Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative

SupportWise Workforce Data Summary for Reporting Period July 1, 2023–December 31, 2023

February 2024   Prepared for Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative Coordinating Council and Stakeholders

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On Disabilities / Rhode Island College

BHDDH
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
HOPE
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES & HOSPITALS

COMMUNITY
PROVIDER NETWORK
OF RHODE ISLAND

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions** | INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION | UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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The University of Minnesota stands on *Miní Sóta Makhóčhe,* the rightful homelands of the *Dakhóta Oyáte.* We recognize the U.S. did not uphold its end of these land treaties. It is the current and continued displacement of the *Dakhóta Oyáte* that allows the University to remain today.

Ongoing oppression and discrimination in the United States has led to significant trauma for many people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and other oppressed persons. At ICI, we affirm our commitment to address systemic racism, ableism and all other inequalities and forms of oppression to ensure inclusive communities.

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Introduction

Access to consistent, competent direct support professionals is a crucial need to support the objectives of community living and employment for people with disabilities. Direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors (FLSs) provide essential services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) which allows them to live, work, socialize with family and friends, and succeed in their communities. DSPs provide supports that meet individual needs related to daily living, household tasks, health, work, social connections, and other aspects of community living (Bogenschutz et al., 2014). FLSs' principal role is providing direction and guidance to the work of DSPs; however, they often provide notable direct support to persons with IDD, too.

High vacancy and turnover rates and short tenure among direct support professionals have been documented across the country (National Core Indicators Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, NCI-IDD, 2023). High turnover rates coupled with high stress levels for the direct support workforce have been unrelenting (Bogenschutz et al., 2014; Houseworth et al., 2020; PHI, 2021), all worsening during the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-standing workforce issues, including financial and work, were also exacerbated (Sheppard-Jones et al., 2022). Feasible and effective strategies to improve workplace support and well-being are imperative to stabilize the workforce.

Background

Rhode Island's history exemplifies the trends in the broader history of the services and supports for individuals who have intellectual or developmental disability – trends including a focus on increasing awareness of the capabilities of these individuals, changing expectations for their increased rights and choices and inclusion and participation in their communities, and developing practices and implementing systems that support those practices. In 2013, after several years of underfunding and decreased services, the Department of Justice conducted an investigation which resulted in a consent decree in 2014. The consent decree mandated the expectation that all individuals with IDD be employed and empowered to participate in community integrated settings – that they can make choices that allow them to live their best lives. An addendum to the consent decree was implemented in September 2023.

Over the last few years, one of the measures used to demonstrate progress regarding the development and promotion of effective models for providing service and supports is the collection and reporting of key workforce data that address workforce stability in the State of Rhode Island.

The purpose of this report is to summarize key workforce data findings for the reporting period July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, identify trends across time points where available and identify specific data points of concern and actions that can be taking to

address the problems. This report should provide the RISWI Coordinating Council benchmark and trend data to monitor progress. It should also provide the standing RISWI work groups (data & reporting, marketing & recruitment, policy guidance & worker voice, selection & retention, and training & professional development) with prioritized actions to consider in their work. Finally, it should help identify for BHDDH focused areas of investment for ongoing workforce development activities that will reduce turnover and vacancy rates.

Methodology and Data Analysis

Survey Instrument

The state of Rhode Island, in conjunction with the Human Services Research Institute, created a modified Rhode Island version of the National Core Indicator (NCI-IDD)© State of the Workforce (SoTW) Survey which has been providing the data needed by the court monitor to satisfy requirements of the consent decree. This survey was reviewed and approved by the court monitor and the data workgroup.

Data Collection and Analysis

The SupportWise data portal, developed by the University of Minnesota's Direct Support Workforce Solutions group, is a tool for employers to collect, enter, track, and report data around key workforce indicators (e.g., staffing, recruitment and retention, wages, benefits, and other workforce indicators) to inform their efforts to address workforce stability within their organization. It also allows for employers to compare their results to key National Core Indicator (NCI-IDD)© State of the Workforce (SoTW) benchmarks. For Rhode Island, SupportWise also incorporated the modified RI SoTW survey items needed by the court monitor.

During January 2024, DD providers across the state of Rhode Island collected and reported their workforce data using the SupportWise data portal. The University of Minnesota aggregated the data and submitted results to the court monitor for his reporting.

Respondents

Respondents included 34 DD provider organizations participating across Rhode Island. Organizations represented are listed below:

- AccessPoint RI
- Action Based Enterprises Inc.
- Agape Homes of Rhode Island LLC
- Avatar Residential Inc.
- Community Living of Rhode Island Inc
- Community Residences Inc.
- Corliss Institute Inc.
- Easterseals Rhode Island Inc.
- Frank Olean Center
- Gateways to Change Inc.
- Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island
- J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center
- James L. Maher Center
- Justice Resource Institute
- Kaleidoscope Family Solutions Rhode Island Inc.
- Living in Fulfilling Life Environments Inc. (LIFE)
- Looking Upwards Inc.
- Life Connections/Becket Academy
- Opportunities Unlimited for People with Differing Abilities
- Perspectives Corporation
- ReFocus Inc.
- Rhode Island Community Living and Supports (RICLAS)
- Seven Hills Rhode Island
- Spurwink|RI
- The Arc of Blackstone Valley
- The Arc of Bristol County Inc./proAbility
- The COVE Center Inc./The Groden Network
- The Fogarty Center
- Town of Coventry Project FRIENDS
- United Cerebral Palsy of Rhode Island (UCPRI)
- West Bay Residential Services Inc.
- Whitmarsh House
- Work Inc.
- Work Opportunities Unlimited Contracts Inc.

Results

Results are provided in aggregate form. Each of the participating organizations have access to their unique data.

Organization Profile(s)

Provision of Residential Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided residential supports to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 12/31/23. Sixty-eight percent of organizations reported providing residential supports. Thirty-two percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving residential supports, 12% 1-10 adults with IDD, 3% 11-20 adults with IDD, 24% 21-50 adults with IDD, 18% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 12% 100-499 adults with IDD.

Do you provide residential supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	23	68%
No	11	32%

How many adults with IDD were receiving residential supports from your agency on 12/31/23?	N	Percentage
0	11	32%
1-10	4	12%
11-20	1	3%
21-50	8	24%
51-99	6	18%
100-499	4	12%

Provision of In-Home Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided in-home supports to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 12/31/23. Sixty-five percent of organizations reported providing in-home supports. Thirty-eight percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving in-home supports, 24% 1-10 adults with IDD, 15% 11-20 adults with IDD, 18% 21-50 adults with IDD, 6% 51-99 adults with IDD, and none 100-499 adults with IDD.

Do you provide in-home supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	22	65%
No	12	35%

How many adults with IDD were receiving in-home supports from your agency on 12/31/23?	N	Percentage
0	13	38%
1-10	8	24%
11-20	5	15%
21-50	6	18%
51-99	2	6%
100-499	0	0%

Provision of Non-Residential Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided non-residential supports to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 12/31/23. Ninety-four percent of organizations reported providing non-residential supports. Nine percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving non-residential supports, 15% 1-10 adults with IDD, 9% 11-20 adults with IDD, 32% 21-50 adults with IDD, 29% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 6% 100-499 adults with IDD.

Do you provide non-residential supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	32	94%
No	2	6%

How many adults with IDD were receiving non-residential supports from your agency on 12/31/23?	N	Percentage
0	3	9%
1-10	5	15%
11-20	3	9%
21-50	11	32%
51-99	10	29%
100-499	2	6%

Adults with IDD Enrolled in Residential, In-Home, and Non-Residential Services

Organizations were asked how many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services on 7/1/23 and 12/31/23. The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 7/1/23 was 2,782 (average = 82 adults with IDD, range 0-315 adults with IDD). The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 12/31/23 was 2,680 (average = 79 adults with IDD, range 6-306 adults with IDD). The difference between the number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential between 7/1/23 and 12/31/23 was -102 (average = -3 adults with IDD) meaning there were 102 fewer adults with IDD (3 on average) enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services on 12/31/23.

How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 7/1/23?	
Total	2,782
Average	82
Range	0-315

How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 12/31/23?	
Total	2,680
Average	79
Range	6-306

Difference between 7/1/23 and 12/31/23 in adults enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services.	
Total	-102
Average	-3

Turning Away or Stop Accepting New Service Referrals

Organizations were asked if they had to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues during 7/1-23-12/31/23. Thirty-five percent of organizations reported they had turned away or stopped accepting new services referrals and 65% had not.

During 7/1/23-12/31/23 did your agency have to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues?	N	Percentage
Yes	12	35%
No	22	65%
No Response	0	0%

Private For-Profit, Private Non-Profit, Government – State/County/Local Government, or Government – Other Government Entity

Organizations were asked if they were private for-profit, private non-profit, or government (state/county/local). Eighteen percent of organizations reported being private a for-profit agency, 76% private non-profit, and 9% government agency (state/county/local).

Is your agency private for-profit, private non-profit, government (state/county/local), or government (other government entity)?	N	Percentage
Private for-profit	6	18%
Private non-profit	26	76%
Government (state/county/local)	3	9%
No response	0	0%

Note: One organization selected both Private non-profit and Government (state/county/local).

Payroll Data

Direct Support Professionals on Payroll

Organizations were asked how many DSPs were on their payroll on 7/1/23 and 12/31/23. The total number of DSPs on payroll on 7/1/23 was 3,013 (range 2-319 DSPs). The total number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 was 3,058 (range 2-316 DSPs). The difference between the number of DSPs on payroll between 7/1/23 and 12/31/23 was 45. The number of organizations reporting <u>fewer</u> DSPs on 12/31/22 than 7/1/22 was 10.

How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 7/1/23?	
Total	3,013
Range	2-319

How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 12/31/23?	
Total	3,058
Range	2-316
Total	10

Difference between 7/1/23 and 12/31/23 on number of DSPs on the payroll.	
Total	45

What was the number of agencies reporting FEWER DSPs on 12/31/23 than 7/1/23?	
Total	10

Direct Support Professional Employment Tenure

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 who were continuously employed for less than 12 months, between 12 and 26 months, and more than 36 months. Organizations reported 26% (range 0% to 73%) of their DSPs on the payroll on 12/31/23 had been continuously employed for less than 12 months, 25% (8% to 100%) between 12 and 36 months, and 49% (0% to 83%) more than 36 months.

How many DSPs on your payroll on 12/31/23 were continuously employed at your organization for:	Overall Percentage	Range
Less than 12 months	26%	0%-73%
Between 12 and 36 months	25%	8%-100%
More than 36 months	49%	0%-83%

Direct Support Professional Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic/Latino, more than one race/ethnicity, another race/ethnicity, and unknown. Organizations reported <1% (range 0% to 3%) identified as American/Alaska Native, 1% (range 0% to 8%) Asian, 38% (0% to 100%) Black/African American, <1% (range 0% to 3%) Pacific Islander, 43% (0% to 100%) White, 10% (range 0% to 50%) Hispanic/ Latino, 3% (0% to 13%) more than one race/ethnicity, <1% (0% to 15%) another race/ethnicity, and 4% (0% to 24%) did not know. Two organizations were unable to provide data on race/ethnicity.

On 12/31/23, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%	0%-3%
Asian	1%	0%-8%
Black/African American	38%	0%-100%
Pacific Islander	<1%	0%-3%
White	43%	0%-100%

On 12/31/23, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
Hispanic/Latino	10%	0%-50%
More than one race/ethnicity	3%	0%-13%
Another race/ethnicity	<1%	0%-15%
Do not know	4%	0%-24%

Note: Two organizations were unable to provide data

Direct Support Professional Gender Identity

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified as male, female, and non-conforming. Organizations reported 34% (8% to 67%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as male, 66% (range 33% to 92%) female, <1% (0% to 1%) non-conforming, and <1% (0% to 1%) unknown. Two organizations were unable to provide gender identity data.

On 12/31/23, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
Male	34%	8%-67%
Female	66%	33%-92%
Non-conforming	<1%	0%-1%
Unknown	<1%	0%-1%

Note: Two organizations were unable to provide data

Direct Support Professional Age

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported 3% (0% to 13%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as 15-20 years of age, 22% (range 0% to 30%) 21-30 years, 24% (5% to 100%) 31-40 years, 18% (range 0% to 32%) 41-50 years, 19% (range 0% to 67%) 51-60 years, 12% (0% to 22%) 61-70 years, 2% (range 0% to 6%) 71 years or more, and 0% (0% to 5%) unknown. Fifteen organizations were unable to provide age group data.

On 12/31/23, how many DSPs were in each of the following age groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
15-20 years	3%	0%-13%
21-30 years	22%	0%-30%
31-40 years	24%	5%-100%
41-50 years	18%	0%-32%
51-60 years	19%	0%-67%
61-70 years	12%	0%-22%
71 + years	2%	0%-6%
Unknown	0%	0%-5%

Note: 15 organizations were unable to provide data

Separations

Direct Support Professional Permanent Separation

Organizations were asked how many DSPs permanently left/separated from their organization during 7/1/23-12/31/23. The total number of DSPs who permanently left/separated from their organization during 7/1/23-12/31/23 was 518 (average = 15 DSPs, range 0-49 DSPs). The overall DSP turnover ratio was 16.9% (range 0% to 67%).

How many DSPs permanently left/ separated from your organization between 7/1/23-12/31/23?	
Total	518
Average	15
Range	0-49

DSP Turnover Ratio	
Overall Percentage	16.9%
Range	0%-67%

Direct Support Professional Tenure Prior to Separating

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently during 7/1/23-12/31/23 who left worked less than 6 months, between 6 and 12 months, between 13 and 36 months, and more than 36 months. Organizations reported 37% (range 0% to 100%) of the DSPs who left/separated permanently worked less than 6 months, 19% (range 0% to 100%) between 6 and 12 months, 23% (range 0% to 100%) between 13 and 36 months, and 20% (range 0% to 50%) more than 36 months.

How many DSPs on your payroll on 12/31/23 left/separated permanently before working the following amount of time?	Overall Percentage	Range
Fewer than 6 months	37%	0%-100%
Between 6 and 12 months	19%	0%-100%
Between 13 and 36 months	23%	0%-100%
More than 36 months	20%	0%-50%

Direct Support Professionals Voluntary/ Involuntary Separation

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently during 7/1/23-12/31/23 who left voluntarily/retired/quit and those whose employment was terminated. Organizations reported 67% (range 0% to 100%) of the DSPs who left/separated permanently left voluntarily/retired/quit, 32% (range 0% to 100%) were terminated, <1% (range 0% to 2%) were laid off (position was eliminated), and 2% (range 0% to 27%) did not know. Two organizations were unable to provide data.

How many DSPs on your payroll on 12/31/23 left/separated permanently under each of the following circumstances:	Overall Percentage	Range
Voluntarily left/retired or quit	67%	0%-100%
Employee was terminated	32%	0%-100%
Laid off (position was eliminated)	<1%	0%-2%
Do not know	2%	0%-27%

Note: Two organizations were unable to provide data

Direct Support Professional Full-time Status

Organizations were asked the minimum number of hours DSPs needed to work to be considered a full-time employee. Thirty-two percent of organizations reported DSPs needed to work a minimum of 30 hours to be considered full-time, 53% 31-29 hours, and 15% 40 hours.

What is the minimum number of hours a DSP needs to work per week to be considered full-time?	Percentage
30 hours	32%
31-29 hours	53%
40 hours	15%

Direct Support Professional Positions and Vacancies

Organizations were asked how many full-time, part-time and on-call DSPs were on their payroll on 12/31/23. They were also asked the number of full-time and part-time vacant positions they had on

12/31/24. The total number of full-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 12/31/23 was 2,289. The number of full-time DSP position vacancies on 12/31/23 was 303. Across all organizations, the total number of full-time vacant positions on 12/31/23 was 2,592. The total number of part-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 12/31/23 was 769. The number of part-time DSP position vacancies on 12/31/23 was 193. Across all organizations, the total number of part-time vacant positions on 12/31/23 was 962. The total number of on-call and/or PRN DSPs who worked at organizations on 12/31/23 was 375, reported by 18 organizations. The total number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 12/31/23 was 3,554. The total number of DSP (full-time + part-time) position vacancies on 12/31/23 was 496. The DSP vacancy rate was 14.0%.

How many full-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 12/31/23?	
Total	2,289

How many full-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 12/31/23?	
Total	303

Total number of full-time DSP positions on 12/31/23.	
Total	2,592

How many part-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 12/31/23?	
Total	769

How many part-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 12/31/23?	
Total	193

Total number of part-time DSP positions on 12/31/23.	
Total	962

How many on-call and/or PRN DSPs were employed by your agency to support adult with IDD on 12/31/23?	
Number of Agencies Reporting	18
Total	375

Total number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 12/31/23.	
Total	3,554

Total number of DSP vacant positions (full-time + part-time) on 12/31/23.	
Total	496

DSP vacancy rate	
Percentage	14.0%

Average DSP starting hourly wage between 7/1/23-12/31/23 for:	
All services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports)	$20.25
Residential supports	$20.29
In-home supports	$20.22
Non-residential supports	$20.23

Average DSP hourly wage between 7/1/23-12/31/23 for:	
All services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports)	$20.82
Residential supports	$21.04
In-home supports	$20.76
Non-residential supports	$20.95

Note: DSP starting hourly wages across all services and settings was reported by 33 organizations, residential by 25 organizations, at-home by 24 organizations, and non-residential by 33 organizations; DSP hourly wages across all services and settings was reported by 33 organizations, residential by 24 organizations, at-home by 24 organizations, and non-residential by 33 organizations

Compensation

Direct Support Professional Wages

Organizations were asked the average DSP starting and hourly wages during 7/1/23-12/31/23 across all services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports) as well as to split wages separately by residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports. The average DSP starting wages across all services and settings was $20.25. It was $20.29 for residential supports, $20.22 for in-home supports, and $20.23 for non-residential supports. The average DSP hourly wage across all services and settings was $20.82. It was $21.04 for residential supports, $20.76 for in-home supports, and $20.95 for non-residential supports.

Direct Support Professional Pay Scales and Differential Pay

Organizations were asked if they used a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs, meaning do starting wages and/or raise calculations differ for part-time versus full-time DSPs? Three organizations reported they used a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs while 29 did not, and 1 organization used a pay differential for DSPs who communicate in languages other than English while 33 did not.

Does your agency use a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs?	N
Yes	3
No	29

Does your agency provide a pay differential for those DSPs who can communicate in language other than English?	
Yes	1
No	33

Note: Two organizations were unable to provide data

Bonuses and Overtime

Direct Support Professional Wage Bonuses

Organizations were asked if they gave wage bonuses to DSPs and if they did, the average amount of the bonus. Wage bonus was defined as a wage compensation supplemental to salary or wages. Bonuses are typically given at intervals less frequent than payroll. Seventy-six percent of organizations reported they gave wages bonuses to DSPs. Eighteen organizations answered about the detail of wage bonuses given to DSPs. Of the DSPs on their payroll on 12/31/23, the total number who received at least one wage bonus was 1,564 (average = 87 DSPs, range = 4-301 DSPs). DSPs. Of wage bonuses given to DSPs at organizations, 1 gave less than $50, 3 gave $201-$300, 3 gave $401-$500, and 10 gave more than $500.

Does your agency give wage bonuses to DSPs?	N
Yes	26
No	8

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 12/31/23, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one wage bonus?	
Agencies that gave bonuses	18
Total	1,564
Average	87
Range	4-301

If your agency gave wage bonuses to DSPs between 7/1/23-12/31/23, what was the average amount for the bonus?	N
Less than $50	1
$50-$100	0
$101-$200	0
$201-$300	3
$301-$400	0
$401-$500	3
More than $500	10

Direct Support Professional Overtime Costs

Organizations were asked their total payroll costs and total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Across 31 organizations, $73,034,925 was the total payroll cost for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. Thirty-three organizations reported $5,621,498 in total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. That is 7.7% of the total payroll. The total unduplicated number of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay was 1,772. This is 58% of all DSPs.

What were your total payroll costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	
Agencies Reporting	31
Total	$73,034,925

What were your total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	
Agencies Reporting	33
Total	$5,621,498
Percent of total payroll	7.7%

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 12/31/23, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay?	
Total	1,772
Percent of all DSPs	58%

Benefits

Paid Time Off

Organizations were asked if they provided any paid time off. If they offered paid time off, more detailed questions were asked about various types of paid time off including pooled paid time off, paid vacation, paid sick time, and paid personal time. Ninety-one percent of organizations provided some form of paid time off to DSPs.

Twenty-six percent of organizations offered pooled paid time off to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Nine organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for pooled paid time off. Four organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 5 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 4 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 3 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Does your organization provide any paid time off?	N	Percentage
Yes	31	91%
No	3	9%

Did your organization offer pooled paid time off to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?		
Yes	9	26%
No	25	74%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for pooled paid time off? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	4
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	5
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	4
All DSPs are eligible	3

Note: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid pooled time off; therefore, responses can total more than the nine organizations reporting.

Paid Vacation Time

Seventy-four percent of organizations offered paid vacation time to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Twenty-five organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid vacation time. Twelve organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 20 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 21 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 9 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Did your organization offer paid vacation time to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	25	74%
No	9	26%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid vacation time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	12
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	20
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	21

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid vacation time? (Check all that apply)	
All DSPs are eligible	9

Note: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid vacation time; therefore, responses can total more than the 25 organizations reporting.

Paid Sick Time

Seventy-six percent of organizations offered paid sick time to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Twenty-six organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid sick time. Eight organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 13 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period, 16 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 18 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Did your organization offer paid sick time to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	26	76%
No	8	24%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid sick time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	8
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	13
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	16
All DSPs are eligible	18

Note: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid sick time; therefore, responses can total more than the 26 organizations reporting.

Paid Personal Time

Fifty-three percent of organizations offered paid personal time to some or all DSPs between 7/1/23-12/31/23. Eighteen organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid personal time. Eight organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 14 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period,

11 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 8 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Did your organization offer paid personal time to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	18	53%
No	16	47%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid personal time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	8
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	14
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	11
All DSPs are eligible	8

Note: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid personal time; therefore, responses can total more than the 18 organizations reporting.

Health (Medical) Insurance

Ninety-one percent of organizations offered health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Thirty-one organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for health (medical) insurance coverage. Nineteen organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 27 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period, 26

required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 8 reported all DSPs were eligible. Across 31 organizations, there were 2,657 DSPs eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage with 1,293 (42% of all DSPs) enrolled in health (medical) insurance coverage through their organization.

Did your organization offer health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	31	91%
No	3	9%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	19
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	27
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	26
All DSPs are eligible	8

During 7/1/23-12/31/23, how many DSPs were eligible for health insurance through your organization?	
Total Agencies Reporting	31
Total DSPs	2,657

During 7/1/23-12/31/23, how many DSPs were enrolled in health insurance through your organization?	
Total	1,293
Percent of all DSPs	42%

Note: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage; therefore, responses can total more than the 31 organizations reporting.

Vision & Dental Coverage

Seventy percent of organizations offered vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Ninety-one percent of organizations offered dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23.

Did your organization offer vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	23	70%
No/No answer	10	30%

Did your organization offer dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?		
Yes	30	91%
No	3	9%

Note: One organization was unable to report vision coverage and dental coverage, respectively.

Retirement Benefits

Eighty-two percent of organizations offered an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Twenty-seven organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for retirement benefits. Seven organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 18 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period, 16 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 15 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Did your organization offer an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	27	82%
No	6	18%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for an employer-sponsored retirement plan? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	7
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	18
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	16
All DSPs are eligible	15

Note: One organization was unable to provide data. Additionally, organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid sick time; therefore, responses can total more than the 27 organizations reporting.

Other Benefits

Ninety-four percent of organizations offered other benefits not previously listed to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23.

Did your organization offer any other benefits to some or all DSPs during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	32	94%
No	2	6%

Recruitment and Retention

Pay Incentive for Referral Bonus

Organizations were asked if they provided a pay incentive or referral bonus for current DSPs to bring in new recruits. Eighty-two percent of organizations reported they offered a pay incentive or referral bonus to current DSP staff to bring in new recruits. Three organizations reported the incentive amount of $151-$200, 14 $201-$500, 10 $501-$1,000, and 1 more than $1,000.

Does your agency offer a pay incentive or referral bonus for current DSP staff to bring in new recruits?	N	Percentage
Yes	28	82%
No	6	18%

What is the incentive or referral bonus amount that current DSPs get to bring in new recruits?	
$1-$50	0
$51-$100	0
$101-$150	0
$151-$200	3
$201-$500	14
$501-$1,000	10
More than $1,000	1
Do not know	0

Note: Six organizations were unable to provide data.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Organizations were asked what recruitment and retention strategies they used to bring in and keep DSP staff. Eighty-five percent of organizations used a realistic job preview for DSP positions, 100% DSP training on a Code of Ethics, 44% DSP ladder to retain highly skilled workers in DSP roles, 62% supporting staff to get credentialed through a state or nationally recognized professional organization, 50% bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of or steps of a credentialing process, 79% employee engagement surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency, 82% employee recognition programs such as initiatives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones, and 35% including DSPs in agency governance.

Which of the following strategies does your agency use to retain and/or recruit staff in DSP positions? (Check all that apply)	
Realistic job preview for DSP positions	85%
DSP training on a Code of Ethics	100%
DSP ladder to retain highly skilled workers in DSP roles	44%
Supporting staff to get credentialed through a state or nationally recognized professional organization	62%
Bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of credentialing process (or steps of a credentialing process)	50%

Which of the following strategies does your agency use to retain and/or recruit staff in DSP positions? (Check all that apply)	
Employee engagement surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency	79%
Employee recognition programs such as initiatives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones	82%
Including DSPs in agency governance	35%

Frontline Supervisors

Organizations were asked the number of frontline supervisors (FLSs) on their payroll on 12/31/23. The total number of FLSs employed across organizations was 310. Half (50%) of organizations reported their FLSs are paid hourly, 38% salaried, and 19% a mix of hourly pay and salaries.

How many frontline supervisors were on your staff on 12/31/23?	
Total	310

Are the frontline supervisors employed by your agency paid hourly wages (and therefore eligible for overtime pay) or are they salaried?	Percentage
All frontline supervisors are paid hourly	50%
All frontline supervisors are salaried	38%
Some frontline supervisors are paid hourly and some are salaried	19%

Note: Two organizations selected both "all are salaried" and "some are hourly, some are salaried".

Overtime

Organizations were asked if FLSs received additional pay/wages for overtime hours during 7/1/23-12/31/23. Fifty-six percent of organizations reported FLSs received additional pay/wages for overtime hours. Organizations were asked the number of hours of overtime paid to FLSs during 7/1/23-12/31/23. The total number of overtime hours paid to FLSs during 7/1/23-12/31/23 was 18,509 (average

= 1,234 hours, range 24-4,496 hours). The number of FLSs who received overtime pay from their organization during 7/1/23-12/31/23 was 152, which was 49% of FLSs.

Did FLSs receive additional pay/wages for overtime hours during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	N	Percentage
Yes	18	56%
No	14	44%

What was the total number of overtime hours your agency paid to frontline supervisors during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	
Total	18,509
Average	1,234
Range	24-4,496

How many frontline supervisors received overtime pay from your agency during 7/1/23-12/31/23?	
Total	152
% of all FLSs	49%

Frontline Supervisor Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic/Latino, more than one race/ethnicity, another race/ethnicity, and unknown. Organizations reported 2% of the FLSs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as American/Alaska Native, 0% Asian, 21% Black/African American, 0% Pacific Islander, 65% White, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 3% more than one race/ethnicity, 0% another race/ethnicity, and 1% were Unknown. Four organizations were unable to provide data on race/ethnicity.

On 12/31/23, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	Overall Percentage
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%
Asian	0%
Black/African American	21%
Pacific Islander	0%

On 12/31/23, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	Overall Percentage
White	65%
Hispanic/Latino	8%
More than one race/ethnicity	3%
Another race/ethnicity	0%
Unknown	1%

Note: Four organizations were unable to provide data

Frontline Supervisor Gender Identity

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified as male, female, non-conforming, and unknown. Organizations reported 21% of the FLSs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as male and 79% female. Three organizations were unable to provide data on gender identity.

On 12/31/23, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	Overall Percentage
Male	21%
Female	79%
Non-conforming	0%
Unknown	0%

Note: Three organizations were unable to provide data

Frontline Supervisor Age

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported 1% of the FLSs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as 15-20 years of age, 14% 21-30 years, 30% 31-40 years, 22% 41-50 years, 20% 51-60 years, 11% 61-70 years, 2% 71 years or more, and 0% unknown. Eighteen organizations were unable to provide age group data.

On 12/31/23, how many FLSs were in each of the following age groups?	Overall Percentage
15-20 years	1%
21-30 years	14%
31-40 years	30%
41-50 years	22%
51-60 years	20%
61-70 years	11%
71 + years	2%

On 12/31/23, how many FLSs were in each of the following age groups?	Overall Percentage
Unknown	0%

Note: 18 organizations were unable to provide data

Emergency and Disaster Planning

Organizations were asked if they had emergency management and/or disaster preparedness plans for potential future evacuations or shelter-in-place orders (for example, those related to hurricanes, fires, or pandemics), and if so, did the preparedness plan include actions to take in the case of potential DSP staffing shortages. Thirty-four (100%) of organizations reported having an emergency management and/or disaster preparedness plan, and of those with a preparedness plan, 85% (29 organizations) said the plan included actions to take in the case of potential DSP staffing shortages.

Does your agency have an emergency management and/or disaster preparedness plan for potential future evacuations or shelter-in-place orders (for example, those related to hurricanes, fires or pandemics)?	N
Yes	34
No	0

Does your agency's emergency management plan and/or disaster preparedness plan include actions to take in case of potential DSP staffing shortages?	
Yes	29
No	5

Workforce Trends

Workforce data have been collected in Rhode Island by the court monitor over the past few years. Prior to the current time period described in this report, data was collected by the court monitor directly from provider organizations. For comparison and trending purposes, we are also presenting data from the last two reporting periods (July-Dec 2022 and Jan-June 2023) collected by the court monitor.

When examining three of the more important workforce metrics (turnover ratio, vacancy rate, and wages), all show trends in the desired direction. The turnover ratio was 20.7% on December 31, 2022, had decreased to 16.6% on June 30, 2023, and remained consistent at 16.9% on December 31, 2023. The vacancy rate was 17.1% on December 31, 2022, remained consistent at 17.5% on June 31, 2023, and decreased again to 14.0% on December 31, 2023. Average starting hourly wages across all services and supports have increased consistently across time. They were $18.87 during July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, and were at $20.25 during July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Average hourly wages across all services and supports have increased consistently over time as well. They were $18.94 during July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, and were at $20.82 during July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

	Historic data (collected via direct submission to court monitor) *		Current time period (collected via SupportWise data portal)
	July – Dec 2022	Jan – June 2023	July – Dec 2023
# Agencies Reporting	32	32	34
Number of agencies that turned away referrals because of DSP staffing issues	20 (63%)	13 (41%)	12 (35%)
Total number of DSPs	2,771^	3,015	3,058
Difference in 6 months	-55	+58	-102
Number of separations	573	503	518
Turnover ratio (separations/ number of DSPs)	20.7%^^	16.6%	16.9%
Total full-time DSP positions	2,328	2,464	2,592
Total part-time DSP positions	903	1,136	962
Full-time DSP vacancies	324	389	303
Part-time DSP vacancies	152	242	193
Total vacancies	476	631	496
Vacancy rate (vacancies/number of DSP positions)	17.1%^^^	17.5%	14.0%
Average starting wage	$18.87	$18.43	$20.25
Average hourly wage	$18.94	$18.97	$20.82
% of total salary overtime	6.7%	10.8%	7.7%
% of DSPs receiving overtime	63%	64%	58%
DSPs eligible for health insurance	1,966	NA	2,657 (89% of all DSPs)
DSPs enrolled in Health Insurance	1,089	NA	1,293 (49% of eligible DSPs)
Total Number Supervisors	326	323	310
% Supervisors Receiving Overtime	59%	47%	49%

* NOTE: this is historic data collected by the court monitor directly from provider organizations.

^ NOTE. Wrong number here. This was the number of people receiving services, not the number of DSPs.

^^ NOTE: This is wrong because the wrong denominator was used. Calculation with correct denominator gives 22.3%.

^^^ NOTE: Wrong formula used (used total number of DSPs as denominator; should be total number of DSP positions), also was the wrong number in the number of DSPs.

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions**

Implications of Findings

For the Developmental Disability System

While there is high demand for services in Rhode Island, there is simply more demand than can be met by current provider organizations. When asked if they had to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues, 35% reported they had turned away or stopped accepting new services referrals during the reporting period. The inability to accept new service recipients, even when services are authorized and funded, is an indication of the need to invest heavily in creating pipelines for new entrants into the disability field. Consideration should be given to building pipelines in K-12 educational programs, post-secondary educational programs, displaced worker programs, organizations in Rhode Island that support immigrant populations, volunteer programs, and various community resources such as faith-based organizations and service organizations.

For Direct Support Professionals

Data provided by the organizations in Rhode Island identified the average tenure of their direct support professionals at a point in time (12/31/23). Slightly under one half had more than three years tenure with 26% being there less than 12 months and 25% between 12 and 36 months. The nature of the role DSPs play in the lives of people with IDD is relationship based and it takes time to get to know a person and establish a positive relationship with them. Slight-

ly over one quarter of DSPs hired in RI are not even in their positions for one year. There is no way that any DSP lasting less than one year truly has time to get to know a person to whom they provide supports. This means that more than one quarter of DSPs are not able to provide true person centered supports to people with IDD who receive services in Rhode Island. It is a strong indication that there needs to be focused intervention designed to increase retention of these early leavers.

Early turnover is the most expensive type of turnover. Money is invested into the process of recruiting, hiring, and on-boarding a DSP only to have them leave within the first 6 or 12 months. Rhode Island organizations reported that over one-third (37%, range 0% to 100%) of the DSPs who left/separated permanently as of 12/31/23 had worked less than 6 months with an additional 19% (range 0% to 100%) having only worked between 6 and 12 months. These numbers are comparable with national turnover numbers: 41.1% who left employment with their organization had been employed for less than 6 months and 21.2% between 6 and 12 months (NCI-IDD, 2023). There are a few reasons why DSPs leave their jobs early. The most common are 1) that they really didn't understand the job they applied for and took it without knowing what it was going to be like, 2) they do not receive sufficient onboarding and initial training to have the skills to do their jobs, 3) lack of or insufficient supervision that supports, guides, and directs their work until they feel comfortable in their roles, and 4) existing long-term direct support professionals are resistant to new entrants and are not supportive or helpful because they suspect the new person will not last in their position and see no need to invest their time and attention. A well-designed statewide realistic job preview should assist with reducing early turnover due to unmet expectations. Interventions should also be employed at the organizational level to target early turnover including FLSs competency-based training, enlisting peer mentors to support new hires, and designing and implementing effective orientation and onboarding practices.

There are some interesting trends related to the demographic make-up of the direct support workforce in Rhode Island that should be noted. Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 12/31/23 who identified as male, female, and non-conforming. Thirty-four percent of the DSPs on the payroll on 12/31/23 identified as male. This is high compared to other states and the national data (25%; NCI-IDD, 2023) and is an indication that em-

ployers are having more success in finding males to join this workforce. Effective strategies used across the state to recruit and retain men into the workforce should be shared. It is also important to note that 14% of DSPs are very close, at, or beyond retirement age. This is a significant percentage when added to the turnover rates. Employers should plan in advance for filling these positions before retirements actually occur.

The average DSP vacancy rate in Rhode Island was 14.0% in this reporting period. This number is much improved having been 17.1% in December 2022. It is also better than the national average 15.3% for full-time DSPs and 17.9% for part-time DSPs in 2022 (NCI-IDD, 2023).

The average DSP turnover ratio was 16.9%. This number is much improved having been 20.7% in December 2022. It is also better than the national average of 40.9% for DSPs in 2022 (NCI-IDD, 2023). While the turnover ratio for Rhode Island is improving, it is still burdensome as every time a DSP leaves and has to be replaced is costly. Furthermore, vacancies are caused by turnover and when there are vacancies, existing DSPs often are asked to work overtime. Based on the thirty-three organizations that reported overtime expenses during this reporting period, $5,621,498 in total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD were paid out. That is 7.7% of their total payroll. Expecting existing staff to fill vacancies can result in burnout and during this reporting period 58% of all DSPs in Rhode Island worked overtime.

Of particular interest related to the turnover rate in Rhode Island is the point in time that DSPs left the organization and why they left. Thirty-seven percent of DSPs left within the first 6 months of hire. However, more concerning is that of DSPs who left/separated permanently during 7/1/23-12/31/23, 32% (range 0%-100%) were terminated. This is a very high percentage of the departing staff and is an indication that employers are not doing a good job of selecting employees who are the best fit for the job, but instead are too often just hiring to fill a vacancy. This is an important statewide point of intervention to teach employers effective, research-informed selection practices.

There has been tremendous progress in increasing wages over the past two years in Rhode Island. Organizations were asked the average DSP starting and hourly wages during 7/1/23-12/31/23 across all services and settings. The average DSP starting wage across all services and settings was $20.25. It was

$20.29 for residential supports, $20.22 for in-home supports, and $20.23 for non-residential supports. The average DSP average hourly wage across all services and settings were $20.82. It was $21.04 for residential supports, $20.76 for in-home supports, and $20.95 for non-residential supports. There are not significant differences in the starting and average wages paid to DSPS based on the type of service setting in which they work. Additionally, there is little difference between the average starting and average hourly wage of DSPs. There are two important observations that employers and state policy makers need to consider based on this data. First, there is significant wage compression between new hires and long-term employees. This can bring negativity to organizational culture and result in disengagement of long-term employees who feel slighted when new hires make almost as much as they do. Second, the similarity of wages irrespective of setting and service type limits career pathways and professional development within organizations. Often the intensity of support needs, hours worked based on service type, knowledge and skills required, amount of autonomy, and other differences across service settings/types can offer career pathways and professional development opportunities for DSPs so they can grow and develop while staying in their beloved role as a DSP. The compression issues identified in this data restrict these opportunities and promote frustration and disengagement of long-term DSPs.

Of the organizations that reported data about benefits (31) there were 2,657 DSPs (89% of all DSPs) eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage with 1,293 (49% of eligible DSPs) enrolled in health (medical) insurance coverage through their organization. This means that while they might be eligible for health benefits, only 42.0% of all eligible DSPs actually sign up for and utilize this benefit, meaning 58% of DSPs who are eligible do not have health insurance through their employer. This finding is unacceptable, especially when we know that DSPs have significant health and well-being issues. It is important for the state and employers to find out where DSPs get health insurance and to better understand why they are not using employer-offered health insurance benefits.

Organizations were asked about the various interventions they currently use to find, choose, and keep good DSPs. There were three evidence-based interventions that 50% or fewer organizations reported they used. Two were related to creating career paths (only 44%) and providing bonuses/stipends/raises

for DSPs who complete a credentialling process (only 50%). These two interventions are important retention strategies that help to develop skills through opportunities to professionally develop and be rewarded financially for this achievement. The other intervention not used widely (only 35%) related to including DSPs in aspects of agency governance such as being on advisory boards, serving as members of work groups and ethics committees, attending and presenting to boards of directors, etc. These types of opportunities give longer-term DSPs a sense of importance, belonging, and contribution to their organization and offer opportunities to develop professionally.

For Frontline Supervisors

There is inconsistency across Rhode Island in how the roughly 310 frontline supervisors are paid by their employers. Of those reporting data, half (50%) of organizations reported their FLSs are paid hourly, 38% salaried, and 19% a mix of hourly pay and salaries. Organizations were also asked to report if FLSs received additional pay/wages for overtime hours they work. Fifty-six percent of organizations reported FLS received additional pay/wages for overtime hours. Frontline supervisors are working substantial numbers of hours beyond full-time. Between 7/1/23-12/31/23 the total number of overtime hours paid to FLSs during was 18,509 (average = 1,234 hours per organization, range 24-4,496 hours). The number of FLS who received overtime pay from their organization during this same period was 152, which was 49% of FLSs. The primary job duty of FLSs is to guide, support, and direct the work of DSPs. When they have to work so many hours doing direct support themselves, it reduces the amount of dedicated time they have to actually supervise DSPs which contributes to turnover when DSPs do not feel well supported or well trained to do their job.

There are differences in demographics of FLSs compared to DSPs. There are fewer male FLSs and fewer FLSs from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds compared to DSPs. This finding is important as too often the only mobility DSPs have within organizations is promotion to FLS positions. These vast differences in the demographic makeup of FLSs may unintentionally send messages to men and persons of color that they may not be considered for promotion because of their demographics. Organizations should be intentional about diversifying their FLS staff to avoid disproportionality. It is also important

to note that 13% of FLSs are very close, at, or beyond retirement age. Employers need to plan for these retirements by preparing interested DSPs to assume FLS roles when they open.

Longitudinal Trends

Over time, the response rate of organizations in Rhode Island providing data has improved. For this reporting period 100% (34) of organizations provided data and now have access a dashboard in the SupportWise data portal which allows them to monitor trends and compare their individual organizational data to national benchmarks.

There has been significant reduction in the number of organizations that turned away referrals due to staffing issues. In 2022, 63% of reporting organizations said they had to turn away new referrals compared to 35% in this reporting cycle. The number of DSPs has increased since 2022 from 2,771 to 3,058. While this is a positive change, it is still troubling that 35% of provider organizations cannot meet the new demand for services which likely means people with IDD who have authorized services will still not be able to get them until more DSPs can be found, trained, and retained.

Both turnover and vacancy rates have gone down. The turnover ratio at the end of 2022 was 20.7% and is now 16.9%, and vacancy rates in 2022 were 17.1% and are now 14.0%. Starting and average wages have also significantly increased since December 2022 with starting wages going from $18.87 in 2022 to $20.25 in this reporting period and average hourly wages moving from $18.94 in 2022 to $20.82. While wages have increased, wage compression is glaring, and efforts need to be made to intentionally set wage structures that significantly reward years of service.

Conclusion

Many of the key workforce metrics show encouraging trends. The turnover ratio decreased by more than 5% over the last year to 16.9% and the vacancy rate also decreased notably. Both average starting and hourly wages have increased. But there is still much work to do at system and organizational levels to keep these key indicators moving in the right direction.

It is also important to note that there is no data in this report representing employers in self-directed services. Efforts are underway to build and pilot workforce data collection in these services within Rhode Island and through the SupportWise data portal in future years of the RISWI.

These results are being shared widely with all interested stakeholders. The RISWI Coordinating Council and related work groups will use this and future data to ensure their efforts are on track and effective. The next data collection via the SupportWise data portal in Rhode Island will occur in July 2024 and will cover the reporting period 1/1/24-6/30/24.

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