



APA California 2025 Membership Survey Analysis

Survey Overview

This analysis summarizes results from the 2025 APA California Membership Survey that was sent to both National and Chapter-only members. The survey was sent on 3/17/25 via multiple channels, including email blasts, eNews, and social media. The survey closed on 4/6/25.

Emails sent	4,997
Emails bounced	83
Responses	522
Response rate	10.6%

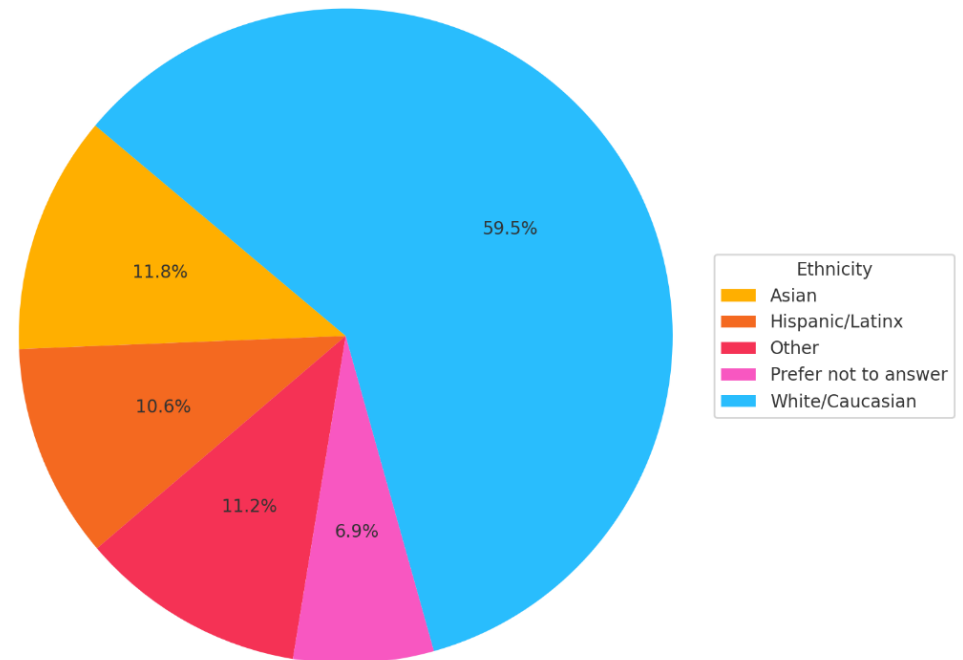
Respondent Demographics

Racial/Ethnic Identification

The APA California Membership Survey asked respondents to self-identify their racial or ethnic background.

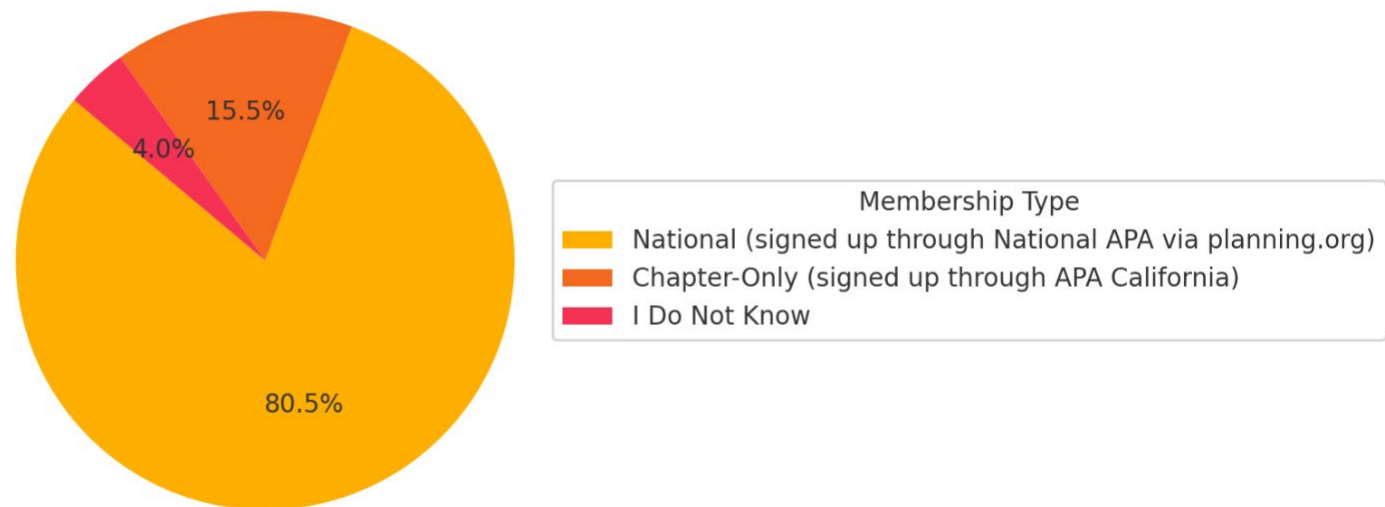
Racial/Ethnic Identification (475 responses):

White/Caucasian	65%
Asian	13%
Hispanic/Latinx	12%
Multi-racial	8%
Other (combined small groups)	2%



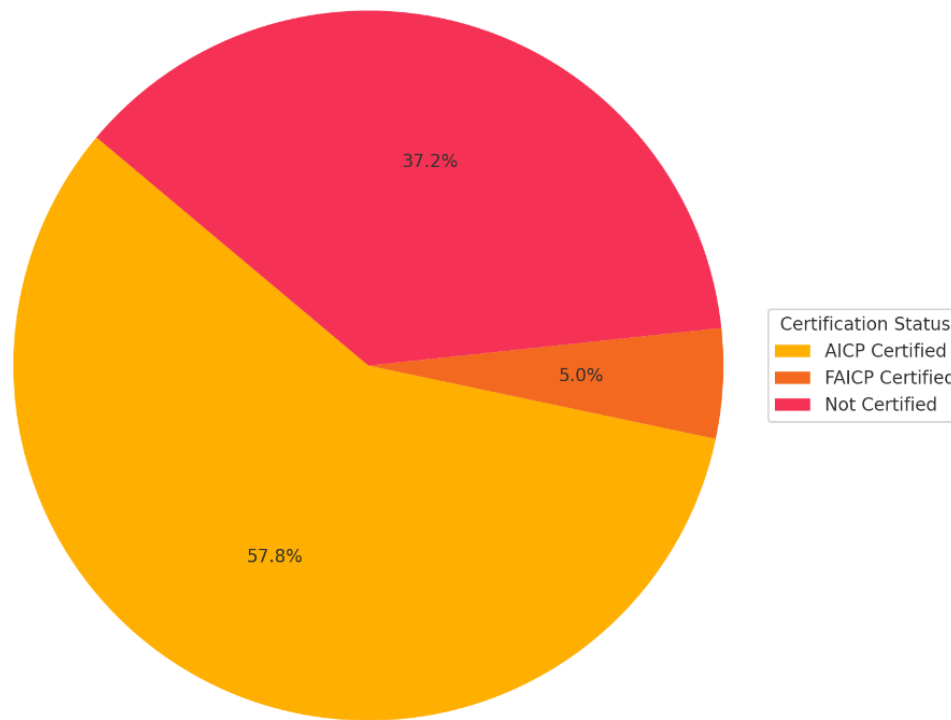
Membership Type

National APA	~80%
Chapter-Only	15.5%
Unsure	4%



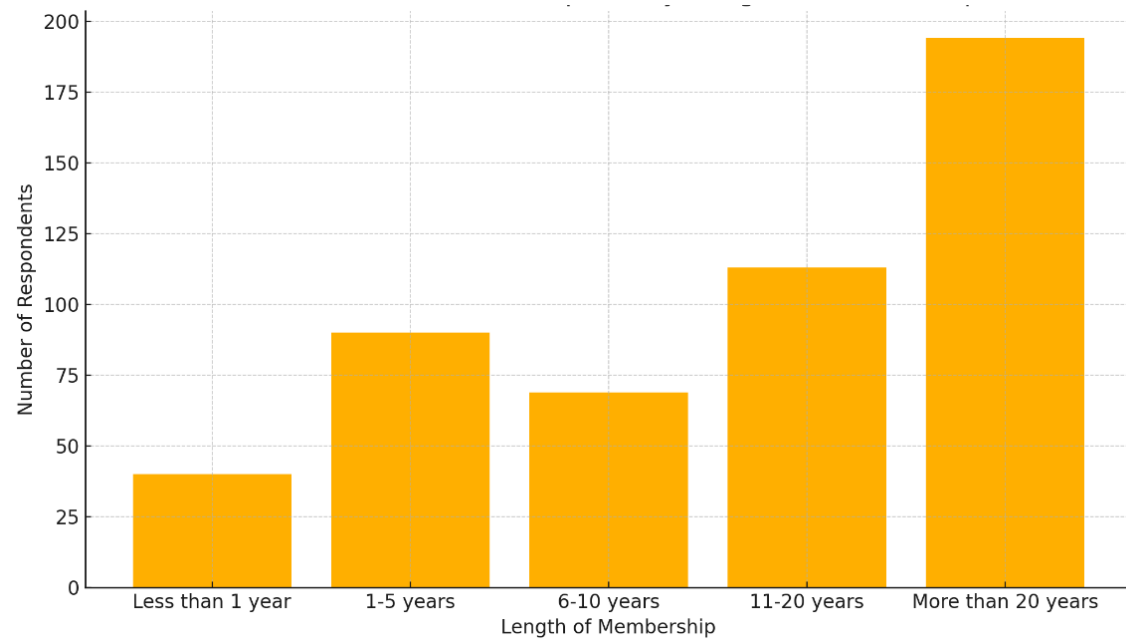
Certification

AICP Certified	57.8%
FAICP	5%
Not Certified	37.2%



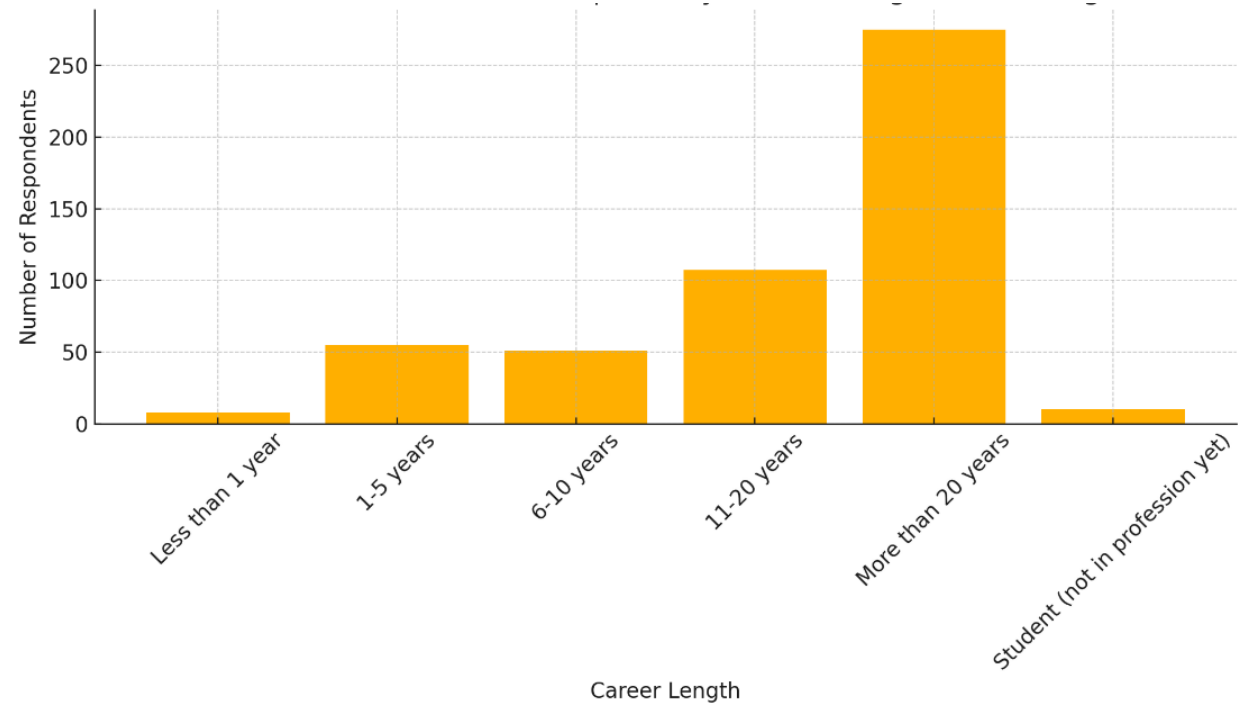
Membership Duration

20+ years	38.3%
11–20 years	22.3%
6–10 years	13.6%
1–5 years	17.8%
<1 year	7.9%



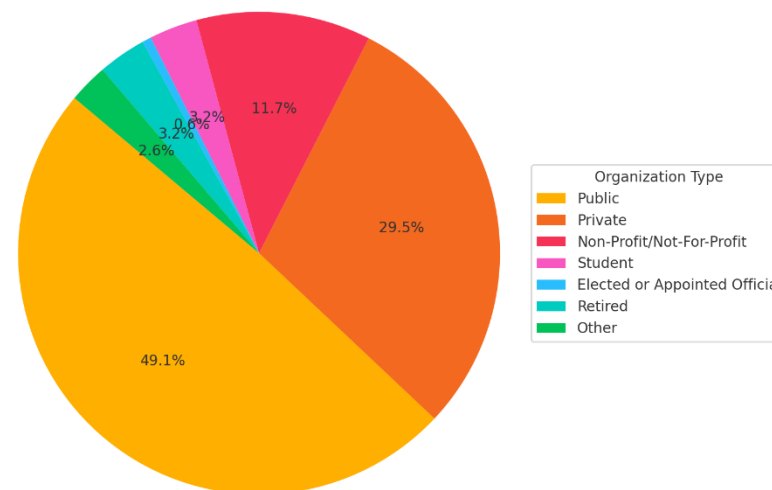
Career Length

20+ years	54.4%
11–20 years	21.2%
6–10 years	10.1%
1–5 years	10.9%
<1 year	1.6%
Students	2%



Organization Type

Public Sector	50.9%
Private Sector	30.6%
Non-Profit	12.2%
Students & Retirees	6.8%
Other	2.7%



Smaller segments included:

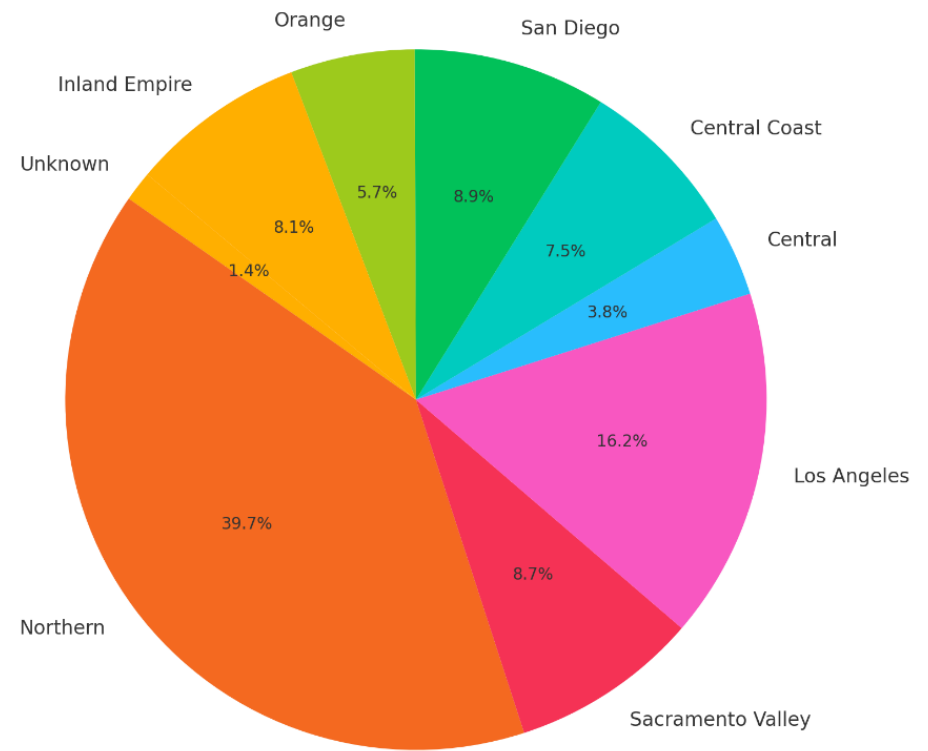
Students	3.4%
Retired professionals	3.4%
Elected or appointed officials	0.6%
Other (self-described)	2.7%

Other: Retired faculty, environmental advocacy organization boards, Higher Ed, Private working for public and private agencies, Retired, with part time consulting work, Academia, Professional Association, Public University, Unemployed, Self-employed, Tribal Government, Freelance,

Sections

Survey responses by Section:

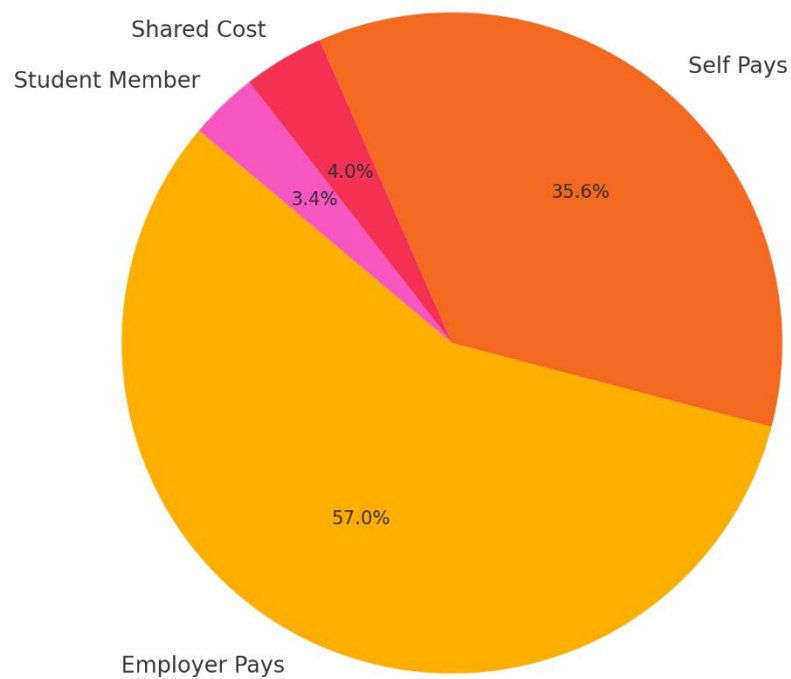
Northern	201	39.7%
Los Angeles	82	16.2%
San Diego	45	8.9%
Sacramento Valley	44	8.7%
Inland Empire	41	8.1%
Orange	29	5.7%
Central Coast	38	7.5%
Central	19	3.8%
Unknown	7	1.4%



Membership Dues

Respondents were asked the question, “Who pays for your membership?”. The majority of responses indicate that employers pay for their membership.

Employer	57.0%	288
Self Pay	35.6%	180
Shared Employer/Self Pay	4.0%	20
Students	3.4%	17



Key Findings

Satisfaction

“How satisfied are you with your APA membership benefits or services provided?”

Very Satisfied	15.3%
Satisfied	45.0%
Neutral	30.4%
Dissatisfied	6.9%
Very Dissatisfied	2.4%

Summary of Satisfaction Results:

- While 60.3% report satisfaction, the 30.4% Neutral segment indicates potential to strengthen perceived value.



Comments Summarized:

Several indicated they don't understand the breakdown of National vs. State vs. Section membership, suggesting a need for better orientation and ongoing communication.

Perceived Value vs. Cost

- Widespread sentiment that the cost of membership and certification is too high relative to the benefits received.
- Members expressed that conference fees, AICP renewal, and event add-ons are excessively expensive.
- Some AICP members are questioning the return on investment, and non-certified members see little incentive to pursue certification.

Benefits and Programming

- Many who commented feel benefits are not relevant or robust:
 - Limited local programming, especially in rural or geographically distant areas (section boundaries too large)
 - Educational content is seen as too specialized or superficial.
 - A desire for stronger leadership development, mentoring, and cross-disciplinary engagement.
 - Appreciation for programs like international travel, but concerns regarding poor organization and exclusivity.

Communication and Transparency

APA is perceived as opaque in its decision-making:

- Lack of clarity about legislative positions and internal processes.
- Lack of clarity on who is making decisions and how they are made.
- Concerns about "gatekeeping" in conference session selection and perceived limited member involvement in advocacy.

Advocacy and Political Stance

- Several members stated that APA has become too political, while others feel it isn't advocating strongly enough, especially on housing or "abundance agenda" policies.

- Desire for balanced, clear communication of advocacy goals and processes.

Engagement and Community

- Members want more meaningful engagement:
 - Local events, in-person networking, mentoring, pro bono opportunities.
 - Some noted past involvement and volunteering, but said it hasn't been reciprocated with value.
- Suggestions include more inclusive programming and leveraging funds to support member events (e.g., free food, social mixers).

Most dissatisfied members are:

- AICP-certified
- Long-term members (10–20+ years)
- Located in urban and rural areas alike, but with a trend toward Northern California and Los Angeles

Highest value among Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied Respondents:

- Legislative updates/advocacy
- Discounts to events
- Local in-person connections

Net Promoter Score (NPS): +17

- 40% Promoters (score 9-10)
- 37% Passives (score 7-8)
- 23% Detractors (score 0-6)
- This indicates moderate loyalty but room for improvement

NPS Score Key

0 to 30 - Generally considered "acceptable" with more promoters than detractors, but with room for improvement.
 31 to 50 - Indicates a company is valuing and delivering a quality customer experience with a good group of promoters.
 50 to 70 - Shows a company is focusing on customer experience and has a strong base of promoters.
 71 to 100 - Highly desirable, indicating a company is among the best in its industry.

Most Valued Overall Benefits

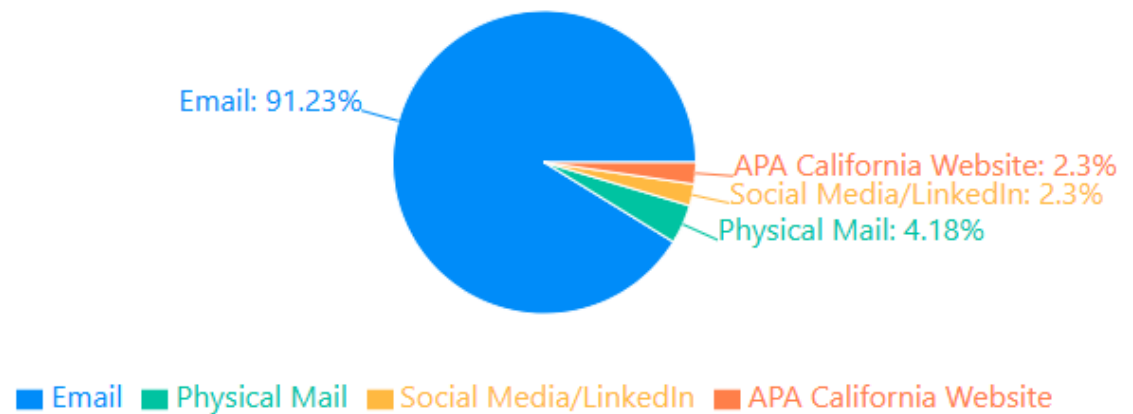
Legislative Action & Advocacy	86.8%
Online Educational Events	83.5%
Professional Development	79.5%
CM Credits/Certification	72.1%

Least Valued Benefit: Section awards programs

Communication Preferences

Email is overwhelmingly preferred across the membership (91.2%), suggesting this preference likely spans all membership duration categories.

Email	91.2%
Physical Mail	4.18%
Website/Social Media	2.3%



Notable Challenges to National Membership or Member Satisfaction

Cost barriers	80.3%
Value proposition	45.9%

Unexpected Results

1. Despite the digital shift in professional organizations, local in-person educational events (78.8% moderately/very important) remain highly valued
2. Section awards programs have the lowest perceived importance across all benefit categories (50.5% rating as neutral or not important)
3. Only 62.6% of members belong exclusively to APA, showing significant crossover with other professional organizations, notably AEP (15.1%) and ULI (13.8%)
4. Retired member engagement: Multiple comments indicate retired members feel overlooked

Section Data:

Satisfaction

This comparison shows how APA members across different California sections rate their satisfaction with membership:

Sac Valley	77.27% satisfied
San Diego	62.22% satisfied
Central Coast	62.17% satisfied
Orange	62.06% satisfied
Inland Empire	60.97% satisfied
Northern	59.70% satisfied
Central	55.55% satisfied
Los Angeles	54.32% satisfied

Chapter Member Benefit Importance Summary

Across APA California sections, members consistently ranked **CM Credits**, **Professional Development**, and **Legislative Action** as the most valuable benefits. Here's how trends emerge across sections:

- **CM Credits** is the top-ranked benefit in most sections including Central Coast, Los Angeles, Northern, Orange, Sac Valley, and San Diego.
- **Professional Development** ranked highest in Central and Inland Empire and frequently appears in second or third place elsewhere.
- **Legislative Action** is a strong second or third choice in nearly all regions, especially valued in Central, Inland Empire, Northern, and San Diego.

This indicates a statewide appreciation for career development and certification-related services, with legislative advocacy also holding consistent value.

Section Benefits Summary

- **Online educational events** were consistently ranked among the top two most important benefits in every section.
- **In-person educational events** were particularly valued in Sac Valley and Central.
- **Social events and newsletters** generally received lower "Very Important" scores, though still had moderate importance in some regions.
- **Section awards programs** were rarely rated as a top priority, with most regions rating them as moderately or least important.

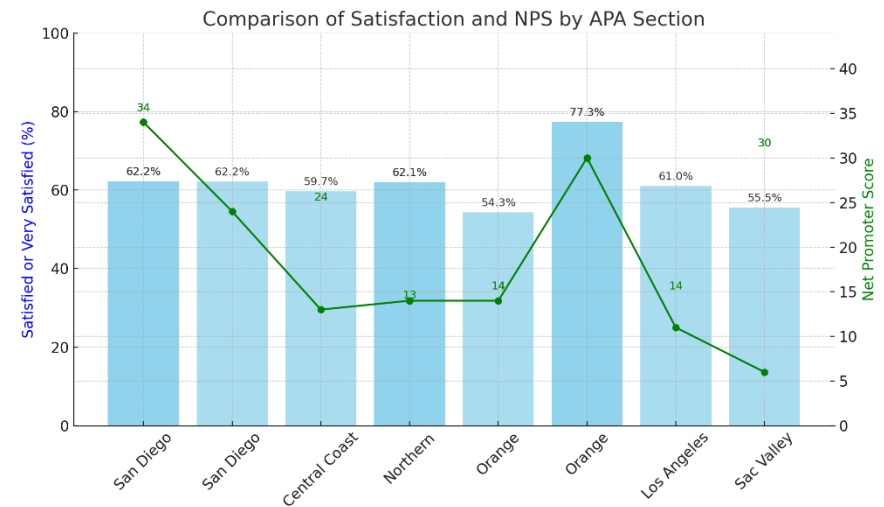
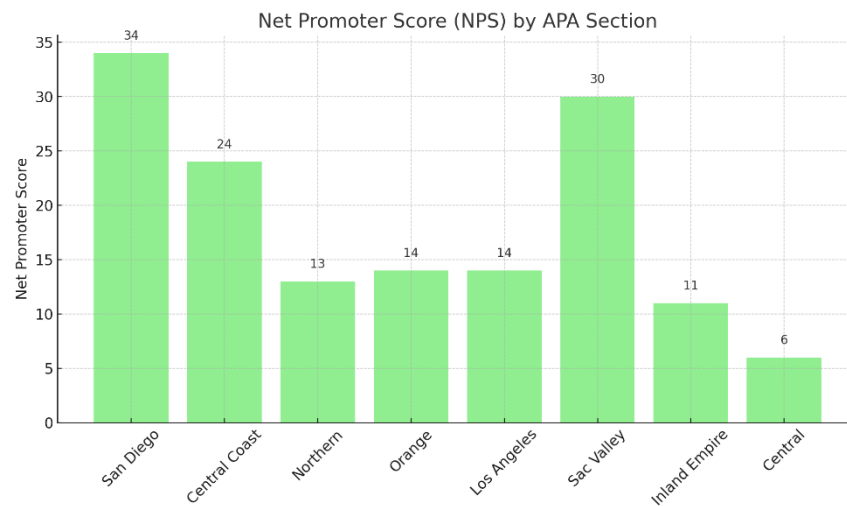
This data suggests a clear preference for **educational programming**, especially in flexible formats like webinars. Networking and recognition-based activities are seen as less critical.

Section	Top Benefit	Top Benefit Importance (%)
Sac Valley	In-person educational events	52.27
San Diego	Online educational events	54.55
Northern	Online educational events	42.41
Central Coast	Online educational events	47.06
Los Angeles	Online educational events	44.87
Inland Empire	Online educational events	54.05
Orange	Online educational events	44.83
Central	In-person educational & social events	44.44

Net Promoter Score Summary

- **San Diego** and **Sac Valley** reported the **highest NPS** values, suggesting strong member loyalty.
- **Central Coast**, **Northern**, and **Orange** fell in the moderate range.
- **Inland Empire** and **Los Angeles** showed **lower NPS**, with more respondents in the Detractor category.
- **Central** had the **lowest NPS** at 6, indicating room for improvement in member satisfaction and engagement.

This aligns with earlier trends showing that high satisfaction with professional and educational benefits often correlates with higher NPS



The chart on the right shows **member satisfaction** (blue bars) with **Net Promoter Scores (NPS)** (green line) across APA California Sections. You can clearly see that:

- **San Diego** and **Sac Valley** stand out with both high satisfaction and high NPS.
- **Central** and **Inland Empire** have the lowest scores on both metrics.
- Some sections like **Orange** and **Los Angeles** show moderate satisfaction but lower NPS, hinting at potential gaps in member enthusiasm or loyalty.