

Wisconsin Workforce Trends

2023 NCI-AD Findings

Wisconsin has participated in the National Core Indicators Aging and Physically Disabled (NCI-AD) State of the Workforce survey since 2022. Every other year, this survey collects comprehensive data from agencies that employ direct service workers (DSWs) and support adults with physical disabilities (AD). DSWs are also commonly known as direct support professionals (DSPs) and direct care workers (DCWs). Wisconsin participates in these surveys to monitor progress in caregiver support initiatives and to discover ways to improve the quality and stability of the caregiving workforce that assists Medicaid members.

The NCI-AD reports provide reliable data on employment metrics. This includes turnover, wages, benefits, and recruitment. The most recent findings on these metrics are available in the [National Core Indicators—Aging and Disabilities State of the Workforce 2021 Pilot Report](#). The goal is to help states:

- Examine workforce challenges
- Identify areas for further investigation
- Benchmark the workforce data
- Measure improvements due to policy or program changes

States can easily compare their data to other states and national averages. States also have the opportunity to ask their own questions. This report shares responses to Wisconsin's unique questions asked in the NCI-AD survey in 2023.

Go to dhs.wi.gov/arpa/hcbs-directcareworkforce-surveys.htm to read reports and learn more about our workforce surveys.

What county do you serve?

| 2023 |
|-----------------------------|
| All 72 counties represented |

What client groups do you serve?

Survey feedback shows direct care agencies serve a wide range of members. The care they provide is not limited to members who are aging and/or living with disabilities.

| Type of client | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Person with an IDD | 162 | 89% |
| Person who is elderly | 139 | 76% |
| Person who is blind | 77 | 42% |
| Person with a physical disability | 141 | 77% |
| Children | 38 | 21% |
| Other | 22 | 12% |

At the end of 2023, indicate your agency's business considerations.

Most agencies anticipate expanding, followed closely by "no change."

| Business changes | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anticipate expanding | 74 | 40% |
| Anticipate downsizing | 22 | 12% |
| Anticipate closing | 18 | 10% |
| Some other change | 38 | 21% |
| No change | 69 | 38% |

Did you increased wages for your direct support workers during 2023?

In 2023, most agencies (67%) reported raising hourly wages for DSWs.

| Increase wages | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | 122 | 67% |
| No | 48 | 26% |
| I don't know | 9 | 5% |

Why do you think your DSWs left their jobs? (Choose all that apply)

The most common response was that pay for DSWs is too low (54% of agencies reporting this), followed by inadequate benefits and many “other” responses.

| Reason for job change | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lack of communication/schedule changes/admin help | 5 | 3% |
| Lack of training | 3 | 2% |
| Pay is too low | 98 | 54% |
| Lack of consistent schedule with enough hours | 33 | 18% |
| Lack of support | 4 | 2% |
| Conflict with coworkers or management | 25 | 14% |
| Inadequate benefits | 40 | 22% |
| Working conditions | 8 | 4% |
| Travel time | 24 | 13% |
| Not applicable | 27 | 15% |
| Other | 42 | 23% |

Types of “other” responses: Worker moved away, went to college, member passed away, didn’t get along well with family/client, didn’t want to stay in caregiving.

How often did your agency have to turn away clients/participants due to DSW staffing issues in 2023?

Most agencies never (34%) or occasionally (28%) had to turn away clients/participants due to staffing issues. However, about a third (33%) stated they had to do so often or very often.

| Clients turned away | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very often | 23 | 13% |
| Often | 36 | 20% |
| Occasionally | 51 | 28% |
| Never | 62 | 34% |
| I’m not sure | 8 | 4% |

Rank how helpful the following would be in strengthening your DSW workforce, 1 being the most helpful.

In 2023, more funding was the highest rated response, followed by support for the DSW workforce such as transportation, childcare, etc.

| Ways to strengthen workforce | Rank | Average Score |
|---|----------|---------------|
| More funding to offer higher wages/benefits | #1 | 1.3 |
| Support for DSW workforce such as transportation, childcare, etc. | #2 | 3.1 |
| Standardized training for DSWs | #3 (tie) | 3.7 |
| Recruitment tools/resources | #3 (tie) | 3.7 |
| Retention tools/resources | #3 (tie) | 3.7 |
| Other (short answer) | #6 | 5.1 |

What are your biggest barriers to recruitment?

Most agencies stated an inability to increase hourly pay as the highest barrier, followed by a lack of qualified applicants.

| Barriers | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cost of recruitment is high | 70 | 38% |
| No one responding to ads | 95 | 52% |
| Unable to offer benefits | 86 | 47% |
| Inability to increase hourly pay | 124 | 68% |
| Lack of qualified applicants | 102 | 56% |
| No barriers to recruitment | 6 | 3% |

Have you hired new staff that are Certified Direct Care Professionals (CDCPs) or have you sent your staff through the Certified Direct Care Professional program?

Most agencies have not hired CDCPs (55%), while 20% have. Another 23% were unaware of the program.

| Hired CDCPs | Number of organizations | Percent of organizations |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | 37 | 20% |
| No | 101 | 55% |
| Unaware of the CDCP Program | 43 | 23% |