Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative

SupportWise Workforce Data Summary and Implications
for Reporting Period January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024

October 2024

Prepared for the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative
Coordinating Council and Community Collaborators.

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 intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors (FLSs) provide essential services and support to people with IDD, which allows them to live, work, socialize with family and friends, achieve their personal goals, and succeed in their communities. DSPs provide support that meets 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 to provide direction and guidance to the work of DSPs; however, they also provide a lot of direct support to persons with IDD.

High vacancy and turnover rates and short tenure among direct support professionals have been well-documented across the United States (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. The combined efforts of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BDDHD), Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPNRI), Paul V Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College (RIC), Department of Labor and Transportation Rhode Island, providers, persons with IDD and their families, as well as other community collaborators have united to address and make improvements in the retention of the direct support workforce in RI. This is the second report related to the outcomes of these combined efforts in RI.

Background

Rhode Island's history exemplifies the trends in the broader field of services and support for individuals who have an intellectual or developmental disability. These trends include a focus on increasing awareness of the capabilities of persons with IDD, changing expectations for their increased rights and choices, inclusion and participation in their communities, and developing systems and services that support these desired outcomes. In 2013, after several years of underfunding and decreased services, the Department of Justice conducted an investigation that resulted in the 2014 Consent Decree which mandated the expectation that all individuals with IDD be employed and empowered to participate in community integrated settings and that they make choices that allow them to live their best lives. An addendum to the Consent Decree was implemented in 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 support 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 January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024, identify trends across time points where available, and identify specific data points of concern and actions that can be taken to address the problems. This report provides the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative (RISWI) Coordinating Council and other key community collaborators connected to the workforce with benchmark and trend data to monitor progress.

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, is a tool for provider agency employers to collect, enter, track, and report data around key workforce indicators (e.g., staffing, recruitment and retention, wages, benefits, and more) to inform their efforts to address workforce stability within their organization. It also allows employers to compare their results to key National Core Indicator (NCI-IDD)© State of the Workforce (SoTW) benchmarks. For RI, SupportWise also incorporates the modified RI SoTW survey items needed by the court monitor.

During July 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 the results to the Court Monitor. This report provides further analyses and offers discussion of the issues, progress made and recommendations moving forward.

Respondents

Respondents included 33 of the 34 DD provider organizations (97%) participating across Rhode Island. The organizations represented are listed below:

1. AccessPoint RI
2. Action Based Enterprises Inc.
3. Agape Homes of Rhode Island LLC
4. Avatar Residential Inc.
5. Community Living of Rhode Island Inc.
6. Community Residences Inc.
7. Corliss Institute Inc.
8. Easterseals Rhode Island Inc.
9. Frank Olean Center
10. Gateways to Change Inc.
11. Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island
12. J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center
13. James L. Maher Center
14. Justice Resource Institute
15. Kaleidoscope Family Solutions Rhode Island Inc.
16. Living in Fulfilling Life Environments Inc. (LIFE)
17. Looking Upwards Inc.
18. Opportunities Unlimited for People with Differing Abilities
19. Perspectives Corporation
20. ReFocus Inc.
21. Rhode Island Community Living and Supports
22. Seven Hills Rhode Island
23. Spurwink|RI
24. The Arc of Blackstone Valley
25. The Arc of Bristol County Inc./proAbility
26. The COVE Center Inc./The Groden Network
27. The Fogarty Center
28. Town of Coventry Project FRIENDS
29. United Cerebral Palsy of Rhode Island (UCPRI)
30. West Bay Residential Services Inc.
31. Whitmarsh House
32. Work Inc.
33. Work Opportunities Unlimited Contracts Inc.

Results

Results are provided in aggregate form. Each of the participating organizations also has access to their unique data within the SupportWise data portal.

Organization Profile(s)

Provision of Residential Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided residential support to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 6/30/24. Seventy percent of organizations reported providing residential support. Thirty percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving residential support, 9% 1-10 adults with IDD, 6% 11-20 adults with IDD, 21% 21-50 adults with IDD, 27% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 6% 100-499 adults with IDD.

Table 1. Organizations that provide residential services by number and percentage.

Do you provide residential supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	23	70%
No	10	30%

How many adults with IDD were receiving residential supports from your agency on 6/30/24?	N	Percentage
0	10	30%
1-10	3	9%
11-20	2	6%
21-50	7	21%
51-99	9	27%
100-499	2	6%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Provision of In-Home Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided in-home support to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 6/30/24. Sixty-one percent of organizations reported providing in-home support. Forty-one percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving in-home support, 22% 1-10 adults with IDD, 16% 11-20 adults with IDD, 13% 21-50 adults with IDD, 6% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 3% 100-499 adults with IDD.

Table 2. Organizations that provide in-home support by number and percentage

Do you provide in-home supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	20	61%
No	13	39%

How many adults with IDD were receiving in-home supports from your agency on 6/30/24?	N	Percentage
0	13	41%
1-10	7	22%
11-20	5	16%
21-50	4	13%
51-99	2	6%
100-499	1	3%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Provision of Non-Residential Supports

Organizations were asked if they provided non-residential support to adults with IDD, and if so, to how many adults with IDD on 6/30/24. Non-residential supports were defined as supports provided in a day program, community program or work setting (e.g., adult day services, employment or vocational services, community supports). Ninety-seven percent of organizations (32 out of 33) reported providing non-residential support. Three organizations reported offering non-residential supports, but having 0 adults with IDD receiving those supports at the end of the reporting period. Six percent of organizations reported having 1-10 adults with IDD receiving non-residential supports, 12% 11-20 adults with IDD, 36% 21-50 adults with IDD, 30% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 3% 100-499 adults with IDD.

Table 3. Organizations that provide non-residential services by number and percentage

Do you provide non-residential supports to adults with IDD?	N	Percentage
Yes	32	97%
No	1	3%

How many adults with IDD were receiving non-residential supports from your agency on 6/30/24?	N	Percentage
0	4	12%
1-10	2	6%
11-20	4	12%
21-50	12	36%
51-99	10	30%
100-499	1	3%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

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 1/1/24 and 6/30/24. The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 1/1/24 was 2,651 (average = 80 adults with IDD, range 0-306 adults with IDD). The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 6/30/24 was 2,697 (average = 82 adults with IDD, range 1-302 adults with IDD). The difference between the number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential between 1/1/24 and 6/30/24 was +46 (average = +2 adults with IDD) meaning there were 46 <u>more</u> adults with IDD (2 on average) enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services on 6/30/24.

Table 4. Total number of adults with IDD enrolled in services by type

How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 1/1/24?	
Total	2,651
Average	80
Range	0-306

How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 6/30/24?	
Total	2,697
Average	82

How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 6/30/24?	
Range	1-302

Difference between 1/1/24 and 6/30/24 in adults enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services.	
Total	+46
Average	+2

Note: 33 organizations provided data

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 1/1/24-6/30/24. Thirty-three percent of organizations reported they had turned away or stopped accepting new services referrals and 67% had not.

Table 5. Organizations turning away or not accepting referrals by number and percentage

During 1/1/24-6/30/24 did your agency have to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues?	N	Percentage
Yes	11	33%
No	22	67%
No Response	0	0%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

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 a private for-profit agency, 76% private non-profit, and 6% government agency (state/county/local).

Table 6. Organization profit or government status

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	25	76%
Government (state/county/local)	2	6%
No response	0	0%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Payroll Data

Direct Support Professionals on Payroll

Organizations were asked how many DSPs were on their payroll on 1/1/24 and 6/30/24. The total number of DSPs on payroll on 1/1/24 was 3,062 (range 3-316 DSPs). The total number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/24 was 3,210 (range 3-340 DSPs). The difference between the number of DSPs on payroll between 1/1/24 and 6/30/24 was +148. The number of organizations reporting <u>fewer</u> DSPs on 6/30/24 than 1/1/24 was 9.

Table 7. Number of DSPs on payroll between 1/1/24 and 6/30/24

How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 1/1/24?	
Total	3,062
Range	3-316

How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 6/30/24?	
Total	3,210
Range	3-340

Difference between 1/1/24 and 6/30/24 on number of DSPs on the payroll.	
Total	+148

What was the number of agencies reporting FEWER DSPs on 6/30/24 than 1/1/24?	
Total	9

What was the number of agencies reporting MORE DSPs on 6/30/24 than 1/1/24?	
Total	21

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Employment Tenure

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/24 who were continuously employed for less than 12 months, between 12 and 26 months, and more than 36 months. Organizations reported 29% (range 0% to 100%) of their DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/24 had been continuously employed for less than 12 months, 24% (range 0% to 84%) between 12 and 36 months, and 47% (range 0% to 80%) more than 36 months.

Table 8. Overall percentage and range regarding the number of DSPs on payroll

How many DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24 were continuously employed at your organization for:	Overall Percentage	Range
Less than 12 months	29%	0%-100%
Between 12 and 36 months	24%	0%-84%
More than 36 months	47%	0%-80%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/24 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 2%) identified as American/Alaska Native, 1% (range 0% to 8%) Asian, 34% (range 0% to 91%) Black/African American, <1% (range 0% to 3%) Pacific Islander, 41% (range 0% to 100%) White, 10% (range 0% to 36%) Hispanic/Latino, 3% (range 0% to 33%) more than one race/ethnicity, <1% (range 0% to 10%) another race/ethnicity, and 10% (range 0% to 100%) did not know. One organization was unable to provide data on race/ethnicity.

Table 9. Percentage of DSPs by racial and ethnic groups

On 6/30/24, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	Overall Percent	Range	RI 2020 Census
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1%	0%-2%	<1%
Asian	1%	0%-8%	4%
Black/African American	34%	0%-91%	6%
Pacific Islander	<1%	0%-3%	<1%
White	41%	0%-100%	71%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	0%-36%	17%
More than one race/ethnicity	3%	0%-33%	9%
Another race/ ethnicity	<1%	0%-10%	9%
Do not know	10%	0%-100%	n/a

Note: 32 organizations provided data

When compared to RI state demographics (US Census 2020, https://dlt.ri.gov/labor-market-information/ data-center/census-data) there are fewer Asian, White, and Hispanic/Latino DSPs than would be expected, and more DSPs who identify as more than one race/ethnicity or another race/ethnicity when compared to the total population in RI. Additionally, there are far more DSPs who are Black/African-American and whose race and ethnicity are unknown by their employer when compared to RI statewide demographic data.

Direct Support Professional Gender Identity

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/24 who identified as male, female, and non-conforming. Organizations reported 33% (range 9% to 67%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/24 identified as male, 64% (range 0% to 91%) female, 0% non-conforming, and 3% (range 0% to 100%) unknown.

Table 10. Percentage of DSPs by gender identity

On 6/30/24, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
Male	33%	9%-67%
Female	64%	0%-91%
Non-conforming	0%	n/a
Unknown	3%	0%-100%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Age

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/24 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported 3% (range 0% to 13%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/24 were 15-20 years old, 24% were 21-30 years old (range 0% to 100%), 23% were 31-40 years old (range 0% to 100%), 18% were 41-50 years old (range 0% to 55%), 17% were 51-60 years old (range 0% to 34%), 10% were 61-70 years old (range 0% to 24%), 2% were 71+ years old (range 0% to 5%), and 3% (range 0% to 100%) unknown. Five organizations were unable to provide age group data.

Table 11. Percentage of DSPs by age group

On 6/30/24, how many DSPs were in each of the following age groups?	Overall Percentage	Range
15-20 years	3%	0%-13%
21-30 years	24%	0%-100%
31-40 years	23%	0%-100%
41-50 years	18%	0%-55%
51-60 years	17%	0%-34%
61-70 years	10%	0%-24%
71 + years	2%	0%-5%
Unknown	3%	0%-100%

Note: 5 organizations were unable to provide data

Separations

Direct Support Professional Permanent Separation

Organizations were asked how many DSPs permanently left/separated from their organization between 1/1/24-6/30/24. The total number of DSPs who permanently left/separated from their organization between 1/1/24-6/30/24 was 485 (average = 15 DSPs, range 0-68 DSPs). The DSP turnover ratio was 15.1% (range 0% to 42%).

Table 12. DSP separations and turnover ratio

How many DSPs permanently left/ separated from your organization between 1/1/24-6/30/24?	
Total	485
Average	15
Range	0-68

DSP Turnover Ratio	
Overall Percentage	15.1%
Range	0%-42%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Tenure Prior to Separating

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently between 1/1/24-6/30/24 who left worked less than 6 months, between 6 and 12 months, between 13 and 36 months, and more

than 36 months. Organizations reported 42% (range 0% to 100%) of the DSPs who left/separated permanently worked less than 6 months, 20% (range 0% to 100%) between 6 and 12 months, 22% (range 0% to 100%) between 13 and 36 months, and 16% (range 0% to 85%) more than 36 months.

Table 13. DSP tenure prior to separation by percentage and range

How many DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24 left/separated permanently before working the following amount of time?	Overall Percentage	Range
Less than 6 months	42%	0%-100%
Between 6 and 12 months	20%	0%-100%
Between 13 and 36 months	22%	0%-100%
More than 36 months	16%	0%-85%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professionals Voluntary/ Involuntary Separation

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently between 1/1/24-6/30/24 who left voluntarily/retired/quit and those whose employment was terminated. Organizations reported 65% (range 0% to 100%) of the DSPs who left/separated permanently left voluntarily/retired/quit, 34% (range 0% to 100%) were terminated, 0% were laid off (the position was eliminated), and 1% (range 0% to 100%) did not know.

Table 14. DSP separation by type

How many DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24 left/separated permanently under each of the following circumstances?	Overall Percentage	Range
Voluntarily left/retired or quit	65%	0%-100%
Employee was terminated	34%	0%-100%
Laid off (position was eliminated)	0%	--
Do not know	1%	0%-100%

Note: 32 organizations provided 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-eight percent of organizations reported DSPs needed to work a minimum of 30 hours to be considered full-time, 53% 31-39 hours, and 9% 40 hours.

Table 15. requirements for DSP full time status

What is the minimum number of hours a DSP needs to work per week to be considered full-time?	Percentage
30 hours	38%
31-39 hours	53%
40 hours	9%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Positions and Vacancies

Organizations were asked how many full-time, part-time and on-call DSPs were on their payroll on 6/30/24. They were also asked the number of full-time and part-time vacant positions they had on 6/30/24. The total number of full-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/24 was 2,387. The number of full-time DSP position vacancies on 6/30/24 was 270. Across all organizations, the total number of full-time positions on 6/30/24 was 2,657. The total number of part-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/24 was 823. The number of part-time DSP position vacancies on 6/30/24 was 164. Across all organizations, the total number of part-time vacant positions on 6/30/24 was 987. The total number of on-call and/or PRN DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/24 was 304, reported by 15 organizations. The total number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/24 was 3,644. The total number of DSP (full-time + part-time) position vacancies on 6/30/24 was 434. The DSP vacancy rate was 11.9%.

Table 16. Number of full-time and part-time DSPs by position and vacancies

How many full-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 6/30/24?	
Total	2,387

How many full-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 6/30/24?	
Total	270

Total number of full-time DSP positions on 6/30/24.	
Total	2,657

How many part-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 6/30/24?	
Total	823

How many part-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 6/30/24?	
Total	164

Total number of part-time DSP positions on 6/30/24.	
Total	987

How many on-call and/or PRN DSPs were employed by your agency to support adult with IDD on 6/30/24?	
Number of agencies reporting	15
Total	304

Total Number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/24.	
Total	3,644

Total Number of DSP vacant positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/24.	
Total	434

DSP Vacancy Rate	
Percentage	11.9%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Compensation

Direct Support Professional Wages

Organizations were asked the average DSP starting and hourly wages between 1/1/24-6/30/24 across all services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports). They were also asked to split wages separately by residential support, in-home support, and non-residential support. The average DSP starting hourly wage across all services and settings was $20.69. It was $20.78 for residential support, $20.59 for in-home support, and $20.50 for non-residential support. The average DSP hourly wage across all services and settings was $21.12. It was $21.13 for residential support, $21.21 for in-home support, and $21.16 for non-residential support.

Table 17. DSP average starting and average wage by setting type

What was the average DSP starting hourly wage between 1/1/24-6/30/24:	Average	Range
For all services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential support)	$20.69	$20.00-$27.30
Residential support	$20.78	$20.00-$28.90
In-home support	$20.59	$20.00-$24.50
Non-residential support	$20.50	$20.00-$24.50

What was the average DSP hourly wage between 1/1/24-6/30/24 for:	Average	Range
For all services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports)	$21.12	$20.00-$24.18
Residential supports	$21.13	$20.00-$24.05
In-home support	$21.21	$20.00-$24.53
Non-residential support	$21.16	$20.00-$24.53

Note: DSP starting hourly wages across all services and

settings was reported by 31 organizations, residential by 25 organizations, at-home by 22 organizations, and non-residential by 29 organizations; DSP hourly wages across all services and settings was reported by 31 organizations, residential by 25 organizations, at-home by 22 organizations, and non-residential by 29 organizations

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. Two out of 32 organizations that responded to this question reported they used a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs while 30 did not. Two out of 33 organizations that responded reported that they used a pay differential for DSPs who communicate in languages other than English while 31 did not.

Table 18. Organization use of DSP pay scales and differentials

Does your agency use a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs?	**N**
Yes	2
No	30

Does your agency provide a pay differential for those DSPs who can communicate in language other than English?	
Yes	2
No	31

Note: 32 and 33 organizations provided data, respectively

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 percent of organizations reported they gave wage bonuses to DSPs. Of the 23 organizations who reported that they offered bonuses to DSPs, only 18 provided the details of wage bonuses given to DSPs. Of the DSPs on their payroll on 6/30/24, the total number who received at least one wage bonus was 1,467 (average = 92 DSPs, range = 3-309 DSPs) DSPs. Of wage bonuses given to DSPs at organizations, 0 gave less than $50, 1 gave $50-$100, 3 gave $101-$200, 2 gave $201-$300, 1 gave $301-$400, 2 gave $401-$500, and 8 gave more than $500.

Table 19. Use of DSP bonuses

During 1/1/24-6/30/24, did your agency give any wage bonuses to DSPs?	**N**
Yes	23
No	10

If yes, did your organization offer an employee referral bonus to current DSPs for bringing in new recruits?	
Yes	17
No	1

If yes, did your organization offer newly hired DSPs a monetary hiring bonus?	**N**
Yes	4
No	12

If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for performance recognition?	**N**
Yes	4

If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for performance recognition?	N
No	12

If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for years of service?	N
Yes	4
No	12

If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for reasons other than employee referrals, hiring, performance recognition, or years of service?	N
Yes	8
No	8

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one wage bonus?	N
Agencies reporting	17
Total	1,467
Average	92
Range	3-309

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one wage bonus?	N
Less than $50	0
$50-$100	1
$101-$200	3
$201-$300	2
$301-$400	1
$401-$500	2
More than $500	8

Note: 33, 18, 16, and 17 organizations provided data, respectively

Organizations that Gave Wage Bonuses to DSPs versus Those that Did Not

Additional analyses were performed to see if there were differences in vacancy and turnover rates between those organizations that gave wage bonuses to DSPs (N=23) and those that didn't (N=10). Results are shown below.

Table 20. Differences in turnover and vacancy rates by bonus status

Wage Bonus	N	Turnover Rate %	Turnover Rate Range	Vacancy Rate %	Vacancy Rate Range
Yes	23	15%	0%-42%	10%	0%-50%
No	10	14%	0%-25%	18%	0%-50%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

The turnover rate was similar for organizations that did and did not provide wage bonuses (15% vs 14%). However, those organizations providing wage bonuses had a significantly lower vacancy rate compared to those that didn't provide them (10% vs. 18%).

Direct Support Professional Overtime Costs

Organizations were asked about their total payroll costs and total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD from 1/1/24-6/30/24. Across the 30 organizations that provided this data, $64,197,467 was the total payroll cost for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. Thirty-one organizations reported $5,085,908 in total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. This is 7.9% of the total payroll. The total unduplicated number of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay was 1,770. This is 55% of all DSPs.

Table 21. Organizational DSP payroll and overtime costs

What were your total payroll costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	
Agencies reporting	30
Total	$64,197,467

What were your total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	
Agencies reporting	31
Total	$5,085,908
Percent of total payroll	7.9%

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/24, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay?	
Total	1,770
Percent of all DSPs	55%

Note: 30, 31, and 32 organizations provided data, respectively

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-seven percent of organizations provided some form of paid time off to DSPs.

Twenty-seven percent of organizations offered pooled paid time off to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24. Nine organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for pooled paid time off. One organization required DSPs to be working full-time, four required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time over a defined period of time, three required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and three reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 22. DSP paid time off

Does your organization provide any paid time off?	N	Percentage
Yes	32	97%
No	1	3%

Did your organization offer pooled paid time off to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?		
Yes	9	27%
No	24	73%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for pooled paid time off? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	1
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	4
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	3
All DSPs are eligible	3

Note: 33 organizations provided data; 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-six percent of organizations offered paid vacation time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24. Twenty-five organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid vacation time. Ten organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 19 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 20 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 10 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 23. DSP paid vacation time

Did your organization offer paid vacation time to some or all DSPs between 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N	Percentage
Yes	25	76%
No	8	24%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid vacation time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	10
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	19
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	20
All DSPs are eligible	10

Note: 33 organizations provided data; Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid vacation time off; therefore, responses can total more than the 25 organizations reporting

Organizations that Offered Paid Vacation Time to DSPs versus Those that did not

Additional analyses were performed to see if there were differences in vacancy rates and turnover between those organizations that offered paid vacation time to DSPs (N=25) and those that didn't (N=8). Results are shown below.

Table 24. Difference in vacancy and turnover rates based on DSP paid vacation time

Offered Paid Vacation Time	N	Turnover Rate %	Turnover Rate Range	Vacancy Rate %	Vacancy Rate Range
Yes	25	15%	0%-29%	12%	0%-50%
No	8	15%	7%-42%	11%	<1%-27%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Both the turnover and vacancy rates were similar for organizations that did and did not offer paid vacation time to their DSPs (turnover rate - 15% vs. 15%; vacancy rate - 12% vs. 11%).

Paid Sick Time

Eighty-eight percent of organizations offered paid sick time to some or all DSPs between 1/1/24-6/30/24. Twenty-nine organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid sick time. Five organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 14 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 16 required DSPs to be employed at their

agency for a certain length of time, and 19 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 25. DSP paid sick time

Did your organization offer paid sick time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N	Percentage
Yes	29	88%
No	4	12%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid sick time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	5
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	14
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	16
All DSPs are eligible	19

Note: 33 organizations provided data; Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid sick time off; therefore, responses can total more than the 29 organizations reporting.

Organizations that Offered Paid Sick Time to DSPs versus Those that Did Not

Additional analyses were performed to see if there were differences in vacancy rates and turnover between those organizations that offered paid sick time to DSPs (N=29) and those that didn't (N=4). Results are shown below.

Table 26. Difference in vacancy and turnover rates based on DSP paid sick time

Offered Paid Sick Time	N	Turnover Rate %	Turnover Rate Range	Vacancy Rate %	Vacancy Rate Range
Yes	29	15%	0%-29%	12%	0%-50%
No	4	18%	7%-42%	14%	<1%-27%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

For organizations that offered paid sick time to their DSPs, their turnover rate was lower than those that didn't offer paid sick time (15% vs. 18%). Additionally, those organizations offering paid sick time had a slightly lower vacancy rate compared to those that didn't offer that benefit (12% vs. 14%).

Paid Personal Time

Fifty-five percent of organizations offered paid personal time to some or all DSPs between 1/1/24-6/30/24. Eighteen organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid personal time. Six organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 12 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 13 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 8 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 27. DSP paid personal time

Did your organization offer paid personal time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N	Percentage
Yes	18	55%
No	15	45%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid personal time? (Check all that apply)	
Must be working full-time	6
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	12
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	13
All DSPs are eligible	8

Note: 33 organizations provided data; Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for paid personal time off; therefore, responses can total more than the 18 organizations reporting.

Organizations that Offered Paid Personal Time to DSPs versus Those that Did Not

Additional analyses were performed to see if there were differences in vacancy rates and turnover between those organizations that offered paid personal time to DSPs (N=18) and those that didn't (N=15). Results are shown below.

Table 28. Difference in vacancy and turnover rates based on DSP paid personal time

Offered Paid Personal Time	N	Turnover Rate %	Turnover Rate Range	Vacancy Rate %	Vacancy Rate Range
Yes	18	14%	0%-29%	14%	0%-50%
No	15	17%	0%-42%	9%	0%-27%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

For organizations that offered paid personal time to their DSPs, their turnover rate was slightly lower than those that didn't offer paid personal time (14% vs. 17%). However, those organizations offering paid personal time also had a slightly higher vacancy rate compared to those that didn't offer that benefit (14% vs. 9%).

Health (Medical) Insurance

Ninety-one percent of organizations offered health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs between 1/1/24-6/30/24. Thirty organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for health (medical) insurance coverage. Nineteen organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 26 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 25 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 9 reported all DSPs were eligible. Across 30 organizations, there were 2,555 DSPs eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage with 1,206 (38% of all DSPs) enrolled in health (medical) insurance coverage through their organization.

Table 29. DSP health (medical) insurance access

Did your organization offer health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N
Yes	91% (30/33)
No	9% (3/33)

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 of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	26
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	25
All DSPs are eligible	9

During 1/1/24-6/30/24, how many DSPs were eligible for health insurance through your organization?	
Total agencies reporting	30
Total number of DSPs eligible	2,555
Percent of *all* DSPs eligible	80% (2,555/3,210)

During 1/1/24-6/30/24, how many DSPs were enrolled in health insurance through your organization?	
Total	1,206
Percent of *eligible* DSPs enrolled	47%
Percent of *all* DSPs enrolled	38% (1,206/3,210)

Note: 33 organizations provided data; Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for health (medical) insurance; therefore, responses can total more than the 30 organizations reporting.

Vision & Dental Coverage

Sixty-seven percent of organizations offered vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24.

Eighty-eight percent of organizations offered dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24.

Table 30. Organizations that offer DSPs vision and dental coverage

Did your organization offer vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N	Percentage
Yes	22	67%
No	11	33%

Did your organization offer dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?		
Yes	29	88%
No	4	12%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Retirement Benefits

Eighty-two percent of organizations offered an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs between 1/1/24-6/30/24. Twenty-seven organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for retirement benefits. Six organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 16 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 17 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 13 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 31. DSP retirement benefits

Did your organization offer an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	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	6

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for an employer-sponsored retirement plan? (Check all that apply)	
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	16
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	17
All DSPs are eligible	13

Note: 33 organizations provided data: Organizations were able to select more than one option for requirements to be eligible for an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan); therefore, responses can total more than the 27 organizations reporting.

Other Benefits

Ninety-seven percent of organizations (32 out of 33) offered other benefits not previously listed to some or all DSPs during 1/1/24-6/30/24.

Table 32. Other DSP benefits offered

Other Benefits	N
Offered employer-sponsored short-term disability	8
Offered employer-sponsored long-term disability	10
Offered paid tuition or financial support for post-secondary education	19
Offered childcare benefits or childcare cost reimbursement	2
Offered discounts at community businesses	7
Offered health incentive programs (e.g., gym memberships, yoga, smoking cessation incentives)	9
Offered employer-paid job-related training	23
Offered Flexible Spending Accounts	17
Offered life insurance	29
Offered transportation benefits (e.g. bus pass, parking, carpooling)	7
Offered an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	20

Note: 33 organizations provided data

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 DSP recruits. Eighty-two percent of organizations reported they offered a pay incentive or referral bonus to current DSP staff to bring in new DSP recruits. Two organizations reported the incentive amount of $151-$200, 14 between $201-$500, 9 between $501-$1,000, and 2 more than $1,000.

Table 33. Organization use of referral bonuses

Does your agency offer a pay incentive or referral bonus for current DSP staff to bring in new recruits?	N	Percentage
Yes	27	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	2
$201-$500	14
$501-$1,000	9
More than $1,000	2
Do not know	0

Note: 33 and 27 organizations provided data, respectively

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Organizations were asked what recruitment and re-tention strategies they used to bring in and keep DSP staff. Eighty-five percent of organizations used a real-istic job preview for DSP positions, 100% DSP training on a code of ethics, 45% DSP ladder to retain highly skilled workers in DSP roles, 67% supporting staff to get credentialed through a state or nationally-rec-ognized professional organization, 42% bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of or steps of a credentialing process, 76% employee engage-ment surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency, 85% employee recognition programs such as initia-tives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones, 39% including DSPs in agency governance, and 82% require any training for DSPs above and beyond those trainings required by state regulation.

Table 34. Retention and recruitment strategies used by organizations

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	45%
Supporting staff to get credentialed through a state or nationally recognized professional organization	67%
Bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of credentialing process (or steps of a credentialing process)	42%
Employee engagement surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency	76%
Employee recognition programs such as initiatives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones	85%
Including DSPs in agency governance	39%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Frontline Supervisors

Organizations were asked the number of frontline su-pervisors (FLSs) on their payroll on 6/30/24. The total number of FLSs employed across organizations was 298. Just over half (55%) of organizations reported their FLSs are paid hourly, 29% are salaried, and 16% reported a mix of hourly pay and salaries.

Table 35. Number of frontline supervisors and how they are paid

How many frontline supervisors were on your staff on 6/30/24?	
Total	298

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	55%
All frontline supervisors are salaried	29%
Some frontline supervisors are paid hourly and some are salaried	16%

Note: 33 organizations provided data

Frontline Supervisor Turnover and Vacancy

The average Frontline Supervisor turnover rate during the period of 1/1/24-6/30/24 was 3.5% across 21 reporting organizations (range 0%-20%). The average Frontline Supervisor vacancy rate was 6.3% across 21 reporting organizations (range 0%-50%).

Frontline Supervisor Overtime

Organizations were asked if FLSs received addition-al pay/wages for overtime hours during the period between 1/1/24-6/30/24. Forty-seven 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 1/1/24-6/30/24. The total number of overtime hours paid to FLSs during 1/1/24-6/30/24 was 16,124 (average = 1,152 hours, range 33-3,586 hours). The number of FLS who received overtime pay from their organization during 1/1/24-6/30/24 was 134, which was 45% of FLSs.

Table 36. FLS additional pay for overtime hours

Did FLSs receive additional pay/wages for overtime hours during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	N	Percentage
Yes	15	47%
No	17	53%

What was the total number of overtime hours your agency paid to Frontline Supervisors during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	
Total	16,124
Average	1,152
Range	33 - 3,586

How many frontline supervisors received overtime pay from your agency during 1/1/24-6/30/24?	
Total	134
% of all FLSs	45%

Note: 32, 14, and 28 organizations provided data, respectively

Organizations That Paid Overtime to FLSs Versus Those That Did Not

For those organizations that provided FLS turnover and vacancy data, additional analyses were performed to see if there were differences in FLS turnover rates between those organizations that paid overtime to FLSs (N=10) and those that didn't (N=11). Results are shown below.

Table 37. Difference in turnover and vacancy rates for organizations that pay overtime to FLSs

Paid Overtime	N	FLS Turnover Rate %	FLS Turnover Rate Range	FLS Vacancy Rate %	FLS Vacancy Rate Range
Yes	10	2%	0%-20%	5%	0%-23%
No	11	3%	0%-13%	12%	0%-50%

Note: 21 organizations provided data

The turnover rate was similar for organizations that did and did not pay overtime to FLSs (2% vs. 3%). However, those organizations that paid overtime had a significantly lower FLS vacancy rate compared to those that didn't offer that benefit (5% vs. 12%).

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions**

Frontline Supervisor Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/24 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 6/30/24 identified as American/Alaska Native, 1% Asian, 26% Black/African American, 0% Pacific Islander, 59% White, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 3% more than one race/ethnicity, 0% another race/ethnicity, and 1% were Unknown.

Table 38. Frontline supervisor race and ethnicity

On 6/30/24, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	FLS Overall %	DSP Overall %	RI 2020 Population Census
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	1%	<1%
Asian	1%	1%	4%
Black/African American	26%	34%	6%
Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	<1%
White	59%	41%	71%
Hispanic/Latino	8%	10%	17%
More than one race/ethnicity	3%	3%	9%
Another race/ethnicity	0%	<1%	9%
Unknown	1%	10%	n/a

Note: 30 organizations provided FLS data; 32 organizations provided DSP data

When compared to DSPs, the race and ethnicity of DSP and FLSs are similar, with the exception of there being a much higher percentage of DSPs who are Black or African American and a higher percentage of FLSs who are White. Additionally, a much higher percentage of DSPs have race and ethnicity that is unknown to their employers. Compared to 2020 US Census data (https://dlt.ri.gov/labor-market-information/data-center/census-data) fewer FLSs are Asian, White, Hispanic/Latino, or more than one race/ethnicity or another race/ethnicity than would be expected based on state population demographics. Additionally, there is a higher percentage of FLSs who are Black/African-American when compared to the state population.

Frontline Supervisor Gender Identity

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/24 who identified as male, female, non-conforming, and unknown. Organizations reported 23% of the FLSs on the payroll on 6/30/24 identified as male and 77% as female. Less than 1% were Unknown. When compared to DSPs, there are far fewer male FLSs.

Table 39. FLS gender

On 6/30/24, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	FLS Overall %	DSP Overall %
Male	23%	33%
Female	77%	64%
Non-conforming	0%	0%
Unknown	<1%	3%

Note: 31 organizations provided FLS data; 33 organizations provided DSP data

Frontline Supervisor Age

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/24 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported 0% of the FLSs on the payroll on 6/30/24 were 15-20 years old, 13% were 21-30 years old, 24% were 31-40 years old, 33% were 41-50 years old, 21% were 51-60 years old, 8% were 61-70 years old, <1% were 71+ years old, and 1% unknown. Five organizations were unable to provide age group data. When compared to DSPs, a larger percentage of FLS are above the age of 40 (63% compared to 50%) but more DSPs (10%) are above age 61 when compared to FLS (8%).

Table 40. FLS age

On 6/30/24, how many FLSs were in each of the following age groups?	FLS Overall %	DSP Overall %
15-20 years	0%	3%
21-30 years	13%	24%
31-40 years	24%	23%
41-50 years	33%	18%
51-60 years	21%	17%
61-70 years	8%	10%
71 + years	<1%	2%
Unknown	1%	3%

Note: 5 organizations were unable to provide FLS and DSP 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-three (100%) of organizations reported having an emergency management and/or disaster preparedness plan, and of those with a preparedness plan, 85% (28 organizations) said the plan included actions to take in the case of potential DSP staffing shortages.

Table 41. Organization disaster management plans

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	33
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	28
No	5

Workforce Trends

Workforce data have been collected in RI by the court monitor over the past few years. July – December 2022 and January – June 2023 data were collected by the court monitor directly from provider organizations. Beginning with the July – December 2023 time period, data were collected in the Direct Support Workforce Solution's SupportWise data portal. For comparison and trending purposes, data are presented from July – December 2022 and January -June 2024 collected via both mechanisms.

When examining three of the more important workforce metrics (DSP turnover ratio, vacancy rate, and wages), all show trends in a positive direction. The turnover ratio was 20.7% on December 31, 2022, decreased to 16.6% on June 30, 2023, remained consistent at 16.9% on December 31, 2023, and decreased to 15.1% on June 30, 2024. The vacancy rate was 17.1% on December 31, 2022, remained consistent

at 17.5% on June 30, 2023, decreased again to 14.0% on December 31, 2023, and 11.9% on June 30, 2024. Average starting hourly wages across all services and supports have increased consistently over time. They were $18.87 during July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, $20.25 during July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, and $20.69 during January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024. 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, $20.82 during July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, and $21.12 during January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024.

Additionally, it is important to note that the number of organizations that turned away referrals due to DSP staffing shortages has also decreased from 63% in the July – December 2022 period, to 41% in the January – June 2023 time frame, to 35% between July – December 2023 and down to 33% in the current time period of January 2024 to June 2024.

Table 42. DSP and FLS data trends over time

	Data Collected via Direct Submission to Court Monitor *		Data Collected via SupportWise Data Portal	
	July – Dec 2022	Jan – June 2023	July – Dec 2023	Jan – June 2024 (Current time period)
# Agencies reporting	32	32	34	33
Number of agencies that turned away referrals due to DSP staffing issues	20 (63%)	13 (41%)	12(35%)	11 (33%)
Total number of DSPs	2,771^	3,015	3,058	3,210
Difference in number of DSPs between end of data period and start of data period (6 months)	-55	+58	+45	+148
Number of DSP separations	573	503	518	485
Turnover ratio (separations/number of DSPs)	20.7%^^	16.6%	16.9%	15.1%
Early turnover (% DSP separations within the first 6 months of tenure)	--	--	37%	42%
% of DSP separation due to terminations	--	--	32%	34%
Total full-time DSP positions	2,328	2,464	2,592	2,657
Total part-time DSP positions	903	1,136	962	987
Full-time DSP vacancies	324	389	303	270
Part-time DSP vacancies	152	242	193	164

	Data Collected via Direct Submission to Court Monitor *		Data Collected via SupportWise Data Portal	
	July – Dec 2022	Jan – June 2023	July – Dec 2023	Jan – June 2024 (Current time period)
Total vacancies	476	631	496	434
Vacancy rate (vacancies/number of DSP positions)	17.1%^^^	17.5%	14.0%	11.9%
Average DSP starting wage	$18.87	$18.43	$20.25	$20.69
Average DSP hourly wage	$18.94	$18.97	$20.82	$21.12
% of total DSP salary overtime	6.7%	10.8%	7.7%	7.9%
% of DSPs receiving overtime	63%	64%	58%	55%
DSPs Eligible for Health Insurance	1,966	NA	2,657	2,555 (80% of all DSPs)
DSPs Enrolled in Health Insurance	1,089	NA	1,293	1,206 (47% of eligible DSPs)
Total number of supervisors (FLSs)	326	323	310	298
% supervisors receiving overtime	59%	47%	49%	47%

* 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.

Implications of Findings

Rhode Island's key workforce indicators of turnover ratio, vacancy rate, and wage are on a positive trajectory toward improved stability. The DSP turnover ratio has dropped from 21% in December 2022 to 15% in June 2024 and DSP vacancy rates have dropped from 17% to 12% in that same timeframe. DSP average wages have increased from $18.94 in December 2022 to $21.12 in June 2024 and starting wages in that same period moved from $18.87 to $20.69. Additionally, far fewer providers are turning away referrals due to workforce shortage, this number has fallen from 63% to 33%.

While this is great news, there are still many remaining challenges that need continued attention. These are described below:

1. Increased pay for DSPs is extremely helpful. Yet, it is not the only solution. This is evident by the continued range in turnover ratios, with some providers having 0% DSP turnover and others having a rate of 42% (average at 15%). This is an indication that other things are influencing turnover within provider organizations. These differences are likely a combination of ineffective practices and organizational culture. Additionally, the wage increase, while extremely helpful, has also caused significant wage compression between new entrants into the field and longer-term employers. The difference in DSP entry wage and the average wage is now only 43 cents. Organizations need continued support to best understand their specific challenges and tailor interventions to address them. Building pay increases for DSPs commensurate with increased competence can help reduce this turnover and wage compression. Oftentimes this is paired with completing initial training, gaining a credential, or moving through an established career pathway. Of note, less than half (45%) of all organizations in this reporting period reported that they have an established career ladder, 67% support staff to get credentialed, and 42% provide bonuses, stipends, or raises for completion of a credential. Yet, there is currently no statewide credentialing program with aligned pay increases for completion.

2. Organizations in RI that provide bonuses to their DSPs have lower vacancy rates (10% compared to 18%). It is important to identify the types of bonuses that are most effective and to ensure that all employers of DSPs are aware of this effective strategy.

3. Early turnover continues to be a significant challenge in RI, with 62% of separations happening with DSPs before they reach one year of tenure and 42% leaving within the first six months. This early turnover means that money is being invested into DSPs who leave before they can fully contribute to the organization. Far too many separations are due to terminations. In the most recent data collection cycle, 34% of DSPs who left their positions were terminated. There are three key areas to continue to explore with employers: 1) refining their selection processes to ensure they are carefully reviewing and choosing candidates with the skills needed to be effective in the DSP roles, 2) exploring with employers the reasons for terminations, and 3) identifying any systemic causes of the terminations such as delayed background checks or other obstacles. Additionally, putting selection techniques into place, such as structured behavioral interviewing and correctly using realistic job previews (RJPs), can help select employees who are more likely to stay in their positions. According to the data provided, 85% of RI organizations indicate that they are already utilizing realistic job previews. Continuing to hone that practice, ensuring that the RJPs are used correctly, and using the RI-specific realistic job preview scheduled to be released this year will be helpful.

4. Of significant concern is the low percentage of DSPs enrolled in health insurance programs in RI. While the overwhelming majority of organizations offer insurance to DSPs, only 38% of all DSPs are enrolled in insurance. This is alarming because providing direct care is one of the highest-risk jobs related to injury and workers' compensation. Given the fact that most DSPs in the US are single heads of households, it is highly unlikely they are getting insurance through a spouse or lifetime partner. One cannot assume that DSPs have insurance elsewhere as currently, this is unknown. Benefits do not benefit employees if they do not use them. Finding strategies to bring low-cost health insurance to DSPs in RI remains a priority.

5. It is also important to note that organizations that offer paid sick leave have lower DSP turnover (15%) than those that do not (18%) and their vacancy rates (12%) are also lower than organizations that do not offer this benefit (14%). Additionally, organizations that offered paid personal time off had slightly lower turnover (14%) than organizations that did not offer this benefit (17%). Employers should be encouraged to offer paid sick leave and paid personal time off for DSPs.

6. The direct support workforce is aging. Fifteen percent of the DSP workforce is almost at or beyond retirement age. This is predictable turnover, and data must be collected to identify the number of DSPs who retire each year and to continue to monitor age trends.

7. Vacancy rates have decreased considerably from 17% to 12%. Open positions are often being filled by overtime hours paid to DSPs. This cost over 5 million dollars in the last six-month data collection cycle and comprised 8% of payroll costs during that period. Turnover is costly, and filled vacancies could be diverted to other needs such as bonuses, professional development, or higher wages.

8. Vacancies also result in frontline supervisors filling in for DSP hours. Organizations that paid FLSs overtime were much more likely to have significantly lower FLS vacancy rate compared to those that didn't offer that benefit (5% vs. 12%). That said, every hour that FLSs spend providing direct care reduces the time they can commit to providing coaching and training to DSPs. Reducing the need for FLSs to work direct care will increase the attention they can pay to supporting and retaining DSPs.

9. Less than half (47%) of organizations offered overtime to FLSs. This may change over the next year when the new Department of Labor's Restoring and Extending Overtime Protections rule goes into effect for people who make up to $58,656 annually (US Department of Labor, 2024). Continuing to offer opportunities for frontline supervisors to make more than DSPs is a key retention strategy for this group of employees who often work significantly more than 40 hours each week and can be difficult to recruit and retain. The average Frontline Supervisor turnover rate was 3.5% (range 0%-20%), and the average Frontline Supervisor vacancy rate was 6.3% (range 0%-50%).

10. While the vacancy rate continues to decrease, 33% of reporting organizations still indicated that they had to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues. Continuing to find new marketing opportunities and creating career pathways to entering the direct support workforce on a statewide level will help decrease vacancy rates and increase capacity.

11. This data only represents DSPs employed by provider organizations and does not include DSPs employed by people who self-direct their services. Additionally, this data only represents DSPs who support adults with IDD and is not inclusive of the DSP and FLS workforce that provide services and support children with IDD. The University of Minnesota is working with community collaborators in RI to assist them in developing processes within SupportWise to collect data from self-direction and children's services. This will offer a better understanding of the full picture of DSPs in Rhode Island and continue to support the state and employers to make data-based decisions to better recruit and retain DSPs.

12. Poor or lack of supervision is likely one of the reasons DSPs leave their jobs and may be a contributor to DSP turnover in Rhode Island. Continuing to refine techniques to select, train, and retain the right FLSs for the job will help to improve DSP retention by creating general stability in the workforce and quality of services for people supported. The Supervisor Training Series, sponsored by CPNRI and facilitated by the University of Minnesota Direct Support Workforce Solutions, is an example of best practices in training for supervisors to increase competence.

13. DSPs are more diverse than the general population in RI and their supervisors. It is important for supervisors and managers within provider organizations to be trained in cultural competence and cultural responsive practices.

Ongoing Efforts to Improve Rhode Island Direct Support Workforce Stability

In Rhode Island much activity has occurred to support the needed infrastructure to sufficiently support a sustained and stable direct support workforce. During the past four data collection periods, the

University of Minnesota's Direct Support Workforce Solutions consultants and Sherlock Center workforce coaches continue to provide organizations with support and intensive technical assistance by identifying and implementing workforce strategies that are informed by their organizational data and align with best practices. Eleven organizations have received individualized consultation through the Discovery and Action Planning and Implementation phases beginning in late 2021 and continuing in 2024. As data continue to be available post-implementation of the tailored interventions within the organizations that received intensive TA, it will be enlightening to compare the vacancy and turnover rates between organizations that have implemented intervention plans and those that have not. Supporting organizations to understand their key workforce indicators and implement workforce strategies to address their turnover and vacancy rates through intensive technical assistance, coaching, and training continues.

Twenty-two providers (including the 11 organizations receiving intensive technical assistance) have participated in six webinars on the implementation of specific workforce strategy topics. Webinar topics covered to date include:

- Competency-based training
- Credentialing and career pathways
- Realistic job previews
- Competency-based job descriptions and job analysis
- Employee engagement
- Competency-based skills evaluations and competency-based performance reviews

Two cohorts, consisting of a total of 22 member organizations and 95 supervisors have completed the Foundational Skills in Supervision supervisory training, a collaborative effort between CPNRI, UMN ICI, and DLT. An additional cohort of 66 supervisors is in progress. Of the first two cohorts, 70% said they were more likely to stay at their organization or in their position as a result of the training and 86% of the participants indicated they will perform their job better as a result of the training. Twenty supervisors from eleven provider organizations continued their training and completed a pilot of Advanced Skills in Supervision and DSP Recruitment and Retention. Another cohort is in progress. These 6-month blended learning training series focus on increasing supervisor competence to better support, coach, train, develop, and retain direct support professionals. Additionally, two RI-based trainers employed by

participating provider organizations completed their first year of training to continue to continue training supervisors across Rhode Island.

On a statewide level, the Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative Coordinating Council and corresponding workgroups are developing tools, processes, and recommendations that align with effective workforce practices. The University of Minnesota, in partnership with BHDDH, Sherlock Center, CPNRI, and other key groups in Rhode Island, is supporting the implementation and alignment of these recommendations to provide resources statewide to employers of DSPs and FLSs. The Coordinating Council is chaired by Sherlock Center. The Coordinating Council workgroups are organized along five working topics:

1. Data and reporting
2. Policy and worker voice
3. Marketing and recruitment
4. Selection and retention
5. Training and professional development

Each workgroup is co-led by leaders invested in the RI State Workforce Initiative with support and guidance from Sherlock Center's Workforce Team and Direct Support Workforce Solutions consultants.

The Data and Reporting workgroup has supported the development of SupportWise data collection and the development of a self-direction workforce data approach.

The Marketing and Recruitment workgroup has discussed challenges to hiring direct support professionals and discussed methods of hiring and career pipeline development.

The Selection and Retention workgroup developed competency-based job descriptions, skills assessments, structured behavioral interviewing tools and score guides, stay interviews and surveys, and made recommendations for development of peer mentors. They provided feedback regarding a state-specific Realistic Job Preview.

The Training and Professional Development workgroup developed RI-specific competency sets for DSPs and FLSs and an onboarding and orientation guide for employers.

The Policy Guidance and Worker Voice workgroup developed a recruitment flyer for those connected to the workforce to join the RISWI, conducted listening sessions across Rhode Island, and discussed various methods of communicating with DSPs and other professionals.

All workgroups will continue work into 2025 to continue to support the workforce in RI.

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions**

Conclusion

There are encouraging trends with key workforce outcomes that should be celebrated. These are the result of hard work, strong collaboration, and much-needed time and resources. The turnover ratio decreased by nearly 2% in the last six months to 15.1% (and a total of 6 points since the initial data reporting). The vacancy rate has also decreased notably from 14.0% to 12% in the past six months (and 5 points since the initial data collection). Both average starting and hourly wages have increased from $18.87 to $20.69 and $18.94 to $21.12 respectively. That said, there is much more that can and should be done to continue the momentum and hard work to continue these trends. Ultimately, as this work continues, the hope is that other key workforce indicators continue to improve in all services and supports for persons with IDD irrespective of their age or the types of services they receive. These efforts will ultimately result in improved services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities being supported in the state.

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