



NATION OF MAKERS

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doi: [10.5281/zenodo.5165209](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5165209)

► **CSCCE Community Profile**

CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH: **Wilson Center**

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Nation of Makers is a national nonprofit supporting maker organizations in the US. Launched in 2016, they connect maker organizations and facilities (or makerspaces) in order to enhance their impact on local and national policy development and advocacy. Members are encouraged to share resources, best practices for generating funding, and engagement strategies, with a view to ensuring broad access to the creative and practical benefits of making. Nation of Makers programming is designed to engage makers and maker organizations in a variety of settings, from urban centers to rural communities. Members are able to connect virtually, as well as in-person at NOMCON, Nation of Makers annual conference.

► Website: www.nationofmakers.us

KEYWORDS

Paradigms

- CONSERVATION TECH
- CRITICAL MAKING
- DIY BIOLOGY
- OPEN INNOVATION
- OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE
- OPEN HARDWARE
- OPEN ACCESS
- PARTICIPATORY DESIGN
- COMMUNITY OR CIVIC SCIENCE

Disciplines / skills

- INTERDISCIPLINARY

Programming and goals

- COLLABORATION
- DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
- RESOURCE SHARING
- ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY BASICS



Approximately 200 active organizations (of which approximately 50 are supporting members) with a broader reach of more than 2000 maker organizations



Mostly online with some in-person events



Mostly national with some limited international participation



Open - anyone can join

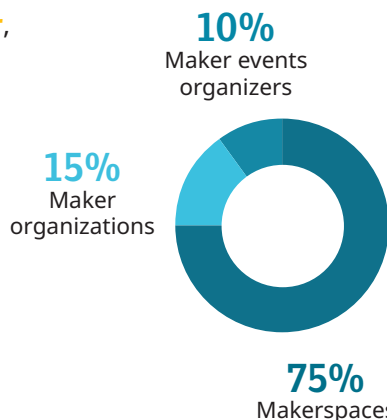
COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Community Management

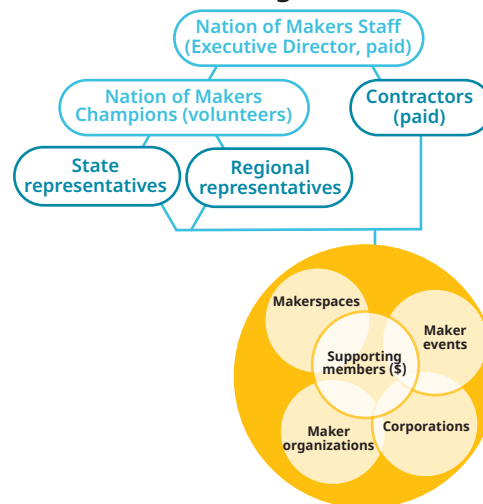
Community management is provided by the **Executive Director**, who spends ~0.25 FTE of their fulltime role supporting 5-10 **volunteers** who do community management tasks.



Members



Community Configuration





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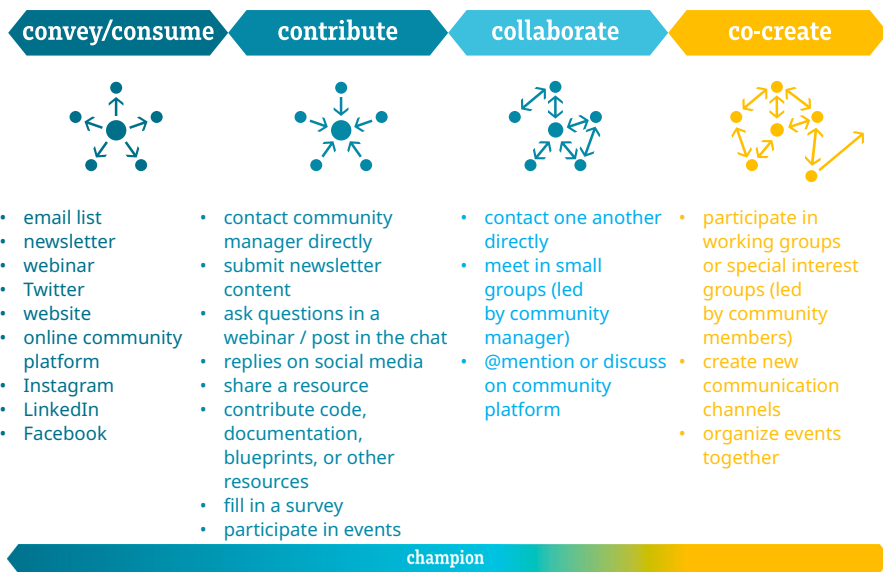
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PROGRAMMING

In-person programming includes the annual convening (NOMCON), the annual Capitol Hill Maker Faire, and the annual National Week of Making. Virtually, there is a monthly newsletter, quarterly all-community calls, the BIPOC Makers Collective, regular working group meetings (members can start and join working groups; which meet weekly or monthly), an active Slack community, and two Facebook groups (a state representative group and a makerspace organizer's group). The community also conducts an annual survey of makerspaces.



THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MODEL

The CSCCE Community Participation Model describes four modes of member engagement that can occur within a community – CONVEY/CONSUME, CONTRIBUTE, COLLABORATE, and CO-CREATE – and one that can occur both inside and outside of it: CHAMPION. All modes may be present at once, with some members interacting in multiple modes – or a community may have member engagement that falls into only some of the modes described. The model enables the mapping of community member behaviors to programming and other infrastructural support that the community manager, convening organization, or funder may provide to the community.

► For more information, see the [CSCCE community participation model](#).



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Nation of Makers began with an informal champions program to garner “super volunteers” who would extend its mission to particular geographic areas across the US. After an initial pilot of a formal champions program, it transitioned back to an informal volunteer-led champions program, led by participants in the pilot.

i CHAMPIONS take on additional activities to support or advance the community. They are sometimes described as emergent leaders.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p> MAINTAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> act as informal community managers | <p> GROW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reshare the newsletter recruit new members represent the community at external events | <p> EVOLVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate in a focus group or other means of in-depth feedback serve on a steering committee or other advisory role |
|--|---|--|

COMMUNITY TOOLBOX

Communications

Email	Zoom
MailChimp	Slack
Twitter	GitHub
Facebook	LinkedIn
Instagram	Gather

Productivity

Adobe Suite	SurveyMonkey
Google Drive	GitHub

Community platform

Facebook groups	Slack
	Working groups



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OUTPUTS & EVALUATION

Success looks like a diverse, highly collaborative, supportive and supported community of maker organizations that widely share resources, best practices, and knowledge with one another, and who serve as advocates and champions for the maker movement - demonstrating the impact of the maker movement on a diversity of sectors.



Successes over the last year

The community's role in coordinating the fabrication of over 48 million pieces of PPE and medical supplies for the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with Open Source Medical Supplies, Find the Masks, Accenture, the NIH 3D Print Exchange, MatterHackers, America Makes, and Get Us PPE.

- **Growth** - added new working groups
- **Growth** - launched new program or project
- **Growth** - added new members
- **Engagement** - increased activity of members
- **Engagement** - more members acted as champions
- **Activities** - created community outputs together
- **Activities** - an in-person or virtual event
- **Funding** - solidified existing funding stream
- **Value** - external recognition of the community's impact
- **Value** - members expressed recognition of the community's value



Evaluation and Reporting

- Community member interviews
- Community member surveys
- Reports for leadership



Opportunities

(1) Ground the community in equity and promote the growth of a diverse and inclusive Nation of Makers; (2) Expand awareness of Nation of Makers; (3) Grow the Champions program and programming; (4) Increase the advocacy work.

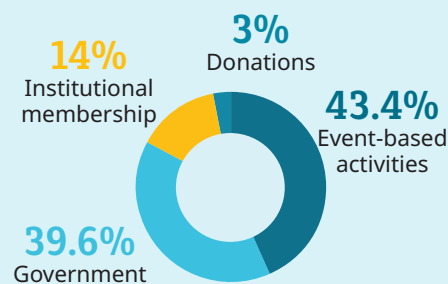
- **Growth** - add new members
- **Engagement** - increase member activity
- **Engagement** - more members acting as champions
- **Activities** - create community outputs together
- **Activities** - host conference(s) / workshops
- **Funding** - secure new funding stream
- **Funding** - solidify existing funding stream
- **Value** - external recognition
- **Value** - more members expressing recognition of the community's value



Challenges

- Financial sustainability
- Too few staff or volunteers
- Increasing diversity
- Lack of clarity about community return on investment

FUNDING



Funding Streams

- 43.4% from event-based activities
- 39.6% from a government subcontract
- 14% from institutional membership dues
- 3% from donations

Members can apply for **travel stipends** to attend Nation of Maker events and **funding for small projects**, depending on funds available.

ABOUT THIS PROFILE

This profile is part of a research project conducted by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement (CSCCE) in collaboration with the [Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Wilson Center](#). You can find out more about the project, and view more community profiles, [on the CSCCE website](#).

Information for this profile was submitted by Dorothy Jones-Davis, Executive Director.

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