

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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Direct Support Professional Workforce Survey Spring 2022

What

In the Spring of 2022, agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) will receive a survey to collect quantitative information about factors impacting this workforce during the 2021 calendar year. For the purpose of this survey, DSPs are defined as paid staff whose primary job responsibility is to provide support, help with skills development, guidance, or personal assistance to individuals with intellectual/ developmental disabilities (IDD).

Why

The DSP workforce is low-wage and experiences increasingly high turnover, yet is a primary workforce delivering services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Multiple stakeholders have expressed support for learning more about the employment of DSPs in order to inform policy changes, design recruitment and retention efforts, and examine the impact of rate increases over time. The survey will establish baseline information from which DDS, agencies, and stakeholders may evaluate the impact of these initiatives.

Who

All agencies that employ DSPs are requested to participate. The comprehensiveness and quality of this baseline data is exponentially improved when more agencies participate.

This voluntary survey is completed by the agency employing DSPs in residential, in home and/or non-residential programs. It is recommended that the individual(s) at the agency responsible for payroll or human resources complete the survey. There is only one survey per agency.

When

Agencies employing DSPs can expect to receive the invitation email from Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) closer to April 2022. Surveys must be completed by June 30, 2022. Once the survey has closed, HSRI and DDS will complete data analysis with the goal of publishing initial survey results in late 2022.

Some Details

The survey instrument will be the National Core Indicator (NCI) Staff Stability Survey, a national survey tool developed by HSRI in collaboration with National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). It is used by 26 other states, and is the only survey specifically focused on the DSP workforce serving individuals with IDD.

The survey collects data pertaining to DSP tenure, turnover, vacancy rates, wages and other compensation including benefits, recruitment and retention, and front-line supervisor support. The survey also will include questions specifically tailored to the California workforce and IDD service system, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the DSP workforce.

How

The survey is completed through an on-line portal. Agencies will receive an email invitation directly from NCI with a unique log-in link to the online portal to complete the survey.

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Respondents may return to the survey as many times as necessary to complete the survey. Participants are encouraged but not required to answer all survey questions. DDS staff will be available throughout the survey period to answer agency questions and provide technical assistance.

Depending on the size and complexity of the agency and its payroll or human resources records, it may take some time to collect some of the data requested. However, once gathered, it should take less than two hours to complete the on-line survey.

What else?

Participating agencies will be able to compare their individual survey responses with other agencies employing DSPs, including those in the same geographic region or providing the same types of service(s). Agencies can also use this objective data to evaluate or confirm factors impacting their workforce and to consider agency-level initiatives that could improve their workforce stability. DDS will not publish individual agency data.

To learn more about the survey instrument, please visit the NCI Staff Stability Survey [website](#). You can see national results from the [2020 Survey Report](#). You also may direct your questions to our team coordinating the 2021 California survey at DSPWorkForce@dds.ca.gov.

Thank you for helping to address these workforce challenges!