

**Developmental Disabilities Services  
Innovation Think Tank**  
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**HIRING, TRAINING AND KEEPING WORKERS**

**~ WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW ~**

**Direct Support Workers** include both agency staff and workers who are hired by home providers and people who self-manage, family-manage and share-manage their services.

<p><b>Direct Support Workers in 2016</b>  <b>1,510 – Agency Staff</b>  <b>1,360 – Home Providers</b>  <b>3,459 – Workers Paid by ARIS</b></p>	
<p><b>Training recently strengthened:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Person-Centered Thinking</li> <li>- Person-Centered Planning</li> <li>- Supported Decision-Making</li> <li>- Personal Outcome Measures</li> <li>- Transformative Power of Relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Training identified as most needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Person-Centered Thinking</li> <li>- Develop, implement and monitor Individual Support Agreements</li> <li>- Create effective, positive behavior support plans</li> <li>- Health and Wellness documentation</li> </ul>

**Calendar Year 2016**

<p><b>Staff Survey of Direct Support Staff at Agencies</b>  <b>(National Core Indicators - NCI)</b></p>	
- Staff Wages – Average starting hourly wage	\$12.68
- Staff Wages – Average hourly wage	\$13.51
- Employees who left employment	491
- Turnover rate	33%
- Of those who left employment:	
- Left employment within 6 months of being hired	23%
- Left employment within 6-12 months of being hired	21%
- Left employment after 1 year of being hired	56%

- All workers must have background checks done before they start work.
- Workers are required to receive specific training before they work with a person.

## Hiring, Training and Keeping Workers

### (What is Happening Now)

- Workers must receive ongoing training to assist them to do their job better.
- 87% of people interviewed said their “workers have adequate training to meet their needs” (National Core Indicators – NCI)
- 88% of people interviewed said their “workers are respectful” (NCI)
- 74% of people interviewed said their “service coordinator asks them what they want” (NCI)

### ~ WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES ~

- Making sure that all direct support workers get best-practice training about values like “Presumption of Competence” and “Self-Determination”.
- Families need to have training to help them better support their family member.
- Home providers need to have training to help them do their job well and safely. Hard for agencies to know if home providers have been trained.
- It can be difficult for families and home providers to find back-up workers who can fill in when other workers are not there.
- Low pay, low unemployment rates and decreased Vermont population make it hard to find people to do the work.
- Lack of statewide Service Coordinator training has left gaps in in-service training.
- Lack of 5-day statewide Pre-Service Training has left gaps in staff training.
- Entry level positions are easier to hire for. Workers whose jobs require college and graduate degrees are hard to fill.
- Limited trainers and training budgets at agencies. No dedicated training staff or funding at the state.
- Lack of support available to people who have experienced trauma.
- Continuous recruitment can be expensive and time consuming.
- Many long-time agency directors and other leaders will be retiring.

## Hiring, Training and Keeping Workers

### ~ WHAT CAN WORK WELL ~

- Creative and respectful advertising for support workers.
- Taking time to hire someone who fits in with the culture of the agency.
- Providing realistic job previews to applicants so they know what to expect.
- Taking time to make a good match between a person and their support worker.
- Focusing orientation of staff on values, understanding agency culture and building relationships.
- Providing direct oversight for the first two weeks before a new staff person works alone with a person.
- Building a positive and respectful relationship between a person and their worker.
- Providing training to direct support workers. This training is an investment that saves time and money in the future.
- Self-advocates taking part in the design, delivery and evaluation of staff training – especially for new staff.
- Providing monthly Service Coordinator training and monthly all-staff meetings.
- Getting feedback from staff on a regular basis.
- Providing Therapeutic Options, trauma, inclusion, person-centered thinking and relationship building training for all direct support staff.
- Finding training from outside the agency. Having staff bring back good ideas to the agency to share with other staff.
- Providing training through on-line classes and You Tube videos.
- Respect diversity by hiring staff that look like those in the community where they work.
- Providing individual, timely and supportive supervision of direct support workers.
- Conducting evaluation of new staff after one month. Asking the person being supported if they are satisfied and getting their needs met.
- Conducting exit interviews with workers who leave employment with the agency.
- Showing staff that they are appreciated for the good work they do (recognize good work, send 'thank you' cards, celebrate important events in people's lives).

## Hiring, Training and Keeping Workers

### ~ *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS* ~

It might be helpful to get your ideas ready ahead of time. These are questions we will be talking about:

1. In your experience, what ways of hiring new workers have you found to be the most helpful?
2. What types of support and supervision is best for keeping good workers?
3. What are some of the reasons why workers do not stay?
4. Are there ways that orientation and training could be done differently?
5. What creative ways are workers hired, trained or supported that you learned about that are used in other places?