State of the Workforce Survey

Wisconsin Workforce Trends

2021 and 2023 NCI-IDD Findings

Wisconsin has participated in the National Core Indicators® Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI®-IDD) survey since 2022. Every other year, this survey collects data about direct support professionals (DSPs) who support adults with IDD. DSPs are also commonly known as direct support workers (DSWs) and direct care workers (DCWs). Wisconsin participates to find ways to improve the caregiving workforce for Medicaid members.

The NCI-IDD reports provide reliable data on employment metrics. This includes turnover, wages, benefits, and recruitment. 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

The most recent findings on these metrics are available in the National Core Indicators— Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities State of the Workforce 2023 Survey Report. States can compare their data to other states and national averages. States also have the opportunity to create and ask their own questions.

This report shares answers to Wisconsin's unique questions. It also shows how direct care agencies' responses changed from 2021 to 2023. The 2021 and 2023 NCI-IDD surveys asked Wisconsin's unique questions.

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

What county do you serve?

2021	2023	Change
All 72 counties represented	70 of 72 counties represented	-2

What client groups do you serve?

In both our 2021 and 2023 IDD responses, we see that many of our direct care agencies serve a wide range of members. The care they provide is not limited to members with intellectual or developmental disabilities. In 2023, agencies reported serving a broader, more diverse range of members than in 2021.

Type of client	2021	2023	Change
Person with an IDD	91%	98%	6%
Person who is elderly	60%	72%	12%
Person who is blind	37%	48%	11%
Person with a physical disability	74%	78%	4%
Children	20%	22%	2%
Other	11%	14%	4%

At the end of 2021 or 2023, indicate your agency's business considerations.

In 2023, we saw a positive trend of more agencies anticipating expanding business in the year ahead. In both 2021 and 2023 the most common answer was anticipating "no changes to business model."

Business changes	2021	2023	Change
No changes to business model	49%	50%	1%
Anticipate expanding	23%	32%	9%
Anticipate contracting	11%	12%	1%
Anticipate closing	5%	7%	2%
I don't know	8%	9%	1%
Other	15%	4%	-11%

Have you increased wages for your direct care workers during the year?

Most agencies reported increasing wages for their direct care workers during the year in both 2021 and 2023. Slightly more agencies shifted from a response of "I don't know" to "No" in 2023 compared to 2021.

Increase wages	2021	2023	Change
Yes	77%	77%	0%
No	16%	21%	5%
I don't know	6%	2%	-4%

What is the longevity of your direct care workforce?

We saw an increase in longevity of direct care workers from 2021 to 2023. We will monitor to see if this continues as a trend.

2021	2023	Change
5.3 years	6.7 years	1.4 years

In your opinion, why are DCWs leaving their jobs? (Choose all that apply)

In 2021 and 2023, "pay is too low" was the most common response, although in 2023 this response decreased. "Inadequate Benefits" and "Lack of consistent schedule with enough hours" were the two next highest preset responses.

Reason for job change	2021	2023	Change
Lack of communication/schedule changes	6%	4%	-2%
Lack of training	5%	3%	-2%
Pay is too low	73%	61%	-12%
Lack of consistent schedule with enough hours	19%	20%	1%
Lack of support	8%	3%	-5%
Conflict with coworkers or management	13%	10%	-3%
Inadequate benefits	29%	25%	-4%
Working conditions	11%	6%	-5%
Travel time	11%	16%	5%
Not applicable	12%	15%	4%
Other	28%	21%	-7%

New question in 2023: Have you hired new staff that are Certified Direct Care Professionals (CDCPs)?

Though most respondents reported being unaware of the CDCP program and not hiring new staff who were CDCPs, there were 29 respondents (14%) who indicated they have hired CDCPs. We hope to see this climb in the years to come.

Hired CDCPs	Number	Percent
Yes	29	14%
No	119	59%
Unaware of the CDCP Program	54	27%
Total	202	N/A

Estimate the percentage of clients you've had to turn away in the calendar year because you did not have enough direct care workers to support them.

Between 2021 and 2023, reporting categories changed, which limits the validity of a comparison. Here you can see the 2023 responses.

Clients turned away	2023
0%	38%
1-5%	10%
6-10%	7%
11-20%	7%
21-30%	6%
31-40%	3%
41-50%	2%
51-60%	3%
61-70%	3%
71-80%	3%
81-90%	2%
91-100%	6%
I don't know/blank	7%

What are your biggest barriers for recruitment?

The most common answer in both 2021 and 2023 was the inability to increase hourly pay, though we saw a slight decline in this response from 2021 to 2023. The second most common response was a lack of qualified applicants, though this fell as well (more significantly). The greatest decline was seen in the response "no one responding to ads"—a positive trend.

Barriers	2021	2023	Change
Cost of recruitment is high	28%	34%	6%
No one responding to ads	71%	49%	-22%
Unable to offer benefits	42%	46%	4%
Inability to increase hourly pay	71%	69%	-2%
Lack of qualified applicants	60%	50%	-10%
No barriers to recruitment	5%	7%	2%

What do you most need to strengthen your DCW workforce (increase numbers, improve skills)?

The most common answer in 2023 was more funding to offer higher wages and benefits—a significant increase over 2021, when this was the lowest rated response. The need for standardized training for DCWs fell, perhaps due to the work of new, standardized curriculum provided for free via WisCaregiver Careers. The other rising need identified was for support for the DCW workforce, such as transportation and childcare, while needs for recruitment and retention tools fell.

Reason for job change	2021	2023	Assessment
More funding to offer higher wages/benefits	#5	#1	↑ Increasing need
Standardized training for DCWs	#1	#3	↓ Decreasing need
Support for DCW workforce such as transportation, childcare	#4	#2	↑ Increasing need
Recruitment tools/resources	#2	#5	↓ Decreasing need
Retention tools/resources	#3	#4	↓ Decreasing need