

EXAMINING DSP TURNOVER AND TENURE IN MASSACHUSETTS USING NATIONAL CORE INDICATORS®-IDD STATE OF THE WORKFORCE SURVEY DATA

Valerie Bradley,
Human Services Research Institute

Massachusetts Commission on the Status
of Persons with Disability
September 7, 2023

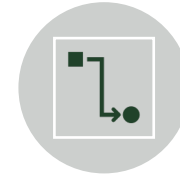




AGENDA



Role of Direct
Support
Professionals



Impact of the
Workforce Crisis



Roots of the
Workforce Crisis



Promising
Research



Comparative
Data from the
NCI State of the
Workforce
Survey



Potential
solutions

Who are DSPs

- Paid staff whose primary job responsibility is to provide the following at any location or during any activity (e.g., at home, at leisure activities, at work, during recreational activities, etc.):
 - support,
 - help with skills development,
 - guidance,
 - or personal assistance
- DSPs are critical to ensuring that people receiving services can
 - live the lives they want in the community,
 - experience person-centered practices,
 - make choices
 - have employment and other value-driven outcomes



Challenges Faced by DSP Workforce

COVID-19 has increased the challenges faced by the workforce



Demand for home-based care increases demand for quality DSP workforce; HCBS settings rule will impact further



Aging population also require direct support- competing for the same workers



High vacancy rates/turnover rates impact service delivery – staffing ratios, access, trust and delays in progress



High turnover rates: extra incurred costs to providers

- Recruitment costs
- Onboarding and Pre-Service Training
- Additional costs associated with overtime



NCI-IDD State of the Workforce in 2021: Survey Basics in MA

Agencies and providers included in the sample:

- Massachusetts included all licensed and certified residential and day/employment providers in the sample

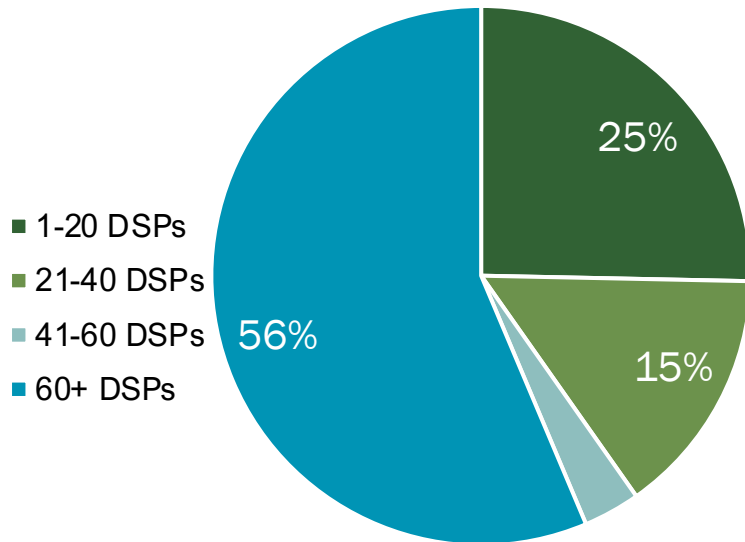
Implementation strategies included:

- Using the executive director email address on record, providers were emailed, the opportunity to complete the survey.
- Participation was encouraged but was voluntary.

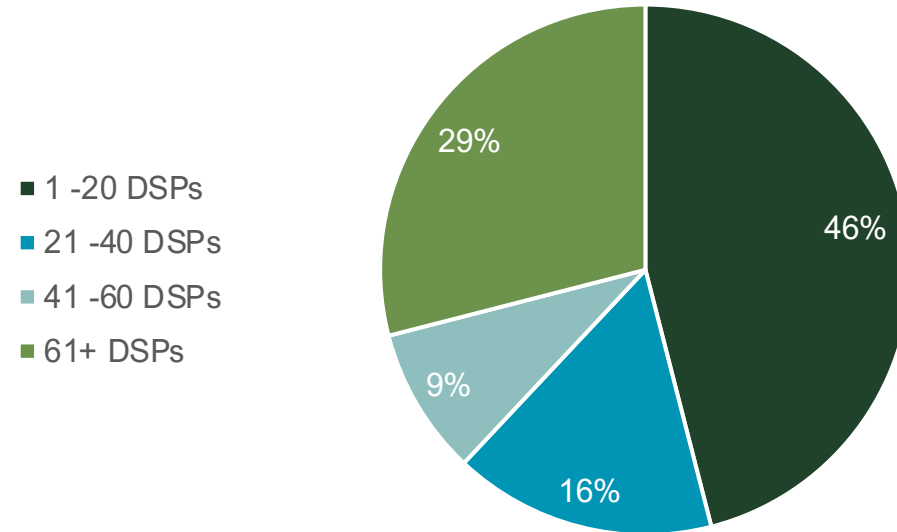
	Valid responses	Total population	Response rate	Margin of Error
MA	87	181	48.1%	7.59%

Agency Size Based on Number of DSPs on Dec. 31, 2021

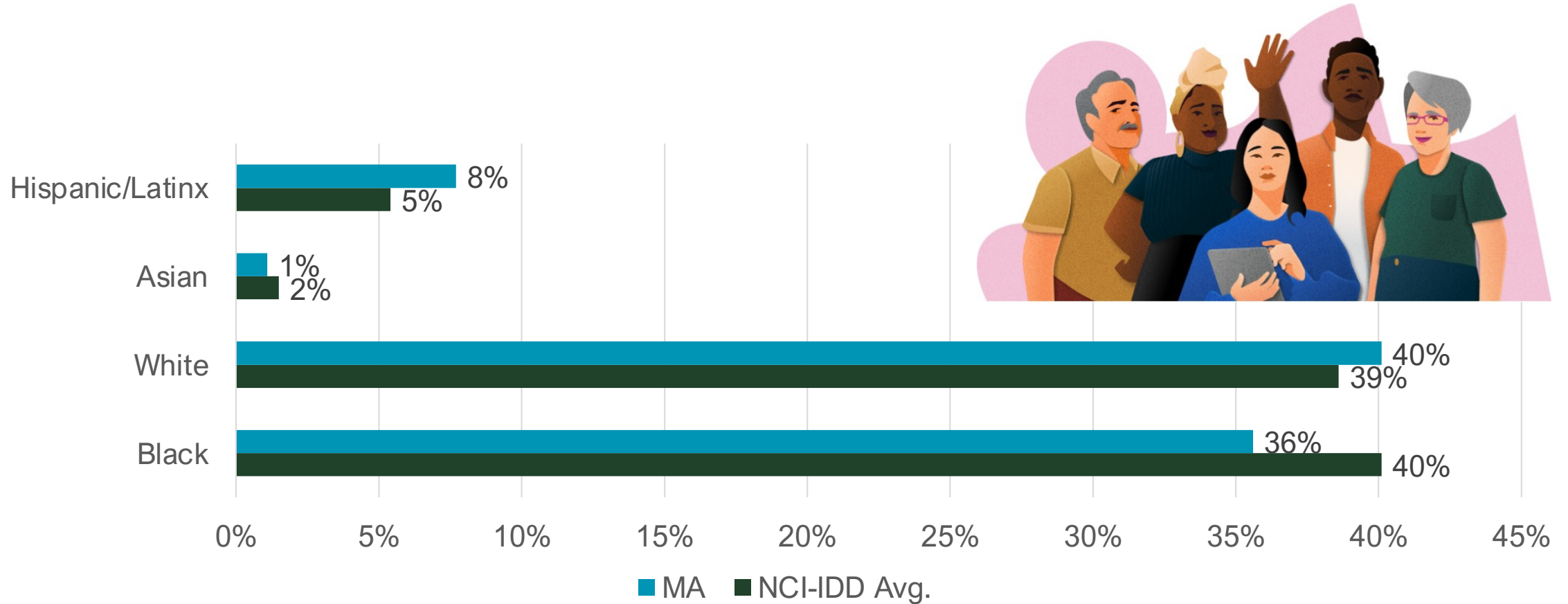
% MA Agencies



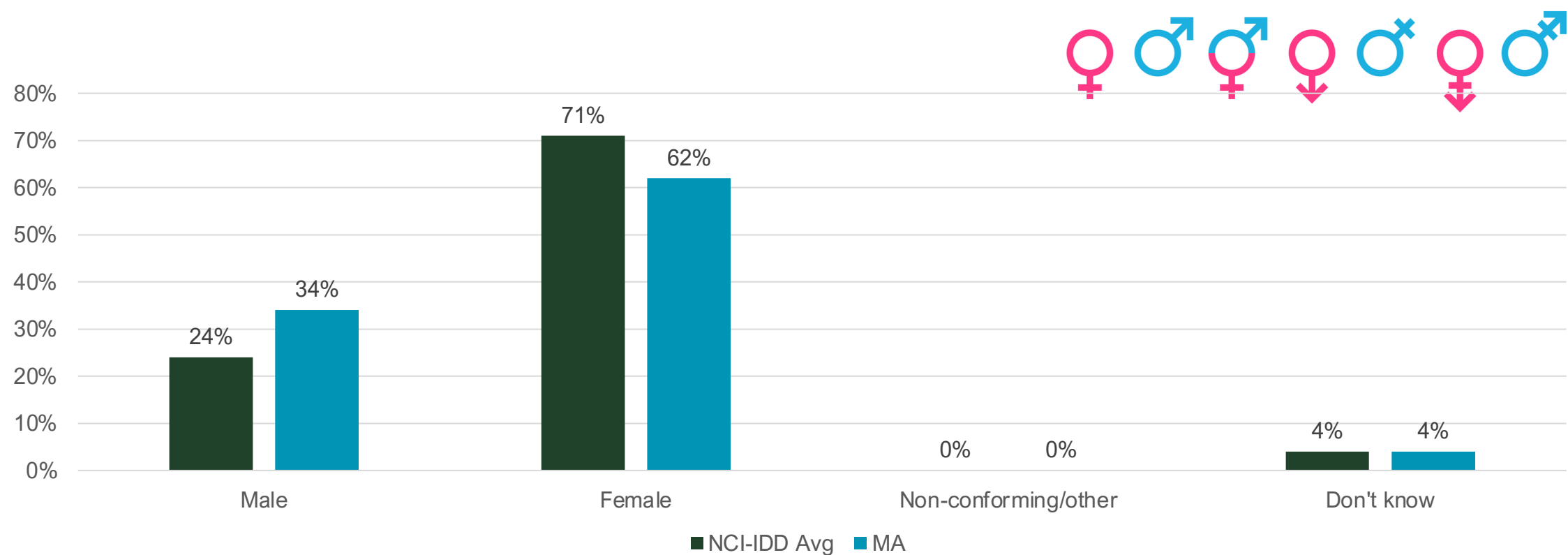
NCI-IDD Avg.



DSP Workforce Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



DSP Workforce Demographics: Gender Identity





Data at a Glance

Wages

\$17.22 overall
average hourly
wage

NCI-IDD average
\$14.41

Health Insurance

94.2% of
agencies offer to
some or all
DSPs

NCI-IDD average
59.9%

Paid Time Off

94.2% provide
any paid time off
to DSPs

NCI-IDD average
73.7%

Turnover Ratio

31.4%

NCI-IDD average
43.3%

Vacancy Rate

18.8% full-time
and 18.1% part-
time

NCI-IDD average
16.5% and
20.3%



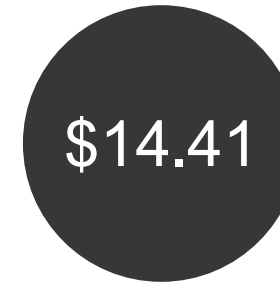
Wages Benchmark: Overall Average Hourly



Massachusetts



East Coast
Peers**



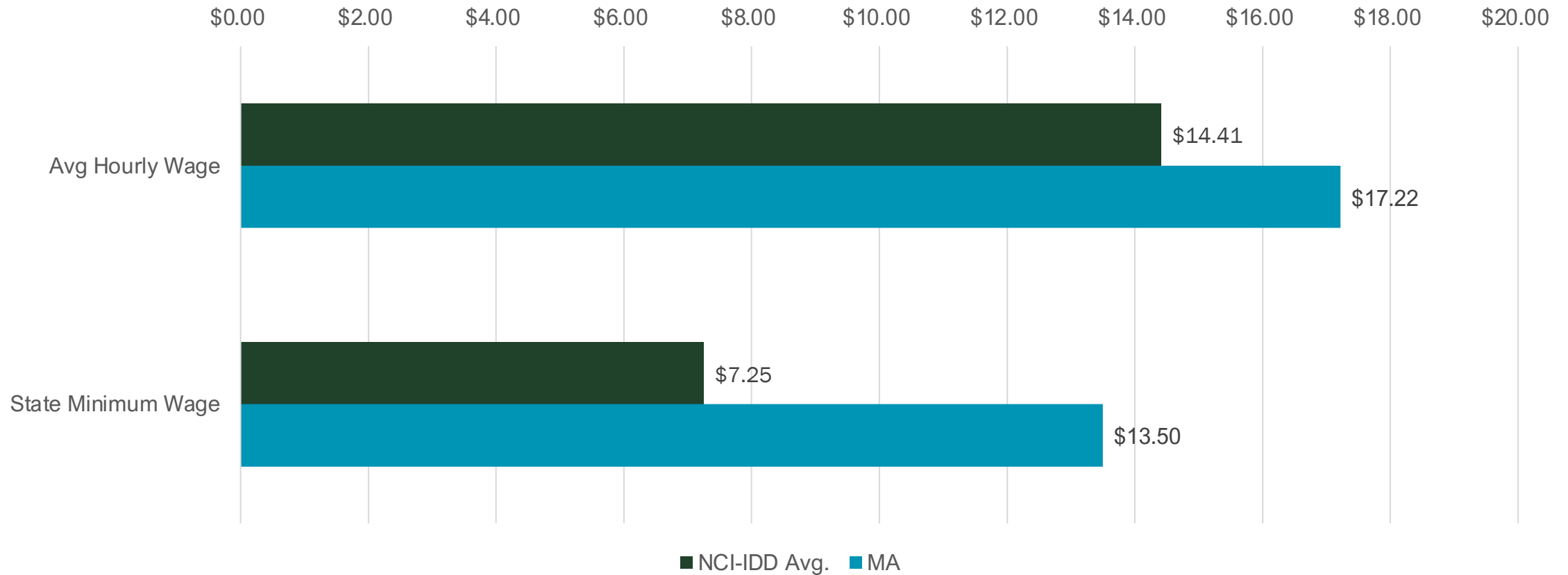
NCI-IDD

	MA	CT	NY	NJ	NCI-IDD
State Minimum	\$13.50	\$13.00	\$12.50	\$12.00	\$7.25*
Average Starting	\$16.25	\$16.03	\$15.58	\$16.06	\$13.61
Overall Average	\$17.22	\$17.04	\$16.64	\$16.92	\$14.41
Median	\$17.00	\$16.78	\$16.43	\$16.50	\$14.50

*Federal minimum wage



Average Hourly Wage of All DSPs



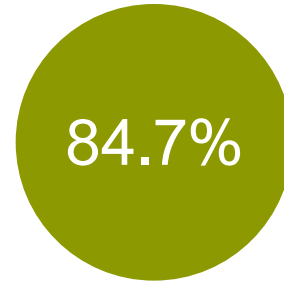
\$7.25/hour is the federal minimum wage



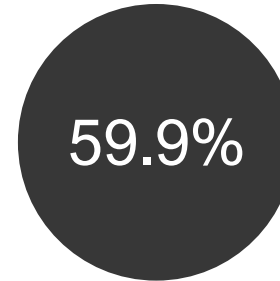
Health Insurance Benchmark



MA



East Coast
Peers



NCI-IDD



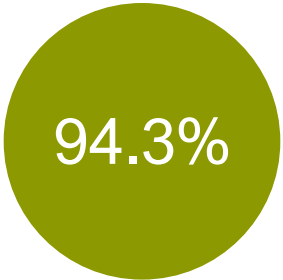
MA	CT	NY	NJ	NCI-IDD
94.2%	86.8%	95.0%	72.3%	59.9%



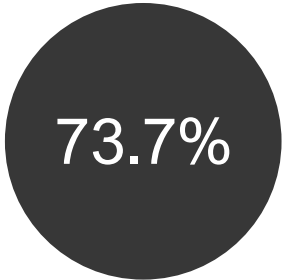
Paid Time Off Benchmark: Any Type



MA



East Coast
Peers

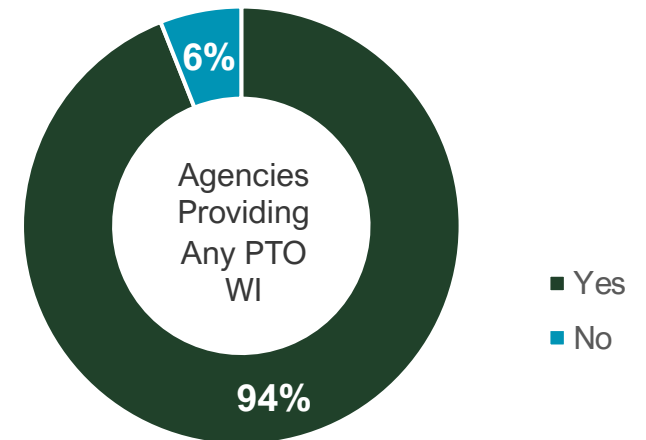
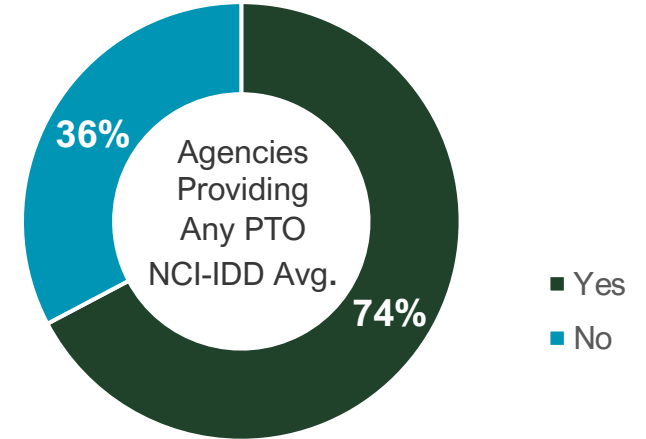
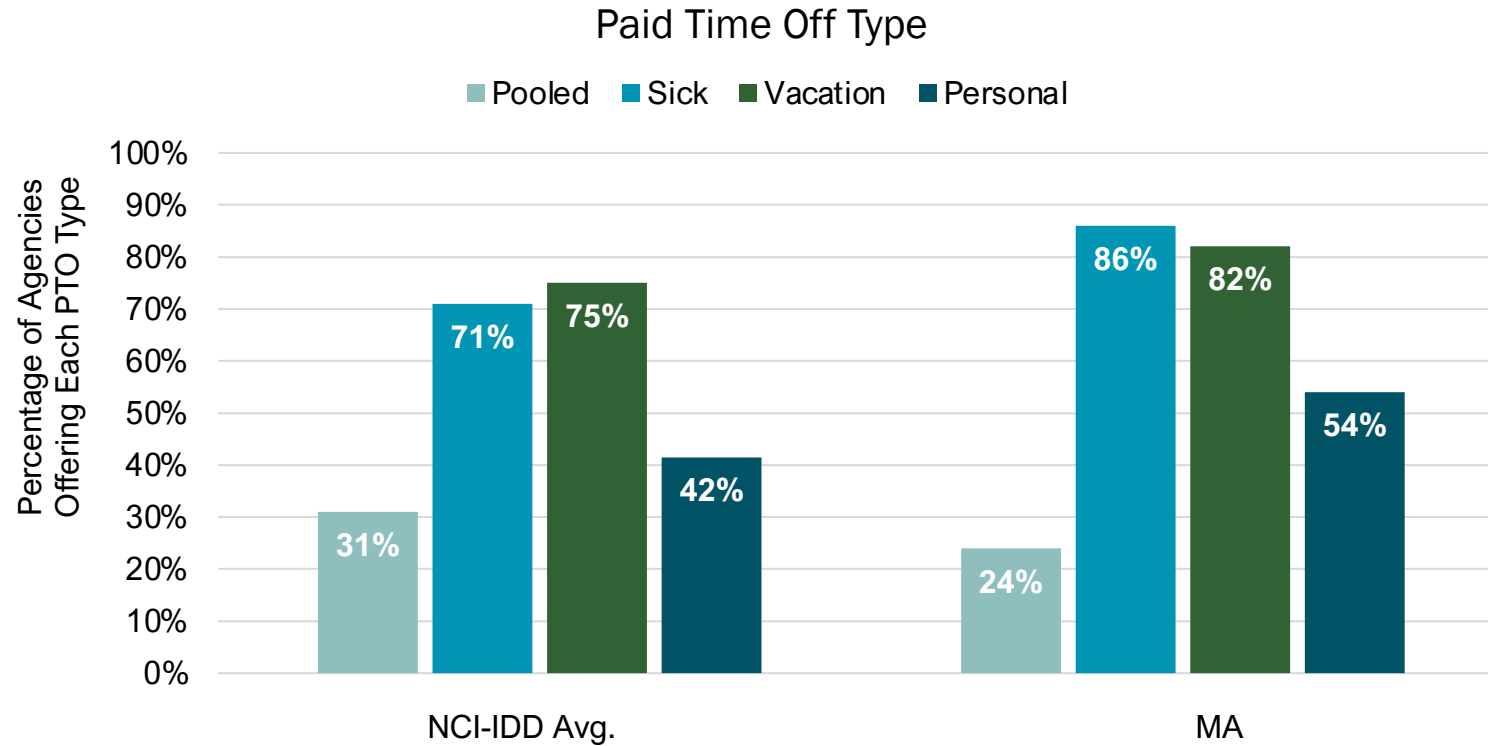


NCI-IDD

MA	CT	NY	NJ	NCI-IDD
94.2%	98.1%	99.0%	85.9%	73.7%

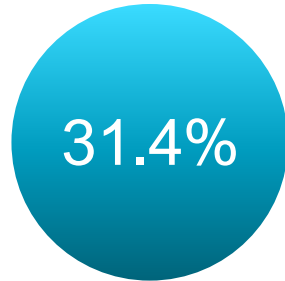
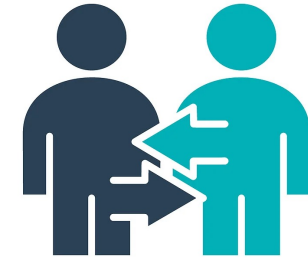


Agencies Providing Paid Time Off to DSPs

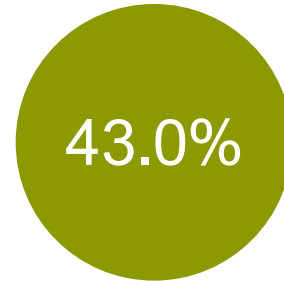




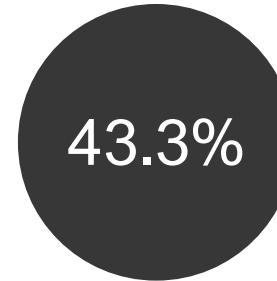
Turnover Ratio Benchmark: Mean



MA



East Coast
Peers



NCI-IDD

	MA	CT	NY	NJ	NCI-IDD
Mean	31.4%	52.8%	38.3%	37.9%	43.3%
Median	25.8%	40.1%	33.8%	33.3%	33.3%

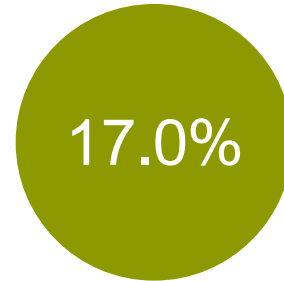


Vacancy Rates Benchmark: Full-Time



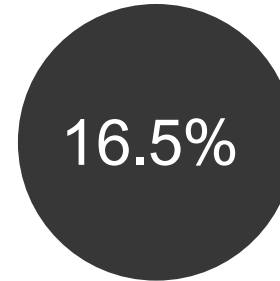
15.7%

MA



17.0%

East Coast
Peers



16.5%

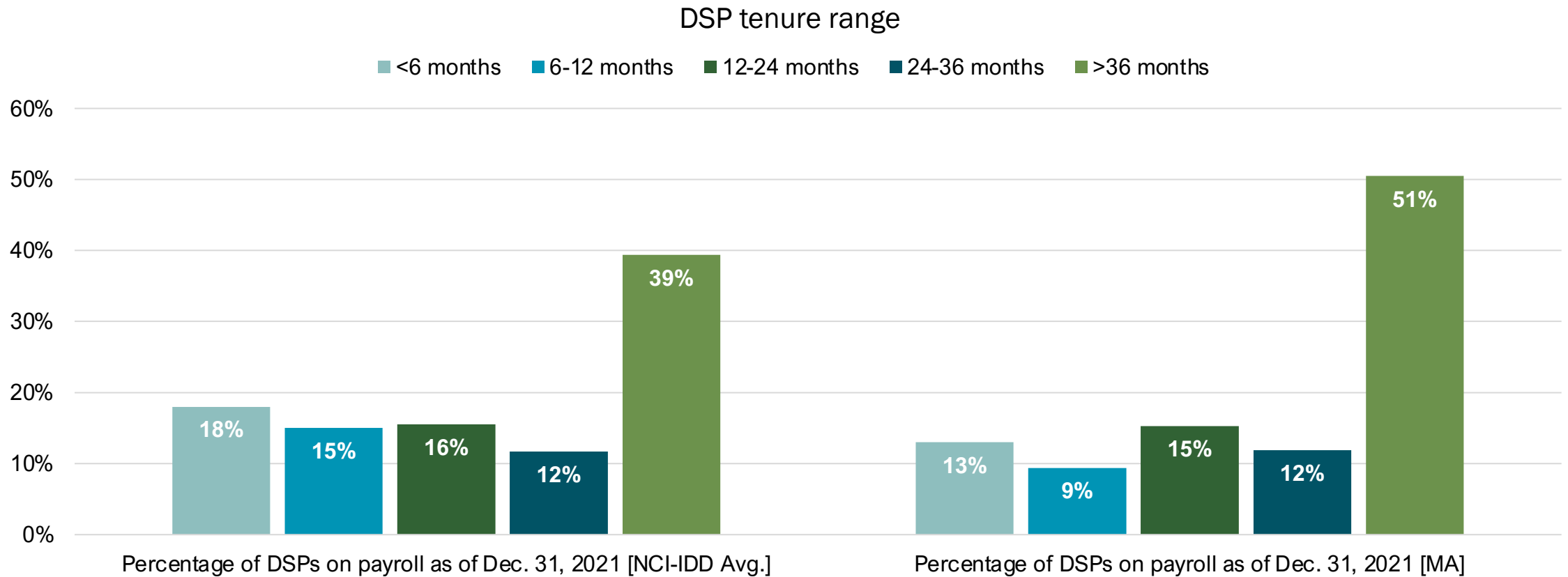
NCI-IDD

	MA	CT	NY	NJ	NCI-IDD
Full-time	18.8%	12.6%	21.3%	17.2%	16.5%
Part-time	18.1%	18.8%	25.0%	22.6%	20.3%



Tenure Among Employed DSPs

DSPs on payroll at responding agencies = 10,269

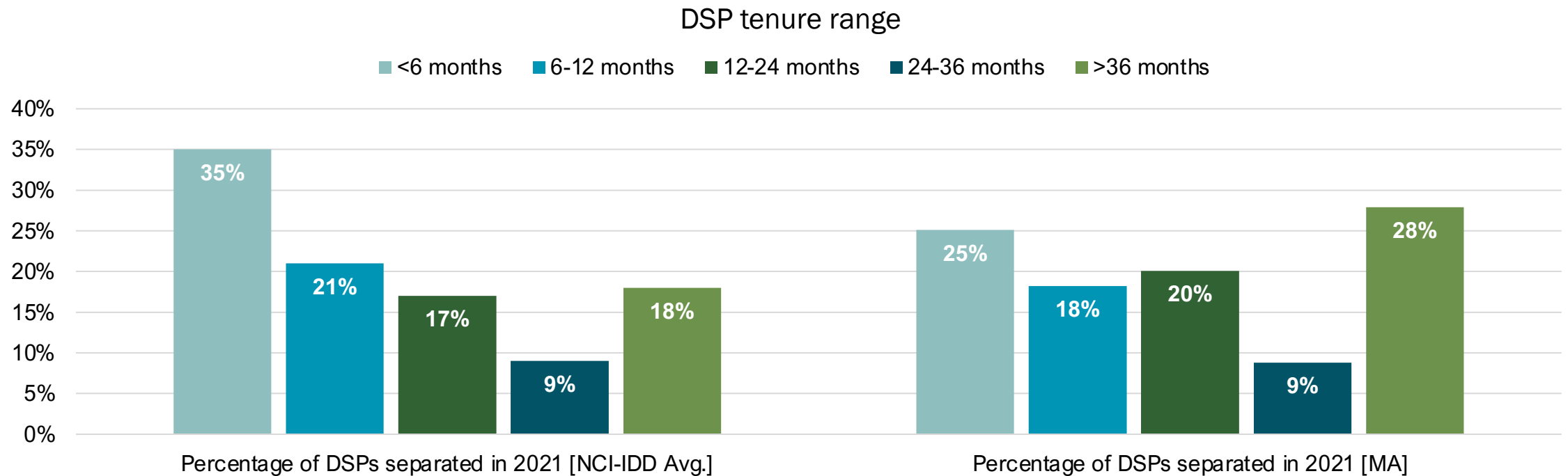


Only includes agencies that provided information on both the total number of DSPs employed as of Dec. 31, 2021, and the tenure of those DSPs. State tenure rates are an average of all cases in the state. Only includes the number of DSPs reported by respondents that also reported the tenure of those DSPs.



Tenure Among Separated DSPs

DSPs separated from responding agencies = 3,828



Only includes agencies that provided information on both the total number of DSPs employed as of Dec. 31, 2021, and the tenure of those DSPs. State tenure rates are an average of all cases in the state. Only includes the number of DSPs reported by respondents that also reported the tenure of those DSPs.

Recruitment and retention in MA

Realistic Job Preview

85%

NCI-IDD Avg. 83%

Train on code of ethics

81%

NCI-IDD Avg. 87%

DSP ladder

23%

NCI-IDD Avg. 32%

Staff supported to acquire credential

31%

NCI-IDD Avg. 32%

DSP included in agency governance

22%

NCI-IDD Avg. 22%

Agency requires training for DSPs*

69%

NCI-IDD Avg. 52%

*Above and beyond those trainings required by state regulations

A photograph of three young people, two women and one man, laughing and interacting joyfully. They are positioned in front of a backdrop that features the U.S. flag, the U.S. Capitol dome, and the text 'U.S. Embassy, Tel Aviv' and 'viva leT, yssadmE .S.U'. The woman on the left is wearing a patterned sweater, the woman in the center is wearing a grey t-shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a grey hoodie. A solid green horizontal bar is at the bottom of the image.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF TURNOVER?



How Does Turnover And Short Tenure Affect DSPs

- Leads to **unpredictability** in hours/schedule
- Lowers **trust** of colleagues
- Results in **double shifts**
- Inhibits the ability to **create relationships** with
 - Co-workers through shared experience
 - People receiving services because of over-work
- Lowers **morale**
- Increases **stress**

How Does Turnover Affect Provider Agencies?



- Increases **cost** of recruiting to fill vacancies
- Increases **overtime costs**
- Requires frequent **training** of new staff
- Restricts the ability to open **new programs**
- In some cases, **closing existing programs**
- Potential **health and safety** vulnerability
- Constrains ability to develop a **positive organizational culture**

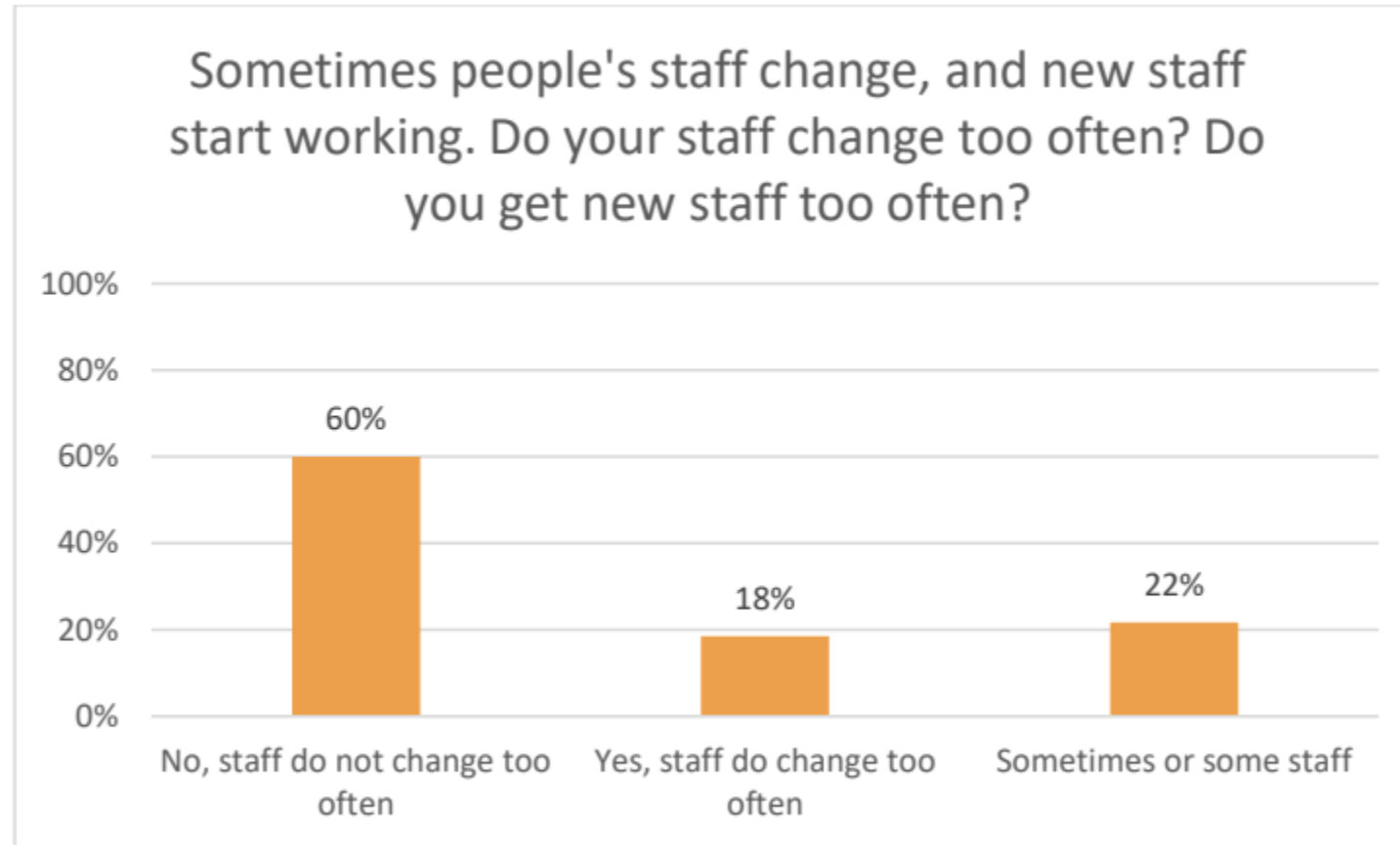
How Does Turnover Affect People Receiving Services



- Disruption of relationships
- Erosion of trust
- Inability to maintain routines
- Difficulty achieving critical life outcomes
- Exposure to abuse, neglect, exploitation

How people with IDD experience Turnover?

In-Person Survey 2021-22



NCI-IDD IPS data—outcomes related to feelings of high turnover of staff

- Relationships: Do you ever feel lonely?

	Yes, often	No/Sometimes
No, staff do not change too often	10%	90%
Yes, staff change too often, or sometimes or some staff change too often	14%	86%

NCI-IDD IPS data—outcomes related to feelings of high turnover of staff

- Community Engagement: Do you do things you like to do outside home as much as you want to?

	Yes	No/Some activities or sometimes
No, staff do not change too often	70%	30%
Yes, staff change too often, or sometimes or some staff change too often	63%	37%

NCI-IDD IPS data—outcomes related to feelings of high turnover of staff

- Transportation: Are you able to get places when you want to do something outside your home, like going out to see friends, for entertainment, or to do something fun?

	Yes	No, almost never/Sometimes
No, staff do not change too often	82%	19%
Yes, staff change too often, or sometimes or some staff change too often	71%	29%

NCI-IDD IPS data—outcomes related to feelings of high turnover of staff

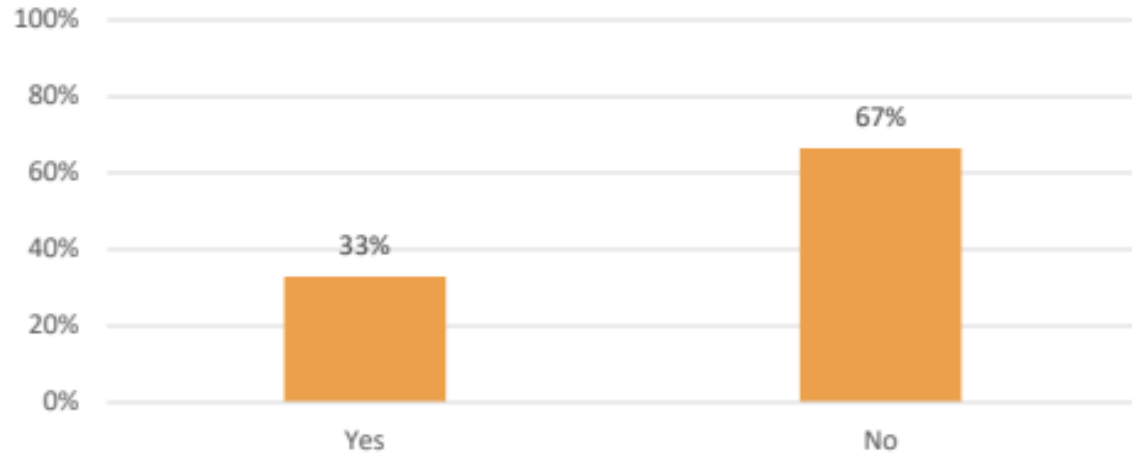
- Rights and Respect: Do staff do things the way you want them done?

	Yes, all staff, always	No/Sometimes or some staff
No, staff do not change too often	90%	10%
Yes, staff change too often, or sometimes or some staff change too often	81%	19%

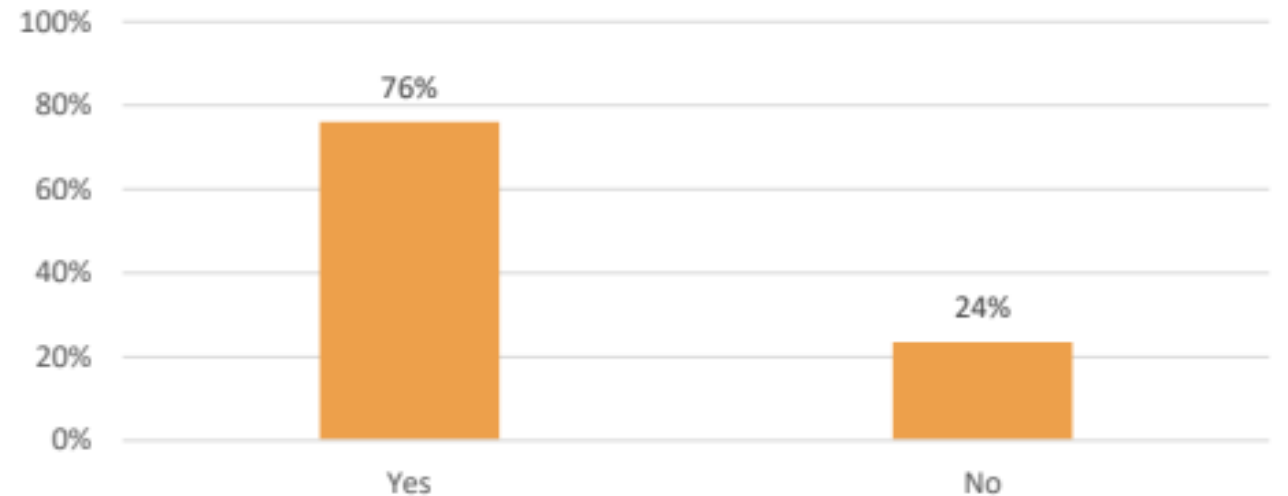
How does turnover affect families?

Adult Family Survey

Do your family member's support workers change too often? Is there too much "turnover" of support workers?

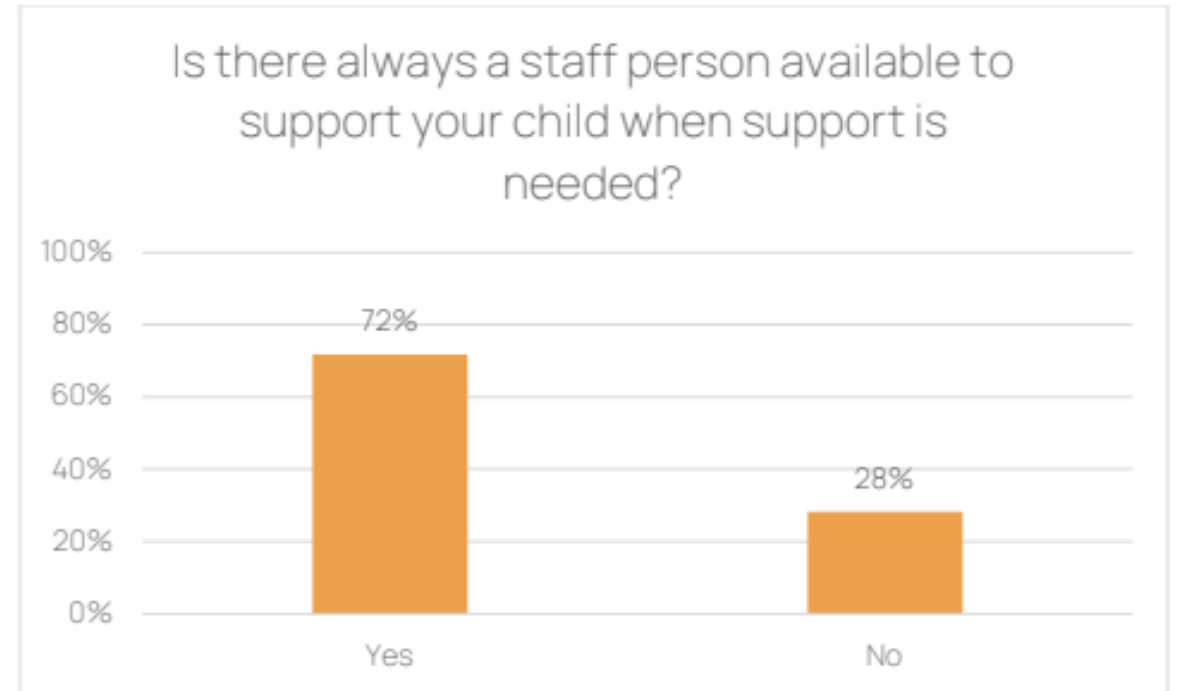
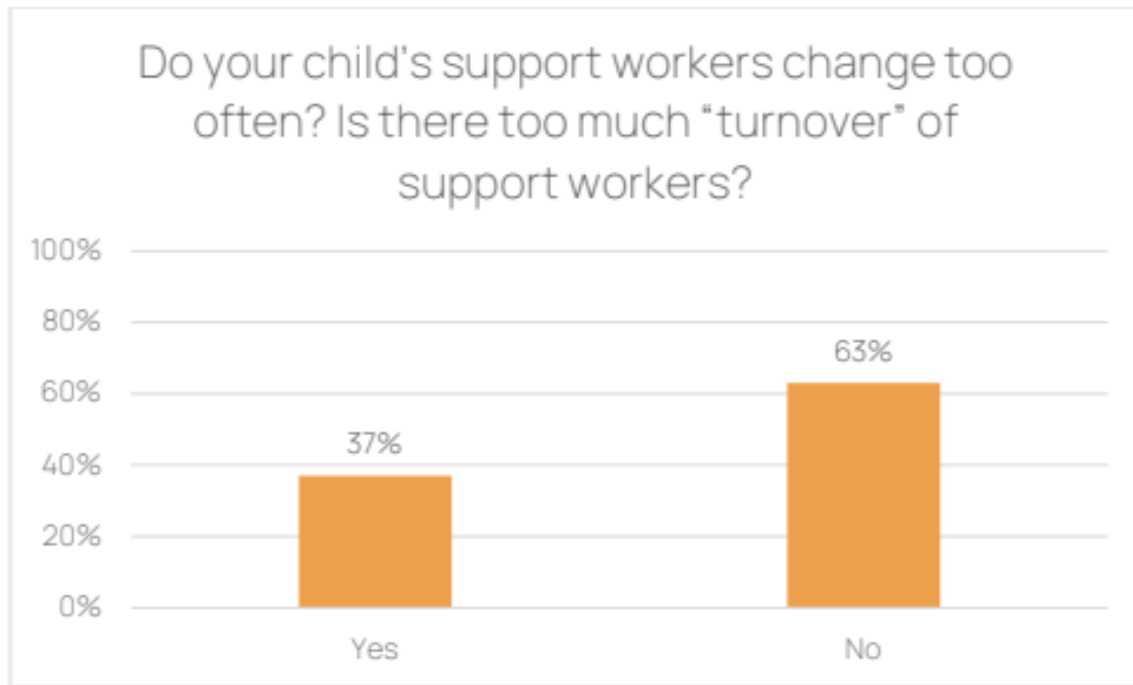


Is there always a staff person available to support your family member when support is needed?



How does turnover affect families?

Child Family Survey



RESEARCH ON WORKFORCE



Research using NCI-IDD SoTW on predictors of turnover and tenure

- Tenure
 - **Staff wages** were the most notable factor associated with differences in DSP retention rates, along with the state in which the organization was located
 - Competitive wage plus offering **benefits packages** that addresses various needs (e.g., flexible spending accounts, post-secondary education assistance, disability insurance) and **at least one bonus** contribute to better DSP tenure in NY
- Turnover
 - Significantly related to **lower DSP wages** and to **not offering benefits** (PTO and health insurance)
 - Early turnover also related to **higher vacancy rates** at organizations, smaller **number of staff**, and higher proportion of **part-time DSPs**
 - Higher state average rates associated with less people **living in individualized settings** and less **Medicaid per-capita spending**.

Pettingell SL, Houseworth J, Tichá R, Kramme JED, Hewitt AS. (2022)

Mir, H., Liu, Q., Rosca, O., & Blakeslee, E. (2020)

Houseworth J, Pettingell SL, Kramme JED, Tichá R, Hewitt AS. (2020)

What can be done
to deal with the
Workforce Crisis?





First and Foremost, Increase Wages and Financial Incentives

- Necessitates changes in **reimbursement rates**
- Requires making sure that **rate increases are passed to DSPs**
- Should include provider re-evaluation of how **current resources are allocated**
- Includes giving **staff incentives** to recruit staff
- CMS Notice of Proposed Rule Making on Access to HCBS has explicit reference to ensuring robust workforce wages relative to overall revenue—ensure DSP workforce is represented

Find Ways to Support DSPs



- Use **Employee Assistance Programs**
- Explore **Employee Resource Networks**
 - Have been implemented in Ohio, New York, and Georgia
 - Multiple agencies collaborate to hire “success coaches” to help staff with challenges such as auto repair, day care, etc.
 - Helps to address absenteeism and burn-out
 - Can reduce DSP feelings of working in isolation
- Help staff to **pay off student loans**
- Provide **childcare stipends**

More ways to support DSPs

Supervisor ratio

The recent study by New York State found that the ratio of supervisors to DSPs also influenced the length of tenure.

Specifically, the ratios of 10 DSPs to one supervisor or less was associated with longer tenure.

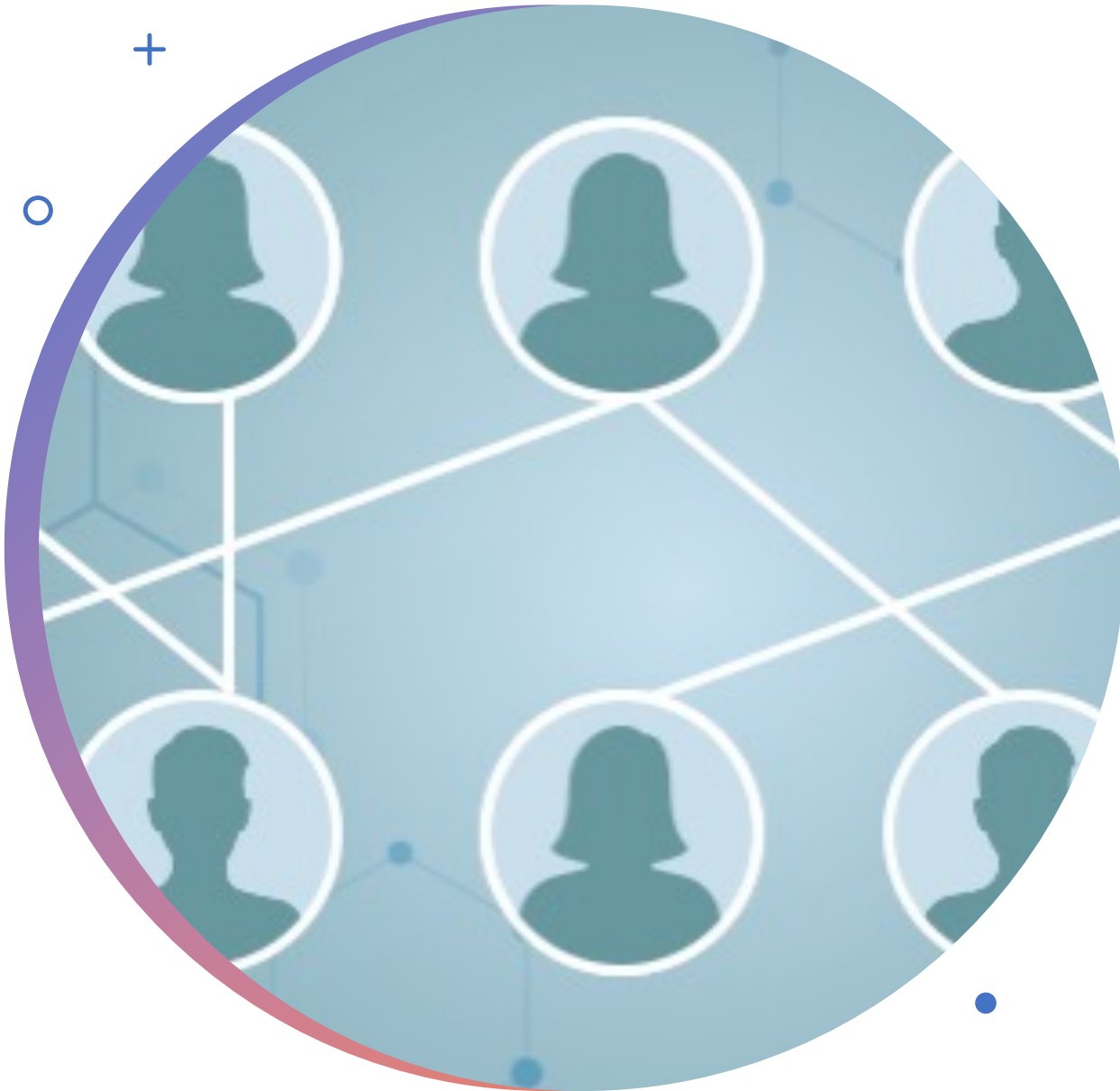
Training and certification

Competency-based training is important to ensure the workforce has the skills to provide quality supports.

Ensure that increased competency is linked to higher wages

Organizational culture

Opportunity for DSPs to participate in governance of the organization, to provide feedback for quality enhancement, and to be empowered to innovate and be creative in the ways in which they provide support.



Improve the Match Between Workers and People they Support

- **Involving service users in screening and hiring staff** makes it possible to match staff with service users based on interests, skills, culture, and personality.
- **Including the users in the hiring decision** minimizes conflicts that may result in termination down the line.
- The Collaboration for Citizen Directed Supports received an ACL prize for their interactive map that helps people with IDD identify compatible staff.
(<https://acl.gov/DSPchallenge>)

Increase Training and Promotional Opportunities



- **Pay for training** through a range of different learning platforms including College of Direct Support, Relias, and Open Future.
- **Seek certification** through the NADSP E-Badge Academy and other certification programs
- **Create career ladders** to give promotional opportunities to DSPs who complete designated training, show initiative, and/or have high performance ratings
- Attach **wage increases** to **training and certification**

What can organizations do?



- Use NCI-IDD State of the Workforce data to **inform and persuade** legislators, Medicaid rate setters, and IDD leadership about the extent of the workforce crisis.
- **Chart the impact** of any workforce initiatives on improved tenure and turnover
- Work with researchers to **examine the relationships** between provider, policies and other variables on turnover and tenure
- [Take the NCAPPS **person-centered practices** self-assessment for your organization](#)
- Encourage the House to **support The Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act**. This act aims to create a Standardized Occupational Classification (SOC) for DSPs.

Thank You.

idd.nationalcoreindicators.org

Vbradley@hsri.org

