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New Faunalytics Study Reveals Nearly Half of Paid Animal Advocates Have Experienced Discrimination or Harassment in their Work

The study of animal advocates in North America found that organizations should focus on retaining advocates by addressing problems with leadership, burnout, harassment, and career support.

Olympia, Wash. (July 22, 2020) — [Faunalytics](#), a national nonprofit that provides research, analysis, and strategies for animal advocates and organizations, has released a new study that explores why some animal advocates leave organizations or the animal protection movement, while others remain involved over time.

Researchers surveyed 161 current and former advocates and found that the majority of them were satisfied with most areas of their work. However, there is room for improvement in areas such as leadership, burnout, harassment, and career support to improve advocates' experiences and increase retention.

Key findings of the [Advocate Retention Report](#) include:

- **85% of respondents had left at least one animal advocacy organization in the past, staying a median of 2.3 years within each organization.** Reasons for leaving included problems with leadership (40%), finding a better opportunity (35%), not wanting to do a particular type of advocacy anymore (27%), or burnout (21%).
- **Among paid animal advocates**, up to 25% experienced compassion fatigue and/or overly demanding work, up to one third were not satisfied with aspects of their organization's leadership such as fairness and transparency, and more than one third were not happy with their pay, opportunities for training, and career advancement.
- **Among unpaid animal advocates**, 25% did not feel understood by supervisors, one-third did not feel they received enough training, and more than 50% did not feel they received career advancement opportunities.
- **49% of paid advocates and 28% of unpaid advocates reported experiencing at least one instance of discrimination, unfair treatment, harassment, bullying, or abuse in an animal advocacy context in the past five years.** Advocates who are members of marginalized groups including people of color, people with disabilities,

LGBTQ+ advocates, and female and non-binary advocates were particularly likely to report experiences of harassment, abuse, or discrimination.

While the results offer a starting point for examining opportunities for improvement, they must be interpreted with caution. For example, Black advocates were underrepresented in the sample while paid advocates and those within top-down advocacy groups were overrepresented. This means the results are likely more representative of privileged experiences, further highlighting how much work is needed to facilitate racial equity and inclusion within animal advocacy.

“As a movement, we’re only effective if we prioritize and support the well-being of all advocates, paid and unpaid. In this study, we found that the majority of advocates are satisfied with their work, but there are some fundamental issues that need addressing to keep our movement and advocates flourishing,” **said Dr. Jo Anderson, Research Director at Faunalytics and the study’s lead author.** “In particular, we need to focus on creating a safer environment for underrepresented advocates. It’s not enough to have an anti-discrimination and harassment policy in place; movement leaders must work proactively to create an equitable and self-reflective community benefitting all advocates, especially those who are members of marginalized groups.”

This study is the latest addition to Faunalytics’ original research collection, which prioritizes high-impact studies that help build capacity for members of the animal protection community. Faunalytics’ mission is to empower animal advocates with access to research, analysis, strategies, and messages that improve their effectiveness for animals. A list of upcoming and previous original studies can be found [here](#).

To access the full Advocate Retention report, visit <https://faunalytics.org/advocate-retention/>.

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About Faunalytics

Faunalytics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that empowers animal advocates with access to research, analysis, strategies, and messages that improve their effectiveness to reduce animal suffering. For more than 20 years, Faunalytics has conducted and disseminated original research that delves into essential animal advocacy issues. Faunalytics also houses the world’s largest collection of opinion and behavior research on animals and offers pro-bono support to other animal advocacy organizations looking to increase their impact. Animal Charity Evaluators has rated Faunalytics a standout charity since 2015. For more information, visit www.faunalytics.org.