



SI REOPENING SURVEY

Quantitative Results

September 2020



SMITHSONIAN
ORGANIZATION
AND AUDIENCE
RESEARCH

Smithsonian Organization and Audience Research

SI Reopening Survey Response Frequencies

This report presents the quantitative findings from the June 2020 Smithsonian Reopening all-staff survey, administered by Smithsonian Organization and Audience Research (SOAR). The survey focused on two broad areas:

- **Whether efforts to adjust operations to address the risks of the Coronavirus pandemic have been successful**, and how they might be improved going forward.
- **What staff see as they look to the future.** How should the Smithsonian approach reopening? In the longer term, how will the New Normal differ from what preceded it?

An effort was made to distribute the survey invitation to all current Smithsonian staff, and the response rate was high. A total of 6220 staff were invited to participate, and 4485 responses were received, for a response rate of 72%. **The findings can be considered a good representation of the opinions, perceptions, and priorities of Smithsonian staff.**

The findings are grouped by questionnaire section as follows, with the first digit in each question number indicating the section:

- Section 1: Respondent profile.
- Section 3:¹ Communications.
- Section 4: Onsite Work (questions asked only of staff who had been onsite regularly in the period leading up to the survey).
- Section 5: Telework (questions asked only to staff who had been teleworking during the period prior to the survey).
- Section 6: Supervision (questions asked only to supervisors, managers, and unit leadership).
- Section 7: Environmental and Safety Measures.
- Section 8: Audiences (questions about volunteers, visitors, and digital offerings, in most cases asked only to staff who work in these areas).
- Section 9: SI in the New Normal (“big think” questions about the Smithsonian’s future).

The findings are presented as a series of tables identified by survey question number(s) and text. The “n” figure shows the total number of responses to the question(s). Where the display of a question was conditional upon a previous survey response, this is indicated in a blue banner above the question.

If you have any questions about the report or the findings, please contact James Smith (smithjame@si.edu) at SOAR.

¹ The “missing” Section 2 was identical to Section 9. It was separated in the questionnaire for technical reasons of survey administration. Findings from Section 2 are rolled up with the findings of Section 9.

Respondent Profile

Q1.4, Q4.1, Q5.1 Work status as of June 11, 2020

	<i>n</i>	4,448
<i>Teleworking only</i>		70%
<i>Working onsite only</i>		10%
<i>Both teleworking and working onsite</i>		14%
Not currently working (e.g., on weather/safety leave)		5%

Q1.5 Which of the following best describes your professional status?

	<i>n</i>	4,479
Staff (no supervisory responsibilities)		69%
Supervisor (responsible for oversight of staff)		19%
Manager (responsible for oversight of supervisors; reports to senior unit management)		10%
Unit Director (reports to an Under Secretary)		1%

Q1.6 What is the primary function of your position within your unit?

	<i>n</i>	4,479
<i>Research, collections, and exhibitions</i>		35%
Research/Curatorial		18%
Collections management (including conservation)		11%
<i>Living collection</i>		2%
Exhibition development		5%
<i>Administration, operations, and management</i>		27%
Administration/Financial (and other professional office functions)		19%
IT infrastructure/support		6%
Smithsonian and Unit leadership		2%
<i>Facilities and security</i>		19%
Facility maintenance and operations		11%
Security		8%
<i>Outreach and revenue generation</i>		11%
Development		4%
Communications		3%
Special events/ Revenue generation		2%
<i>Retail/shop</i>		1%
<i>Public facing</i>		8%
Education (including digital/web content)		4%
Public programs/Visitor services		4%

Q1.7 Please indicate whether you regularly interact with visitors or volunteers in the course of your normal work.

	<i>n</i>	
I do not regularly interact in person with visitors or volunteers, nor do I manage staff who do	4,358	57%
I regularly interact in person with visitors, or manage staff who do		20%
I regularly interact in person with (behind-the-scenes or public-facing) volunteers, or manage staff who do		15%
Regularly interact in person with visitors and volunteers, or manage staff who do		8%

Communications

Q3.2 Do you feel Smithsonian central leadership (e.g., the Secretary, COVID-19 Resource Team) is communicating adequately about...

	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure
How to protect yourself against COVID-19?	4,259	93%	2%	4%
Steps SI is taking to protect staff against exposure to the virus?	4,260	85%	6%	9%
Working from home / Teleworking?	4,251	85%	5%	6%
Decisions related to operations during closure?	4,259	83%	7%	9%
Decisions related to re-opening?	4,258	71%	13%	17%

If Staff, Supervisor, or Manager

Q3.3 Do you feel your Director and unit leadership are communicating adequately about ...

	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure
How to protect yourself against COVID-19?	4,151	88%	5%	7%
Steps SI is taking to protect staff against exposure to the virus?	4,148	84%	8%	8%
Working from home / Teleworking?	4,143	88%	6%	6%
Decisions related to operations during closure?	4,147	83%	9%	8%
Decisions related to reopening?	4,149	74%	12%	14%

Q3.4 Do you find the Smithsonian's PRISM COVID-19 website useful?

	<i>n</i>	
Not useful	4,256	2%
Somewhat useful		30%
Very useful		35%
I was not aware of it		3%
I was aware of it, but have not used it		30%

Q3.5 Do you find the SI-wide COVID-19 announcements useful?

	<i>n</i>	4,237
Not useful		2%
Somewhat useful		39%
Very useful		55%
I was not aware of it		1%
I was aware of it, but have not used it		3%

If Not useful, Somewhat useful, or Very useful to Q3.5

Q3.6 How would you rate the clarity and readability of the SI-wide COVID-19 announcements?

	<i>n</i>	4,061
Not clear and readable		2%
Somewhat clear and readable		35%
Very clear and readable		63%

Q3.7 Overall, how do you feel about the statement: "I am getting the information I need about COVID-19 and the Smithsonian's response."

	<i>n</i>	4,252
Strongly disagree		2%
Disagree		3%
Not sure		9%
Agree		61%
Strongly agree		25%

Onsite Work

Working onsite most or all of working hours, or occasionally

Q4.2 Do you have any safety concerns about working onsite that you feel have not been resolved at this time?

	<i>n</i>	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Interaction with visitors when facilities reopen to the public	986	27%	30%	44%
Putting my family at risk	992	28%	32%	40%
Being exposed to COVID-19 onsite	991	27%	43%	30%
Limited personal protection equipment (PPE) supplies for staff	992	41%	31%	28%
Being exposed to COVID-19 during my commute	992	51%	22%	27%
Inability to adequately social distance onsite	984	44%	33%	23%
Lack of training to minimize risk	990	55%	28%	16%

Telework [Teleworking Staff Only]

If Supervisor or higher

Q5.2 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "The IT and other resources now in place adequately support effective telework."

	<i>n</i>	1,215
Strongly disagree		3%
Disagree		4%
Not sure		5%
Agree		45%
Strongly agree		44%

If Supervisor or higher

Q5.3 What concerns do you have about the continued use of expanded telework as SI reopens? (Select all that apply)

	<i>n</i>	1,201
I have no concerns about continued use of telework		38%
Access to reliable broadband for all teleworking staff		32%
Appropriate work for staff who are not fully telework ready		31%
Inability to adequately supervise teleworking staff		16%
Quality of work from teleworking staff		15%
Inability to adequately communicate with teleworking staff		10%
Other		16%
<i>Home office</i>		8%
<i>Onsite access, SI Technology, childcare, communication, collaboration, miscellaneous</i>		9%

Q5.4 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I am able to complete my duties adequately while teleworking from home."

	<i>n</i>	3,876
Strongly disagree		3%
Disagree		8%
Not sure		5%
Agree		38%
Strongly agree		46%

Q5.5 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I am able to communicate easily with other members of my team while teleworking from home."

	<i>n</i>	3,864
Strongly disagree		1%
Disagree		3%
Not sure		3%
Agree		39%
Strongly agree		54%

Q5.6 What have you found to be positive aspects of teleworking? (Select all that apply.)

	<i>n</i>	3,763
I don't have to spend time commuting		88%
My work/life balance is better		63%
I am more productive		48%
I have access to the same resources/tools/equipment at home as I have at work		43%
My home workspace is more comfortable than the office		39%
I find it is still possible to mentor or be mentored		28%
I find it easy to have social exchanges with my colleagues		24%
It is easier to communicate with my team members than when we're in the office		24%
Other		4%

Q5.7 What have you found to be negative aspects of teleworking? (Select all that apply.)

	<i>n</i>	3,510
I miss in-person interactions with my colleagues		67%
I don't have access to physical locations such as collections spaces, a lab, or a field site		45%
My work and personal lives are hard to separate		32%
I don't have the resources/tools/equipment I need to work efficiently		29%
It is harder to communicate with colleagues		23%
I don't have a suitable workspace at home		19%
I have to instruct or care for children or other dependents during office hours		17%
I feel disconnected from my unit's or the Smithsonian's goals		16%
I am less productive		15%
Commuting helped me transition into and out of the work day		13%
I cannot effectively mentor or be mentored		12%
Other		1%

Q5.8 What additional hardware and supplies do you need to effectively telework? (Select all that apply.)

	<i>n</i>	3,289
Larger/multiple monitor(s)		46%
Ergonomic support		45%
More up-to-date/powerful laptop		38%
Printer		38%
Office furniture		28%
Scanner		24%
Headset/ Webcam for virtual meetings		23%
Office supplies (please describe)		17%
<i>Paper products</i>		12%
<i>Ink/toner</i>		7%
<i>Writing implements</i>		4%
<i>Sticky notes,</i>		2%
<i>Organizational aids,</i>		2%
<i>Staples, paperclips, mailing supplies, whiteboards with markers</i>		1%
More up-to-date/powerful PC		13%
Other		7%
<i>Internet access services and equipment</i>		2%
<i>Computer peripherals, software specific to their jobs, specialized equipment, SI phones, extra digital storage, miscellaneous</i>		6%

Q5.9 What other resources do you need to effectively telework? (Select all that apply.)

	<i>n</i>	2,480
Additional broadband/hotspot access to help with unreliable service or households with multiple users		41%
Training on digital collaboration tools (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Active Collab, Smartsheets, Dropbox, shared documents)		36%
SI-approved virtual backgrounds to ensure privacy during video conferencing		31%
Easier access to databases		30%
Easier access to SI administrative systems like ERP		10%
Software (please describe)		8%
<i>Adobe</i>		3%
<i>Other software</i>		6%
Other training (please describe)		4%
Other		11%

If Staff or Supervisor

Q5.10 Do you feel your main supervisor/manager has adequately supported you in the following areas during this telework period?

	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure
Provides clear assignments with good guidance	3,348	84%	7%	9%
Is responsive to my questions	3,356	92%	4%	5%
Communicates other information needed to do my job	3,346	88%	5%	7%
Helps keep me connected with my colleagues	3,332	84%	8%	9%
Supports my emotional well-being	3,332	81%	7%	12%

If Manager

Q5.13 Do you feel your unit's Director has adequately supported you in the following areas during this telework period?

	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure
Feeling part of the larger unit community	416	89%	5%	7%
Providing unit information in a timely manner	415	91%	4%	5%
Addressing issues you raise related to your part of the organization	414	85%	5%	10%

If Unit Director

Q5.15 Do you feel your Under Secretary has adequately supported you in the following areas during this telework period?

	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure
Feeling part of the larger SI community	51	93%	2%	5%
Providing SI information in a timely manner	51	88%	7%	5%
Addressing issues you raise related to your unit	51	83%	5%	12%

Q5.17 How important are virtual social activities to you (e.g., Teas at Three, Virtual Happy Hour, Coffee Break, Game Time)?

	<i>n</i>	3,865
Not important	41%	
Somewhat important	36%	
Very important	14%	
Not sure	9%	

Supervision [Supervisors, Managers, Directors Only]

Q6.2 Compared to the pre-pandemic baseline, how effectively do you feel your teleworking staff have carried out their work?

	<i>n</i>	1,265
As well or better		48%
Adequately, but not as well as before		12%
Not adequately		2%
It varies for different staff members		23%
I do not manage teleworking staff		14%

Q6.4 As a supervisor or manager, what are the main challenges you have faced in carrying out your responsibilities during the pandemic? (Select all the apply.)

	<i>n</i>	1,100
Team members lack access to equipment, supplies, files, etc.		47%
Team members lack access to collections spaces, labs, field research sites, or other physical locations		36%
Team members must care for or instruct dependents during office hours		29%
Inability to complete all phases of projects		28%
Limited collaboration between my team and colleagues		27%
Hiring and onboarding staff and volunteers remotely		27%
Training staff and volunteers remotely		20%
Conducting performance rating and review processes		20%
Access to HR / staff records		8%
Access to automated workflows to complete administrative and financial duties		6%
Increased turnover and attrition		4%
Other		8%
<i>Managing workloads</i>		2%
<i>Managing and supervising miscellaneous</i>		5%

Safety and Comfort

Q7.2 As of this moment, how comfortable do you feel about (the prospect of) coming to work onsite?

	<i>n</i>	4,180
Very uncomfortable		35%
Somewhat uncomfortable		24%
Somewhere in the middle		21%
Somewhat comfortable		11%
Very comfortable		10%

Q7.3 What are the most important work environment protections you need to feel safe coming to work onsite? (Select up to three.)

	<i>n</i>	4,178
Effective cleaning protocols for offices, labs, and equipment		51%
Safe commuting options		50%
Internal COVID-19 testing		39%
Adequate air exchange		38%
Effective cleaning protocols for public spaces		35%
Flexible hours that allow me to avoid rush hour on public transportation		33%
Accountability for using safety measures		29%
Staff medical self-screening questionnaires		5%

Q7.4 What are the most important community protective equipment (CPE) or other community protective measures you need to feel safe coming to work onsite? (Select up to three.)

	<i>n</i>	4,153
Mandatory face coverings (e.g., cloth face masks)		84%
Required social distancing		72%
Accountability for following safety protocols		38%
Measures to protect me from infection by non-SI people who come to my unit		29%
Contact tracing (while protecting employee's privacy)		29%
Physical barriers or shields between work stations		23%
Adequate cautionary signage		7%

Q7.5 What personal protective equipment (PPE) do you need to feel safe coming to work onsite?

	<i>n</i>	4,103
Soap/ hand sanitizers		87%
Sanitizing wipes for surfaces		87%
N-95 masks / respirators (if required by the job hazard analysis for your position)		53%

Q7.7 Do you think your colleagues will be respectful of your safety and stay home if they are feeling sick?

	<i>n</i>	4,210
Definitely yes		21%
Probably yes		35%
Might or might not		31%
Probably not		9%
Definitely not		4%

Audiences

If regularly interact in person with **visitors**, or manage staff who do

Q8.2 While your facilities are closed to physical visitors, how have you been engaging with your unit's audiences? (Select all the apply.)

	<i>n</i>	
Providing new online resources	845	59%
Digital newsletters and communications		55%
Offering virtual events (large number of participants with ability to ask questions through chat)		39%
Offering virtual workshops (small number of participants with opportunity for direct interaction)		38%
Mailed materials		19%
Other		13%
<i>Other specified</i>		6%
<i>Other unspecified</i>		7%

If regularly interact in person with (behind-the-scenes or public-facing) **volunteers**, or manage staff who do

Q8.3 While the in-person volunteer program is temporarily suspended, how much do you engage in the following volunteer outreach activities in comparison with the pre-pandemic baseline?

	<i>n</i>	More than before	About the same as before	Less than before	Not Sure
Offering virtual meet-ups with groups of volunteers	791	25%	24%	23%	28%
Offering virtual enrichment	790	24%	29%	20%	27%
Offering virtual training	791	22%	30%	20%	28%
Providing online resources (e.g., links to Sidedoor podcast, videos, emails from the Secretary)	804	22%	32%	21%	24%
Conducting email or text correspondence between volunteers and staff	840	19%	34%	30%	17%
Sending digital newsletters and communications	797	19%	36%	20%	26%
Mailing physical materials (e.g., cards, training materials, care packages)	786	5%	30%	32%	32%

If Manager or Unit Director, or regularly interact in person with **volunteers**, or manage staff who do

Q8.4 Are you planning to reopen without onsite volunteers?

	<i>n</i>	
Yes	1,213	25%
No		7%
Not sure		44%
My unit does not have onsite volunteers		24%

If Yes or Not sure to Q8.4

Q8.5 How concerned are you about your ability to sufficiently serve the public and otherwise pursue your unit's mission without onsite volunteers?

	<i>n</i>	
	832	
Very concerned		25%
Somewhat concerned		42%
Not concerned		33%

If regularly interact in person with (behind-the-scenes or public-facing) volunteers, or manage staff who do

Q8.6 Has your unit reconsidered the roles and duties of volunteers in light of the pandemic?

	<i>n</i>	
	876	
Yes		29%
No		13%
Not sure		59%

Q8.8 The New Normal may require greater emphasis on digital offerings for some time to come. Do you feel your unit has the staff to effectively develop digital content?

	<i>n</i>	
	3,625	
Yes		39%
No		28%
Not sure		33%

Q8.10 Do you feel your unit has the non-staff resources to effectively develop digital content?

	<i>n</i>	
	3,516	
Yes		24%
No		19%
Not sure		57%

If Staff, Supervisor, Manager, or Unit Director

Q8.12 With respect to audiences for digital content, how often do you feel your unit...

	<i>n</i>	Not sure	Never	Some-times	Usually	Always
Has adequate data about current and potential digital audiences?	3,929	41%	7%	23%	21%	9%
Uses data about audience interests to inform development of digital content?	3,908	41%	8%	21%	20%	9%
Uses data to target distribution of digital content to appropriate audiences?	3,909	43%	8%	20%	20%	9%

SI in the New Normal

Q9.2 Personally, I'm most concerned about the following big global issues. (Select no more than three.)

Q9.3 I think the Smithsonian is best suited to address the following big global issues. (Select no more than three.)

	<i>n</i>	Personal concerns	SI to Address
		4,267	4,190
Access to education		28%	67%
Cultural sustainability		12%	57%
Environment/ Climate change		53%	50%
Identity-based conflicts such as racism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc.		46%	48%
Human rights		39%	23%
Global health		30%	14%
Economic stability, security, equity		50%	10%
Food/water security		21%	4%
Other (please specify)		2%	1%
<i>All the issues</i>		1%	
<i>Politics, science, miscellaneous</i>		1%	
<i>SI should or should not address these issues</i>			1%