

THE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE: EMPOWERING OHIO DSPS

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About the OSU Nisonger Center and LEND Program

- Federally funded University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
 - Interdisciplinary research, education, and training
 - Clinical services and health promotion
 - Strive to improve the lives of people with disabilities across the lifespan
- Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND)
 - The LEND program recruits graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and community leaders to participate in a year long interdisciplinary program
 - LEND students are expected to conduct at least one research project

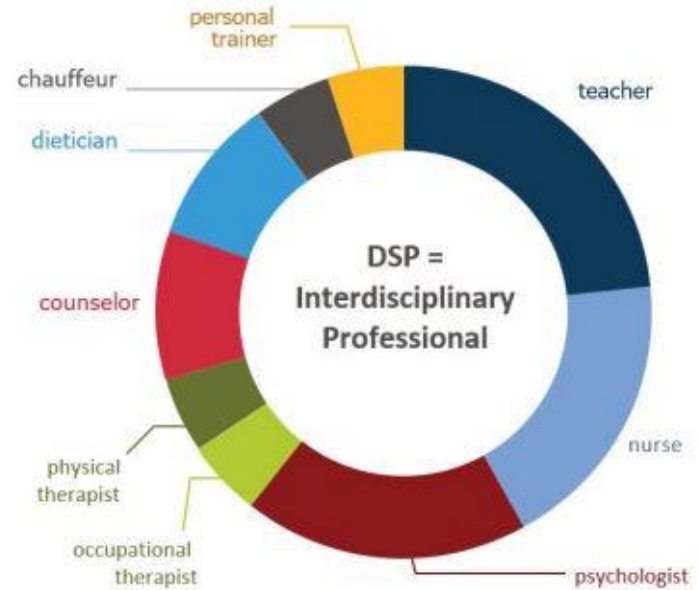


Why this project?

- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are *critical* to the lives of individuals with disabilities. They not only support but empower individuals in all aspects of living.
- The DSP role faces wage challenges and employment shortages
 - Detrimental to individuals who serve as DSPs, the workforce, and the people they serve.
- **Results of a neglected direct support workforce could include widespread negative economic and social consequences impacting individuals with disabilities and their families, caregivers, DSPs, provider agencies, and communities.**
- **Widely overlooked as a public health issue that impacts the health and wellbeing of thousands of workers and people with disabilities.**



- **DSPs have complex responsibilities**
 - Requires education and training to enhance skills and knowledge to better serve consumers
- DSP position is **not recognized by US Bureau of Labor Statistics**
 - Lack of recognition has far-reaching effects
- Opportunities include accreditation, professional development, and pathways for career growth
- Ohio mentions DSPs on Top Jobs List



Project Purpose

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the DSP workforce crisis
2. Create a policy brief to educate ourselves, policymakers and stakeholders
3. Create a survey for DSP professionals to gain a better understanding of the workforce, challenges, and opportunities



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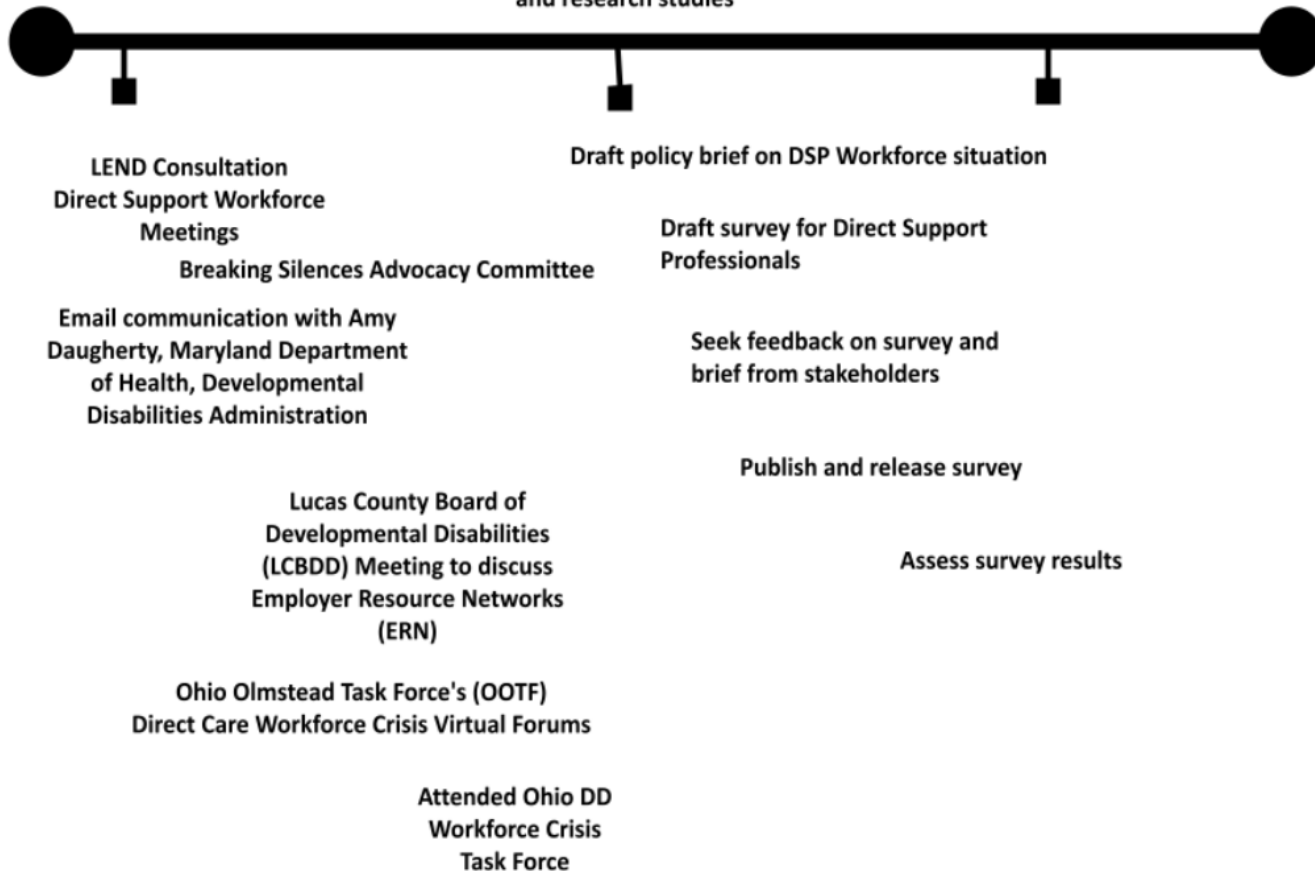
2021-2022 LEND Direct Support Workforce Research Timeline

Fall 2021

Winter 2021

Spring 2022

Literature Review of the Direct Support Professional Workforce Crisis, including current news, policy briefs, and research studies



DSP Workforce Landscape and Retention

- Nationwide, the number of jobs for DSPs and Personal Care Aides is projected to increase by 33% between 2020 and 2030
 - Wage growth and earnings remain low
 - Median annual salary was \$27,080 barely above the Federal Poverty Level
- In 2018, DODD established the Competency-based Training and Longevity Add-on
 - Provided \$0.39 wage increase per 15-minutes of routine homemaker/personal care
 - 2-years of experience and complete 60 hours of applicable training
- Restricted only to HPC
- New workers did not qualify
- Currently the program is being restructured, plans to bring average wage to \$14.04 by 2023.



Revisiting salary and benefits

	Median Salary	Growth	Employment	Openings
Home Health Care Aides (Direct Support Professional)	\$23,000	1,725	56,510	9,025
Personal and Home Care Aides (Direct Support Professional)	\$23,000	1,487	46,454	8,998
Medical Assistants (Direct Support Professional)	\$34,000	432	24,124	3,327

Source: Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation: Ohio's Top Jobs List

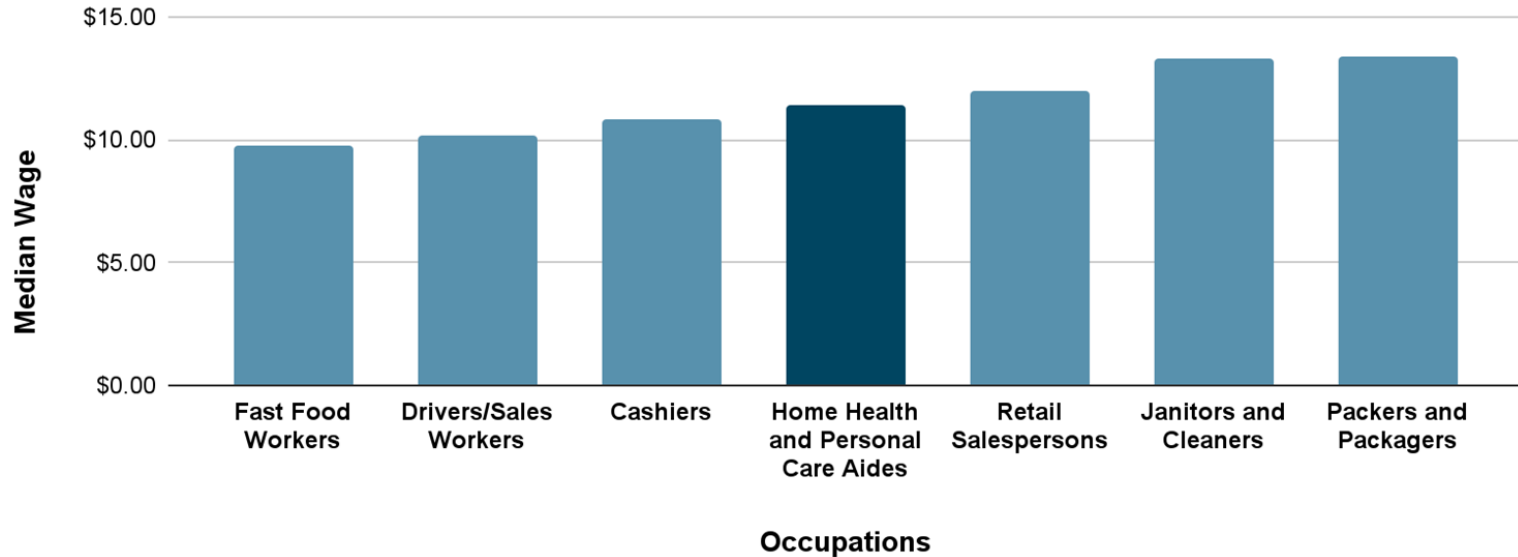


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2020 Occupational Employment and Wages in Ohio

Home Health and Personal Care Aide Wage Comparisons



2019 National Core Indicators Survey

- 36.5% of DSPs were employed 36 months or more by the end of December 2019
- 32.7% of DSPs separated from their employer during the first 6 months of their employment from Jan. 1, 2019-Dec. 31 2019
- The weighted average turnover rate was 42.8% in 2019
- 69.5% offered a form of paid time off to employees
- 57.1% offered health insurance to some or all DSP's
- 52.7% offered dental coverage to some or all DSPs
- 48.5% offered vision coverage to some or all DSPs



Impact of COVID-19 on the Workforce

In August of 2021, The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) sent out a survey, which received 449 responses, to assess the current state of the workforce crisis and COVID-19's impact on hiring and retention. Survey results include:

- 77% of providers are turning away new referrals
- 58% of providers are discontinuing programs and services
- 81% of providers are struggling to achieve quality standards
- 40% of providers are seeing higher frequencies of reportable incidents



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Effects on People with Disabilities and Families

- People with disabilities share the burden of the workforce shortage
 - Force some individuals to go without the care they need, or risk being placed in an assisted living facility against their will
 - Added strain on families struggling to find Caregivers

Cleveland Direct Care Workforce Crisis Virtual Forum

"... I work 60 hours a week or 48 hours a week. I have one Friday off, and frankly I am exhausted."
In regards to what two items would improve the field of direct care- "... benefits ...and to uplift their profession so we don't feel like dirt. We feel terrible."

Sherry Carlson, Independent Provider

The Center for Disability Empowerment Direct Crisis Virtual Forum

"...I need the assistance of ... all the things that people take as human rights for granted that we all want access to. I was laughing with my assistant the other day because it had been two days since I brushed my teeth, and I spent an extra 20 minutes because it was such an amazing feeling to brush your teeth..."

Tanya Fernandez-Mote, Consumer

The Ability Center of Greater Toledo Direct Care Workforce Crisis (Public Forum)

"...[T]o really understand how many people this is affecting out there, you really can't quantify that. ...It really is a crisis because there's people that are suffering and potentially dying because we don't have people caring for us..."

Jeremy Bigelow, Consumer

Promising Practices - Opportunities for Policy

Maryland's SEEC DSP-II Training Program

- Provides a 5-month hybrid CMS-based competency training, including live classes, online classes, and assignments designated to demonstrate competency
- DSPs receive a \$1 wage increase upon completion
- As of September 2021, 226 had completed the program and report higher confidence in work, increased job satisfaction, and better work-life balance
- Retention rate in the field among those who completed the program is 90%
- Yielded \$18.43 in economic returns for every \$1 of investment



Promising Practices - Opportunities for Policy

Ohio's Technology First Initiative

- A 2018 executive order
- Technology must be considered first as an option before Homemaker/Personal Care staff is considered
- Goal is for people to learn how to use technology to improve quality of life and personal freedom
- Technology can assist with safety, cooking, or accessing public transportation



Promising Practices - Opportunities for Policy

The Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professional (OADSP) DSP-U program

- Includes classroom instruction with a year-long internship and portfolio creation demonstrating abilities in DSP knowledge and skills.
- Uses the DSPaths' Certificate of Initial Proficiency and Certificate of Advanced Proficiency curricula for classroom instruction which also serves as an Industry Credential with the Ohio Department of Education
- Students can earn their high school diploma through completion of this program
- Current internship sites and partners include: Residential Home Association – Marion (RHAM), [The Society-The Arc of Medina County](#), Self-Determined Living, TLC, [ViaQuest](#), [Boundless](#), [Goodwill Columbus](#), [Residential Concepts](#)



Promising Practices - Opportunities for Policy

Northwest Ohio's EaRNed Success ERN

- Provides utilization of a success coach, both on-site and off-site, to help navigate challenging situations that create barriers to remaining employed
- Provides assistance in improving access to community resources for employees
- Coaching is available throughout the day to accommodate for various shifts
- “Employees have collectively accessed \$60,000 in employer small dollar sponsored loans, allowing them to overcome barriers and meet financial goals”
- Limitations: low wages, challenging to retain enough members to support funding



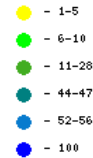
LEND DSP Survey



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- Worked with Provider Agencies and Disability-led organizations to design the survey
- 950+ DSPs responded to the survey representing every region of Ohio

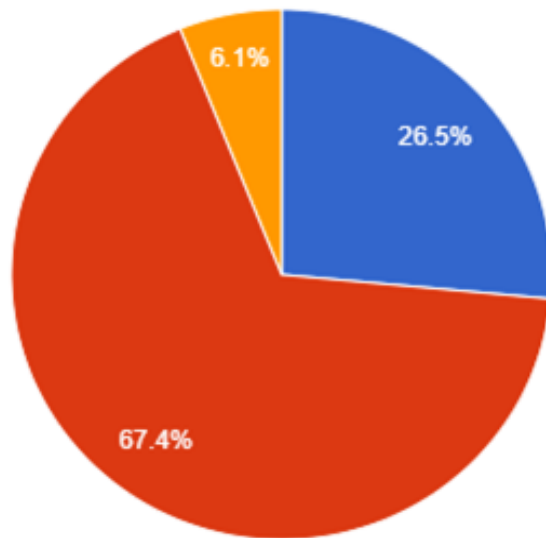
DSP Survey Map



Source: diymaps.net, ...



Are you an Independent Provider, employed by an Agency Provider or both?



Both- 6.1%

**Independent
provider**-
26.5%

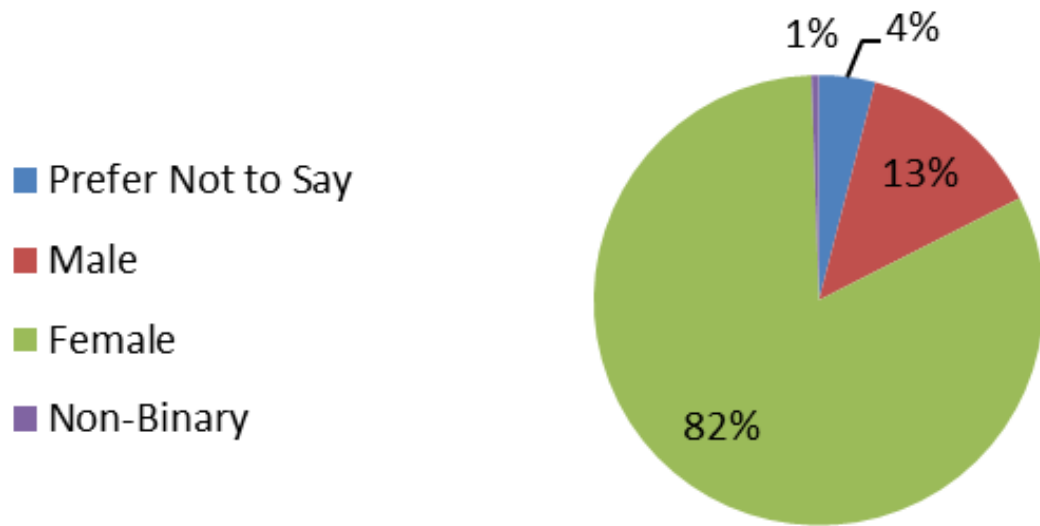
**Agency
provider**-
67.4%



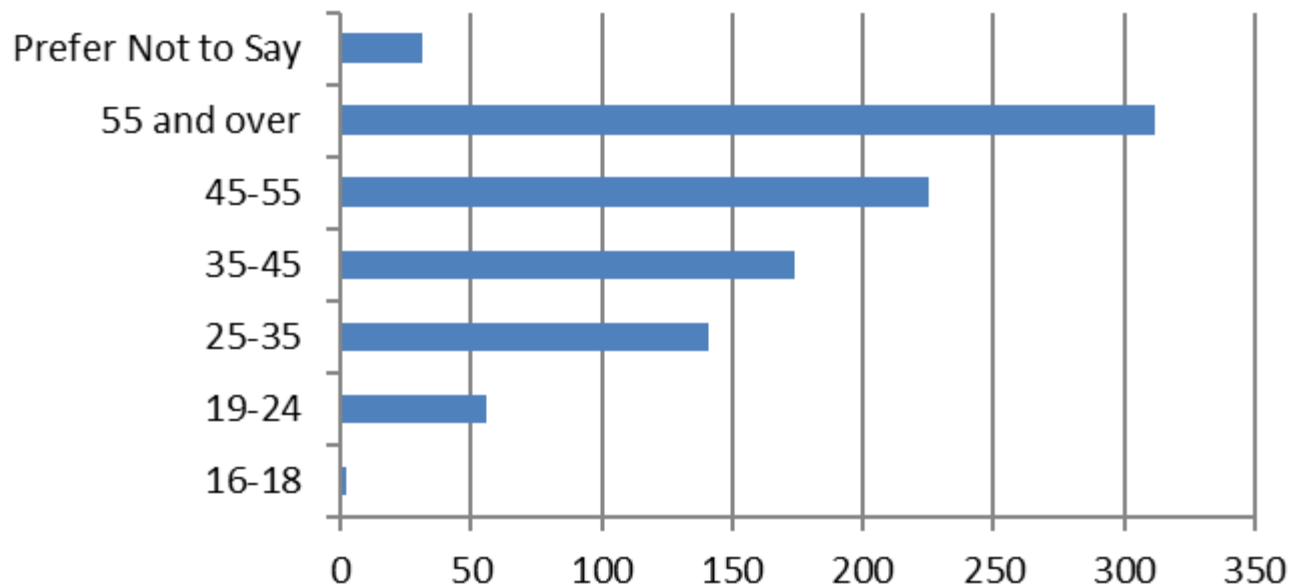
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What is your Gender?



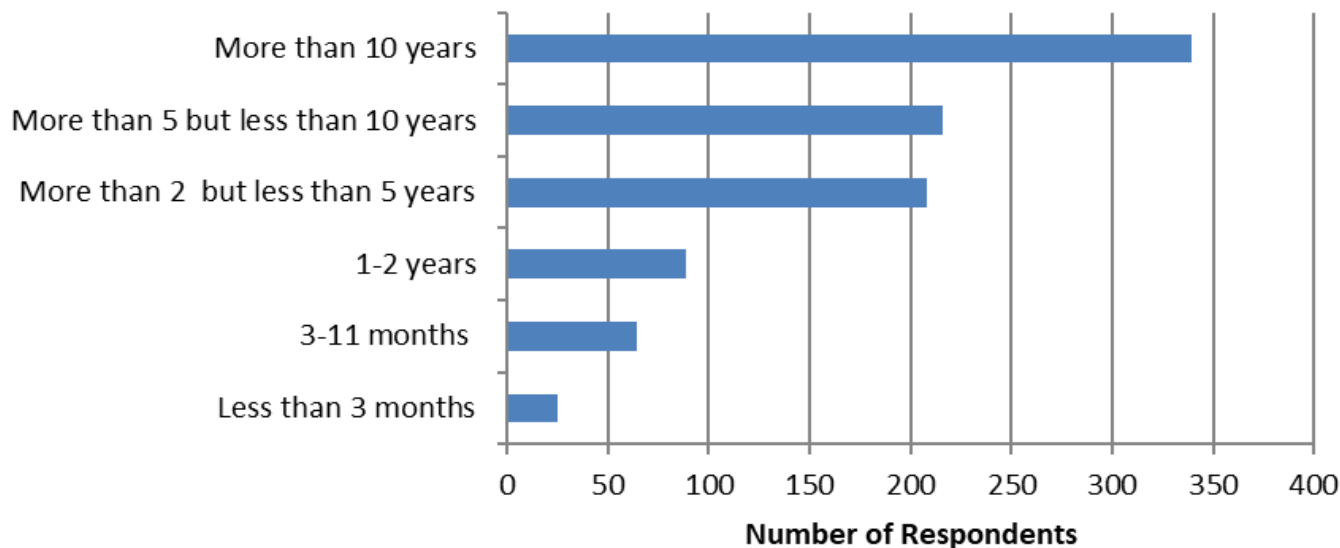
Please Select Your Age Range



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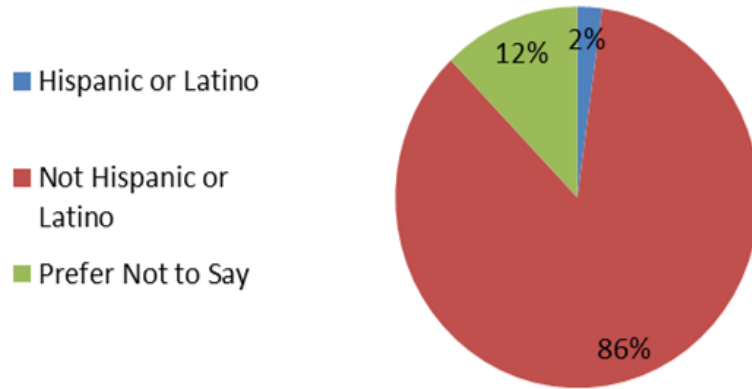
How Long Have You Been Employed as Direct Support Professional?



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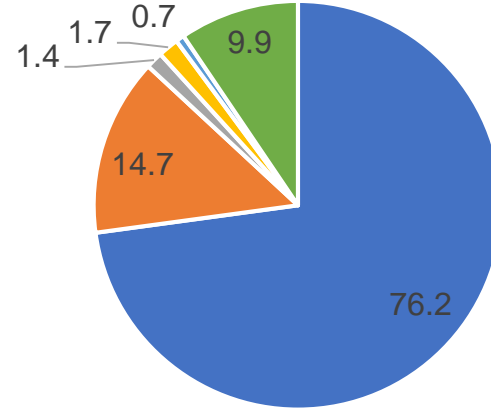
Please Select Your Ethnicity



2020 Ohio Census Comparison

81% White
13.1% Black or African American
4% Hispanic & Latino
0.3 American Indian and Alaskan Native
0.1% Asian

Please Select Your Race



- White
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Prefer Not to Say



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What was your most recent job or experience before becoming a Direct Support Professional?

Stay at home mother of 4"

"Working for a school"

"Factory/ 13 yrs"

"Day care"

"Fast food"

"Customer care"

"College"

"Nursing Home and Hospice"

"This is an additional part-time job for me"

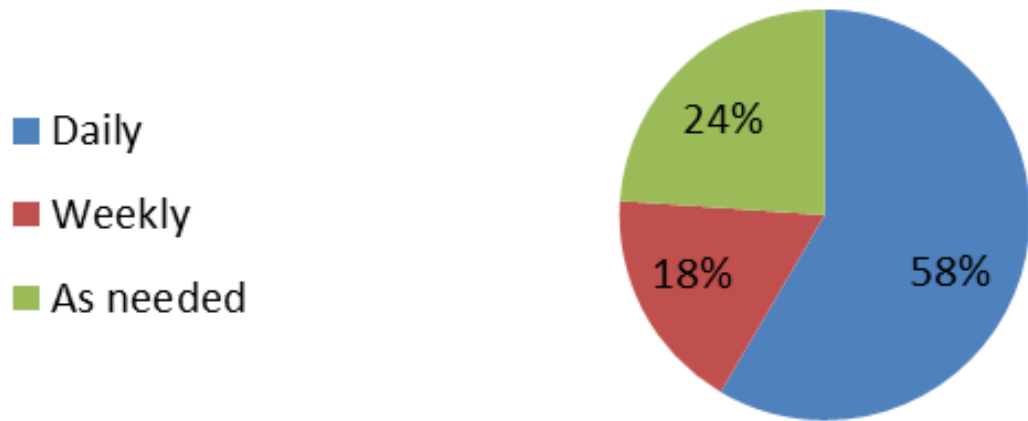
"Truck Driver"



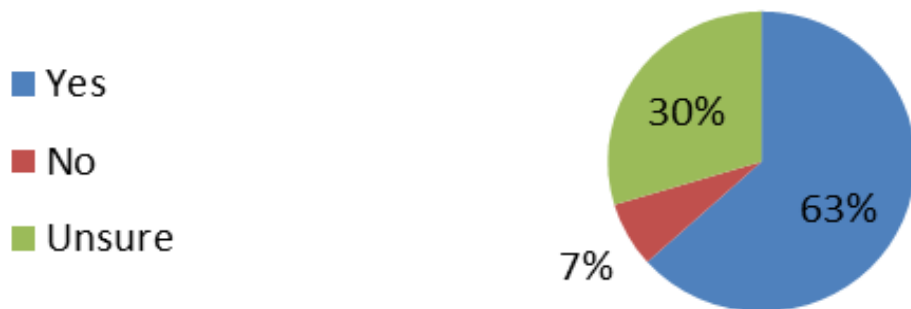
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How Often Do you Service More Than One Client?



Do You Plan on Staying in Your Role as a DSP Over the Next Two Years?



Independent Provider

- “...I work 60 hours a week or 48 hours a week. I have one Friday off, and frankly I’m exhausted.”

Consumer

- “...I need the assistance of...all the things that people take as human rights for granted that we all want to have access to.”

Consumer

- “...It really is a crisis because there’s people that are suffering and potentially dying because we don’t have people caring for us.”



How Important are these Factors as a DSP?

MOST

Wages and Benefits

Opportunity to Support
Individuals with Disabilities

Supportive Work Environment

Ongoing Training and
Professional Development

Opportunities for Career
Advancement

LEAST



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What incentives or supports (other than increased compensation) would allow you to have a long-term career as a Direct Support Professional?

“...if I could **pay my bills** and **provide for my family** without have to work 100 hours a week...I was not in survival mode while trying to provide exceptional care.”

"Support
from upper
management"

"When my shift
ends, being able to
leave on time.."

"Tuition
Reimbursement, Certified
Training"

"To be appreciated
more."



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DSPs care about clients

“Because I love their smiles. I wish I was able to do more things that They want to do though. But I stay because I care about them all and I want to make their lives as happy as I can.”

“I take care of a family member.”

“Because my clients need me(main reason) and I just renewed my certification.”

“There are times it is physically, emotionally and mentally draining, but seeing individuals thrive in their day to day life is the reason I stay.”



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What do these results mean?

Through DSPs who took this survey, we found that...

- DSPs care about their clients, know what they do is essential, but often feel unsupported.
 - Low wages
 - Inadequate benefits
 - Lack of paid time off
 - Limited career development



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Next steps

1. In depth data analysis of extended responses
 - a. Over 2500 responses from DSPs in the field
 - b. Sort into common themes
 - c. Examine differences between respondents based on age, race, gender, type of employment and other factors
2. Share findings with workers, provide agencies, state policy makers



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Thank you to our partners, and to you!

Department Of Developmental Disabilities

Breaking Silences Advocacy Group

The Ability Center of Greater Toledo

The Center for Independent Living Options

Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities

The Ohio Self-Determination Association

Ohio Association of County Boards

The Ohio Provider Resource Association

All DSPs for taking the survey



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Questions?

What strategies we should use to publish our results.

Are there questions that we should have asked?

Are there ways you feel this data should be used?



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Contributors

Contributors include: the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Provider Resource Association, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals, The Center for Independent Living Options, Inc., Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, The Ohio Olmstead Task Force, The Ohio Developmental Disability Workforce Crisis Task Force, Maryland Department of Health, and both family and self-advocates.

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