

THE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE: EMPOWERING OHIO DSPS

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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.**



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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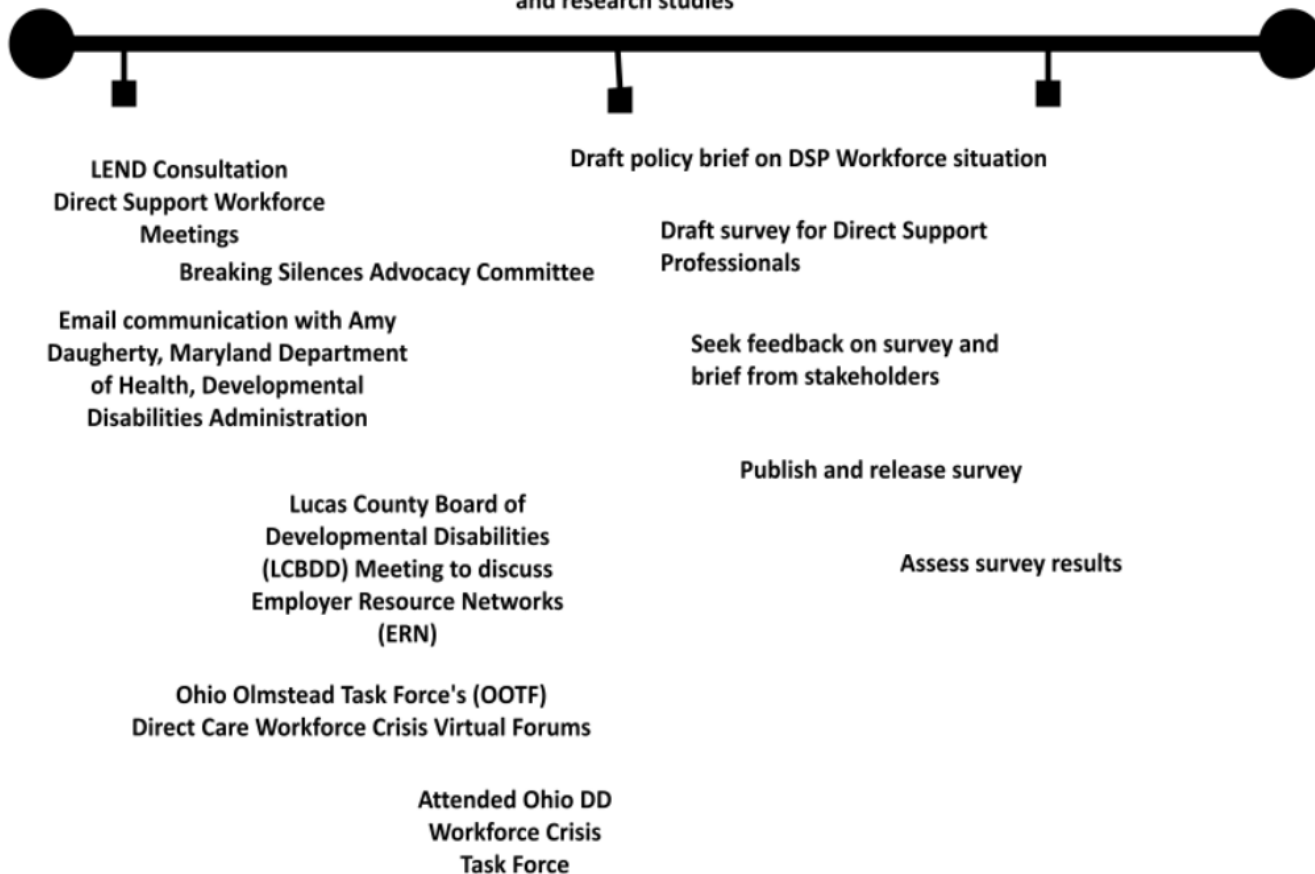
2021-2022 LEND Direct Support Workforce Research Timeline

Fall 2021

Winter 2021

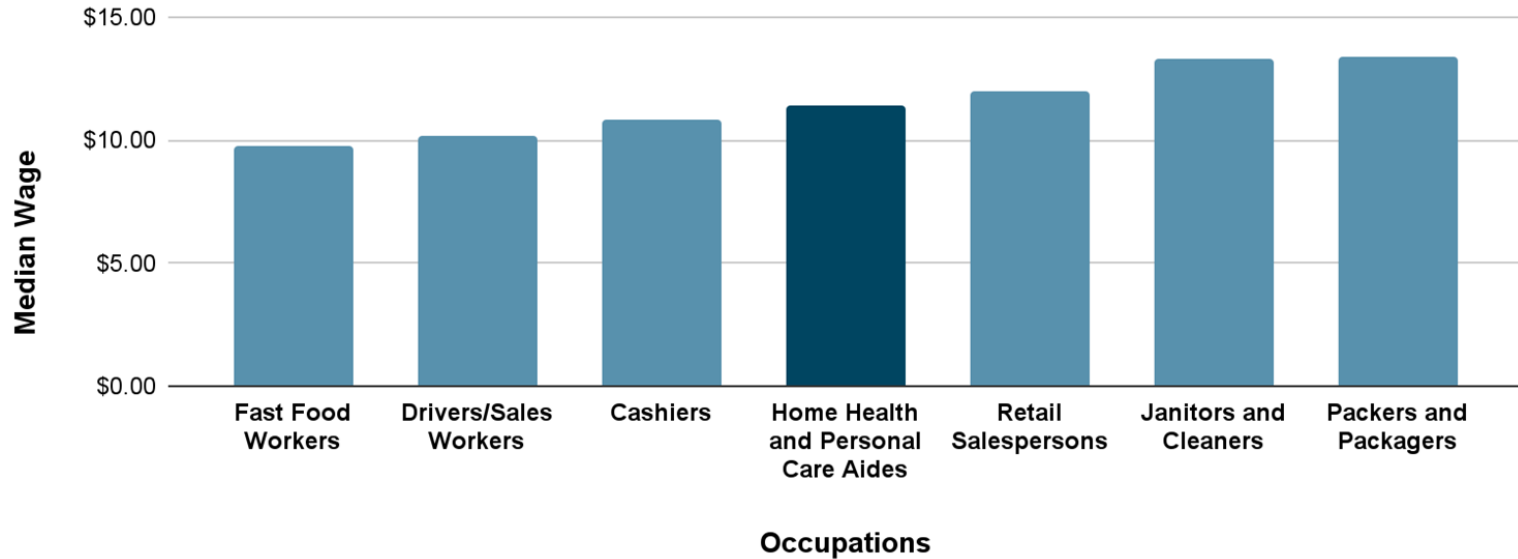
Spring 2022

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



2020 Occupational Employment and Wages in Ohio

Home Health and Personal Care Aide Wage Comparisons



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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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

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

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

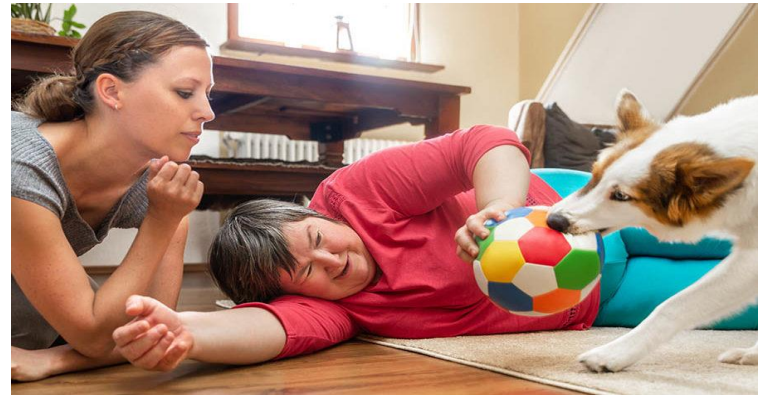
- Includes classroom instruction with a year-long internship and portfolio creation demonstrating abilities in DSP knowledge and skills.
- Uses the DSPaths' Certificate of Initial Proficiency and Certificate of Advanced Proficiency curricula for classroom instruction which also serves as an Industry Credential with the Ohio Department of Education
- Students can earn their high school diploma through completion of this program



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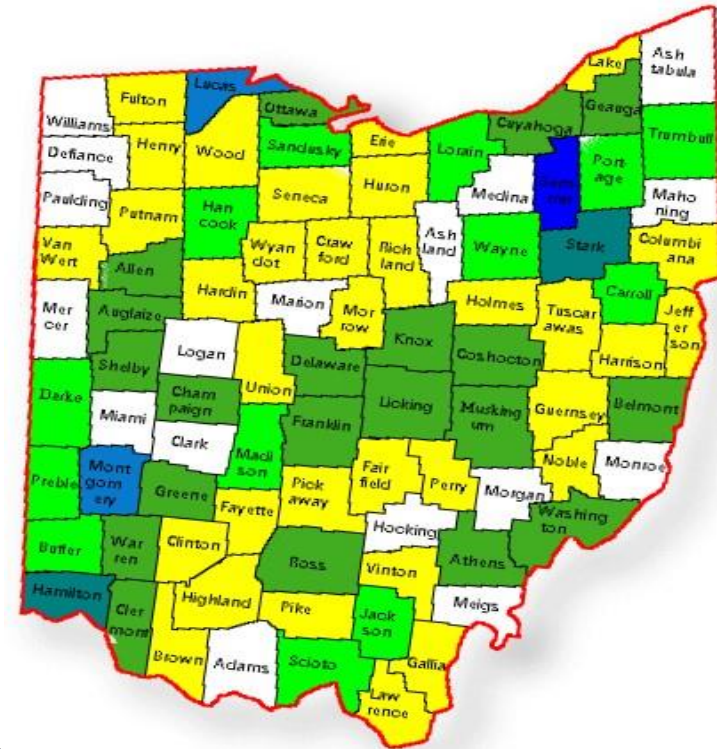
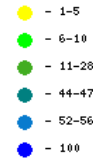
LEND DSP Survey



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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



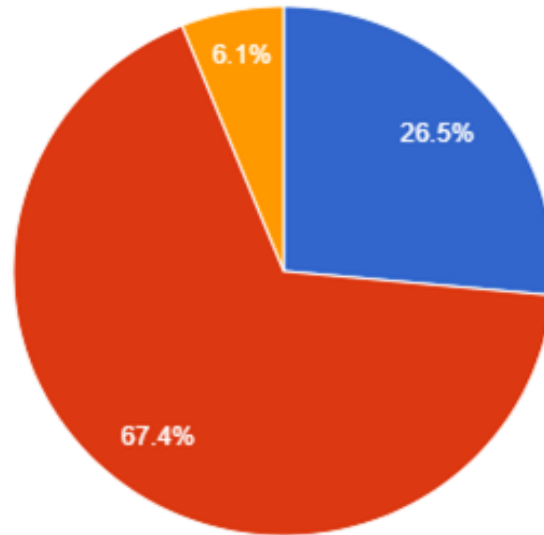
Source: diymaps.net



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



Both- 6.1%

**Independent
provider**-
26.5%

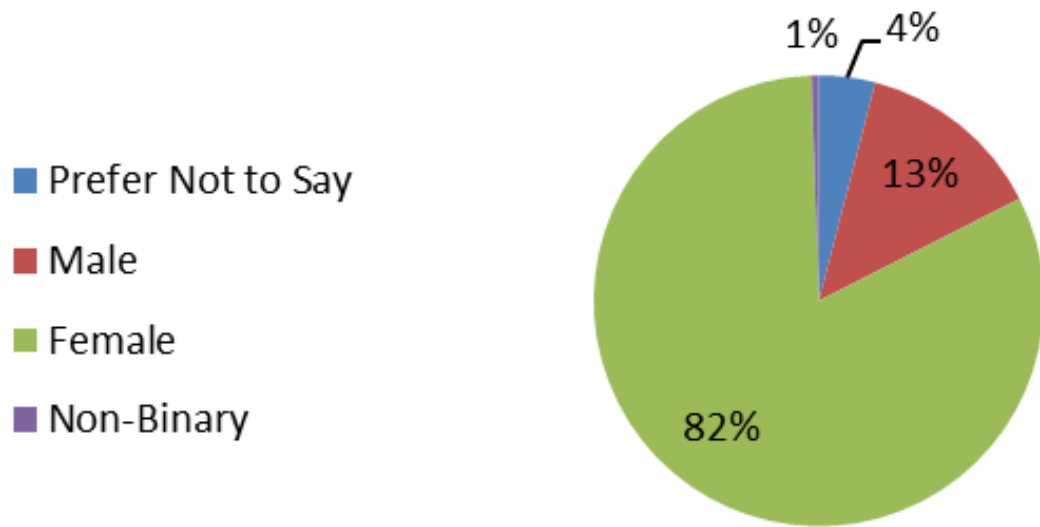
**Agency
provider**-
67.4%



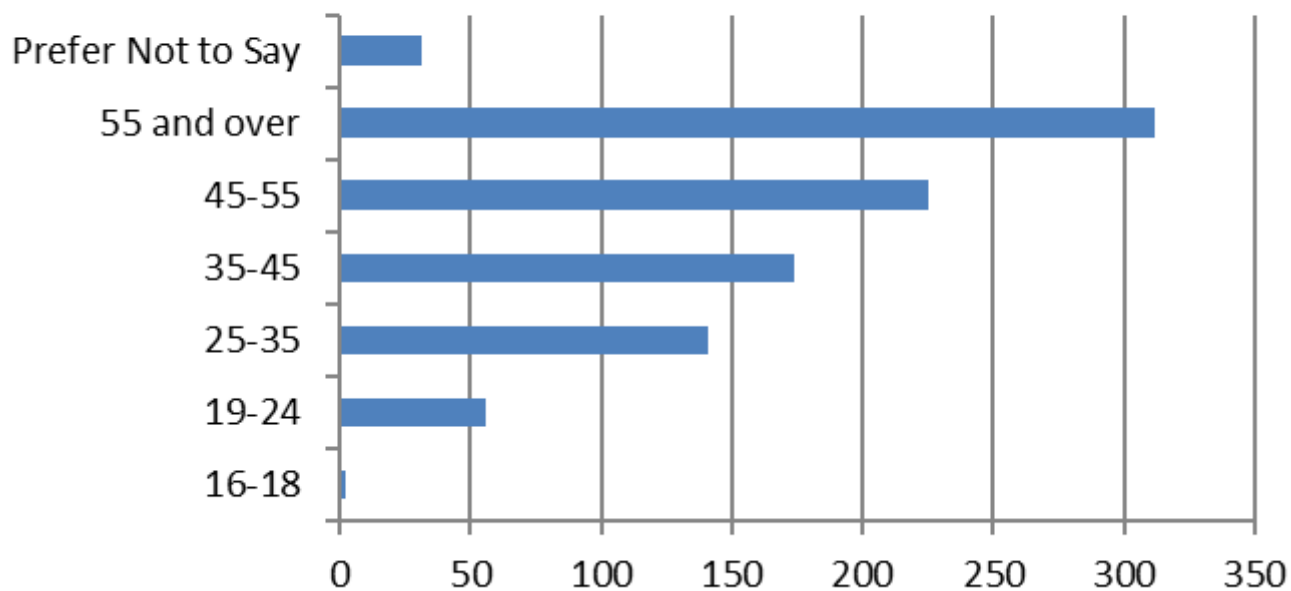
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What is your Gender?



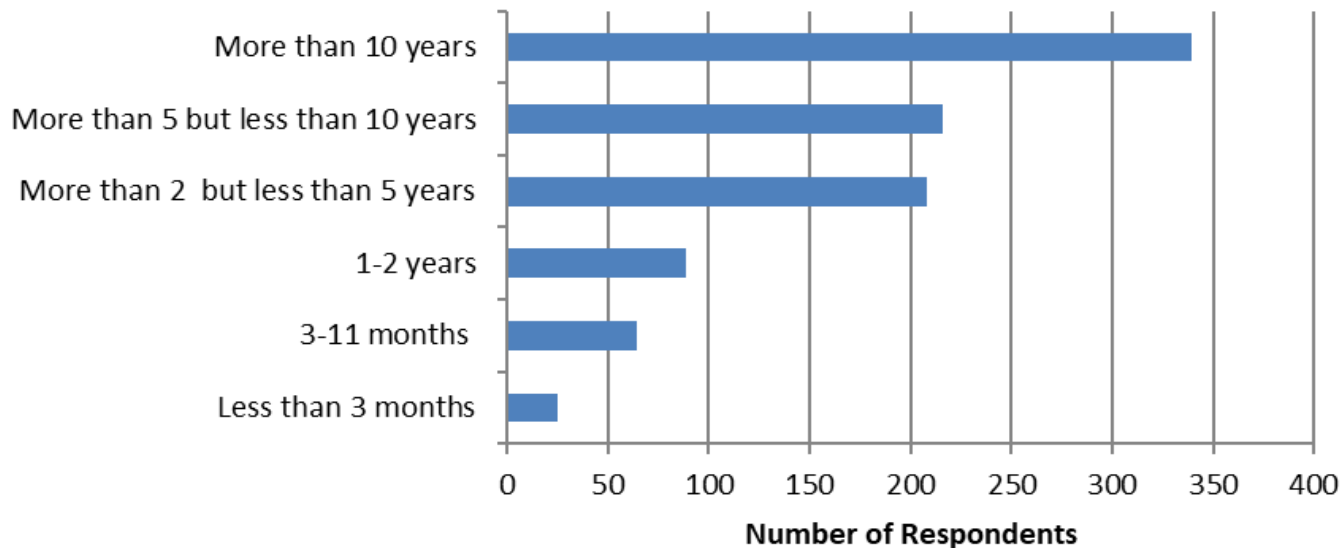
Please Select Your Age Range



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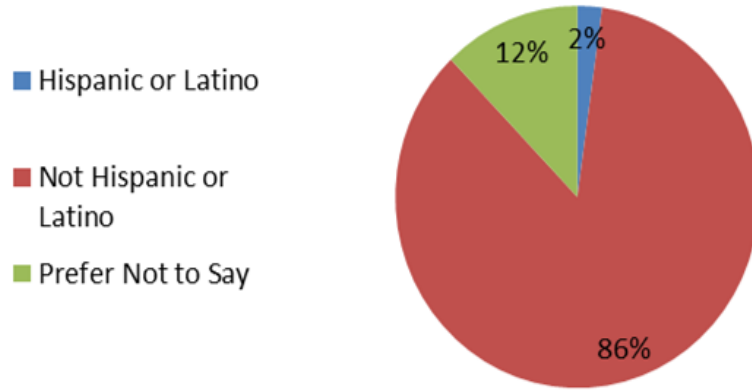
How Long Have You Been Employed as Direct Support Professional?



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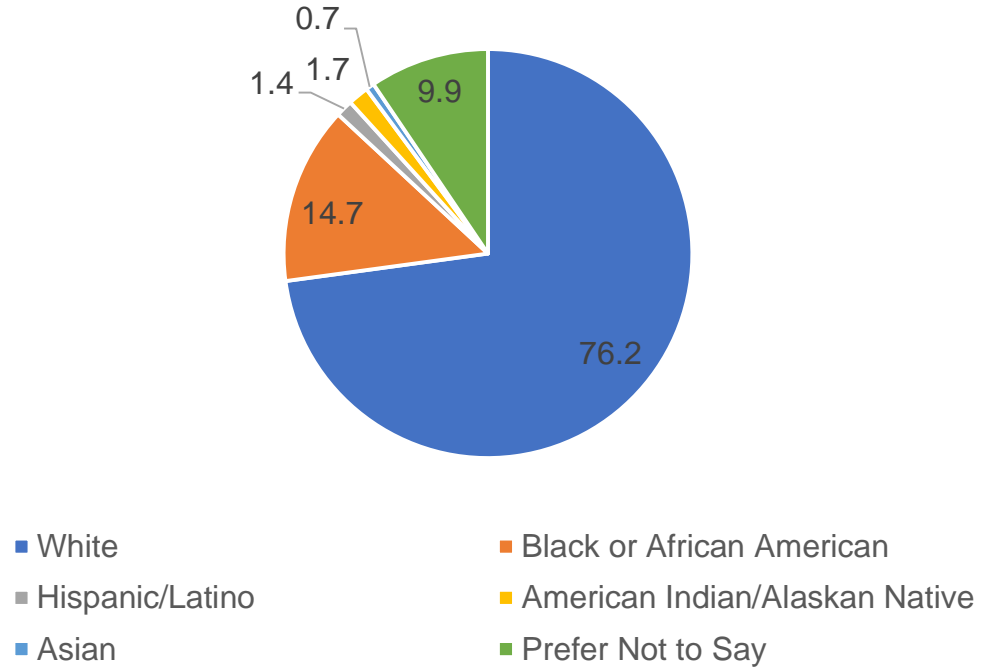
Please Select Your Ethnicity



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



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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"

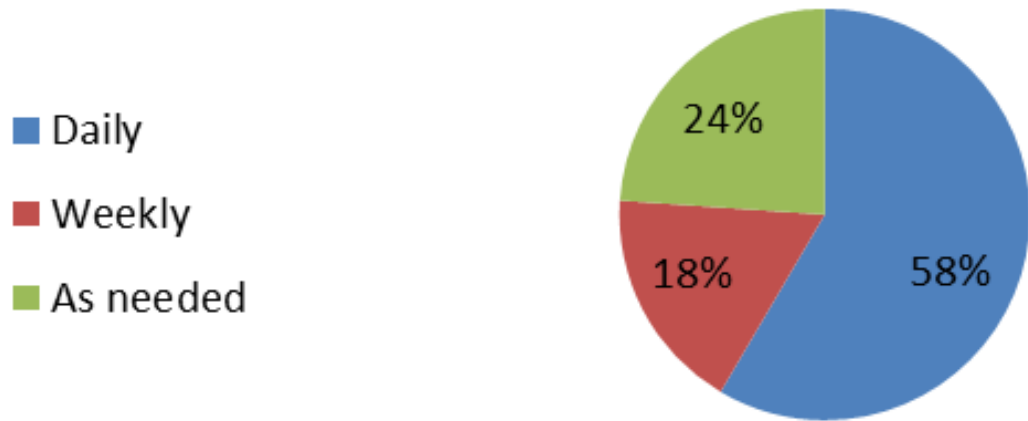
"Truck Driver"



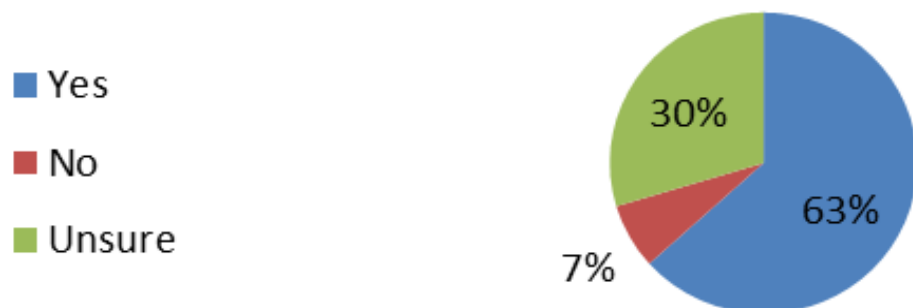
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How Often Do you Service More Than One Client?



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



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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Questions?



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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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