlife network represent varied structures, audiences, priorities and strengths. Better understanding the differences between sites will ensure that appropriate opportunities are provided for learning, implementing and contributing to empathy work through the network.

3. Sites' Capacity to do Empathy Work

During the needs assessment site visits at the 19 ACE for Wildlife partner organizations, the most frequently mentioned concern was capacity, which was brought up in various contexts. Due to sites' perceived or actual lack of capacity to do empathy work, providing opportunities to build sites' internal capacity should be a major focus of the learning network.

While all sites mentioned capacity as an issue at their organization, not all sites viewed their lack of capacity as a negative attribute. There were six organizations that described themselves as "small but mighty [zoos]." They viewed their small size as an asset in allowing them to be flexible and make quick changes, to have opportunities to pursue their passions, to have increased communication and collaboration, and to think creatively from a small zoo perspective. This is critical, since many of the zoos and aquariums in this network are smaller organizations, so recognizing their value and unique perspectives will be important to drive this work forward.

Some organizations, however, felt like their smaller size was a constraint. Four organizations explicitly mentioned concerns around being compared to larger organizations because they feel they cannot measure up in terms of resources, and therefore cannot do the same amount of work. It is important to keep this concern in mind moving forward to make sure that all organizations are encouraged to participate in all activities no matter their size or type of contribution, to create opportunities for varying types and levels of work, and to make time commitments clear from the beginning. This way, these organizations will still feel included, but not overwhelmed or less than compared to the work of larger organizations.

When sites discussed their capacity, they often used words such as "limited," "not enough time," "difficult," "challenging," and "distracted." Sites mentioned little to no capacity to take on new projects right now or having a limited number of revisions they are allowed to make to existing programs. Additionally, sites mentioned not having enough time and needing more flexible time to devote to the work. They are especially looking for more time to be able to train staff internally. These capacity constraints impede their ability to be innovative and creative, as well as focus on, nurture and follow up with staff around this work. Sites are interested in building program capacity, and developing assets and resources to continue to do this work. Sites are trying to distill down this information so it is manageable for them and to figure out what the best practices will look like in their organization. Some of the sites mentioned that they would benefit from guidance and support during this process.

3.1. Frequently Mentioned Concerns

Specifically, around capacity, there were three frequently mentioned concerns that were brought up across sites (Figure 6):

Figure 6. Most frequently mentioned concern around capacity constraints was overtasked staff.

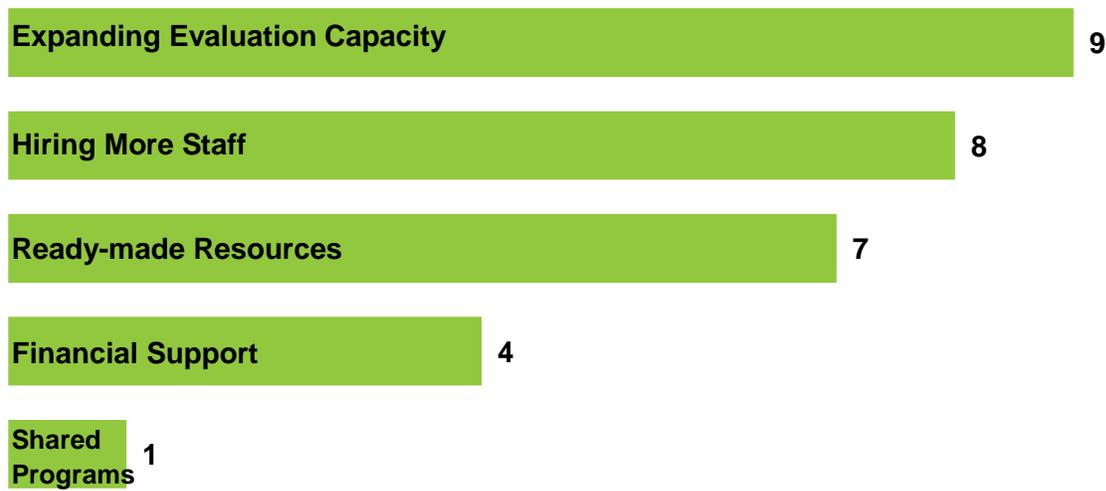


- **Overtasked staff** was one of the largest concerns around capacity, with 12 organizations mentioning this issue. Many identified “wearing a million hats” and being “spread out thin” across projects and priorities. The primary reason for this was having limited numbers of staff to do the necessary work. Staff are filling multiple roles and responsibilities across the organizations and they do not feel there is enough time in the day to get all their tasks completed.
- Eight sites are trying to determine **how empathy fits into their busy work schedules** and **how to prioritize this work** on top of their other existing priorities. They do not want to overwhelm staff with changes and are figuring out how to focus on and develop practices for empathy. They need support from leadership, time and staff to decide how to prioritize this work.
- The idea of evaluation is overwhelming for some sites, with eight organizations identifying **lack of evaluation capacity and expertise**. Sites do not feel like they have the time or resources to do effective, quality evaluation and that this is not a priority compared to everything else. For some sites that are already doing evaluation, their current assessment is intensive, manual and high cost so it is not sustainable, especially after funding runs out. Without a dedicated evaluation team, the amount of evaluation organizations can do is limited, even if they are trying to build their resources and skills of existing staff. Three organizations identified themselves as sites with evaluation capacity and a culture of measurement that could help inform and support other organizations pursuing evaluation in the future.

3.2. Frequently Mentioned Needs

Often, the sites felt that they could overcome their capacity constraints if the following needs were fulfilled (Figure 7):

Figure 7. Expanding evaluation capacity was most frequently needed to overcome capacity constraints, followed by hiring more staff.



- Nine sites expressed interest in **expanding their evaluation capacity**. Growing evaluation capacity at these sites could include increasing dedicated staff, increasing existing staff knowledge around research and evaluation, doing more evaluation for programs and education experiences, better knowing their visitor population, and learning how to do more data analysis. They would also benefit from discussions and guidance on tools and resources, including providing tools that can be easily embedded or given to teachers to complete. It can be difficult for some zoos or aquariums to make evaluation a priority without specific funding due to time constraints or ability to hire staff for ongoing evaluation.
- **Hiring more staff** was mentioned by eight organizations because it would give existing staff more time to build capacity for this work. Having more staff was often thought of from an education standpoint. If there was more educator time, then they would be able to better prepare for programs, to teach more programs, to create plans and trainings, and to do evaluation. Sites that have experienced high turnover and transitions have found it difficult to make this work consistent since passing on knowledge has been limited. Sites believe having more staff would allow for this work to be more effective across the organization. Some sites are already thinking about specific roles they would want to hire for, which includes evaluators for programs and exhibits, educators, and other staff for current vacancies. It was also mentioned that some sites had trouble with retaining volunteers and that it would be helpful to have more volunteers in order to fill in some of their gaps.

- While specifically mentioned by seven sites, **ready-made resources** would be valuable for all sites so that they do not have to spend their limited time researching and vetting various tools.
- It was identified by four sites that **more financial support** would be needed in order for this work to be effective organization-wide. One of the ways funding would be helpful is to fund training through paying for staff time and external trainers.
- One site mentioned interest in **building capacity around shared programming or experiences with other organizations** to contribute to a larger, shared body of knowledge and to continue to advance the field forward.

Overall, all sites identified capacity constraints during our discussions regardless of organization size or experience with empathy. This will be important to keep in mind as we move forward with ACE for Wildlife to ensure there is a variety of projects and options for levels of involvement for sites. Providing multiple types of opportunities for sites will, hopefully, ensure continued involvement and investment in this work as capacity and needs change over time.

4. Resources Necessary for Empathy Work

The 19 ACE for Wildlife partner sites were asked throughout the needs assessment visit to describe what types of resources would help build their capacity so that they could be successful in implementing empathy work. Sites frequently mentioned specific types of tools, guides and modules, listed types of examples, and identified specific areas of guidance they would need. Responses are broken out below across many areas of their work: communication, training, programs, on-grounds tools and interpretation and evaluation. Sites also reflected on what types of resources or guidance they could bring to the learning network to share with others. Overall, there are a wide variety of resources that would help the partner sites accomplish this work.

While sites mentioned various tangible resources that would help them do their work, they are also seeking out examples of what successful empathy implementation looks like at other organizations. Eleven sites mentioned some variation on the idea that having examples from others to learn from are always helpful. Types of examples include: success stories of inducing empathy, written examples, examples that people are not proud of, specific examples of empathy in the zoo and aquarium world, and concrete examples that they can build off of or incorporate into their own work.

- Examples of successful “empathy inducing stories,” as well as “examples of what has been successful regionally.”
- A variety of “written examples, even those they are not proud of, which shows how to augment how they have traditionally done things, and shows what they have stopped doing rather than adding on to.”
- “Zoos and aquariums are doing great things, [so it would be great] to hear specific examples of what they are doing to foster empathy” and “how zoos are trying to achieve [their] empathy goals.”
- “They do not want to reinvent the wheel, [they] need concrete resources around examples, success stories and what others are doing” so that they can build upon what other people are doing.
- They are looking forward to more ideas and real-world examples for “how to do this effectively and consistently.” Examples would motivate people to weave empathy practices into what they are already doing.
- “An FAQ of examples spoken [sic] to them or an examples sheet” from other zoos would be useful, “it may not be their animals, but they can see how [empathy] is used.”

Additionally, during this process, sites were asked to complete an activity focused on their current empathy practices to identify assets, needs and barriers that they see in completing this work. This activity helped inform some of the resources listed below and will continue to inform learning network activities moving forward. At the end of this activity, sites were asked to rate five questions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) (see Appendix C):

- *I have a clearer idea of my organization’s needs for incorporating empathy*

- *I have a clearer idea of my organization’s assets for incorporating empathy*
- *I have a clearer idea of my organization’s barriers to success in incorporating empathy*
- *I have ideas for next steps to close gaps in incorporating empathy at my organization*
- *I need help to figure out how to incorporate empathy into my current offerings*

These questions were completed by a total of 83 attendees, with an average of four people per site (Table 5).

Table 5. Attendees’ responses to quantitative measures after the current empathy practices activity.

Question	<i>I have a clearer idea of my organization’s needs</i>	<i>I have a clearer idea of my organization’s assets</i>	<i>I have a clearer idea of my organization’s barriers to success</i>	<i>I have ideas for next steps to close gaps</i>	<i>I need help to figure out how to incorporate empathy in my current offerings</i>
Range of Site Averages	2.83-4.75	2.86-4.83	3.17-5.00	2.29-4.67	2.20-4.00
Mean	3.85	3.93	3.93	3.33	3.20
Standard Deviation	0.424	0.499	0.473	0.652	0.457

Overall, these questions demonstrate that, through this activity, sites were able to reflect to varying degrees on their current empathy practices, begin to identify assets, needs and barriers to doing this work, and to develop some ideas for next steps. Since there were so many different types of needs, assets and barriers identified, it is not a surprise that there is a large range of scores for these items and it is reflected in the extensive list of resources below.

4.1. *Communication Tools*

There were 12 sites that mentioned needing resources for communication around empathy. Communication resources included guidance on how to communicate empathy to others (staff and visitors), consistent messaging, building empathy into policies and social media, and resources for specific roles. It was important for these organizations to be able to share examples and information in a streamlined way.

- They are interested in “information sharing... [and] ways of messaging that can be built into their existing work, not recreating something that already exists.”
- They need more examples of language and perspectives that are important for presenting this information. They want to know “what messages seem to

resonate with people” and what are more direct, tangible examples of language and specific words they should actually use.

- They want “a way to highlight the small things that they are doing” by sharing them with others through a chat room or other online platform and to learn what others are doing and what is working for them. They are looking for “a space to share ideas, ‘aha’ moments,” things they feel they do well, what did and did not work well, “something that people were doing that inspired empathy even if their process or end goal was not intentional, [or] something that they continue to do due to the positive outcomes.”
- Ideas and resources have been shared freely within their education departments because they have been related to programs, however, there are concerns that “there may be issues sharing these things more broadly [across departments] ... since it may not seem immediately useful or relevant for everyone.”
- They are interested in “examples of how to inject empathy into marketing messaging. Since they are the outward face, it is important to think about how they portray their internal values.”
- There is an ongoing interest in staying up-to-date on the latest developments in the field. They enjoy learning about results at AZA for the Why Zoos and Aquariums Matter study, are interested in learning what articles are out there and how they are informing work, and would love to hear updates on research.

In addition to the broad ways of sharing information, they also called out specific needs around communicating empathy (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Sites are most interested in guidance on how to include empathy into their communications, in general, followed by specific applications.



Nine sites are looking for **guidance on how to include empathy into their communications** and feel that different types of documents are helpful because they provide a variety of methods or ways to discuss things.

- Documents with succinct language to be able to explain empathy to various people or templates that anyone could use to draft assorted written items, with well-defined guidelines on how to incorporate empathy into a document with an “intro-body-conclusion.”
- More infographics and case studies around why we do things (on when does empathy go too far or using anthropomorphism) with decision trees which can be helpful to engage staff.
- “Is there a press release for this work? It would be great and helpful if there was a template or a press release that all organizations could use.”

Eight sites are interested in **how to communicate empathy to staff** by having empathy as a particular tool or lens on all communications.

- Learning ways of communicating “why empathy” and having a quick elevator speech to reach someone or having a quick response to “why do we have to do this?” along with easy actions to incorporate into already full workloads.
- Clear guidelines on how to explain empathy to others with empathy or sympathy talking points for individual concerns. They would also benefit from “tools [or] talking points for how to help operations-minded leaders to grasp these ideas and share them with others.” They want to be able to prepare their leaders to voice how this is crucial to what they are doing and have some resources to help them be able to speak to it.
- Have “short phrases or something to share with staff every day during their daily meetups as a reminder about empathy.” This could be done by including messages in the daily communication, an empathy “video of the day,” or “a series of cheesy, inspirational posters” that display the basic empathy principles to remind themselves about empathy.

There is a need for a **consistent messaging** framework mentioned by seven sites.

- A vocabulary list with the best words and phrases to use, resources for best phrasing, and examples of practices they can do at their site to share with staff. Have a “words that matter” document that is shared across sites to inform word choice. It would also be helpful to have the vocabulary list on a poster or some type of display that shows “these are the words that I use,” or examples of empathy practices.
- There is a “lack of cohesive zoo-wide messaging for empathy,” so they are interested in messaging guidance. It would be helpful to have a common vernacular and shared messaging points to “incorporate into training so there is an agreed upon common language to use with staff” and across sites so that we are all saying the same thing. It will also be important to have a shared language

to help this be “relevant for other groups outside of education [and] to help have these conversations across the organization.”

- Some specific questions sites have: “what do they say for difficult topics?” What kind of language should they use to connect with distinctive groups? (i.e. ages, genders, languages, cultures, etc.).

Other considerations around communication tools that sites mentioned:

- Incorporate best practices into social media.
- Figure out ways of incorporating empathy into their policies. They are looking for “a consistent framework and tools that they can work off of to be able to write [empathy] into their policies so there is accountability and incorporate [empathy] into their institution [and make it something that can] be a key component of their brand.”
- They want to make sure this is useful for everyone across the organization, not just education. So, any resources with relevant scenarios for marketing or other groups would be valuable.
- Creating tools to help frame empathy from a community perspective: “most tools have been focused on talking empathetically about animals at the zoo, but what about how to talk to communities in the wild, do the practices change?”

More specifically, eight sites mentioned that **webinars** as a communication tool could be a good resource.

- “They like webinars, discussion groups and reading newsletters because they make them feel informed and connected, like they are not out there on their own doing the work.” It was also mentioned by two sites that it could be interesting to do a podcast.
- Webinars are helpful, especially when participants can ask questions. Lately, sites have been participating in many different webinars, so it would be great to have “more regular webinars that they can invite others to watch.”
- “Webinars can be useful if they are focused on a specific topic that are valuable to people across multiple departments.”
- Webinars “can be interesting, but not sure they are always the most functional since it is easy to not participate” in an hour-long webinar. It is better to have something that they can access and use effectively even when there are only a few minutes.
- “It will be important to make the webinar materials available later so people can digest the information in their own time.” A great resource to have would be a repository of recorded webinars with a good search engine so they can easily find and access the content, even if they cannot attend them live, so then they can look back at things when they need to know them.

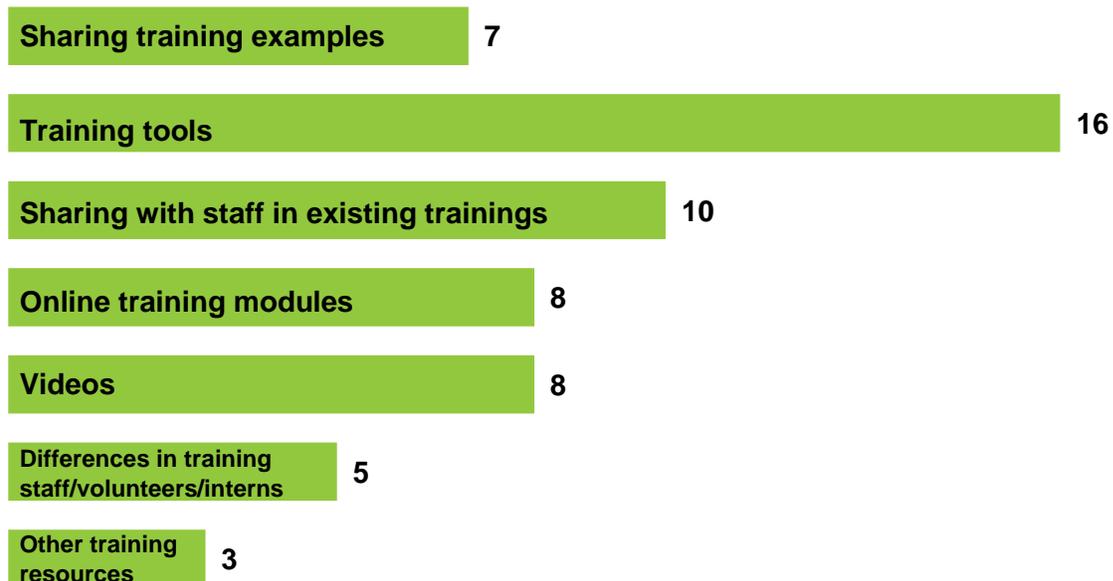
There is a clear need to establish consistent vocabulary and messaging points around empathy so that all network partners are able to consistently communicate within their

organizations and with each other. Additionally, sites are looking for guidance on when and how to incorporate empathy into current communication strategies, as well as ideas for communicating empathy more successfully throughout their organization. Overall, there is interest in learning more about how to increase empathy in sites communications, but they will need support to do this.

4.2. Training Resources

Training was brought up by all sites as a need for staff and volunteers so that they are able to develop a deeper understanding of how empathy relates to and is incorporated into their day-to-day work. Training is considered a critical need for being successful at fostering empathy for animals. Specific training needs include: onboarding, increasing staff's general knowledge of empathy to help increase buy-in, providing continuing education around empathy, and specific needs such as how to incorporate empathy practices into programming. Based on these needs, sites have identified a variety of resources that will be necessary in developing, executing and continuing training at all sites (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Training tools was the most mentioned resource needed for successful trainings.



Seven organizations specifically mentioned an interest in **sharing examples around training**. Sites are looking for support in onboarding and ongoing training, and are looking for successful models and methods from other zoos and aquariums. They would like more examples of how to train staff and how other organizations are tackling training and getting everyone on board. Sites are curious if there are opportunities for cross-training, and if so, how people are doing it. For example, if someone already has a PowerPoint for new staff, they do not want to create a new one since they do not want

to be reinventing the wheel. Additionally, since most sites are new to this concept, they would benefit from affirmation of their understanding to build their confidence in how they are thinking about this.

Sixteen sites mentioned a need for **training tools** around recruiting, onboarding or ongoing training of staff. There is a need for a simple and consistent training framework and materials that all zoo and aquarium staff can use.

- Develop specific interview questions and hiring considerations to ensure new staff are also thinking about empathy.
- Create a common onboarding training or unique trainings for organizational onboarding for full-time staff versus something different for seasonal staff and interns.
- Identify tools, train-the-trainer modules or activities to train staff on “the six best practices to answer questions, talk about this more, and include [empathy] in ... orientations and new staff packets.” Using the train-the-trainer model will “create an intellectual think tank” to drive this work forward.
- Utilize training tools for better implementation and learning how to use best practices in interpretation. Looking for specific training for people who regularly interact with guests (i.e. floor staff). These should include specific training activities on how this works and allow time for practice.
- Develop program, department or role specific training for ideas on how to incorporate empathy.

Ten sites are interested in **sharing information with staff** and being able to incorporate this information into **existing trainings**. Any existing training programs that incorporate empathy that they can access would be helpful to use in their current training programs. This would be an easy and useful way to provide more background and information to more people and help staff better understand the importance and relevance to their work.

- Better techniques on how to teach empathy to others with training resources on how to provide staff with “clear skills and methods for communicating empathy.” Also, they are interesting in showing staff subtle changes that they can make in their work rather than telling them it will be a complete overhaul of existing work.
- Ways to incorporate this into their existing trainings without having to remove content from current trainings. They are looking for access to existing resources or tools “that help explain easy steps and small changes to incorporate” into their training so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel.
- “Want to share the existing resources with staff in a more structured way.”
- Opportunities for coaching or mentorship, especially for keepers since this information is newer for them.
- Continuous training or yearly refreshers to ensure empathy is consistently used and implemented.

Five sites also differentiated between regular, full-time staff training and **training volunteers, interns or part-time and seasonal staff**. These sites felt that additional resources geared towards non-professional, seasonal and temporary staff would be beneficial since their training is different.

- “Online or hard copy training resources for volunteers” and/or seasonal staff to expand their learning around how to communicate empathy with examples of what others are doing.
- Resources especially for “volunteers who handle animals; something [that] they can do on their own to take ownership and to be engaged in conversations.” Additionally, there is interest in how to change the way animals are presented and resources to train people on these new techniques in order to foster empathy through influencing visitor perspectives, increasing knowledge of the animals, and other opportunities during animal trainings.
- User-friendly resources or a guide that has examples of using empathy with their animals and can be shared with staff for how to talk with volunteers or others about empathy.
- Training for board members and partners.

Eight sites also indicated which ways of delivering trainings might be most useful. One potential method would be to have **online training modules** that they could reference or incorporate into their trainings.

- Straightforward tools such as a simple webinar or PowerPoint that they can use as an easy training tool to share with staff to “understand what empathy is in a general sense.”
- It is time intensive to do a lot of in-depth training, so it would be beneficial to be able to break trainings up into key components using web tutorials. These could cover how to “incorporate empathy day-to-day to help orient and onboard staff. Make them short, fun, interactive, 15-20 minute modules broken out into categories or subjects with real world, dynamic examples,” rather than a long, all-encompassing training. Previously, there has been high participation with similar formats.
- Modules to train staff on best practices so that they can fit them to their needs. There should be modules or tools that interpreters can use to practice and learn techniques, as well as a “module around how to teach empathy to those who are not interpreters framed in a way that is meaningful for them, [ways to] support someone who is not a frontline educator.”

Videos were also mentioned by eight sites as a potential method for a training resource. This could look like a one-hour video to incorporate into their training or even a ten-minute video about what is empathy with links to more resources that staff can view on their own.

- Short videos that “model empathetic practices to help [them] know if [they] are modeling them correctly.” It is nice to see someone using empathy practices in action, so a series of easy to follow short videos that show people modeling empathy practices and answering common questions would be great to use in trainings.
- “A guide for how to create their own video (similar to the [Woodland Park Zoo] rhino videos) to talk about their animals” and include key points to emphasis when teaching new staff how to share about the animals and their relationships.
- Create distinct “video chapters on YouTube [for] a video series with different experiences from [the] partners.” The videos could show how empathy best practices fit into specific job roles to make it more accessible.

There were a few **other types of training resources** that were mentioned by sites and are listed below.

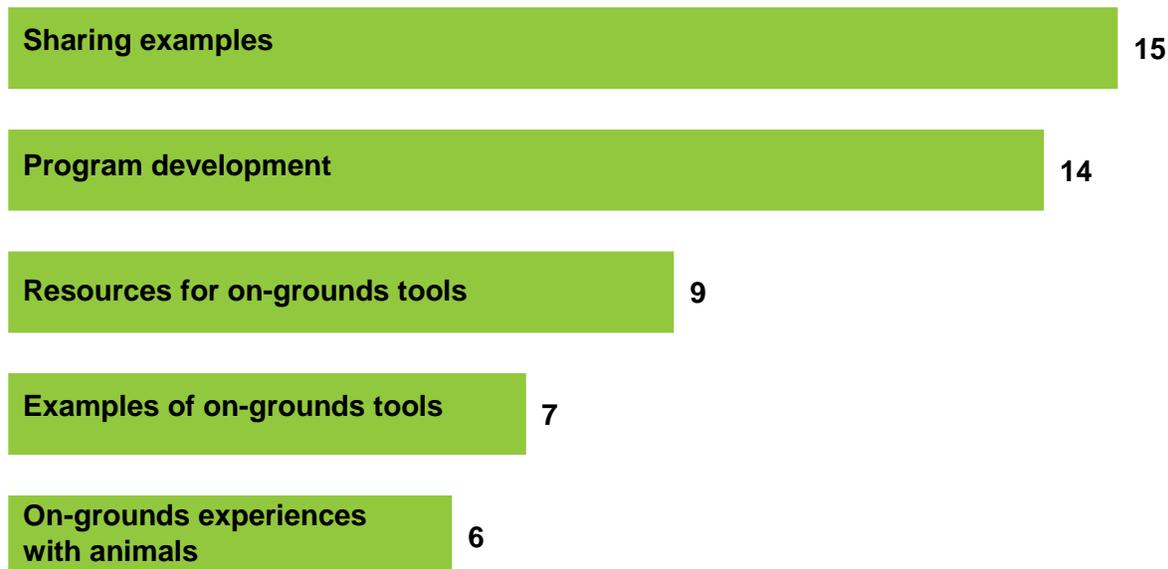
- How to address “off-handed comments” from guests so they feel like they can talk with them from a less defensive standpoint.
- Delivery methods for specific ages or communities, including ways to reach underserved demographics.
- How to communicate with guests through different mediums (i.e. differences between talking with guests or guests reading signage).

While all sites are excited about incorporating empathy into their work, there are still numerous unanswered questions about how to do so and what it means for their work. Creating trainings that they can use with their staff will help build their confidence in using empathy as a tool and ensure that it is applied consistently across the organization. Creating appropriate training resources will be critical for sites to continue to be engaged and to do this work effectively.

4.3. Implementation Tools

In order for partners to be successful at implementing empathy practices in their organizations, it is essential that they have examples of what success looks like, as well as resources to help them get there. Sites are interested in learning about what other organizations are doing to put this into practice and called out implementation resources specifically around program development and on-grounds tools (Figure 10). While there may be other resources that would also be useful, these ideas from the sites set a baseline expectation of types of resources needed for this work.

Figure 10. Sharing examples was the most frequently mentioned resource for successful implementation.



Sharing examples around what other facilities are doing and how they are putting this into practice was mentioned by 15 organizations. They like being able to look at the things others are doing and say, “wow, they did it way better [than we did], we can do that.” They are interested in what other zoos and aquariums are doing that work well in their day-to-day practices. Learning what others are doing provides sites with new ideas and opportunities to discuss their different experiences.

- There is a desire to know what others are putting into their organizations and the specific things they are doing, since knowing what others already do helps them be more efficient. “It is beneficial to learn the successes and struggles of other organizations so [they] do not feel alone in what [they] are experiencing and it moves everyone along faster because [they] are learning from each other.”
- They want to learn about what other zoos and aquariums are doing, how they are implementing things, and tangible examples to show what others are working on; this “is how they learn the most, it does not make sense to reinvent the wheel if other zoos are already doing [these things].”
- Sites are interested to learn what programs exist and have “opportunities to talk with these people, so [they] can see how [they] can or how [they] already are incorporating empathy.” They want to learn about other’s programs, what has been tried, and to see examples of what has or has not worked to provide a model to work from: “the key to all good programming is to be able to steal good programming, stealing bits as much as possible.” It would also be nice to work with others who have experience in inclusive programming and learn what they are doing (e.g. sensory events).

- They would like to see curriculum and educational resources that others are willing to share. Examples and other’s lesson plans showing ways to include empathy have been helpful in thinking about how to incorporate it into their respective programs.
- They are looking for “examples of [different] activities situated within the program context to see how [empathy] fits in with other things, not just the activity as a standalone,” that can be built into their existing work.
- They want a “place where people can share about their experiences of effectively applying empathy with stories and examples of using empathy practices” and be able to ask questions of and offer perspectives to others who are doing similar things.
- There is interest in ideas or resources for things they have not yet focused on or things they want to improve. They are looking for creative concepts from others who have been successful at reaching broader audiences and want to learn about the various techniques to use in different settings. They are also curious about what other organizations are looking for because perhaps they take for granted things they have that other organizations could benefit from. Additionally, they want to know what the “next level” is for other organizations, and receive guidance on what comes next, learn what has evolved, and what should be their next steps.

A large number of needed resources for implementing empathy practices revolve around **program development**, which was mentioned by 14 organizations. Sites are looking for readily available educational resources and opportunities around developing programs, learning ways to write empathy into programs, and effective program delivery.

- A framework or outline for how to “apply this to their own practice [with] tangible actions and strategies,” how to methodically make changes to programs, and have “access to resources that helps explain easy steps and small changes” so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel. Additionally, it would be helpful to have “guidelines on how to use these empathy best practices for people [rather than animals] and how it relates to diversity and inclusion.”
- A way to reference existing techniques and activities to foster empathy; this could look like an “empathy rolodex of examples,” “a pool of ideas,” or a “Pinterest board for empathy.” There is a need for a collection of established activities with simple ways to use “common practices that they do not need to research and vet. If things already exist, then they can just steal them and do not have to double check them and already know they are good.”
- A shared education curriculum outline, resources or techniques that they can share with instructors or seasonal staff, and any type of content for programs to be able to show the various layers for how empathy is different in separate situations.

- A place to see and share any newly developed activities that might be helpful for them that people can use or modify.
- Tools to use with schools out in the field, like implementation resources, case studies or any existing tools that are financially sustainable. There is an interest in doing virtual field trips, but they are not sure how to do this.
- A searchable database of programming or curriculum that has information that spans departments so it is useful across the organization and becomes more integrated. This would be “an open resource that anyone can access when they have questions,” a space to share ideas. It should have “clearly defined examples by department of this is how to apply the ‘concept of empathy’ through programming or incorporate it into [the] workplace.” It would also be useful if some resources were role specific (e.g. if there were tools to give keepers to help them be more comfortable with using empathy).
- Access to handpicked or searchable resources, such as live videos with examples of what empathy looks like in a zoo or aquarium setting with accompanying buzz words. Create recommended videos that show how to incorporate empathy practices into keeper chat programs with before and after videos of chats or similar programs with or without empathy practices. There could also be different videos for species-specific talks.
- Suggested ways to educate visitors about empathy with specific language to integrate into current programs. Interested in the idea of guiding questions, that are “open-ended or discourse engaging... [and] prompt thinking that can facilitate empathy thinking or discussion.”
- “Learn more and get more support around what using empathy practices would look like with... different audiences” (i.e. ages, genders, languages, cultures, etc.). Also, it would be helpful to have guidance on how they use the empathy best practices during short time periods when they only have a few minutes with someone.

Nine sites also need implementation **resources around on-grounds tools**, which includes signage, graphics, interpretation and exhibits. It is important to have tools to create exhibits, interpretation, written materials, signs, etc. and not just things with a programmatic focus. They are looking for “physical things that can help guide this work and help create an empathetic experience.” Sites are in search of practical ways to incorporate empathy into on-grounds tools and experiences with concrete ways of taking steps to get there.

- Create signs to “get the most empathetic response” and engage people with signage. They are looking for simple ways to incorporate best practices into their signage and other aspects. Recommendations on what to include in signage or verbiage would be a valuable thing to learn more about, but also how to make it inclusive for all people and abilities. There is some interest in doing QR codes on signs to help guests access more information.

- Design tools and recommended changes for graphics, as well as dedicated photography with advice on how to foster empathy through these mediums.
- Better understand best practices for empathy interpretation with examples of “successes and failures and why decisions were made.” They would like a “simple toolkit or recommendations for things that have worked for [empathy] interpretation,” like an “interpretive manual that includes information beyond just names and pronouns,” with tangible things that can be done.

There were also inquiries from seven sites around **what are other organizations doing to incorporate empathy into on-grounds tools**. They are interested in sharing and learning about examples based on others’ experiences.

- Types of signs others are using and seeing examples of signage and specific language.
- From an interpretive standpoint, they want to learn successful things that others are doing and “more examples or guidelines that staff and volunteers can use on grounds.”
- Share vendors that others currently use for a range of projects, and learn which are the best vendors or structures from a fabrication quality standpoint.
- Curious whether “other zoos have advice for exhibit changes. Any suggestions would be helpful for when they are designing exhibits and buildings.” It would be nice to work with others who have experience in making exhibits accessible and hear about what other people are doing.

Six sites were also interested in learning more about **how to incorporate empathy into on-grounds experiences with animals**. This includes keepers talks as well as formal or informal guest encounters. Several sites also brought up resources around animal fact sheets.

- Sites are interested in real world, tangible, clear examples of how others have talked to their keepers about how to incorporate empathy organization-wide and into programming to help with keeper talks or other guest facing activities.
- They want to know what other zoos and aquariums are doing, especially around presenting animal welfare in keeper talks, and are looking for “examples of how to convey and practice animal choice” and how to talk about other signs of stress. They are also curious about “what works for others when talking about the non-charismatic or scary animals.” But, there is concern about teaching empathy when they are holding an animal that is obviously struggling, so they are looking for guidance on these topics.
- Another resource they are interested in is templates or examples for empathy fact sheets for specific animals that they can modify for their own animals. Information on specific strategies of how to use empathy practices for a particular animal or any other hard, concrete examples are valuable. “It would be great to have resources, digitally accessible, for addressing some of this, it would be cool

to compile the information in yearbook style about the individual animals and their stories for people to reference and be able to share accurate stories with visitors.”

The majority of this work will be in implementing the empathy best practices into existing work and creating new ways to use these practices in interactions with guests. It is not surprising then, that there are a large number of needed examples and resources listed by sites around program development and on-grounds tools. There are many different ways that empathy practices can be incorporated and used at each site. The ideas listed above are not comprehensive, but a start at brainstorming ways that we can collectively be more successful at fostering empathy for animals in our guests.

4.4. Evaluation Resources

Evaluation is a major challenge and feels overwhelming for many sites. Most sites are currently struggling with the idea of evaluation in general, which will need to be addressed before they are able to confidently and competently conduct empathy measurements. Sites are looking for help from the network with evaluation plans, evaluation tools for measurement, and guidance on which evaluation methods and tools should be used, especially for empathy.

The current state of evaluation at organizations came from information shared by sites in the pre-visit survey (Table 6). While the numbers below show a wide variety of experiences and comfort levels with evaluation, conversations reflected more uncomfortable and hesitant perspectives towards conducting evaluation.

Table 6. Self-identified evaluation capacity across the organizations

<i>Number of staff involved in regularly conducting evaluation</i>				
None	One	Two	Three	Four or More
2	6	4	1	5

<i>Types of outside help that sites rely on</i>				
Consultants	Students	Interns	Volunteers	Other
6	4	5	6	2

<i>Types of evaluation methods used in the past 12 months</i>						
None	Survey	Observations	Focus Groups	Interviews	Embedded Assessments	Other
1	17	13	4	5	9	3

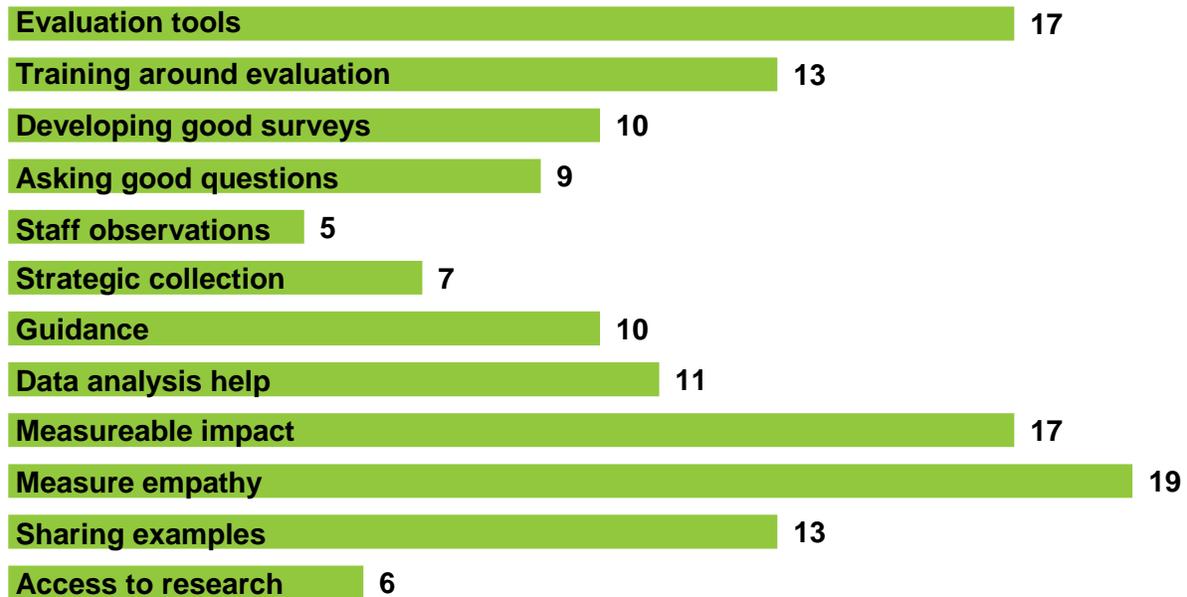
<i>Contexts in which evaluation has been conducted in the past 12 months</i>				
None	Grant Reporting	Guest Experiences	On-site Visitor Programming	On-site School Programming
1	11	12	15	13
Offsite School Programming	Outreach Programming	Exhibits	Staff-specific Needs	Other
14	9	4	6	2

<i>Comfort level with evaluation</i>				
None	A little	Medium	Quite a bit	High
0	4	8	4	2

<i>Familiarity with measuring empathy</i>				
None	A little	Medium	Quite a bit	High
2	8	2	5	1

Evaluation is a major concern for most organizations, with 14 sites mentioning **needing support, guidance and resources** in order to conduct evaluation, in general. There is a lack of evaluation knowledge, skills and capacity, and their needs range from design help, to implementation help, to analysis and interpretation help. Evaluation needs are not complicated since most do not have the capacity to conduct extensive evaluation and primarily implement simple guest surveys around satisfaction and learning outcomes. Sites that already do some form of evaluation primarily focus on program evaluation, but they also identified a need for support around making their evaluations more robust. Sites want to do more evaluation, but do not have a clear idea of why. Currently, the focus is on collecting feedback to improve existing offerings or to collect information to report back to funders. The following areas in Figure 11 were discussed across all partners during the site visits and are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 11. Evaluation tools are the most frequently mentioned need, while all sites are interested in measuring empathy and most are interested in having a measurable impact.



Sites are looking for structured **evaluation tools** for different types of programs. This was mentioned by 17 sites, and they are looking for evaluation tools that better suit their needs, are easy to access and easy to learn.

- “An organized bank of tools to draw from, with suggested applications and what [to] expect from them, with examples of results.” They are looking for measurements that are “portable and not too intensive.”
- New tools to add to their belts and knowledge of how people are using evaluation tools and in what scenarios. This would enable them to “look at existing empathy programs with new evaluation tools.” It would also be great to have resources on how to evaluate effectiveness and to measure impact in general.
- “A better tool to capture feedback... [so they are] able to utilize it as they move forward.” They are curious about what kind of tools and training will be needed to do assessment, workshops and data analysis.
- Resources for creating or using embedded assessments. “Videos, PowerPoints and tests for the end of programs [could] work if they did not take a huge amount of time.”

Thirteen sites are interested in specific **training around evaluation**, which includes how to create plans, design tools and analyze data. They want to become better evaluators, but do not know how. Some have done professional development workshops in evaluation, but most staff do not feel knowledgeable. They are looking for guidance and best practices on how to do evaluation and to collect data. Finally, they would also like all staff to be trained more specifically on how to measure empathy.

- Evaluation training for more complicated evaluation methods, including some videos would be helpful.
- Develop a better understanding of what evaluation is and is not and start focusing on the reasons behind doing evaluation (the why of evaluation).
- Sites are struggling to determine for whom evaluation is done. It is difficult to focus on evaluation if no one is asking for it. They do not want to collect data for the sake of collecting data because it is so much work, so if there is not a grant requirement then they do not prioritize it.
- Evaluation needs to be something they use regularly and not just think about for AZA accreditation or funding. Most often the driving force for collecting data is to inform grant writing and reporting, to make small improvements, or to gauge learning or guest satisfaction with existing programs, but is not outcome driven. They want to better understand how to use evaluation results and implement suggested improvements and recommendations.

Ten sites also had questions on **how to develop good surveys**. They are looking for tools to improve their existing surveys, especially education and school program surveys. Currently, most general visitor surveys focus on satisfaction and learning measures, but there is a need to move beyond measuring satisfaction. They would benefit from a repository of ready-made, good-to-go surveys or similar materials and having access to other's surveys to see how they are asking questions. They are curious about what motivates people to do a survey and concerned about the feasibility of executing survey collection. They want to make sure they are getting people to reflect and to share their experiences accurately, so they may need to move beyond surveys.

Nine sites also feel like they struggle with **how to form good questions** and want resources around how and what to ask about empathy. They want a simple way to add a question to an existing evaluation or update a visitor survey with a single, clear measure of empathy since they feel that this would provide a small opportunity to measure empathy more quickly. Evaluation tools with specific empathy questions or a bank of questions to insert into demographic surveys would be a valuable resource. They need good questions to ask people and support to know which questions measure empathy. For example, there could be a list of exit survey questions that all AZA organizations could use.

Sites are not as interested in **guest observations**, but five are looking for presenter rubrics or an observation checklist for evaluating staff on their empathy interpretive techniques.

All sites want to be more **strategic in collecting feedback**, but this was called out specifically by seven sites. There is interest across multiple areas of the organization to make better choices around how and what type of data they collect.

- They are interested in doing evaluation to measure the daily visitor and want to know how to measure the guest experience formally. They are curious whether

separate experiences (i.e. keeper interaction versus reading a sign) have different impacts on visitors.

- They want to do more evaluation on the education experience and there is interest in having consistent metrics across programs. While they already do some program evaluation, they need more tools and ways to measure education classes. Currently, program evaluations are often completed by teachers or conducted on teachers, but they want to be able to conduct more robust evaluations, using pre-/post-measures, collecting valuation information, embedding assessments for camp programs, and measuring change during short programs. While there is a focus on education programs, they also want to extend evaluation to other departments or programs.
- There is interest in using evaluation to measure staff satisfaction and effectiveness or success in using empathy practices, as well as the impact of volunteers; they recognize that they will need to measure a baseline before making significant changes.
- Right now, they do not do evaluation on exhibits or signage; the focus is mainly on programs, staff and guest experience, but they want to extend evaluation to exhibits and signage. There is a need to obtain ways to measure their experience with empathy around signage and messaging.

Ten sites are also looking for **guidance** in evaluation. Specifically, they would benefit from pointers, suggestions or helpful hints on how to measure empathy in their guests and evaluate their understanding of empathy to figure out what the public is picking up on.

- There is a lack of expertise to design good evaluation tools on their own. Tools are hard to develop and while they do not think they would be able to create their own evaluation tool, they could modify one to fit their needs, so having guidance on this would be a good resource.
- “Help with assessing [and interpreting] their local feedback to determine if they are really doing what they want to be doing and if they are reaching who they think they should be reaching.”
- Develop a mentorship for evaluation.

Data analysis is also a big question for 11 sites, and they are looking for examples and guidance on how to do data analysis, as well as assistance in analyzing the data they collect.

- Sites do not have time to analyze data and need guidance on how to do this. They would like to have the ability to send their data for analysis and reporting to an external professional, who could then provide recommendations.
- They would like to know “what kind of analysis [others] are doing... [and] to learn more about how to appropriately analyze data.”

- Example data and access to others' data, not just strategies, would be helpful to show them what people are already doing and with what impact.

Ultimately, sites want to be better at evaluation so that they are able to determine their **measurable impact**. It was mentioned by 17 sites that they are looking for consistent measurables to make evaluation more of an efficient process and know that they are actually improving their programs.

- Have “evaluations or evaluation results to find out what is connecting visitors the most.” They want to learn about anything that produces “quantifiable data, like best practices or ways to know that what [they] are doing works.”
- Share techniques to learn what others are doing and results of evaluations to learn what data others are collecting. It is important to communicate existing data across organizations to “illustrate impact and effectiveness of this work.”
- Develop shared measurement where they can use the same tools for all programs and interactions across sites. This way they would be asking the same questions across the learning network sites, so it could be a group effort with a unifying goal or outcome.
- Conduct a longitudinal study that would allow them to measure behavior change and impact over time.

There is an interest in **measuring empathy** across all 19 sites, however there are some concerns about being able to prove to their staff that empathy practices work. They want to know where they can actually intentionally measure empathy and how they know that they are measuring what they think they are measuring. They also want to better understand why they are measuring empathy, what empathy looks like, what they are trying to achieve, and what are the metrics that show they are having an impact or that this work is valuable.

- Sites want to know if the empathy practices work and if they are actually making an impact. They are looking for evidence of effectiveness for incorporating empathy and proof of impact that the project will have the desired outcome (or improve upon the status quo). Anecdotally they know that there is empathy happening, but they do not have hard proof.
- Right now there is no feedback loop for them to know if the metric they are measuring against is changing. They want to know what they are measuring empathy against and what they should do with this information. They want to know how to measure future behavior change in order to see if they had an impact.
- They are curious if evoked empathetic behavior is dependent on experience style (i.e. facilitated versus non-facilitated), rather than the content they are exposed to.
- They want access to previous case studies on empathy that they can use to prove effectiveness of empathy work.

- One site had a disconnect when evaluating for empathy previously because the program did not have empathy outcomes; so then they questioned if they should even continue to evaluate this program for empathy. But they felt it was valuable to evaluate programs with and without specific empathy outcomes so that they could see if their intentionality around creating empathy makes a difference.

Thirteen sites mentioned **sharing and learning about examples of what others are doing for evaluation** at their organizations. They are interested in examples of how to measure empathy and tools for measuring empathetic behaviors. They want to know what is currently being used as evaluation tools, as well as examples of when to use which evaluation tools. They want to make sure they truly have access, not to just a select set of tools or some files, but to information and guidance around how and when to use these tools.

- “Would like more off-the-cuff or informal evaluation ideas” and “ways to share ideas and key in on specific topics for guest evaluations.” They would also like to learn about others’ experiences with measuring empathy.
- Sites want to understand what others are doing around evaluation and what they are doing with the tools. They want to share resources and see if they have similar measurements as other organizations and how they vary. They would also benefit from being able to get feedback from other organizations around their activities and evaluations.
- Some sites are unclear about what questions they should be asking because they do not know what they want to do next. They are searching for questions that other organizations are asking that they should be, or if there are questions they are not asking but should be. They want to know where the gaps are and where they can contribute to this work.
- They feel that the network will provide a good platform to share with and learn from others to help with evaluation; it will encourage learning as a collective on how to design, provide comparable information across facilities, have access to a repository of others’ surveys, and use a consistent measurable to be more efficient.

Related to sites ability to conduct successful evaluation is having **access to research**. Six organizations mentioned having access to research and studies would be helpful, since they want to be able to search for articles or questions online. It would be valuable if there was a resource list of articles, access to best practices on research and results or a compiled set of most recent articles or data that are regularly updated. It is good to know what research is already out there, specifically what is useful and relevant to their questions.

- They are interested in any new information around this work and want to learn about “any kind of updates or new best practices” as they arise.
- They do not currently have the resources or capacity for research and development, so they want to tap into what has already been done.

- Pull articles and relevant research and share them out, having “some sort of [ongoing] synthesis and dissemination of the literature would be great, so that they have it all in one place, and so that others can process the information better in their own time.”
- Ongoing professional development on how to apply new research findings and additional new practices based on other resources.

Sites were also asked during the *Evaluation* discussion to rate three questions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) (see Appendix C):

- *I have a better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in evaluation in general*
- *I have more ideas for when to measure empathy in my current offerings*
- *I need help to figure out how to measure empathy in my current offerings*

These questions were completed by a total of 57 attendees, with an average of three people per site (Table 7).

Table 7. Attendees’ responses to quantitative measures after the Evaluation discussion.

Question	<i>I have a better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in evaluation in general</i>	<i>I have more ideas for when to measure empathy in current offerings</i>	<i>I need help to figure out how to measure empathy in current offerings</i>
Range of Site Averages	2.25-5.00	2.33-5.00	2.00-5.00
Mean	3.43	3.35	3.72
Standard Deviation	0.675	0.602	0.823

Since evaluation is seen as an area for improvement across sites, it is no surprise that the scores to the above questions vary widely. Due to the large differences between the score ranges and standard deviations, these scores will be most valuable for tracking change in time across individual sites to determine if self-efficacy in evaluation increases with introduction of new tools and guidance from the learning network.

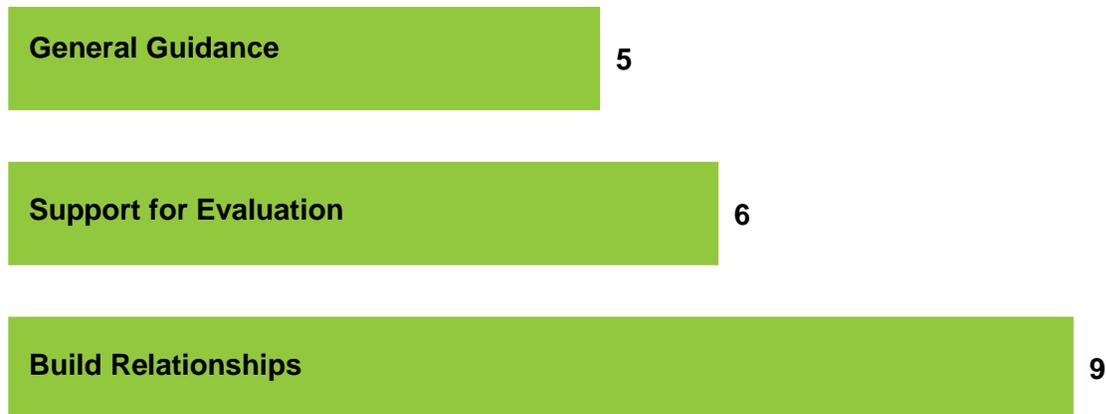
While evaluation is often seen as a weakness, there is a strong interest in improving their capabilities, learning about empathy measurement, and contributing to a broader understanding about the impact of this work. By providing resources and guidance to sites, their evaluation capacity will improve and knowledge of the effectiveness of empathy practices will increase.

4.5. Access to Support

There are seven sites that are looking for support beyond tangible, ready-made resources and are interested in **people to provide guidance**. They recognize that in

order to be successful in this work they need to look to others who can support them as they figure out how to incorporate empathy at their organizations. The types of guidance mentioned fall out into two main categories: general guidance around implementing this work and guidance for evaluation, along with support around building relationships (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Sites are most interested in building relationships along with guidance as forms of support.



General guidance, mentioned by five sites, was described as having someone visit the organization to provide training or more information to staff on site, advice for using the best practices to generate content and fill known gaps, and technology support.

- A “road show” where someone comes to the organization to bring more information to them and train them to train others on vocabulary, general knowledge, and specific tools, even if they are on specific topics. They see value in having someone go to their organization and provide professional development through an in-house class to educate on empathy because then they can train the entire staff.
- Advice and resources on suggested content and concrete ideas to know where there is a gap or a need they could fill.
- Help with technology and IT support to be able to “easily video and then watch presentations for increased practice.”

Six sites were also specifically interested in someone providing **support for evaluation**. Since evaluation has been recognized as a weak point for many organizations, it is not a surprise that they are interested in more structured support around evaluation from the network.

- “An evaluation consultant for the network... even if it is a full service that they have to buy into.” Access to a researcher or someone with evaluation expertise

and experience wording questions that could help with modifying their existing surveys and questions would be valuable.

- Looking for the network to provide tools, implementation help and a formula for how to analyze data. They either want this to be done for them, or to have mentorship/assistance from evaluation professionals to help them out and develop tools.
- A mentorship based on their needs, where someone is “helping them design evaluations so that they are the most meaningful for each site.” This could be an “opportunity to bring in people to grow their ability to do research.”
- An evaluator or academic person whom they could send their results to for analysis and interpretation so that there is someone “in charge of analyzing and reporting data collected from other sites.” This person could be “someone who is part of the network who would be able to help take a look at their data and provide some recommendations.”
- Sites that currently have robust evaluation have a lot of creative instrument ideas for empathy measurement that they can share with the learning network.

Support was also discussed by nine organizations in the form of sites’ ability to **build relationships** with others within the learning network. The learning network will give them the resources and ability to collegially talk through this, “reflect on practice, and have a community that holds each other accountable.” It will be beneficial to get “affirmation that we are all going through [similar] challenges” and be able to get peer support.

- They want to get to know everyone who is in the network so they know who could be a resource. They want to be able to network, share with others, and build off of the work that has already been done to continue to grow and contribute. They are excited to include their information into the learning network so that they can work together with other zoos and aquariums. They want to see examples of the personal connections and relationship building that other sites are doing and be able to brainstorm with other organizations that are facing similar challenges.
- It would be helpful if there was someone in the network to ask questions of if something happened and they needed input or be able to reach out to colleagues for information or advice.
- One of the “most valuable experiences at the symposium was being able to talk to more experienced organizations and get ideas.” Any time information or ideas are exchanged with another organization, especially when doing similar things, there will be information to walk away with and opportunities to learn new things, which is important.
- It is helpful to be able to “talk to other zoos of similar size and capability,” so it could be valuable to create a smaller “network of organizations of similar sizes, resources or climate so we can relate and share more relevant or useful things” within the larger network.

Having access to support will be critical for all sites as the learning network moves forward. As sites continue to grow and learn, building relationships with others in the network will be invaluable as everyone has different experiences that can inform other's needs.

4.6. *Other Resources*

There were a number of resources mentioned by one or two sites that did not fit into the above categories. It is important to recognize that these resources are needed by some sites and could also potentially benefit others in the future.

Two organizations mentioned looking for resources around **funding**, either opportunities from the learning network for funding or ways that they could find relevant solicitations. Organizations that identified a need for funding were sites that were already involved in grants focused on empathy work. Most of the other sites that did not directly identify funding as needed support, still listed money or funding as a need or barrier during the sticky note activity around current empathy practices.

- There is interest around having shared resources for funding.
- They are looking for “resources where funders can share appropriate funding opportunities specific to empathy,” such as an adaptable and flexible listserv resource for organizations looking for funding. Currently, it is hard to find some of these opportunities because they are so “narrow and focused.” Perhaps the network “will be able to help find [funders that] would be interested in the depth of what they are trying to do” and recognize the value in using the learning network to scale up their impact.

Three organizations were also looking for resources to help them more concretely **connect this work to conservation**. They are looking for “more solid pieces to connect empathy and conservation action” including resources, training and strategies that show the relationship between empathy and animal welfare. They feel that having more resources around this would help it feel less “fluffy.”

- Beyond resources for staff, they are also interested in “resources for the public to take away about conservation and the animals.”

Other resources that were brought up by sites, but do not fall into a specific category are listed below.

- “Examples of other organizations’ definitions of empathy and how they came to that definition.”
- “They liked PollEverywhere... [and it would] be great to have guests do live polls on a big screen.”
- “It would be nice to have a list of [all] on the floor staff who use empathy best practices well.”

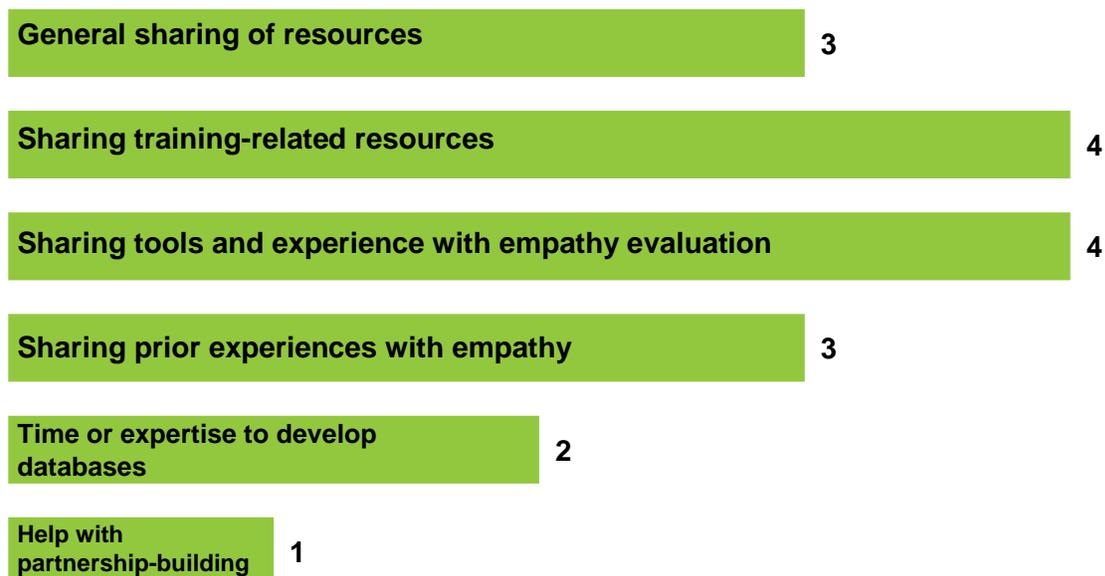
- “A space or workshop where people can co-create empathy activities, like a hack-a-thon for empathy, an emp-a-thon.”
- “A book club or paper review related to empathy to encourage discussion of current events, and then actually have a discussion.”
- Would “love to do another symposium next year that develops more tangible products like a booklet, a training manual or more of a series of videos.”
- “Interest in resources, connections, examples, [and] grants for empathy building in adults, [which includes] adult learning for volunteers, [the] public, [zoo and aquarium] members, etc.”

The resources listed in this section demonstrate a wide-range of thinking across sites. It will be important to continue to foster organizations’ ideas as the network moves forward as many of these resources could be important tools or considerations in the future.

4.7. Existing Resources

There were several existing resources that sites are already using in their empathy work. Nine organizations mentioned that they are interested in sharing trainings, knowledge databases, experiences with prior empathy work, evaluation tools and partnerships with the learning network (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Sharing training-related resources and tools and experience with empathy evaluation were the most common types of existing resources sites wanted to share.



General sharing of resources:

- “They are willing to share anything, it is the right thing to do and we are all working in the same direction, it is not a competition.”
- They can share stories and positive outcomes about “their interactions with guests because they are good learning experiences.”
- They want to “share their small zoo perspective to help others think creatively with limited resources.”

Sharing training-related resources:

- There is a zoo-wide negativity training that could be shared with the rest of the organizations.
- There have been discussions about how to share existing empathy training workshops with other organizations. Perhaps they could be hosted on-site and provided for free on designated days.
- Make empathy trainings that have already been done for staff and volunteers available to other organizations that do not have the capacity to create these types of trainings.
- If an empathy Nearpod (online training module) was created, then they would be excited to share it and it would be “motivation for getting it done.”

Sharing tools and experiences with empathy evaluation:

- They have “more experience using the evaluation tools from MECAP than others, so it might be nice for them to help with tips or techniques from using the tools so that [others] would not have to go through the same stumbling phase that they went through.” Provide support on not specifically where or when to use them, but why and help with context or build confidence in using a tool.
- They can share their experiences and evaluation tools with other organizations and provide guidance to help others understand when they need which tool for what situation.
- “They have a lot of creative evaluation instrument ideas that they can share with the learning network. They want to create a document that tracks all of the specific changes they have made” to share with others what did not work in the past.
- “They want to get more information out into the field, share a packet about ‘so you want to evaluate empathy...’ with steps and a deliverable.”

Sharing prior experiences with empathy work:

- Developing and contributing to a database of staff who are actively using empathy best practices at their organizations in their day-to-day work. They want to know who are the “enthusiastic ‘boots on the ground’ people that may not necessarily be the ‘core empathy people,’” but to whom they could talk with at a non-manager level.
- They are open to giving advice and “talking to people about the struggles, pitfalls and commitment necessary to develop a comprehensive, robust program.”

- There is “experience in what has not worked in relation to empathy.” Some sites have “been on this journey a lot longer than some of the other organizations and have learned a lot with the MECAP partners about what works and does not work. They have had persistence, continued training, and have learned a lot of lessons along the way. They have a history of things not working because they started at the bottom.”

Providing time or expertise to develop knowledge databases:

- Sites would be “happy to contribute to a vocabulary list or a program database” and want to share their “words that matter” document.
- They are currently “building a library of empathy-focused kids’ books and could build a suggested reading list” to share with the network.

Providing help with partnership-building:

- “They are pretty good at fostering partnerships, so they would be happy to bring in people that might be a good connection for others and help foster those relationships.”

All of these existing resources would be useful additions to the learning network as it begins to form its structure and determine what types of resources and information is valuable to share with partners. Additionally, using these resources will demonstrate to these sites the commitment the network has to their ongoing work and help them feel that their contributions are meaningful. Finally, these existing resource provide a jumping off point for what the learning network could create when everyone is working together.

The variation in number and type of resources that organizations mentioned during the site visits provide a critical starting point to developing helpful materials and information for sites to use as they to continue on their journey of incorporating empathy practices in their organizations. This list is not comprehensive and represents the beginning brainstorm of sites that are interested and willing to continue this work at their organizations. If the learning network can meet the needs of these sites through developing and providing a repository for these resources, it will demonstrate ongoing commitment and support for this work across the partners. Over time, this list will expand as the work and knowledge base continues to evolve.

5. Perspectives on Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is a prominent topic across AZA organizations and an essential part of zoos' and aquariums' day-to-day operations. Part of this current grant explores the connections between animal welfare, guest perceptions of animal welfare, and empathy. Therefore, one of the conversations during the needs assessment site visits was devoted to discussing guest perceptions of animal welfare and how sites see its relationship to empathy. Based on the conversations, it was apparent that all 19 organizations are thinking about animal welfare and how it relates to guests' perceptions of animal well-being, as well as how it influences guests' ability to build emotional connections with their animals, and therefore, their ability to foster empathy for animals.

While sites recognized the importance and relationship of perceptions of animal welfare to empathy, there were still several questions around how to make this connection and successfully impact guests' perceptions. Ideas around how to do this were related to creating experiences for visitor connection, using empathy practices in guest interactions, and exhibits having an impact on perceptions. There were also concerns around misperceptions, transparency, choice and control, anthropomorphism and connecting to behavior change.

Sites also talked about how to address guest concerns, whether due to misperceptions of specific animals, practices or zoos and aquariums in general. This can be difficult because every visitor comes to the zoo or aquarium with different predispositions, experiences and expectations. However, they felt that by using empathy practices and focusing on animal-keeper relationships they could create a positive experience for guests and help them empathize with the animals.

Finally, every site has unique community perspectives they are considering as they do this work. It is important to be able to educate their guests no matter where they are coming from as this is critical to ensure understanding and increased empathy for animals and zoos and aquariums as critical organizations in species conservation.

Sites were also asked during the *Perspectives on Animal Welfare* discussion to rate three questions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) (see Appendix C):

- *How often do you consider visitors' perceptions of animal welfare?*
- *How well do you think you understand your visitors' perceptions of your animals?*
- *If you feel a visitor has an incorrect perception of welfare, how comfortable are you with having a conversation with that visitor about their perceptions?*

These questions were completed by a total of 101 attendees, with an average of five people per site (Table 8).

Table 8. Attendees' responses to quantitative measures after the Perspectives on Animal Welfare discussion.

Question	<i>How often do you consider visitors' perceptions of animal welfare?</i>	<i>How well do you think you understand your visitors' perceptions of your animals?</i>	<i>How comfortable are you with having a conversation with that visitor about their perceptions?</i>
Range of Site Averages	3.00-4.67	2.60-4.00	4.00-5.00
Mean	4.14	3.54	4.58
Standard Deviation	0.379	0.396	0.332

Overall, these questions demonstrate that all sites are considering visitors' perceptions but feel that they have some work to do in understanding those perceptions. They are also comfortable with approaching and discussing with visitors about animal welfare and correcting any misperceptions. Additionally, with the small range and small standard deviation for each question, it shows that all sites are similarly aligned on these issues.

While there were several topics and viewpoints discussed during the conversations, sites predominantly see opportunities to educate guests to improve their understanding of animal welfare, to positively influence guests' perceptions, and to build empathy. Additionally, sites are hopeful that, through education, more guests will see zoos and aquariums as a positive place for animals and as conservation stewards as they continue to fight to save species.

Much of the information gathered from these conversations will be used to inform future directions and research at individual organizations and within the learning network.

6. Considerations for the Learning Network Structure

During the needs assessment site visits, all 19 ACE for Wildlife partner organizations **expressed interest** in being a part of the learning network, but eight specifically stated that they were committed to this work, excited and willing participants. Additionally, some of the sites called out specific aspects that they were looking forward to in being part of the learning network:

- Eight are excited about what they can learn, what they can contribute to this work, and learning from others in the network.
- Five are looking forward to sharing and connecting with others and working with others through the learning network.
- Three sites expressed excitement for getting and continuing their keeper staff involved in this work.
- Three sites mentioned an interest in being leaders and using their assets to help others in the learning network.
- Three sites expressed hesitations or concerns around being able to find the time to do this work alongside their other responsibilities, but feel that if they have reminders, a finite time commitment, and a clear initiative or direction, then they will continue to be excited to be involved.

Sites' enthusiasm and commitment to this learning network and empathy work was evident in our conversations. Having their ongoing support is critical to the success of this initiative.

Sites were also asked during the *Learning Network* discussion to rate three questions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) (see Appendix C):

- *I am excited to participate in and contribute to the learning network*
- *Being a member of the learning network will be valuable to my organization*
- *Our organization will need external support to be successful and sustainable in incorporating empathy practices*

These questions were completed by a total of 115 attendees, with an average of six people per site (Table 9).

Table 9. Attendees' responses to quantitative measures after the Learning Network discussion.

Question	<i>Excited to participate in and contribute</i>	<i>Being a member will be valuable to [their] organization</i>	<i>Need external support to be successful and sustainable</i>
Range of Site Averages	3.21-5.00	3.50-5.00	2.5-4.75
Mean	4.31	4.38	3.82
Standard Deviation	0.531	0.476	0.621

These questions demonstrate that there is a range of excitement around being part of the learning network and recognizing value in being a member, but sites are demonstrating some level of enthusiasm. Additionally, whether or not sites feel they will need help incorporating and sustaining this work varies widely from site to site. This is expected since all sites are currently at different levels of understanding and implementation of empathy work. The responses to these questions align with the conversations that we had across sites and provide a baseline for current interest as network partners.

6.1. Platforms for Communication

Sites were asked if they used any existing platforms that could be a model or useful system for the learning network. There were four existing platforms that were frequently mentioned by organizations as examples during the site visits: AZA listservs and other communication platforms, Facebook, San Diego Zoo Global learning platform and NNOCCI network website (see Table 10).

Table 10. Pros and Cons of existing communication platforms

Existing Platform	# of sites	PROS	CONS
AZA listservs	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Like the structure ✓ Can get perspectives from different organizations ✓ A good platform to reach people who already use it ✓ Able to have “real time conversations” and ask questions ✓ Can subscribe/opt in to communities or topics ✓ “Empathy” could be a board on the AZA network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Receive “too many emails” ✗ Difficult to navigate ✗ Expensive since membership is required <i>(cons were mentioned by one-third of sites)</i>
Facebook	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can participate in various groups ✓ Can be a good way to share questions or information with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Worried about people constantly posting updates to the group and it becomes more like a bulletin board ✗ More like a space for sharing information rather than active participation ✗ Have algorithms that filter out content and create communication barriers <i>(sites were not sure that this was the right platform)</i>

San Diego Zoo Global	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classes are valuable and a good way to share information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good, interactive interface that could serve as a model for how to create modules on various topics and levels of expertise	
NNOCCI network website	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is helpful to find new information and to learn about what is going on	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is a dense website that is difficult to navigate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is hard to find useful tools

Sites also described **other groups or networks** that they participate in which could be models for the learning network. It was also mentioned that it would be nice to have a single platform across all uses rather than having to access multiple platforms with multiple logins (i.e. AZA boards). There is a concern that it will become a platform that no one uses if there is too much to keep track of.

- Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center network (CELC)
 - Monthly education directors call with subcommittees that present out
 - In person meetings once per year, they cover costs for the annual meeting
 - They struggle to maintain efficiency, they are currently managed by volunteers and “the primary problem is that it does not necessarily have a purpose anymore, [but] it seems like a good thing and so [it is] assumed that a new purpose will surface, but that does not really happen.”
- Washington regional fisheries enhancement groups
 - Formed for each watershed
 - Required annual reports
 - Required networking for executive directors
 - “Interact extensively because they share resources and have continuous communication and access to each other as people, it is a very effective and intense partnership”
- Capacity-building for Youth Civic Leadership for Issues in Science and Society (CYCLIST) is a community of practice developed to focus on civic engagement with youth programs.
 - Have monthly conference calls
 - Use Google Drive for storing and sharing
 - Send fairly regular emails
- National Association for Interpretation (NAI)
 - Online conference every year, which is very accessible
- Southwestern Idaho Directors of Volunteer Services (SWIDOVVS)
 - Have monthly meetings

- Not a whole lot of communication between everyone
- Usually, just an email that comes out from the main group
- Econet is a platform that is a condensed form of job position announcements and advertising for specific professional development opportunities.
- “MECAP is not a good solution. It is hard to understand what is in there and the Dropbox is bad.”
- Other groups or networks mentioned include: Sea World Youth Leadership Council, Ocean and Climate Change Institute (OCCI), Center of Science and Industry (COSI), networks focused on getting kids in nature, and a listserv of marine mammals that shares job and research opportunities.

Outside of existing groups or networks, sites also mentioned **other platforms for communication**. These platform examples have been utilized by sites across various uses, but they felt that they could be an effective way for the learning network to communicate between partners. These platforms are SharePoint, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Groups, Smartsheet Portals, Whova, WhatsApp, Slack, Nearpod and Miradi.

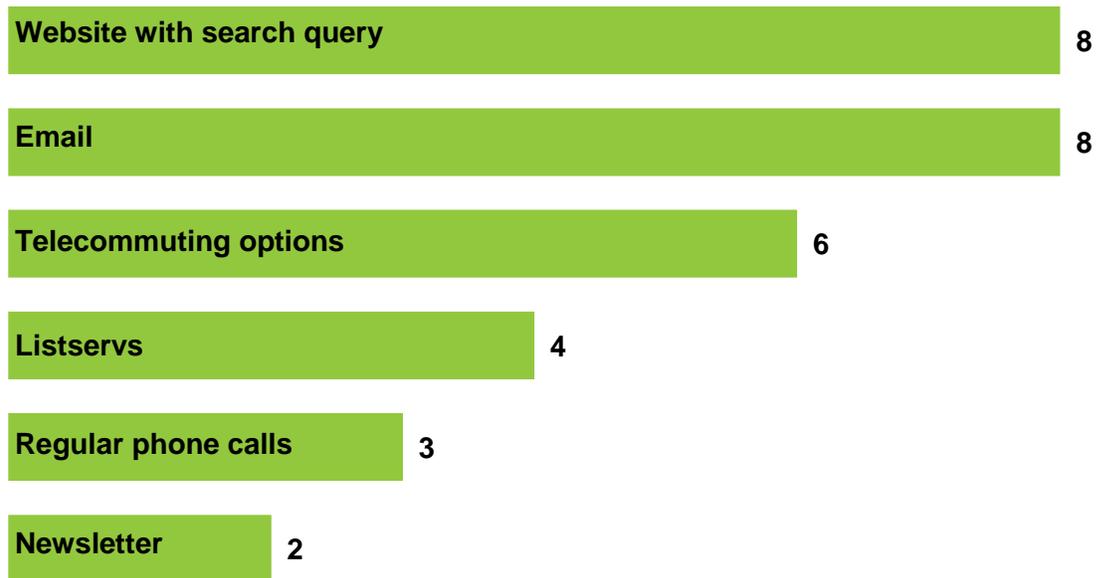
Information sharing and news aggregator sites that organizations have used in the past and might serve as good models are Upwell, Deep Sea News, Southern Fried Science, Exhibitfiles.org and Blue Avocado.

The existing platforms identified by sites may serve as useful examples as the learning network develops. Understanding what sites are currently using, what is helpful, and what is frustrating in these existing platforms is important for making design decisions as this process moves forward.

6.2. *Communication Preferences*

It is challenging to find the best ways to communicate, but it is important to have “multiple touchpoints [and] ongoing communications.” Sites seek out many things, so it is always better to have different types of communication: written, online, meetings, etc. The below communication methods were top-of-mind for a specified number of sites, however, all sites would benefit from all of these methods (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Sites most prefer a website with a search query or emails for communication.



Eight sites mentioned a **website with search query** so that they can find the information and resources they are looking for, information lives outside of email, and other people can access it. An online location is better for organizing all documents and resources, something like a portal where they can find everything for a specific topic and can reference it. It could be one space where people can share out what they are doing in order to expand knowledge, share ideas, collaborate on resources or training, and learn from others' experiences (it is also important to have a space to share what did not work well, ask questions and vent about things). It needs to have good keywords and be easily searchable, be easy to navigate with a good user experience so that people are willing and able to use it (it only takes one bad experience for someone to never use it again), and easy to share information since several people will be accessing it. It needs to be accessible to everyone, no matter their organizations' technology level or an individual's access to a computer.

- Have passive options where they can access materials and information on their own time. It will be important to provide things that are effective and reliable, not intrusive, and immediately available.
- Would be interested in digest emails containing valuable resources based on various content areas they sign up for. There could be learning links for separate categories that contain research, examples, videos, signage, training, etc.
- Want a way to “store and track conversations or resources that [have] come up in the past” so that they are searchable in the future. For example, “some questions come up all the time,” so it would be useful if there was an easy way to search for the answer rather than people continually posting the same questions.

- Categorize and organize research articles and resources that are “easily searchable by content, author or some other way with a standardized description that is easy to cross-reference.”
- Create “mini networks based on needs or job roles” so that it is easy to find relevant information and people with similar experiences.
- “Make this information more visible [in a space] where [others] are already accessing information so they do not have to create more logins and passwords. Link people to the network from already existing platforms where empathy conversations are already happening, or where [this] relates to a broader conversation.”
- Consider concerns about being able to get information to people who work out on grounds and who do not spend their day at a desk (ex. zookeepers, plumbers, facilities, volunteers, etc.). It will be important to figure out how to “meet them where they are at since the time they spend at the computer is minimal.”

Eight sites mentioned **emails** would help remind them to engage with content, especially since they can read emails in their own time. Email would also be in the same place as all of their other communications, which would help it be more streamlined and then they would not have to download anything else or access anything separately. Email can be a good way to share resources and documents to reference and communicate with others. But two sites felt that they already get a lot of emails and would like a better way to stay engaged. It was also felt that email can be fine to communicate the main message, but receiving materials through email can be difficult and hard to sort through (especially when the materials do not live in a separate, accessible location). It would be good if the email contained information about new content on the website or embedded links, that way they would know when to look at the things that were relevant to them. When receiving multiple emails, it would be good to be able to filter or find specific things with keywords. A frequency of once per week is good, it still keeps it fresh without being overwhelming.

- Email is a good way to actively remind people to access information, but it needs to be packaged and sent in a way that is fast and interesting. If it looks cool, they are more likely to look at it, but if they are not interested then they will ignore it.
- Getting communications specific to their needs would be more valuable than email alone.

Six mentioned an interest in a **telecommuting option** like zoom or a live video feed. Video conferencing is easier now and would be beneficial because it makes them more engaged than just listening to a presentation since everyone is visible to each other. It would be nice to do a virtual meet and greet so that they know who else is working on this and who they might work with across the organizations.

- Having this technology to communicate would allow them to bridge beyond regional limitations.

Four sites are interested in **listservs** where they can subscribe to different conversation board topics, share what they are doing and ask questions, share ideas, and communicate with others. Sites described discussion boards as nice because they are always accessible and do not require participants to be online at the same time. They also like listservs because they are similar to a mailing list where particular questions can be asked, then other people can answer and direct them to specific resources. Two sites thought it would also be useful to have a digital space for people to get together, such as a live portion where others can chat back and forth.

- It is important that posts be well-labeled with appropriate subject lines and headers so that people can decide whether or not the post is useful instead of reading it halfway and realizing it is not relevant to them. Creating a useful way to tag and categorize posts would also be helpful for searching key terms.

Three sites would like a **regular (monthly or quarterly) call** with presentations from different organizations about what they are working on, current ideas, projects, questions, etc. and then a roundtable discussion. There is a need to be able to talk with others. The timeframe of monthly is reasonable, but any more frequently than that would be difficult.

- It would also be helpful to have calls with other evaluation or research people to share what they are doing.

Two sites mentioned having a **newsletter** that could be displayed at their organization. Summary newsletters are useful as a reference and once a month is sufficient.

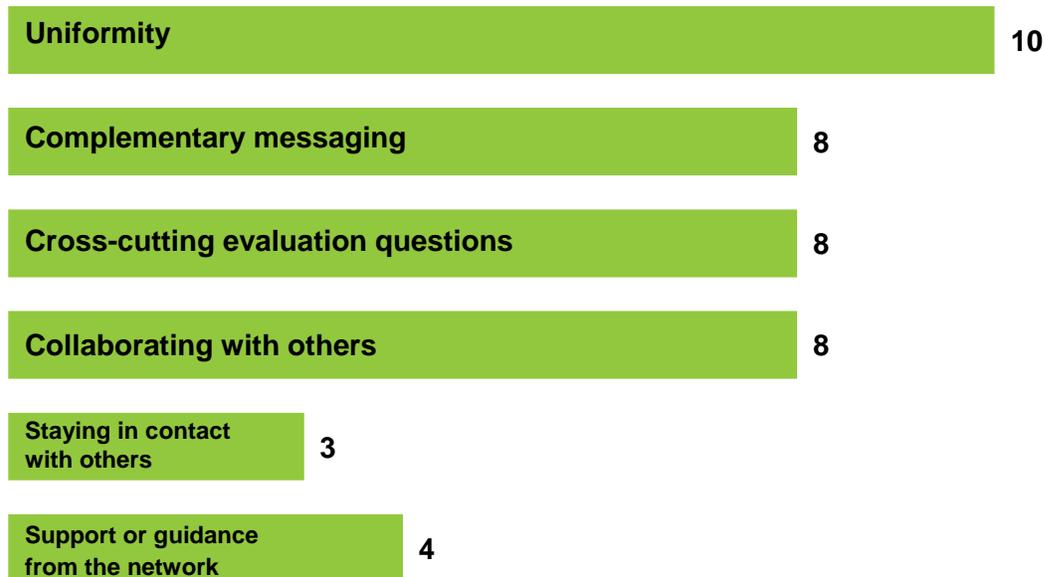
- Two organizations mentioned listening to podcasts; another mentioned a blog.

Understanding the ways that sites would like to communicate is important for designing an effective network structure. Since there are various options for communication identified by sites it will be critical to create multiple opportunities for participation within the learning network.

6.3. Cross-organizational Collaboration

Many sites expressed excitement at the opportunity to build connections and to collaborate with the other organizations in the network. Creating these relationships will take time and effort, and sites identified several important factors to have successful partnerships across organizations within the network (Figure 15). Additionally, the idea of collaboration through other regional opportunities was discussed (Table 11).

Figure 15. The most frequently identified way of creating cross-organization collaboration is through uniformity.



The most important aspect for **successful collaboration within the network** is having uniformity. The idea of uniformity was identified by ten organizations that believe having everyone on the same page and moving the same direction is helpful for support, to make sure that resources are used efficiently, and so events, programs and initiatives are not scattered.

- It is important to have the same unifying goals and objectives to make sure we are on the same path and focusing in the same direction, to help hold each other accountable, and to provide support to each other.
- “What is our mission or charter with empathy?” Identifying the expectations of this network is vital; it is important that the network has a clear purpose with practical outcomes so that there is a practical reason for everyone to stay engaged.
- Need to create a framework to guide partners in how they share information or resources, to use similar language, and to evaluate in the same way so we are being consistent.
- Organizations should share the same methodology, values, tools to train our people and ways of measuring; it would be a huge plus to know we are all implementing these practices in the same way and it is the right way.

Closely related to the idea of uniformity, eight sites mentioned the need for **uniform, complementary messaging** across organizations. Having a common language and common vocabulary would allow partners to be able to communicate across organizations more effectively and ensure that messaging around empathy was consistent.

- It is important to all be on the same page with messaging, so messaging points that everyone can use need to be developed.
- There currently is not a cohesive idea of “this is the empathy messaging we are doing and this is how we are doing it;” the more shared language there is, the more effective it is going to be. They want to develop consistent messaging for keeper chats and training.

Additionally, eight sites mentioned a need for **cross-cutting evaluation questions** about empathy to be able to collect comparable data across organizations. They want to be able to collectively ask the same or similar questions or use the same tools to amplify results, compare and contrast across sites, and get more robust data.

- “If there are gaps that all sites identify, then maybe it would be good for all of us to collect and supply data to help fill these gaps and fill in the literature.”
- Standardized framework or best practices for evaluation would be helpful so that data could be compared across the different organizations that have similar questions and contribute to broader knowledge sharing.
- There is a need for shared tools that everyone can use no matter their resource capacity.
- Creating videos for evaluation would be a good opportunity to determine if people across organizations are scoring things the same way and creates a “version of reliability testing.”

Eight sites like the idea of **collaborating with other organizations** within the network and three sites mentioned an interest in **staying in contact with others** around this work. There is a need for broad, widespread collaboration to be successful, so this desire to build relationships with other organizations in the network will be a critical component in getting this work done.

- “Want to work with the partners in the network to share information around what they are doing and find ways to have shared resources.”
- Create a way for sites to put out projects they would like to work on and see who wants to work with them. They need the “freedom to share” with each other what is happening at their organizations.
- They should be consistent and it will be important to be able to talk to each other and work together. Looking forward to seeing commonalities between the organizations and having others to learn from to help improve and brainstorm ideas.
- There is interest in having a “collaborative partner [to] work with them to develop things based on their [specific] needs.”
- They are looking for “increased connections to other organizations doing empathy” and want to be able to work with other zoos and aquariums on empathy. They want to “create a community across zoos. Doing this [work] alone

would have a very limited effect,” so doing this work within a network across states will create a much more significant impact.

While many are looking forward to being able to work with each other, four sites specifically called out needing **support or guidance from the learning network** itself (i.e. the people in charge). Various ways that guidance from the learning network could look are listed below.

- A group that comes together and makes recommendations.
- Someone who looks at the modifications and changes organizations make and the ways they incorporate empathy and tell them “this is good” or “this needs to be changed.” The content also needs to be monitored for quality.
- “A regulating body that makes sure there is a standard or intentionality” behind the work.

Sites also mentioned that being part of the learning network lends credibility to the work the organizations are doing. It makes funding proposals stronger if they can tie into a larger network and show that they can address larger, scalable issues in the community. They also want to be able to connect this work to other empathy initiatives in the broader field, not just in zoos and aquariums.

Cross-organizational collaboration is also taking place at these sites **regionally**. They identified existing partnerships with each other, other AZA organizations, and other cultural, wildlife and state organizations (see Table 11). Within the Midwest, there are strong relationships amongst the North Dakota zoos, as well as a newly formed Minnesota state empathy network, which is a consortium of cross-field, cross-organization collaboration in zoos and museums. The Pacific Northwest organizations also have a strong ongoing collaboration, as well as partnerships across the state with other key entities. Other sites have a variety of partnerships across disciplines and fields that they see as being useful in doing this empathy work (i.e. collaboration with universities) and would like opportunities to network with people who live closer to them.

- Sites are building connections at large research universities to bring in a variety of resources. Additionally, several nearby colleges may have students who could be interested in this work.
- Partnerships that sites currently have with other organizations to serve as conservation partners and to inform on animal management practices:
 - Conservation organizations
 - Wildlife rehabilitation centers and wildlife refuges
 - Fish and Wildlife/Fish and Game/Department of Natural Resources
 - State and national parks
 - Museums
 - Visitor Convention Bureau
 - Local issues groups
 - School District partners

Table 11. Existing or potential regional relationships that could contribute to collaboration within the network.

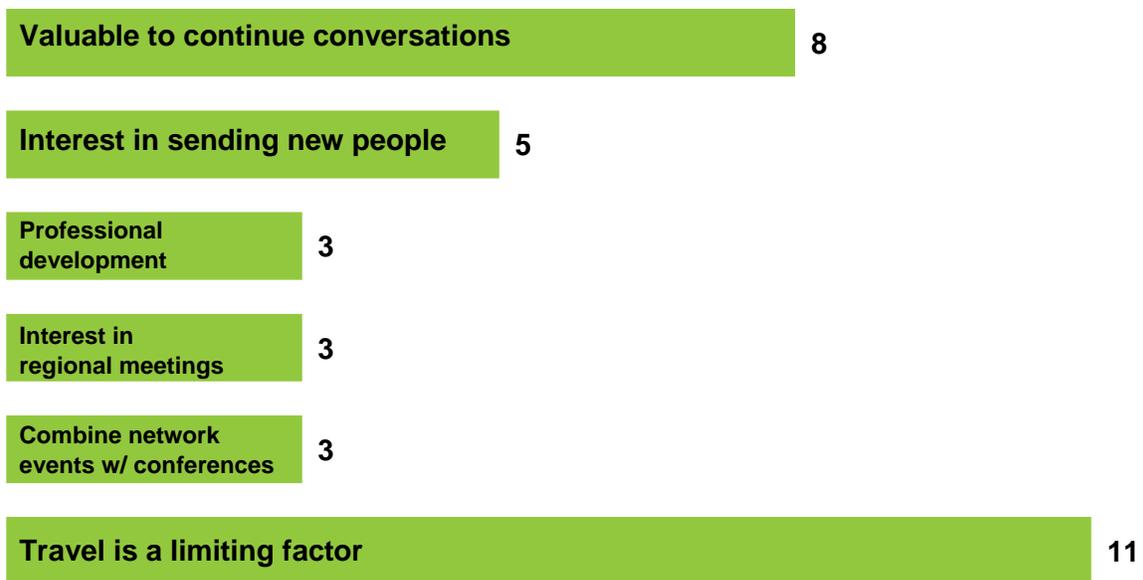
Region	Activities
North Dakotan relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Put on a yearly regional conference and they have recently created an official Dakota AAZK chapter that has regional conferences and monthly meetings. ❖ They have done keeper exchanges, but do not do this often. These exchanges are good for learning what others are doing, “they do not want to do things identically, but want to do things well,” so it may be beneficial to do these exchanges more frequently. ❖ Continuing their work with other North Dakota zoos to “figure out what North Dakotan people are exposed to and how they respond, what are their neighbors doing?” ❖ Sometimes it is difficult to meet up because someone needs to run the zoo.
Minnesota state empathy network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ There is a sub-committee with the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Raptor Center. ❖ Currently, they casually meet and talk about empathy, but it is nice to come together when everyone is still just starting and learning together.
Other Midwest relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “Open to regional workshops or resources; face-to-face opportunities would be good to increase connections, especially for those who do not already know people.” ❖ There is an interest in doing shared programming or share experiences across states, which could be an interesting cross-collaboration (especially around evaluation and sharing results). ❖ There is a regional group of evaluators in Minneapolis that meet every six weeks and share out what they have been working on. ❖ Nature Net Collaborative is unique to southern Wisconsin
Pacific Northwest relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium work together, but are very different organizations; there has been an increase in collaboration between the two and Metro Parks ❖ Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle Aquarium and Oregon Zoo already work together, this could be an opportunity to create some sort of PNW Alliance. ❖ Seattle Aquarium could conduct their empathy trainings at network partners’ sites.

Cross-organizational collaboration within the network will be essential for success, especially in creating uniform goals, consistent messages and cross-cutting questions. Sites recognize this as a need and are excited to begin building these relationships with each other. Additionally, their existing regional partnerships will be key to implementing this work at their organizations and within their communities. Determining the network’s unifying goals, common vocabulary and shared evaluation methods will be a good starting point as the network continues to coalesce.

6.4. *Travel and Meetings*

Sites were asked if travel was a feasible and desirable aspect of being a participant in the learning network. This was asked in order to develop a better idea of whether they would be interested in future travel as an organization. Sites found traveling to the symposium in January 2019 was a valuable experience and hope for another opportunity either for them or their coworkers to attend a second symposium. As shown in Figure 16, travel is seen as an important way to meet and to continue conversations with colleagues, as an opportunity for professional development, and a way to expand personal and professional networks. Despite the benefits of travel, many sites also had concerns centered primarily around the cost and feasibility of travel.

Figure 16. Sites primarily see travel as a valuable way to continue conversations with colleagues, however, travel can also be a limiting factor for many.



Eight sites mentioned that they see **travel as a valuable way to continue conversations with colleagues**. They want “opportunities to continue connecting in person in order to see what others have learned and to keep the momentum going.” They feel that it makes sense to get together, but there is a need to make sure there is a real purpose to the meeting.

- Face-to-face meetings are valuable. It is good to “go somewhere and be around others [and] meet people,” and when everyone gets in a room talking it is awesome. However, it depends on why the meeting is happening, when it is happening and how much advanced planning there is.
- “They love the value of networking and talking [with others] and they usually come back from conferences with a million ideas.”
- “They would be open to having [others] come to observe them and they would love to go observe other programs.”

For future meetings, five sites were **excited to send new people**, since it would be nice for folks who do not have strong connections with others to have the opportunities to meet new people face-to-face.

- It would be nice to be able to send at least one new person each year to an annual gathering. Meeting once a year is great because it helps keep it top of mind.
- It was fantastic having more than one person attend the symposium, but it would have been nice to be able to send three people to the symposium. “It would be nice [to have the symposium] yearly, or at least every other year” so that “others [could] go through the same experience to help build a network of people who have this experience in each organization.”
- Who they send to future meetings will depend on how the gathering is implemented and the context and topics of future events. If they sent the original people for repeat attendance, it would be to build on knowledge. If they send new people, it would be to deepen their knowledge and develop a shared language at their organization.

Three sites mentioned that they see **travel as a professional development opportunity**. “They like to send people to things... the idea of giving employees the dedicated time away from the day-to-day,” and the opportunity to travel since they think it “adds to the experience and is valuable.” Having the opportunity to travel to the symposium was appreciated because they do not have a big professional development budget.

Three sites called out an **interest in being able to get together regionally**. It was thought that “maybe they need to [start] looking at a smaller scale” since some sites are used to having to travel around to different locations regionally, they could “take a day trip [or] make a mini network [and] be more intentional” with their time and relationships. Additionally, Como Park Zoo & Conservatory is centrally located and close to an airport and mentioned they could be a good place to host a future gathering.

The idea of **combining network events with existing conferences** was brought up by three sites. One site felt that everyone meeting at a conference was great. However, two sites felt that face-to-face meetings and meetings at conferences exclude people, and that it would be good to be able to communicate in a way that does not require

travel. Specific to AZA, one site mentioned they did not want it to be part of the AZA conference because it is already so busy and it is difficult to get people there. They can only afford to send one or two people to AZA each year.

Eleven sites mentioned reasons why **travel is a limiting factor**. The most frequently mentioned reasons were the cost of traveling and not being able to be away from their work for long periods of time. Most sites enjoy travel, but would not be able to do it often, and need to have a real purpose for meeting face-to-face.

- “If it is a funded conference, then that is great [it was nice the symposium travel was paid for], but if it is not funded then they probably cannot or it would be difficult to attend.” Travel is only possible with support. “Any support that they can have for flying and travel expenses is helpful and needed” since it means that an individual can participate who would not normally. If they are looking for ways to reduce travel costs, then they would send one person instead of two. Since they cannot afford to send people places (other than leadership), the only time people get to go places is if there is grant money.
- Staff are the ones out there making the changes, but they do not have access to travel opportunities. The struggle is that there is “not funding for a lot of staff at all levels to travel, [so] it is tough for non-permanent staff to travel and to get that same education.”
- Traveling to a meeting depends on why it is happening, when and how much advanced planning there is.
- It would be good to be able to communicate in a way that does not require travel.

Sites were asked when their **ideal time for travel** was, and most said the sooner they know they need to travel the better. They could only travel in the winter months, any other time would not be feasible. The best time to travel for most of the sites is mid-October to March, minus the holidays; January is a good time for travel. The months of April through August are difficult for travel and September is also hard because of AZA. Generally, fall is not a good time for travel.

Having face-to-face meetings is an essential component to the success of any learning network. However, it is important to consider the participants’ needs and to ensure that travel is feasible and valuable. Many sites are excited by the idea of travel and find the opportunity important for their organizations, however, there were some concerns specifically around funding the cost of travel. Overall, future events will be beneficial to participants, especially if there is support for travel expenses.

6.5. *Sustainability*

One major concern around this learning network is how to make it sustainable over the long-term. Sites are curious about what sustainability looks like for this network, how to get there, and who will be managing the network.

Issues of sustainability were specifically brought up by five sites that were concerned that “if they are relying on this learning network or another institution, what if the resource goes away? They need to know that these things are going to be here [and need to know] what is the sustainability of this network... [they] need assurance of its accessibility.”

- “What are we going to do to ensure the momentum of the network?... How is this going to stay engaging?”
- “Will there be a regulating body that makes sure there is a standard of intentionality? The content needs to be monitored for quality.”
- “It is a long-term challenge to figure out how to make this network sustainable.” If Woodland Park Zoo pulls back, will this breakdown in a few years?
 - To be a truly sustainable project, sites need to be re-asked the same needs assessment questions a year or two later; “the needs assessment is not a one-off, we cannot just do it at the beginning and assume it is done. How do we build in these loops of information from partners? How often do you need to have touchpoints?”

Questions around the **management of the network** were brought up by five sites. Management questions revolve around administration, funding and expansion of the network.

- “Do we do administration as a collective?” “It will be important to know who is in charge of maintaining the website, so if [they] have a specific question [they] know who to reach out to.” How do we make this work relevant to other departments so that it is ongoing?
- Once the funding is done, do we keep the network alive through paying dues? Who will manage the network once funding runs out?
- Will the learning network stay as the 19 organizations? There are some concerns about scaling up the network. If it gets folded into AZA, how do they get money to send staff to the conferences? It will limit the audience, so how can they keep this accessible?

Limitations mentioned that could affect the sustainability of this network were that if there is not the “desire or ability to follow-through, [or] at least communicate this [since] communication and follow-through are really key [and] lack of this is one of the biggest limitations.” Also, “technical usability of whatever online platform is chosen may be affected long term.”

Five sites mentioned **AZA** in relation to keeping the network sustainable. They hope AZA will stay focused on this and not switch topics, and if the network was supported by AZA then it would lend credibility to the work, as well as provide potential opportunities for growth. However, some sites also mentioned concerns about the network becoming part of AZA.

- “Will empathy be a part of the AZA accreditation process? Being associated with a certification process is one good way to require enthusiasm. [However,] accreditation becomes really regulatory and linear and is not all it is cracked up to be, it can become harmful and is not necessary.”
- “There is danger in becoming part of the AZA machine in the long term structure [since] a lot of their things cost money and are time extensive [sic]; the AZA tracks are difficult for people to fund.”

Sustainability will be an ongoing issue as this network continues to grow. It is valuable that organizations are already thinking ahead to the necessity of sustaining this network, which should enable joint decisions to be made with involvement from all the organizations. It will be important to continually reflect on the needs of the network and determine beneficial solutions for all parties involved.

In building this learning network, it will be critical to consider needs of all involved organizations. Through these conversations, it is obvious that there is great interest in participating and there are numerous ideas and preferences across sites. It will be important to continually involve partners in these conversations to ensure that the learning network is useful, valuable and meeting their needs. There is no purpose to a network that does not consider its participants, so hopefully by building the network based on previous experiences, preferences and existing needs, it will be easily sustained over the long term.

7. Final Conclusions and Next Steps

It is evident that rich and varied conversations were had during the needs assessment site visits across the 19 organizations. These conversations were informative for both sides as discussions revealed many different needs and areas of opportunity for individual sites and the learning network as a collective.

All sites acknowledge the value in this work, and all are making clear connections with empathy and their missions. On three separate occasions (during the discussion with members of *Leadership*, during the *Learning Network* discussion, and upon *Wrap up* at the end of the day), sites were asked the question: *I understand how empathy relates to my organization's mission*. This question was answered by a total of 233 attendees, with an average of 12 people per site (some individuals may be represented more than once in this count due to their attendance at more than one discussion where this question was asked). The average score for each site ranged from 4.00 to 4.86, with a mean of 4.42 (SD±0.263). Additionally, attendees were asked to explain how they think empathy relates to their organization's mission. The three most commonly identified ways were through connecting people (39.7%), conservation (34.2%), and behavior change (35.6%); some respondents mentioned two of these items (31.5%) (one person mentioned all three), while some respondents provided unique answers that did not fall into one of these three categories (23.3%). These scores demonstrate high agreement across sites in recognizing how empathy relates to their mission. Identifying this connection is critical to driving this work forward as it justifies prioritizing this work.

Recognizing the diverse perspectives that sites bring to ACE for Wildlife will be critical to the success of the network as it demonstrates the large amount of influence and impact that can be had through these partnerships. Additionally, learning about each site's unique abilities and needs will ensure that opportunities and resources can be tailored to fit their work to help them be as effective as possible.

Since capacity is the over-arching concern amongst sites, it will be important for the network to provide support in internal capacity-building to help sites to continue to do this work in new and innovative ways. However, sites are already thinking about a large number of various resources to increase their capacity and effective implementation of this work. Additionally, with the creativity and unique ideas of so many organizations, it will be imperative to begin to develop new usable resources in communication, training, programs, on-grounds and evaluation as we move forward as a collective.

As for the learning network structure, conversations will continue to be had with sites to ensure their needs are met and perspectives represented. While these initial conversations have provided preliminary information on structure and communication preferences, there is still much to be determined in creating a beneficial, usable learning network.

This report represents the major ideas that were discussed during the needs assessment site visits, but does not capture every individual, unique comment, question

or thought that was brought up. However, the goal of this report is to inform continuing conversations around the development of the learning network, implementation of empathy practices at individual sites, future partner meetings, and future funding opportunities. It will be important to continue to revisit the conversations that were had during the site visits in order to ensure current status of work is accurately captured. It is recognized that these conversations will change over time, so the information in this document is not static, but rather ever-evolving based on ongoing needs and work around fostering empathy for animals.

Appendix A: Logic Model

Needs Assessment Logic Model (internal) (02012019)

Goal: To better understand each site's individual needs around implementing and measuring best practices to foster empathy for animals.

Inputs

NR & LA/WPZ staff expertise

Site staff expertise across a diversity of departments

Time, money, personnel & other resources (WPZ and sites)

Knowledge gained at the Creating Change Symposium (WPZ and sites)

Support for incorporating empathy – organization level, department level, individual employee level (WPZ and sites)

Partnership and collaboration between WPZ and sites (ACE for Wildlife network)

Other partnerships (i.e. schools, county, societies, etc.)

Funding relationships

Previous empathy grants

Activities

Sites complete pre-visit survey on organizational profile and current empathy status to inform discussions

Discussions include staff from a diversity of departments

Discussion with Executive Leadership Team members

Discuss organizations understanding and readiness to incorporate empathy and how it links to their mission

Observations of programming, exhibits and other zoo offerings

Discuss site's needs/assets/barriers around their perceptions of incorporating empathy

Discuss evaluation capacity, with a focus on empathy

Discuss perceptions of animal welfare and how sites think it relates to empathy

Discuss learning network structure and site roles and needs from the LN

NR collects and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data (interviews, scales)

NR completes narrative report summarizing needs assessment at each site

Outputs

Sites begin to express goals for incorporating empathy at their organization

Identify sites' working definition of empathy for their organization

Sites complete worksheets/mapping activity to identify their greatest needs, barriers and assets

Qualitative interview data and quantitative scale data collected by NR from each site

Narrative report summarizing finds of the needs assessment written by NR

Outcomes for sites

Sites will express intention and next steps (as applicable) for implementing empathy best practices and measuring empathy

Sites can articulate their current empathy practices (as applicable)

Sites will understand their strengths and weaknesses to help determine how to be successful with empathy

Sites recognize their evaluation capacity and identify perceived barriers to conducting successful evaluation

Sites reflect on the potential relationship between empathy and perceptions of animal welfare

Sites reflect on how to make their empathy work sustainable

Empathy is introduced as important to a diversity of departments

Sites' connection to ACE for Wildlife increases and they better understand their role in the network

Sites consider their role in ACE for Wildlife and express interest in participating in a specific aspect of the LN

Sites feel supported and heard in their partnership with WPZ

Outcomes for WPZ

Better understanding of whether or not each site is incorporating empathy, and if so, how

Increase understanding of opportunities and gaps in empathy practice at sites (specifically what are their assets, needs and perceived barriers to success)

Gain an understanding of the institutional assets and programmatic profile of each site (e.g. # of visitors, types of programs offered, etc.)

Gain understanding of whether or not sites are considering links between perceptions of animal welfare, empathy and their mission

Gain knowledge of sites' interest to participate in LN and what they want in a LN to inform roles and LN structure

Identify opportunities for WPZ to support sites' success: incorporating empathy, measuring empathy, establishing their role in the learning network, etc.

Get more ideas for the next symposium

WPZ reiterates their commitment and support to each site and continues to build relationships with the sites

Develop a better sense of sites' funding priorities and partnership opportunities as related to empathy

Develop a better sense of sites' regional relationships between related organizations

Appendix B: Structure of the Site Visits

Needs Assessment Plan:

1. Confirm site availability for visits
2. Create visit agenda for each individual site based on draft agenda
3. Send pre-visit survey
4. Complete preliminary analysis and review of pre-visit survey data in preparation for site visit
5. Complete site visits; collect qualitative and quantitative interview data
6. Analysis of pre-visit survey and site visit data to determine areas of greatest need/opportunity

Prior to visiting the sites, a draft agenda and guidelines for the visit was sent to staff who had attended the Creating Change in Symposium.

The initial email contained a broad overview of the visit, as well as guidance on who should be invited to participate during the conversations:

The site visit will be a detailed needs assessment. We will plan on being onsite for the hours that your organization is open; however, we do not expect to be taking up staff time for the entirety of our visit. There are five main components of the visit that we would like you to consider when filling out the Doodle. On this visit, we hope to:

- *Have a short meeting with someone from executive leadership*
- *Meet with representatives from multiple departments, to understand their specific goals or questions related to empathy*
- *Meet with those who are responsible for or regularly participate in evaluation (as applicable)*
- *Observe on-site programming (if possible)*
- *Walk zoo grounds and observe a variety of exhibits (if possible)*

Please note: there will not be training sessions during this visit. We are conducting a needs assessment first in order to build resources and a learning network that is responsive to the needs of all of the organizations. We will also make a summary of the needs assessment results available to the organizations after we complete all site visits.

The second email sent to sites contained more detailed information about the structure of the visits as well as a draft agenda. Sites were encouraged to respond with modifications and feedback to ensure that the visit was beneficial to all parties involved. The following text was sent to all sites:

- *The schedule as written has us visiting ORGANIZATION for the entire day, but we are flexible with start and end times.*
- ***The order and length of these sessions are not set and we want to work with you to schedule times that work best for you and your colleagues. The only sessions that are set in their order are the Welcome and Visit goals and***

Wrap up and Departure. Additionally, it will be important to Explore the zoo prior to discussing current programming and specific needs.

- The attendees are suggestions; if there are additional or other folks you would prefer to attend certain discussions, please let us know. We hope to include many people from a variety of departments (as applicable) for each discussion. We do not know who all works on empathy at your organization, we want to be as inclusive as possible, but you will know best who should attend each discussion.*
- There is 30 minutes scheduled for a discussion with at least one member of your executive leadership team, please schedule that half hour as appropriate and we can schedule the remaining sessions around that time.*
- If there are any additional topics you would like to discuss while we are there, please let us know.*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Attendees</i>
<i>1 hour</i>	<i>Welcome and Visit goals</i>	<i>Discuss our goals for the visit Discuss their goals for our visit Changes at their organization since the symposium</i>	<i>Symposium attendees, and other core empathy people</i>
<i>1.5 hours</i>	<i>Explore the zoo</i>	<i>See empathy-related programs, exhibits, interpretation etc. (this can be us exploring independently or guided with a staff member explaining current work around empathy and introducing us to other staff from a variety of departments)</i>	<i>Core empathy people</i>

1.5 hours	<i>Discussion of observed programs/exhibits/interpretation/etc.</i>	<i>Discuss how the organization is currently incorporating empathy, where they see needs or gaps, and their desired future work</i>	<i>Core empathy: Education Exhibits Interpretation and others</i>
1 hour	<i>Lunch</i>		
30 minutes	<i>Discussion with Leadership Team member(s) around empathy</i>	<i>Discussion of where their understanding of empathy lies, what they are thinking around empathy currently and where they want to go with it in the future</i>	<i>Leadership team member</i>
45 minutes	<i>Evaluation discussion</i>	<i>Discuss their current evaluation capacity, how they are incorporating empathy measurement and their future goals for evaluation of empathy</i>	<i>Core evaluation people Any others who participate in data collection/analysis</i>
45 minutes	<i>Discussion about perceptions of animal welfare</i>	<i>High level discussion about their current practices</i>	<i>Education Animal Management</i>
30 minutes	<i>Discussion about the learning network</i>	<i>Discuss their needs in a learning network – including external support and</i>	<i>Anyone interested in empathy work, we encourage anyone we haven't been able to talk with to attend</i>

		<i>resources, what they will contribute as well as get out of the network</i>	
<i>30 minutes</i>	<i>Wrap up and Depart</i>	<i>Reflect on the day Summarize key needs and takeaways Determine next steps around empathy and our relationship</i>	<i>Core empathy people</i>

At the beginning of the visit, the purpose of the needs assessment was presented to sites in the following way: *We are in the beginning stages of the grant funded initiative to build out the Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife learning network. We are still figuring out how to do this work and involving all of our partners in this process. To do this, we are visiting each site to better understand their current practices, goals and challenges. This will ensure that the structure of the learning network will be relevant to all involved organizations and highlight their strengths. Over time, our goal is to continue to build relationships with sites and understand what types of support organizations will need to continue this work sustainably.*

Additionally, the following goals for the visit were outlined to the sites at the beginning of the day during the *Welcome and goals* conversation:

1. To better understand your current practices, specifically in fostering empathy for animals
2. To better understand your needs, assets and barriers to success around implementing empathy best practices
3. To better understand current evaluation capacity and needs around measuring empathy for animals
4. To better understand what support the learning network can provide to help you be successful in incorporating empathy at your organization
5. To continue to increase interest in and learn about the role the Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife learning network will play in sites work to foster empathy for animals

There were eight distinct conversations had throughout the visit at each site: *Welcome and goals for the day, tour of the grounds and facilities, sticky note activity around current empathy practices, discussion on evaluation, discussion on perceptions of animal welfare, discussion with members of leadership, discussion on the learning*

network and structure, and wrap up. At the end of each conversation, quantitative scales (see Appendix C) were distributed specific to that topic and collected to have a baseline understanding of sites understanding and readiness to incorporate empathy.

The following questions served as a guide for the individual discussions. At each site, not all questions were asked or asked in the following order.

Welcome and Goals:

- What have been your key reflections since the symposium? What has really resonated with you?
- Have you shared out information from the symposium with others in your organization?
- What conversations have you had around empathy since the symposium? Does empathy come up more frequently in other conversations?
- Have you made any plans to make changes to current offerings or plans to implement new offerings?

- How does this work relate to our mission?
- How can we be more intentional about incorporating empathy?
- What is our capacity to take on new projects?
- What challenges do we anticipate? What are the barriers to our success?
- What are our passions and strengths as an organization and how can we bring those to the learning network?
- What's next?

Exploring the zoo/observing programs:

- What are your current outcomes for your exhibits and programs?
- Have you thought about incorporating empathy?
- Which areas do you feel would be most suitable to incorporate empathy?
- Do you have any upcoming projects/changes/new programs planned?
- What are your priorities when deciding to take on new projects? What types of projects do you feel like you have the capacity to take on?
- Do you have a wish list of things that you've learned that you want to incorporate in some way?
- How do you see empathy relating to conservation programs?
- Is there anything you do to reach a diversity of audiences?

Leadership:

- Have you heard about Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife? If so, what are you excited about?
- Do you feel empathy is relevant to your work?
- What are your organizational strengths for tackling this work?
- What are your concerns about taking on this work?
- What do you need to feel like an advocate for this work?
- What questions do you have?

Perceptions of animal welfare:

- Researchers are examining how empathy may be related to perceptions of animal welfare. What do you think about this idea?
- Can you think of ways that empathy might be connected to perceptions of animal welfare and how this could link back to your mission?
- Do you think about how visitors perceive your animal welfare practices?
- What types of messaging do you have related to your animal welfare practices?
- Have you collected feedback from visitors about their perceptions of animal welfare?

Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife: Learning Network:

- What types of resources or support would be useful for you in a learning network?
- Why would it be valuable for your organization to participate in a learning network?
- What are your organization's passions and strengths to contribute to the learning network?
- Are there regional opportunities and/or limitations that could influence your participation in a learning network?

Sticky note activity: Current empathy practices:

Activity:

What are your . . . assets → needs → barriers

- Where are the gaps?
- How do you want to close these gaps?
- Do you have plans to close these gaps?
- What support or resources do you foresee needing to close these gaps?

Evaluation:

- Overview of your current evaluation capacity and who is responsible for conducting evaluation
- What are your current goals and motivations for conducting evaluation?

- What opportunities are there for measuring empathy? When should you be measuring empathy?
- What questions do you have around measuring empathy?
- What support and/or resources do you need to successfully conduct empathy evaluation?

Wrap up:

- Did our visit today bring up any new questions for you?
- Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is important for us to know about your organization?

Appendix C: Likert Scale Questions

Welcome and Goals:

1. I feel confident articulating my organization's priorities for incorporating empathy

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. Our organization has identified opportunities to be more intentional about incorporating empathy practices

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. I understand how empathy relates to my organization's mission

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Sticky note activity: Current Empathy Practices:

1. I have a clearer idea of my organization's **needs** for incorporating empathy

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. I have a clearer idea of my organization's **assets** for incorporating empathy

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. I have a clearer idea of my organization's **barriers** to success in incorporating empathy

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
<input type="checkbox"/>				

4. I have ideas for next steps to close gaps in incorporating empathy at my organization

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much so
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5. I need help to figure out how to incorporate empathy into my current offerings

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

Perceptions of Animal Welfare:

1. How often do you consider visitors' perceptions of animal welfare?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

2. How well do you think you understand your visitors' perceptions of your animals?

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

3. If you feel a visitor has an incorrect perception of welfare, how comfortable are you with having a conversation with that visitor about their perceptions?

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

Evaluation:

1. I have a better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in evaluation in general

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

2. I have more ideas for when to measure empathy in my current offerings

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

3. I need help to figure out how to measure empathy in my current offerings

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

Learning Network:

1. I understand how empathy relates to my organization's mission

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

2. I am excited to participate in and contribute to the learning network

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

3. Being a member of the learning network will be valuable to my organization

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

4. Our organization will need external support to be successful and sustainable in incorporating empathy practices.

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

Wrap up:

1. I have interest from a diversity of departments at my organization to incorporate empathy best practices

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

2. I feel confident in my knowledge to take next steps to incorporate empathy best practices at my organization

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so

3. I understand how empathy relates to my organization's mission

Not at all A little Somewhat Quite a bit Very much so



Please explain how you think empathy relates to your organization's mission:

Addendum – August 2020

In 2020, the Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife network welcomed a new partner organization. The partner organization sent two representatives to the 2020 symposium in February, and then participated in a virtual site visit in August 2020. The virtual site visit took place over two days for a total of 5 hours with staff from education, animal care, and leadership. In these conversations, we learned that they are enthusiastic about intentionally incorporating empathy in their work, see the practices as tactics they already engage in, and have strong support from their leadership to incorporate empathy into their organization. This partner organization has a small number of staff and is located in a rural area; due to their size they are flexible and have open communication, and the challenges they face are not unlike many of the other small organizations already within the network. The primary needs and barriers they face are time, money, and support in their day-to-day work. They are looking for various resources and feedback from other organizations in the network in order to help them move their work forward. This organization's classification is Beginner since they are just starting to think and talk about empathy and identify areas where they could be more intentional (see page 13 for definitions). Overall, the site sees a direct link between empathy and their work and were excited about becoming a network partner. They are looking forward to bringing a keeper-focused perspective to the network and learning how they can improve their existing offerings to foster empathy in their visitors and community.