



Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative (RISWI)

SupportWise Workforce Data Summary and Implications for Reporting Period January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025

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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

We are at a place and time in the history of community living a stable, competent, and reliable direct support workforce is critically needed. This is true in Rhode Island and every state and territory in the United States. Direct support professionals also rely on stable and competent frontline supervisors (FLSs) who set performance expectations and guide and direct their work. Direct support professionals (DSPs) are essential in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live, work, develop new as well as maintain relationships with family and friends, and have good lives in their communities.

For over 30 years, high turnover and vacancy rates for the direct support profession have been documented in the United States (National Core Indicators Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, NCI-IDD, 2024). These issues and the high stress of the job duties for direct support professionals have been persistent (Hall et al., 2022; Hall et al., 2024; PHI, 2021; Houseworth et al., 2020; Boggenschutz et al., 2014) and will continue to be. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges (Sheppard-Jones et al., 2022). Through the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative, steps have been taken to better understand these workforce challenges specific to Rhode Island and to implement strategies at the employer and state-wide levels to address these challenges. Progress has been made, but these issues

will continue to exist and systems-level support and funding to continue to address these workforce challenges will be essential. There are no easy fixes, and it is imperative to continue to strive toward improving the well-being and stability of direct support professionals in Rhode Island.

Background

The history of community supports in Rhode Island is similar to trends across the country in terms of services and supports for individuals who have intellectual or developmental disability (IDD). These include focusing on the strengths people with IDD have, approaching services in a person-centered way, ensuring rights and choices are recognized, and supporting inclusion and participation in their communities. In 2013 the Department of Justice conducted an investigation in RI, which eventually resulted in the 2014 Consent Decree. This agreement mandated the expectation that all persons with IDD in Rhode Island be employed, empowered to participate in community integrated settings, and make choices that allow them to live their best lives. An addendum to the Consent Decree was implemented in 2023.

The consent decree requires investment in the stabilization of the direct support workforce. Over the last few years, one of the measures used to demonstrate progress regarding the development and promotion of effective models for providing services and supports has been the collection and reporting of key

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workforce data that addresses workforce stability in the state of Rhode Island.

This interim report summarizes key workforce data findings for the reporting period January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025. It identifies trends across time points where available and specific data points of concern. This report also provides the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative (RISWI) Coordinating Council and other key stakeholders connected to the workforce with benchmark and trend data to monitor progress and revisit recommendations that have been implemented to further stabilize the direct support workforce.

Methodology & Data Analysis

Instrumentation, Data Collection & Analysis

The initial instrument used for data collection was developed by the Court Monitor and the state of Rhode Island, in conjunction with the Human Services Research Institute. The initial survey was a modified Rhode Island version of the National Core Indicator (NCI-IDD)© State of the Workforce (SoTW) Survey, which provided the data needed by the Court Monitor every six months to satisfy requirements of the Consent Decree. After several data collection cycles, a decision was made to use SupportWise Data, developed by the University of Minnesota's Direct Support Workforce Solutions team, as a method for employers to enter, track, and report data around key workforce indicators (e.g., staffing, recruitment and retention, wages, benefits, and more). SupportWise Data gathers all required data identified in the Consent Decree plus additional data that is used to inform state and employer efforts to address workforce stability. It also allows employers to compare their results to key National Core Indicator (NCI-IDD)© State of the Workforce (SoTW) benchmarks.

During July 2025, DD providers across the state of Rhode Island collected and reported their workforce data using SupportWise Data. The University of Minnesota aggregated the data and submitted the results to the Court Monitor. This report provides additional detail and an update on activities between January 1, 2025, and June 30, 2025.

Respondents

Respondents included 32 of the 34 DD provider organizations (94%) 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
- Justice Resource Institute
- Kaleidoscope Family Solutions Rhode Island Inc.
- Living in Fulfilling Life Environments Inc. (LIFE)
- Looking Upwards Inc.
- 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 RI
- Whitmarsh House
- Work Inc.
- Work Opportunities Unlimited Contracts Inc.



Results

Results are provided in aggregate form. Each of the participating organizations has access to its own unique data within SupportWise Data. This allows them to monitor progress in both real time and over time.

Agency 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 6/30/25. Sixty-nine percent of organizations reported providing residential supports. Thirty-one percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving residential supports, 3% 1-10 adults with IDD, 9% 11-20 adults with IDD, 19% 21-50 adults with IDD, 29% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 9% 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	22	69%
No	10	31%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

How many adults with IDD were receiving residential supports from your agency on 6/30/25?	N	Percentage
0	10	31%
1-10	1	3%
11-20	3	9%
21-50	6	19%
51-99	9	29%
100-499	3	9%

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 6/30/25. Sixty-three percent of organizations reported providing in-home supports. Forty-one percent of organizations reported having no adults with IDD receiving in-home supports, 22% 1-10 adults with IDD, 12% 11-20 adults with IDD, 19% 21-50 adults with IDD, 6% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 0% 100-499 adults with IDD.

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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	63%
No	12	37%

How many adults with IDD were receiving in-home supports from your agency on 6/30/25?	N	Percentage
0	13	41%
1-10	7	22%
11-20	4	12%
21-50	6	19%
51-99	2	6%
100-499	0	0%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

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 6/30/25. Ninety-seven percent of organizations reported providing non-residential supports. Nine percent of organizations reported having 0 adults with IDD receiving non-residential supports, 6% 1-10 adults with IDD, 9% 11-20 adults with IDD, 41% 21-50 adults with IDD, 26% 51-99 adults with IDD, and 9% 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	31	97%
No	1	3%

How many adults with IDD were receiving non-residential supports from your agency on 6/30/25?	N	Percentage
0	3	9%
1-10	2	6%
11-20	3	9%
21-50	13	41%
51-99	8	26%
100-499	3	9%

Note: 32 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 1/1/25 and 6/30/25. The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 1/1/25 was 2,697 (average = 84 adults with IDD, range 1-314 adults with IDD). The total number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential on 6/30/25 was 2,676 (average = 84 adults with IDD, range 0-314 adults with IDD). The difference between the number of adults with IDD enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services between 1/1/25 and 6/30/25 was -21, (average = -1 adults with IDD), meaning there were 21 fewer adults with IDD (1 on average) enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services on 6/30/25. Use caution with interpretation of this as 1 less organization participated in this round of data collection which can have an impact when total numbers are reported compared to averages.

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

	Total	Average	Range
How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 1/1/25?	2,697	84	1-314
How many adults with IDD were enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services at your agency on 6/30/25?	2,676	84	1-314
Difference between 1/1/25 and 6/30/25 in adults enrolled in residential, in-home, and/or non-residential services.	-21	-1	

Note: 32 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 1/1/25-6/30/25. Thirty-seven percent of organizations reported they had turned away or stopped accepting new service referrals and 63% had not.

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

During 1/1/25-6/30/25 did your agency have to turn away or stop accepting new service referrals due to DSP staffing issues?	N	Percentage
Yes	12	37%
No	20	63%
No Response	0	0%

Note: 32 organizations provided data



Payroll Data

Direct Support Professionals on Payroll

Organizations were asked how many DSPs were on their payroll on 1/1/25 and 6/30/25. The total number of DSPs on payroll on 1/1/25 was 3,133 (range 2-333 DSPs). The total number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/25 was 3,078 (range 2-346 DSPs). The difference between the number of DSPs on payroll between 1/1/25 and 6/30/25 was -55. The number of organizations reporting fewer DSPs on 6/30/25 than 1/1/25 was 14. Use caution with interpretation of this as 1 less organization participated in this round of data collection which can have an impact when total numbers are reported compared to averages.

Table 6. Number of DSPs on payroll

	Total	Range
How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 1/1/25?	3,133	2-333
How many DSPs did you have on your payroll on 6/30/25?	3,078	2-346
Difference between 1/1/25 and 6/30/25 on number of DSPs on the payroll.	-55	
What was the number of agencies reporting LESS DSPs on 6/30/25 than 1/1/25?	14	

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Employment Tenure

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/25 who were continuously employed for less than 12 months, between 12 and 36 months, and more than 36 months. Organizations reported 25% (range 0%-100%) of their DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/25 had been continuously employed for less than 12 months, 29% (range 0%-100%) between 12 and 36 months, and 46% (range 0%-75%) more than 36 months.

Table 7. Overall percentage and range regarding the number of DSPs on payroll

How many DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/25 were continuously employed at your organization for:	Percentage	Range
Less than 12 months	25%	0%-100%
Between 12 and 36 months	29%	0%-100%
More than 36 months	46%	0%-75%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/25 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%-2%) identified as American/Alaska Native, 1% (range 0%-7%) Asian, 39% (range 0%-100%) Black/African American, <1% (range 0%-8%) Pacific Islander, 41% (range 0%-100%) White, 9% (range 0%-50%) Hispanic/Latino, 3% (range 0%-50%) more than one race/ethnicity, 0% another race/ethnicity, and 6% (range 0%-100%) did not know.

Table 8. Percentage of DSPs by racial and ethnic groups

On 6/30/25, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	N	Percentage	Range	RI 2020 Census
American Indian/Alaska Native	21	1%	0%-2%	<1%
Asian	26	1%	0%-7%	4%
Black/African American	1,179	39%	0%-100%	6%
Pacific Islander	6	<1%	0%-8%	<1%
White	1,249	41%	0%-100%	71%
Hispanic/Latino	282	9%	0%-50%	17%
More than one race/ethnicity	83	3%	0%-50%	9%
Another race/ethnicity	0	0%	n/a	9%
Do not know	175	6%	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 and DSPs who identify as more than one race/ethnicity or another race/ethnicity than would be expected, when compared to the total population in RI. There are more DSPs who are Black/African American when compared to RI statewide demographic data.

Direct Support Professional Gender

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/25 who identified as male, female, and non-conforming. Organizations reported 36% (range 0%-71%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/25 identified as male, 62% (range 0%-88%) female, 0% non-conforming, and 2% (range 0%-100%) unknown.

Table 9. Percentage of DSPs by gender identity

On 6/30/25, how many DSPs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	N	Percentage	Range
Male	1,075	36%	0%-71%
Female	1,871	62%	0%-88%
Non-conforming	0	0%	n/a
Unknown	75	2%	0%-100%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Age

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs on payroll on 6/30/25 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported 2% (range 0% to 7%) of the DSPs on the payroll on 6/30/25 were 15-20 years old, 23% (range 5% to 67%) were 21-30 years old, 25% (range 10% to 50%) were 31-40 years old, 20% (range 0% to 33%) were 41-50 years old, 17% (range 0% to 32%) were 51-60 years old, 11% (range 0% to 22%) were 61-70 years old, 2% (range 0% to 6%) were 71+ years old, and 0% unknown. Five organizations were unable to provide age group data.

Table 10. Percentage of DSPs by age group

On 6/30/25, how many DSPs were in each of the following age groups?	N	Percentage	Range
15-20 years	61	2%	0%-7%
21-30 years	670	23%	5%-67%
31-40 years	702	25%	10%-50%
41-50 years	575	20%	0%-33%
51-60 years	482	17%	0%-32%
61-70 years	302	11%	0%-22%
71+ years	66	2%	0%-6%
Unknown	0	0%	n/a

Note: 5 organizations were unable to provide data



Sepations

Direct Support Professional Permanent Separation

Organizations were asked how many DSPs permanently left/separated from their organization during 1/1/25-6/30/25. The total number of DSPs who permanently left/separated from their organization during 1/1/25-6/30/25 was 491 (average = 15 DSPs, range 0-60 DSPs). The DSP turnover ratio was 16.0% (range 0% to 100%).

Table 11. DSP separations and turnover ratio

	Total	Average	Range	Percentage
How many DSPs permanently left/separated from your organization between 1/1/25-6/30/25?	491	15	0-60	
DSP Turnover Ratio			0%-100%	16.0%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Tenure Prior to Separating

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently during 1/1/25-6/30/25 who 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, 18% (range 0% to 67%) between 6 and 12 months, 26% (range 0% to 100%), and 19% (0% to 56%) more than 36 months.

Table 12. DSP tenure prior to separation by

percentage and range

How many DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/25 left/separated permanently before working the following amount of time:	N	Percentage	Range
Less than 6 months	179	37%	0%-100%
Between 6 and 12 months	87	18%	0%-67%
Between 13 and 36 months	129	26%	0%-100%
More than 36 months	95	19%	0%-56%

Note: 29 organizations provided data; 2 organizations had 0% turnover

Direct Support Professionals Voluntary/Involuntary Separation

Organizations were asked the number of DSPs who left/separated permanently during 1/1/25-6/30/25 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, 0% were laid off (position was eliminated), and 1% (range 0%-18%) did not know.

Table 13. DSP separation by type

How many DSPs on your payroll 6/30/25 left/separated permanently under each of the following circumstances:	N	Percentage	Range
Voluntarily left/retired or quit	331	67%	0%-100%
Employee was terminated	157	32%	0%-100%
Laid off (position was eliminated)	0	0%	n/a
Do not know	3	1%	0%-18%

Note: 29 organizations provided data; 2 organizations had 0% turnover

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. Three percent of organizations reported DSPs needed to work a minimum of 20-29 hours to be considered full-time, 35% 30 hours, 56% 31-39 hours, and 6% 40 hours.

Table 14. 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 of organizations
20-29 hours	3%
30 hours	35%
31-39 hours	56%
40 hours	6%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Direct Support Professional Positions & Vacancies

Organizations were asked how many full-time, part-time and on-call DSPs were on their payroll on 6/30/25. They were also asked the number of full-time and part-time vacant positions they had on 6/30/25. The total number of full-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/25 was 2,267. The number of full-time DSP position vacancies on 6/30/25 was 298. Across all organizations, the total number of full-time positions on 6/30/25 was 2,565. The total number of part-time DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/25 was 811. The number of part-time DSP position vacancies on 6/30/25 was 177. Across all organizations, the total number of part-time positions on 6/30/25 was 988. The total number of on-call and/or PRN DSPs who worked at organizations on 6/30/25 was 304. The total number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/25 was 3,553. The total number of DSP (full-time + part-time) position vacancies on 6/30/25 was 475. The DSP vacancy rate was 13.4%.

Table 15. Number of full-time and part-time DSPs by position and vacancies

	Percentage	Number of agencies reporting	Total
How many full-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 6/30/25?			2,267
How many full-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 6/30/25?			298
Total number of full-time DSP positions on 6/30/25?			2,565
How many part-time DSPs worked at your organization (were on the payroll) on 6/30/25?			811
How many part-time DSP position vacancies did your organization have on 6/30/25?			177
Total number of part-time DSP positions on 6/30/25.			988
How many on-call and/or PRN DSPs were employed by your agency to support adult with IDD on 6/30/25?	32		304
Total number of DSP positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/25.			3,553
Total number of DSP vacant positions (full-time + part-time) on 6/30/25.			475
DSP vacancy rate	13.4%		

Note: 32 organizations provided data



Compensation

Direct Support Professional Wages

Organizations were asked the average DSP starting and hourly wages during 1/1/25-6/30/25 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 hourly wages across all services and settings was \$20.87 (range \$20.00 to \$25.00). It was \$20.75 (range \$20.00 to \$22.92) for residential supports \$20.77 (range \$20.00 to \$22.92) for in-home supports, and \$20.96 (range \$20.00 to \$25.00) for non-residential supports. The average DSP hourly wages across all services and settings was \$21.77 (range \$20.00 to \$26.00), \$21.79 (range \$20.00 to \$26.00) for in-home supports, and \$21.83 (range \$20.00 to \$26.00) for non-residential supports.

Table 16. DSP average starting and average wage by setting type

What was the average DSP starting hourly wage between 1/1/25-6/30/25 for:	Range	Range
All service and settings (residential supports, in home supports, and non-residential supports)	\$20.87	\$20.00-\$25.00
Residential supports	\$20.75	\$20.00-\$22.92
In-home supports	\$20.77	\$20.00-\$22.92
Non-residential supports	\$20.96	\$20.00-\$25.00

What was the average DSP hourly wage between 1/1/25-6/30/25 for:	Range	Range
All services and settings (residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports)	\$21.77	\$20.00-\$26.00
Residential supports	\$21.77	\$20.00-\$26.00
In-home supports	\$21.79	\$20.00-\$26.00
Non-residential supports	\$21.83	\$20.00-\$26.00

Note: DSP starting hourly wages across all services and settings was reported by 31 organizations, residential by 25 organizations, at-home by 24 organizations, and non-residential by 31 organizations; DSP hourly wages across all services and settings was reported by 32 organizations, residential by 25 organizations, at-home by 23 organizations, and non-residential by 32 organizations

Direct Support Professional Pay Scales & Differential Pay

Organizations were asked if they used a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs, and for DSPs who communicate in a language other than English. Two organizations reported they used a different pay scale for full-time and part-time DSPs, while 30 did not. Two organizations used a pay differential for DSPs who communicate in languages other than English, while 30 did not.

Table 17. 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 languages other than English?	N
Yes	2
No	30

Note: 32 organizations provided data



Bonuses & 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. Forty-seven percent of organizations reported they gave wage bonuses to DSPs. Between 9-10 organizations provided data on the types of wage bonuses provided. And, the 15 organizations who reported that they offered bonuses to DSPs, provided the detail of wage bonuses given to DSPs. Of the DSPs on their payroll on 6/30/25, the total number who received at least one wage bonus was 1,099 (average = 73 DSPs, range = 1-291 DSPs) DSPs. Of wage bonuses given to DSPs at organizations, 1 gave less than \$50, 2 gave \$50-\$100, 0 gave \$101-\$200, 3 gave \$201-\$300, 0 gave \$301-\$400, 2 gave \$401-\$500, and 5 gave more than \$500.

Table 18. Use of DSP bonuses

	Yes N	No N
During 1/1/25-6/30/25, did your agency give any wage bonuses to DSPs?	15	17
If yes, did your organization offer an employee referral bonus to current DSPs for bringing in new recruits?	9	1
If yes, did your organization offer newly hired DSPs a monetary hiring bonus?	1	9
If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for performance recognition?	3	7

	Yes N	No N
If yes, did your organization offer DSPs a monetary bonus or award for years of service?	4	5
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?	5	4

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/25, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one wage bonus?	N
Agencies reporting	15
Total	1,099
Average	73
Range	1-291

If your agency gave wage bonuses to DSPs between 1/1/25-6/30/25, what was the average amount for the bonus?	N
Less than \$50	1
\$50-\$100	2
\$101-\$200	0
\$201-\$300	3
\$301-\$400	0
\$401-\$500	2
More than \$500	5

Note: 32, 15, and 13 organizations provided data, respectively

Table 19. Organizational DSP payroll and overtime costs

What were your total payroll costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	
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Agencies reporting	32
Total	\$71,324,721

What were your total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	
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Agencies reporting	32
Total	\$7,194,873
Percent of total payroll	10%

Of the DSPs on your payroll on 6/30/25, what is the total unduplicated count of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay?	
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Agencies reporting	1,991
Percent of all DSPs	65%

Note: 32 and 31 organizations provided data, respectively

Direct Support Professional Overtime Costs

Organizations were asked their total payroll costs and total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Across 32 organizations, \$71,324,721 was the total payroll cost for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. Thirty-two organizations reported \$7,194,873 in total overtime costs for DSPs supporting adults with IDD. This is 10% of the total payroll. The total unduplicated number of DSPs who received at least one hour of overtime pay was 1,991. This is 65% of all DSPs.



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 1/1/25-6/30/25. Nine organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for pooled paid time off. Three 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 2 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 20. DSP paid time off

Does your organization provide any paid time off?	N	Percentage
Yes	31	97%
No	1	3%

Did your organization offer pooled paid time off to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	9	28%
No	23	72%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for pooled paid time off? (Check all that apply)	N
Must be working full-time	3
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	2

Note: 32 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-five percent of organizations offered paid vacation time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Twenty-four organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid vacation time. Nine organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 18 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 19 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 8 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 21. DSP vacation time

Did your organization offer paid vacation time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	24	75%
No	8	25%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid vacation time? (Check all that apply)	N
Must be working full-time	9
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	18
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	19
All DSPs are eligible	8

Note: 32 organizations provided data; 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 24 organizations reporting.

Paid Sick Time

Eighty-four percent of organizations offered paid sick time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Twenty-seven organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid sick time. Eight organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 17 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 18 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 20 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 22. DSP paid sick time

Did your organization offer paid sick time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	27	84%
No	5	16%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid sick time? (Check all that apply)	N
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.)	17
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	18
All DSPs are eligible	20

Note: 32 organizations provided data; 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.

Paid Personal Time

Sixty-three percent of organizations offered paid personal time to some or all DSPs between 1/1/25-6/30/25. Twenty organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for paid personal time. Nine organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 16 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 6 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 23. DSP paid personal time

Did your organization offer paid personal time to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	20	63%
No	12	37%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for paid personal time? (Check all that apply)	N
Must be working full-time	9
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	16
All DSPs are eligible	6

Note: 32 organizations provided data; 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 20 organizations reporting.

Health (Medical) Insurance

Ninety-one percent of organizations offered health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Thirty organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for health (medical) insurance coverage. Twenty organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 25 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 23 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 6 reported all DSPs were eligible. Across 29 organizations, there were 2,407 DSPs eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage with 1,386 (45% of all DSPs) enrolled in health (medical) insurance coverage through their organization.

Table 24. DSP health (medical) insurance access

Did your organization offer health (medical) insurance coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	30	94%
No	2	6%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for health (medical) insurance coverage? (Check all that apply)	N
Must be working full-time	20
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	25
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	23
All DSPs are eligible	6

During 1/1/25-6/30/25, how many DSPs were eligible for health insurance through your organization?	N
Total agencies reporting	29
Total DSPs	2,407

During 1/1/25-6/30/25, how many DSPs were enrolled in health insurance through your organization?	N
Total	1,386
Percent of all DSPs	45%

Note: 32 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

Seventy-two percent of organizations offered vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Ninety-four percent of organizations offered dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25.

Table 25. Organizations that offer DSPs vision and dental coverage

Did your organization offer vision coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Overall Percentage
Yes	23	72%
No/No answer	9	28%

Did your organization offer dental coverage to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Overall Percentage
Yes	30	94%
No	2	6%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Retirement Benefits

Eighty-four percent of organizations offered an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Twenty-seven organizations provided more detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for retirement benefits. Nine organizations required DSPs to be working full-time, 15 required DSPs to work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time, 19 required DSPs to be employed at their agency for a certain length of time, and 14 reported all DSPs were eligible.

Table 26. DSP retirement benefits

Did your organization offer an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401K, 403b, or other plan) to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	27	84%
No	5	16%

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for an employer-sponsored retirement plan? (Check all that apply)	N
Must be working full-time	9
Must work a minimum amount of time in a defined period of time (for example, 25 hours/week, 18 days/month, etc.)	15
Must have been employed at the agency for a certain length of time	19

What were the requirements for a DSP to be eligible for an employer-sponsored retirement plan? (Check all that apply)	N
All DSPs are eligible	14

Note: 32 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-four percent of organizations offered other benefits not previously listed to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Other benefits included: Employer-sponsored short-term disability, employer-sponsored long-term disability, paid tuition or financial support for post-secondary education, childcare benefits or childcare cost reimbursement, discounts at community businesses, health incentive programs, employer-paid job-related training, Flexible Spending Accounts, life insurance, transportation benefits, and Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Table 27. Other DSP benefits offered

Did your organization offer any other benefits to some or all DSPs during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	30	94%
No	2	6%

Note: 32 organizations provided data



Recruitment & 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. Seventy-eight percent of organizations reported they offered a pay incentive or referral bonus to current DSP staff to bring in new recruits. One organization reported the incentive amount of \$51-\$100, 16 \$201-\$500, 7 \$501-\$1,000, and 1 more than \$1,000.

Table 28. 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	25	78%
No	7	22%

What is the incentive or referral bonus amount that current DSPs get to bring in new recruits?	N
\$1-\$50	0
\$51-\$100	1
\$101-\$150	0
\$151-\$200	0
\$201-\$500	16
\$501-\$1,000	7
More than \$1,000	1
Do not know	0

Note: 32 and 25 organizations provided data, respectively

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Organizations were asked what recruitment and retention strategies they used to bring in and keep DSP staff. Ninety-one percent of organizations used a realistic job preview for DSP positions, 100% provide DSP training on a code of ethics, 44% use a DSP ladder to retain highly skilled workers in DSP roles, 72% offer support to staff to get credentialed through a state or nationally recognized professional organization, 38% provide bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of or steps of a credentialing process, 78% conduct employee engagement surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency, 84% offer employee recognition programs such as initiatives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones, 38% include DSPs in agency governance, and 84% require training for DSPs above and beyond those trainings required by state regulation.

Table 29. 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)	Percentage
Realistic job preview for DSP positions	91%
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	72%
Bonuses, stipends or raises for DSPs for completion of credentialing process (or steps of a credentialing process)	38%
Employee engagement surveys or other efforts aimed at assessing DSP satisfaction and experience working for the agency	78%
Employee recognition programs such as initiatives to reward DSPs for achievement, anniversaries, and other milestones	84%
Including DSPs in agency governance	38%
Require any training for DSPs above and beyond those trainings required by state regulation	84%

Note: 32 organizations provided data



Frontline Supervisors

Organizations were asked the number of frontline supervisors (FLSs) on their payroll on 6/30/25. The total number of FLSs employed across organizations was 332. Half (51%) of organizations reported their FLSs are paid hourly, 39% salaried, and 10% a mix of hourly pay and salaries.

Table 30. Number of frontline supervisors and how they are paid

How many frontline supervisors were on your staff on 6/30/25?	N
Total	332
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	51%
All frontline supervisors are salaried	39%
Some frontline supervisors are paid hourly and some are salaried	10%

Note: 32 organizations provided data

Frontline Supervisor Turnover and Vacancy

The average frontline supervisor turnover rate during the period of 1/1/25-6/30/25 was 14% across 21 reporting organizations (range 0%-62%). The average frontline supervisor vacancy rate was 6% across 16 reporting organizations (range 0%-38%).

Frontline Supervisor Overtime

Organizations were asked if FLSs received additional pay/wages for overtime hours during 1/1/25-6/30/25. Forty-four 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 1/1/25-6/30/25. The total number of overtime hours paid to FLSs during 1/1/25-6/30/25 was 17,939 (average = 1,196 hours, range 6-3,690 hours). The number of FLS who received overtime pay from their organization during 1/1/25-6/30/25 was 186, which was 56% of FLSs.

Table 31. FLS additional pay for overtime hours

Did FLSs receive additional pay/wages for overtime hours during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N	Percentage
Yes	14	44%
No	18	56%

What was the total number of overtime hours your agency paid to Frontline Supervisors during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N
Total	17,939
Average	1,196
Range	6-3,690

How many frontline supervisors received overtime pay from your agency during 1/1/25-6/30/25?	N
Total	186
% of all FLSs	56%

Note: 32, 14, and 31 organizations provided data, respectively

Frontline Supervisor Race/Ethnicity

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/25 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 3% of the FLSs on the payroll on 6/30/25 identified as American/Alaska Native, <1% Asian, 29% Black/African American, 0% Pacific Islander, 57% White, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 2% more than one race/ethnicity, 0% another race/ethnicity, and <1% were unknown.

Table 32. Frontline supervisor race and ethnicity

On 6/30/25, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following racial or ethnic groups?	FLS N	FLS Percentage	DSP N	DSP Percentage	RI 2020 Census
American Indian/ Alaska Native	9	3%	21	1%	<1%
Asian	1	<1%	26	1%	4%
Black/African American	94	29%	1,179	39%	6%
Pacific Islander	0	0%	6	<1%	<1%
White	187	57%	1,249	41%	71%
Hispanic/Latino	31	9%	282	9%	17%
More than one race/ ethnicity	6	2%	83	3%	9%
Another race/ethnicity	0	0%	0	0%	9%
Unknown	1	<1%	175	6%	n/a

Note: 30 organizations provided data

When compared to DSPs, the race and ethnicity of DSP and FLSs are similar, except for a much higher percentage of DSPs who are Black or African American and a higher percentage of FLSs who are White. Additionally, a 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 compared to the state population.

Frontline Supervisor Gender

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/25 who identified as male, female, non-conforming, and unknown. Organizations reported 26% of the FLSs on the payroll on 6/30/25 identified as male and 74% female. When compared to DSPs, there are fewer male FLSs.

Table 33. Frontline supervisor gender

On 6/30/25, how many FLSs identified as being in each of the following gender groups?	FLS N	FLS Percentage	DSP N	DSP Percentage
Male	87	26%	1,075	36%
Female	242	74%	1,871	62%
Non-conforming	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%	75	2%

Note: 30 organizations provided data

Frontline Supervisor Age

Organizations were asked the number of FLSs on payroll on 6/30/25 who identified in various age groups. Organizations reported that 0% of the FLSs on the payroll on 6/30/25 were 15-20 years old, 13% were 21-30 years old, 24% were 31-40 years old, 28% were 41-50 years old, 23% were 51-60 years old, 11% were 61-70 years old, 1% were 71+ years old, and 0% unknown. Six 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%).

Table 34. FLS age

On 6/30/25, how many FLSs were in each of the following age groups?	FLS N	FLS Percentage	DSP N	DSP Percentage
15-20 years	0	0%	61	2%
21-30 years	40	13%	670	23%
31-40 years	74	24%	702	25%
41-50 years	88	28%	575	20%
51-60 years	72	23%	482	17%
61-70 years	34	11%	302	11%
71+ years	4	1%	66	2%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%

Note: 6 organizations were unable to provide data



Emergency & 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-two (100%) of organizations reported having an emergency management and/or disaster preparedness plan, and of those with a preparedness plan, 88% (28 organizations) said the plan included actions to take in the case of potential DSP staffing shortages.

Table 35. 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	32
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?	N
Yes	28
No	4

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. For comparison and trending purposes, we are presenting data collected via both mechanisms.

When examining three of the more important workforce metrics (turnover ratio, vacancy rate, and wages), all show encouraging trends.

With respect to retention, 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, decreased slightly to 15.1% on June 30, 2024, increased to 16.9% on December 31, 2024, and decreased to 16.0% on June 30, 2025. The vacancy rate was 17.1% on December 31, 2022, remained consistent at 17.5% on June 31, 2023, decreased to 14.0% on December 31, 2023, 11.9% on June 30, 2024, and 10.7% on December 31, 2024, and increased to 13.4% on June 30, 2025.

For DSP wages, the average starting hourly wages across all services and supports have increased consistently over time. They were \$18.87 on December 31, 2022, increased to \$18.43 on June 30, 2023, \$20.25 on December 31, 2023, \$20.69 June 30, 2024, \$20.70 on December 31, 2024, and \$20.87 on June 30, 2025. Average hourly wages across all services and supports have increased consistently over time as well. They were \$18.94 on December 31, 2022, \$18.97 on June 30, 2023, \$20.82 to December 31, 2023, \$21.12 June 30, 2024, \$21.48 December 31, 2024, and \$21.77 on June 30, 2025.

Table 35. DSP and FLS data trends over time

	Historic Data* July-Dec 2022	Historic Data* Jan-June 2023	SupportWise Data July-Dec 2023	SupportWise Data Jan-June 2024	SupportWise Data July-Dec 2024	SupportWise Data Jan-June 2025
# Agencies reporting	32	32	34	33	33	32
# Agencies that turned away referrals because of DSP staffing issues	20 (63%)	13 (41%)	12 (35%)	11 (33%)	10 (30%)	12 (37%)
Total Number of DSPs	2771^	3015	3,058	3,210	3,275	3,078
Difference in number of DSPs between end of data period and start of data period (6 months)	-55	+58	+45	+148	+35	-55+
Number of separations	573	503	518	485	554	491
Turnover rate**	20.7%^^	16.6%	16.9%	15.1%	16.9%	16.0%
Early turnover (% DSP separations within the first 6 months of tenure)	—	—	37%	42%	35%	37%
% of DSP separation due to terminations	—	—	32%	34%	26%	32%
Total full time DSP positions	2328 (72%)	2464 (68%)	2,592 (73%)	2,657 (73%)	2,668 (73%)	2,565 (72%)
Total part time DSP positions	903 (28%)	1136 (32%)	962 (27%)	987 (27%)	1,001 (27%)	988 (28%)
Total DSP positions	3231	3600	3554	3644	3669	3553
Full time DSP vacancies	324 (68%)	389 (62%)	303 (61%)	270 (62%)	231 (59%)	298 (63%)
Part time DSP vacancies	152 (32%)	242 (38%)	193 (39%)	164 (38%)	163 (41%)	177 (37%)
Total vacancies	476	631	496	434	394	475
DSP vacancy rate***	17.1%^^^	17.5%	14.0%	11.9%	10.7%	13.4%
Average DSP starting wage	\$18.87	\$18.43	\$20.25	\$20.69	\$20.70	\$20.87
Average DSP hourly wage	\$18.94	\$18.97	\$20.82	\$21.12	\$21.48	\$21.77
% of total salary overtime	6.7%	10.8%	7.7%	7.9%	11.8%	10.1%
% of DSPs receiving overtime	63%	64%	58%	55%	63%	65%
DSPs eligible for health insurance	1966	NA	2,657 (87%)	2,555 (80%)	2,583 (79%)	2,407 (78%)
DSPs enrolled in health insurance	1089	NA	1,293 (42%)	1,206 (38%)	1,349 (41%)	1,386 (45%)
Total Number supervisors	326	323	310	298	319	332
FLS Turnover ratio**	—	—	—	4%	6%	14%
FLS Vacancy rate ***	—	—	—	6%	10%	6%
% Supervisors Receiving Overtime	59%	48%	49%	45%	55%	56%

* This is historic data collected by the court monitor directly from provider organizations.

** Separations/number of staff at end of year: formula used by HSRI

*** Total vacancies/total positions on end of data collection period: formula used by HSRI

^ 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.

+ Use caution with interpretation as 1 less organization participated in this round of data collection which can have an impact when total numbers are reported compared to averages.



Ongoing Efforts to Improve Rhode Island Direct Support Workforce Stability

The University of Minnesota's (UMN) Direct Support Workforce Solutions consultants continue to partner with Rhode Island stakeholders to implement various workforce strategies to address Rhode Island's workforce challenges. The activities conducted during the January-June 2025 reporting period are described briefly below.

For continued sustainability of workforce development work in Rhode Island, UMN consultants provided training and support to three employees of the Paul V Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. These employees, or "Sherlock Center workforce coaches," are being trained and mentored to provide support and technical assistance in workforce development activities to Rhode Islanders following the conclusion of their training.

This report focuses on workforce development activities for Rhode Island's provider organization employees. During this reporting period, the University of Minnesota piloted a Self-Direction Staffing Survey to better understand the challenges faced by self-directing employers. In collaboration with Sherlock workforce coaches, the University also piloted a Self-Direction Learning Series, offering support and technical assistance to self-directing employers in finding, selecting, and retaining direct support pro-

fessionals. Because this initiative began near the end of the reporting period, its impact is not included in this report. Collecting and reporting these data provides a more complete picture of Rhode Island's workforce and highlights both similarities and differences between provider-employed and self-directing workforces.

The University of Minnesota consultants and the Sherlock Center workforce team continue to provide comprehensive support and technical assistance to provider organizations across Rhode Island. The goal of this work is to reduce turnover and vacancy rates by helping organizations implement workforce strategies that are informed by their organizational data and aligned with evidence-based best practices. During the January through June 2025 reporting period, nine provider organizations received intensive technical assistance and support. This work included helping organizations analyze their key workforce indicators and implement strategies to address turnover and vacancy challenges through individualized technical assistance, targeted coaching, and training. Based on the results reported in this report, consultants will have the opportunity to better understand what factors are influencing changes such as terminations at the organizational level and identify strate-

gies to address this issue. These efforts will continue in future reporting periods to further strengthen organizational capacity and promote workforce stability.

During this reporting period, the UMN team finalized a set of marketing materials, including targeted marketing flyers and public service announcements and a general public service announcement to support awareness of the direct support professional role. They will be made available on the riswi.org website in the next reporting period for all stakeholders to use to recruit DSPs, decrease vacancy rates, and support awareness of the role. UMN consultants and Sherlock Center workforce team will provide guidance and support to employers and other stakeholders to use the marketing materials and the previously published realistic job preview, a selection tool to help prospective DSPs understand the job. These materials will continue to be marketed to employers in Rhode Island with the goal of supporting them to reduce vacancies and early turnover rates. Early turnover rates continue to be a challenge in Rhode Island, so supporting employers to use realistic job previews as a selection tool to help people understand the job will be a priority.

During this reporting period, University of Minnesota consultants also developed a proposal for piloting a statewide credentialing program aimed at professionalizing the role of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in Rhode Island. The pilot will be implemented in future reporting periods and will include both training and credentialing components to support the development and retention of DSPs. The long-term objectives of this initiative are to reduce turnover among experienced DSPs and address wage compression, a well-documented challenge in Rhode Island.

In January 2025, two cohorts of the Foundational Skills in Supervision and Developing the Direct Support Workforce supervisory training were launched. This supervisor training is a collaborative effort between CPNRI, UMN, and DLT and consists of a blended learning model that builds the skills of current or aspiring frontline supervisors and managers with the goal of increasing supervisor competence, reducing supervisor and DSP turnover, and developing leaders. Of the first three cohorts who have completed the training, 69% said they were more likely to stay at their organization or in their position because of the training, and 74% of the participants indicated they will perform their job better because of the training. A fourth cohort of 65 supervisors from 13 provider organizations started the Foundational Skills

in Supervision training series and a third cohort of 26 supervisors from 14 provider organizations started the Developing the Direct Support Workforce training series. The current cohorts finish their training in September 2025. Additionally, two local Rhode Island trainers are being trained to implement the supervisor training series to support sustainability of this training. Their training will continue into 2026.

On a statewide level, the Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative Coordinating Council and corresponding workgroups continued developing tools, processes, and recommendations that align with effective workforce practices. The University of Minnesota, in partnership with BHDDH, Sherlock Center workforce team, CPNRI, and other key collaborators in Rhode Island, is supporting the implementation and alignment of these recommendations to provide statewide resources to employers of DSPs and FLSs. The Coordinating Council works to ensure the implementation of key workforce recommendations identified in this report. This work is accomplished by state workgroups organized along five key workforce areas:

1. Data and reporting
2. Policy guidance 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 Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative with support and guidance from Sherlock Center's workforce team and the University of Minnesota's Direct Support Workforce Solutions consultants. State workgroups use data from Workforce Data Summary report implications and feedback from the community to inform updates to their goals and objectives each year at the annual summit, which was held in January 2025 and facilitated by UMN and the Sherlock Center. Workgroups support and contribute to many of the activities UMN conducted during this reporting period, including the development of:

- statewide marketing materials, guidance documents, and a dissemination plan
- a proposal of a statewide credential pilot
- SupportWise Data reports
- the Self-Direction Staffing Survey pilot
- the Self-Direction Learning Series pilot.

During this reporting period, workgroups also developed a resource guide for DSPs and employers of DSPs, conducted an environmental scan of training available to DSPs in RI, and summarized DSP listening sessions that occurred in 2024.

This work will continue in future reporting periods to support workforce stabilization in Rhode Island, including continued monitoring and reporting of workforce data, exploring expansion of data collected, and using reported data to inform components of activities.

Conclusion

There continues to be improvements made in Rhode Island efforts to address direct support workforce stability. The systems level approach, dedicated employees within the provider organizations, and the collaboration across key collaborators continue to be important to the successes experienced to date. Trends in key workforce metrics continue to be encouraging. While there are fluctuations in the retention measures, they are to be expected and good to be aware of. Compared to the previous 6-month period, the percentage of agencies turning away referrals due to DSP staffing issues increased from 30% to 37%. However, it is still half of what it was at the time of the first round of data collection in 2022, and the increase makes sense as the total number of DSPs decreased from 3,275 to 3,078, and the number of vacant positions increased. The turnover ratio decreased from 16.9% to 16.0%. It is significantly lower (4%) than the first round of data collection in 2022. The vacancy rate increased from 10.7% to 13.4% but is still 4% lower than when tracking began in 2022. Both average starting and hourly wages continue to increase steadily over time, and the percentage of total DSP salary spent on overtime decreased from 11.8% to 10.1%. Additionally, the percentage of all DSPs enrolled in the health insurance benefit increased from 41% to 45%. Over half (58%) of eligible DSPs are enrolled in health insurance.

The need to continue the momentum and monitor these trends still exists. Supporting organizations in tracking and understanding their workforce data is a critical step in identifying challenges and implementing targeted recruitment and retention solutions. 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 result in improved services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities being supported in the state.

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