

TURNOVER RATES AFFECT OUTCOMES **FOR PEOPLE WITH I/DD**

The Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce specializes in supporting people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) so they can live in the community with their family and peers, instead of in state institutions. These supports are primarily funded by Medicaid. DSPs perform a wide range of work, from supporting individuals so they can find jobs to assisting individuals with significant disabilities with daily life activities.

DSPs are the backbone of community supports, but in general they are not staying in the field long enough to turn it into a career. This affects the stability and quality of supports to the point of being a crisis, affecting the health and well-being of people with I/DD who rely on supports for the most critical and personal facets of their lives. We explain the situation and its underlying causes below.

» DSP TURNOVER IS HIGH AND FREQUENT.

High turnover is often highly disruptive to people with I/DD, a population for which stability is critical.



**46%**

National Average Turnover Rate

**24-69%**

Range of state turnover rates

TURNOVER BY LENGTH OF TENURE

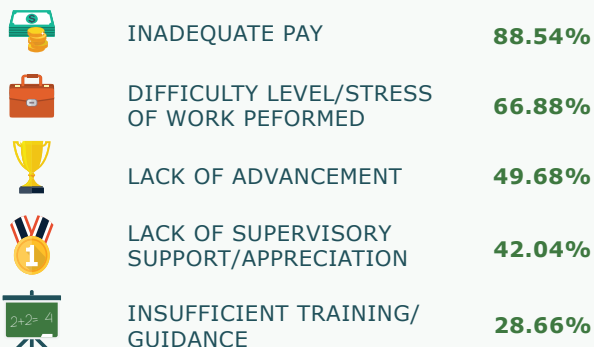


LOW WAGES ARE A PRIMARY CAUSE OF TURNOVER.

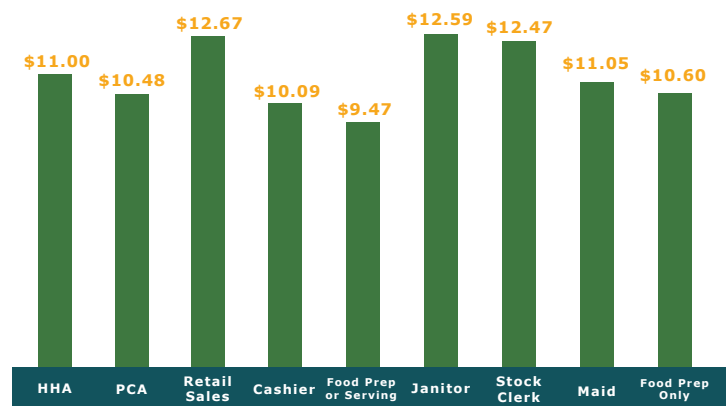
» DSPs operate within a very demanding regulatory framework and have significant responsibilities – including keeping individuals alive – that are not reflected in their wages.

REASON FOR LEAVING

% OF RESPONDENTS



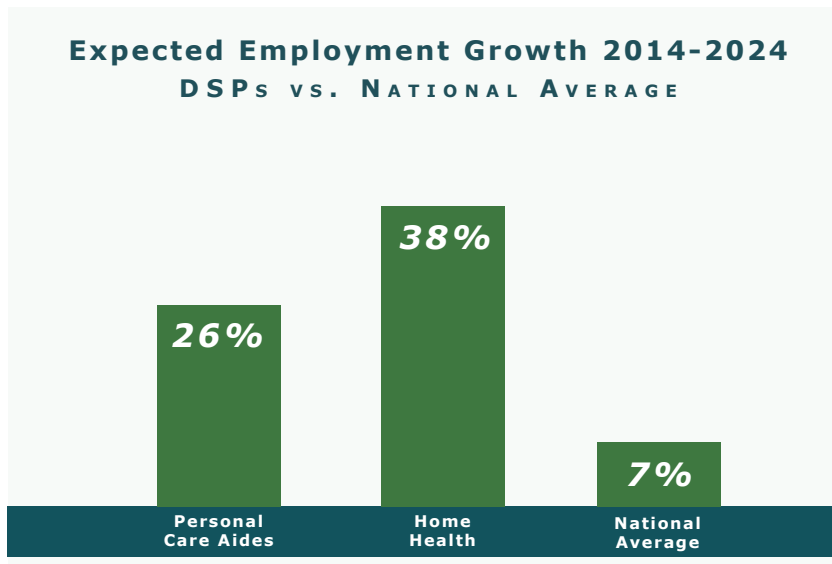
Average Hourly Wages for Direct Care & Alternative Occupations



Source: Medisked Survey. Multiple choice selection allowed so results add up to more than 100 percent.

Source: ANCOR 2017 workforce report

» DEMAND FOR DSPS WILL INCREASE, FURTHER EXACERBATING THE EFFECTS OF TURNOVER.



Demographic trends increasing demand include the increase in Autism diagnoses, increased longevity of people with I/DD, aging family caregivers needing more assistance to care for their loved ones with I/DD, and demand from baby boomers. Simultaneously, fewer women are being born into the labor pool – and the DSP workforce is predominantly female. This promises unmet demand for support unless we take action soon.

» THE GOOD NEWS? STATES HAVE FOUND PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Because DSP wages are set by Medicaid, improving DSP wages requires greater federal and state investments in the Medicaid program. In 2018, several states, including Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine and New York, improved DSP wages by increasing their investments in Medicaid.

Some states have also tackled the DSP workforce crisis by adopting innovative recruitment and retention techniques. Below are three examples of states whose provider agencies found creative ways to improve outcomes.



**IOWA**

An agency leveraged a federal demonstration project to recruit more specialized DSPs, going beyond the usual recruitment targets.



**OHIO**

Ohio recruited DSPs to the workforce by partnering with schools to target students on the brink of dropping out. To improve DSP retention, one agency created an Employer Resource Network to offer more flexibility and better benefits.



**WISCONSIN**

An agency created clear career pathways with built-in wage increases, thus increasing retention.