

**Pennsylvania Office of Mental Retardation Residential and In-Home
Services Turnover and vacancy Survey Results
August 10, 2006**

I. Introduction/Purpose of the Survey

In 2004 The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Office of Mental Retardation (OMR) established the System Capacity and Capability Standing Sub-Committee to the Quality Improvement Council (the Committee). The Committee was charged with the purpose of working to ensure that "sufficient and responsive Home and Community-Based Services Providers are available, possess and demonstrate the capacity and competence to effectively and efficiently serve people receiving services and supports" within Pennsylvania's Mental Retardation System. The Committee agreed with the assertion of the Office of Mental Retardation's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) that "a stable, respected work force is (the) key to quality community services and is an investment in local communities," and made work force stability its main focus. One of the Committee's first activities in support of this focus has been to develop a baseline to establish the number of Direct Support Professionals, vacancy and turn-over rates on a provider and state level annually.

Toward this end, Pennsylvania's Office of Mental Retardation (OMR) in collaboration with the Committee recently conducted a study of vacancy and turnover trends for Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors in order to establish a baseline regarding workforce outcomes in Pennsylvania's Mental Retardation system. The survey looked at turnover data for calendar year 2005 and vacancy data for December 1, 2005. It was designed by consultants from the University of Minnesota, who also helped interpret the results. The University of Minnesota was identified as a resource due to their research and expertise in workforce recruitment and retention strategies in the field of developmental disabilities. The System Capacity and Capability Subcommittee recommended conducting the survey as a means for collecting statewide data regarding workforce stability. The results of the survey would allow OMR to better understand current turnover, wage and retention rates for direct support staff in the Commonwealth, identify technical assistance needs of providers of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities within Pennsylvania and plan accordingly.

II. Survey Process

There were two phases to this process:

- A series of workshops designed to teach provider organizations how to use the turnover calculation tool included in the survey were made

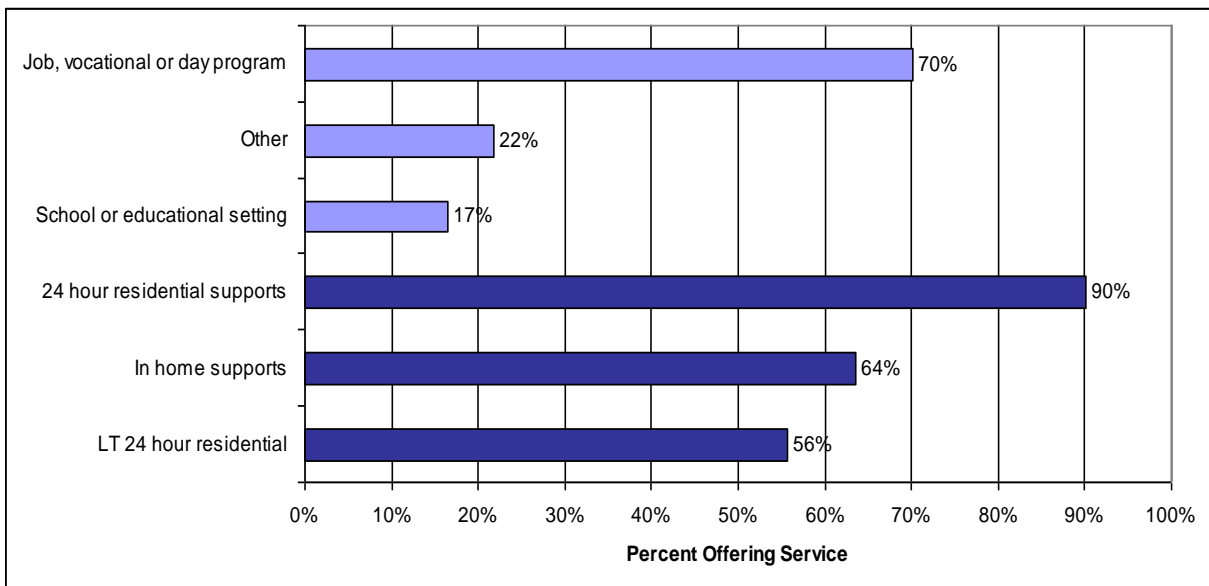
available to all providers in the state of PA. These workshops included information about why it is important to gather data, how to gather data and how to calculate turnover. Additional information was provided regarding interventions that can be used in organizations to reduce direct support turnover.

- A statewide written (or electronic) survey was developed for providers of residential services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Pennsylvania. This survey was developed for the College of Direct Support (CDS) by staff from the University of Minnesota and has been widely used in research on the topic of direct support staff recruitment and retention. CDS is a nationally recognized web based curriculum. OMR has purchased the license to use CDS as a workforce development tool throughout the Commonwealth. A copy of the survey is attached to this report.

III. Responses

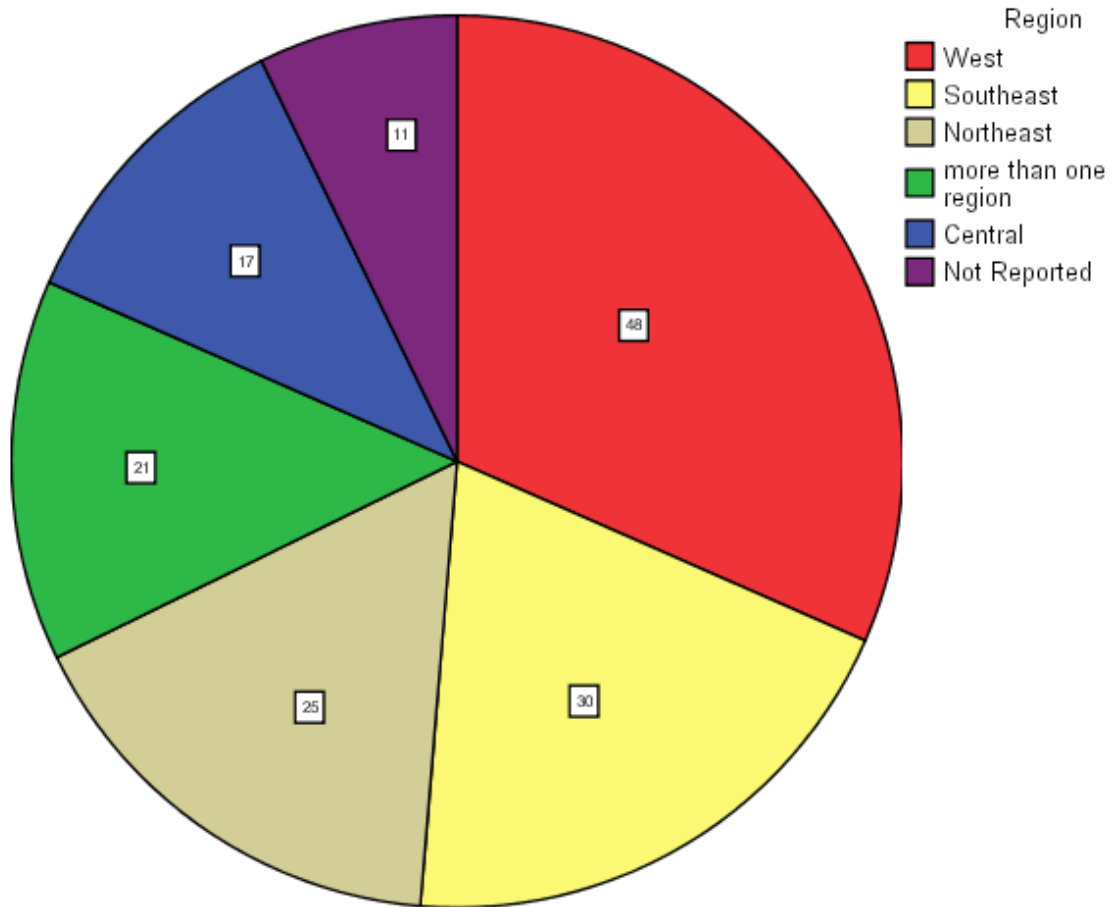
The survey was designed to allow responses to be anonymous. 153 providers in Pennsylvania responded to the survey. Of the 153 returned surveys, 151 were used in the analyses. Ninety percent of the respondents provided residential 24-hour support; 56% provided less-than-24-hour residential; 64% offered in-home support; 70% provided job/vocation/day support and 17% reported that they provided school/education support. The majority of the responding organizations were multi-service organizations meaning they provided two or more of these services.

Services Provided



Overall, 48 of the responses were from organizations in the Western part of the state, 30 were from the Southeast, 25 were from the Northeast, 17 were from the Central Region, 20 reported providing services in multiple regions, and 11 did not specify the region(s) in which they provided supports.

Responses by Region(s) Served



What the responses do not tell us:

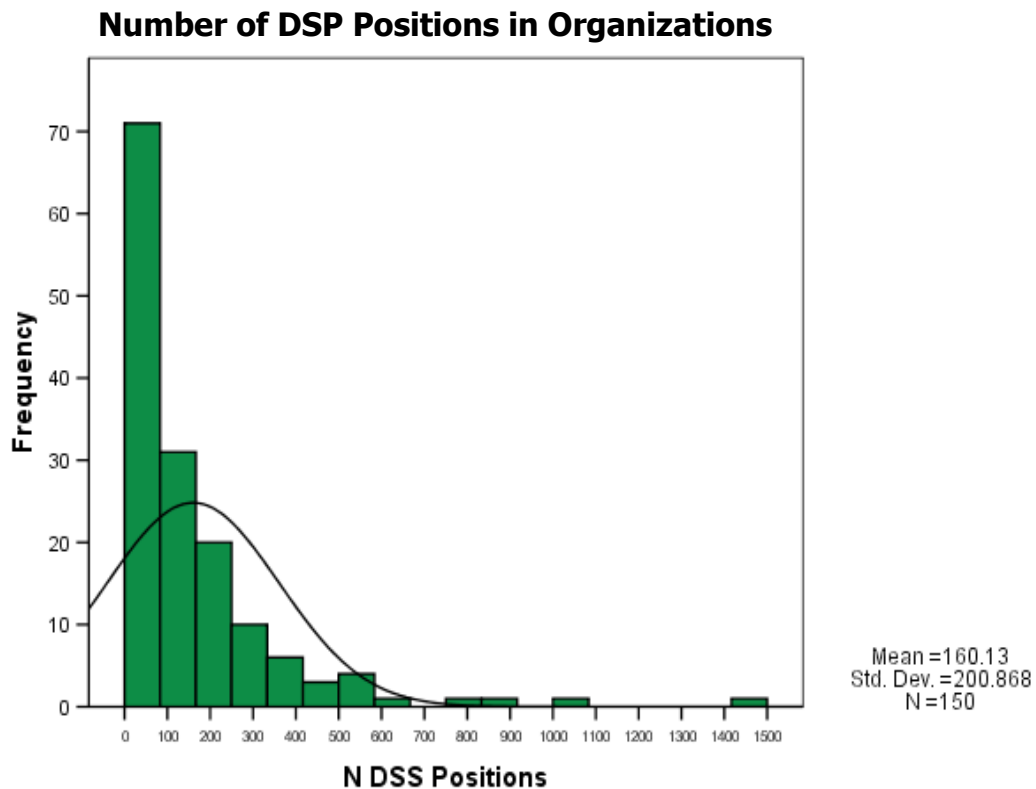
- Total number of surveys distributed
- Extent to which this survey of 151 organizations “represents” the total population of residential service providers in PA
- Differences between CDS users and non CDS users
- The number of people served in each organization

IV. Data Analysis

Data were entered into the CDS data management system. Organizations that were users of the CDS had the option of completing their surveys online (N = 9), others returned their surveys on paper. The surveys completed on paper were subsequently entered into the CDS. A software package (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Simple statistics were used to measure means, ranges and amount of variance. More sophisticated statistics were used to determine which factors (e.g. region, wage, service type) more likely predicted or were related to turnover, wages, and vacancies.

V. Results

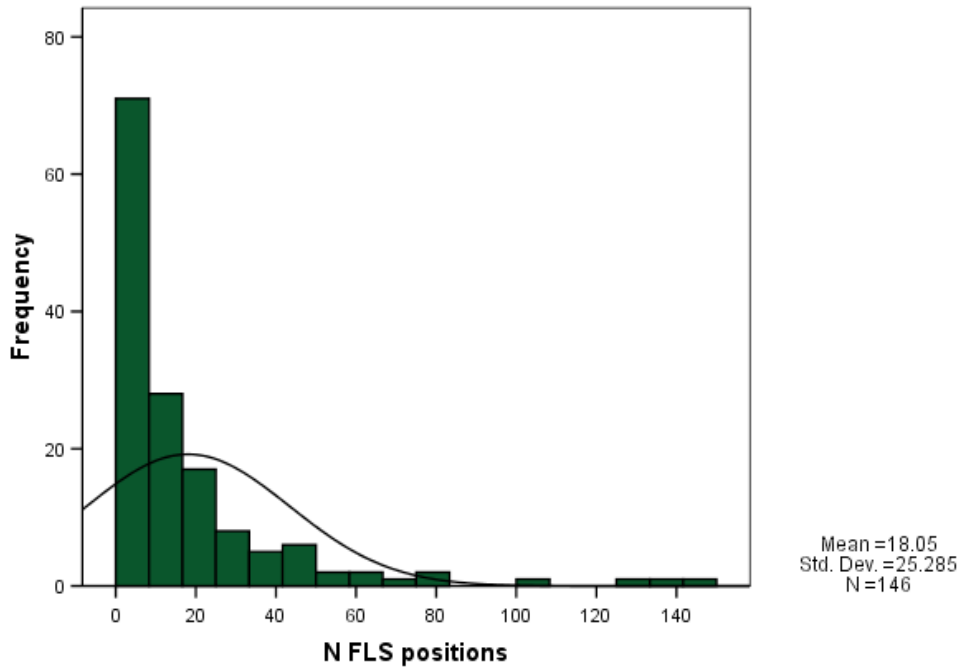
The average respondent employed 160 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and 17 Frontline Supervisors (FLS) – a ratio of 11.5 DSPs per FLS on average. Refer to the following graphs.



The largest group of respondents employed fewer than 100 DSPs. Only four organizations employed more than 700 DSPs

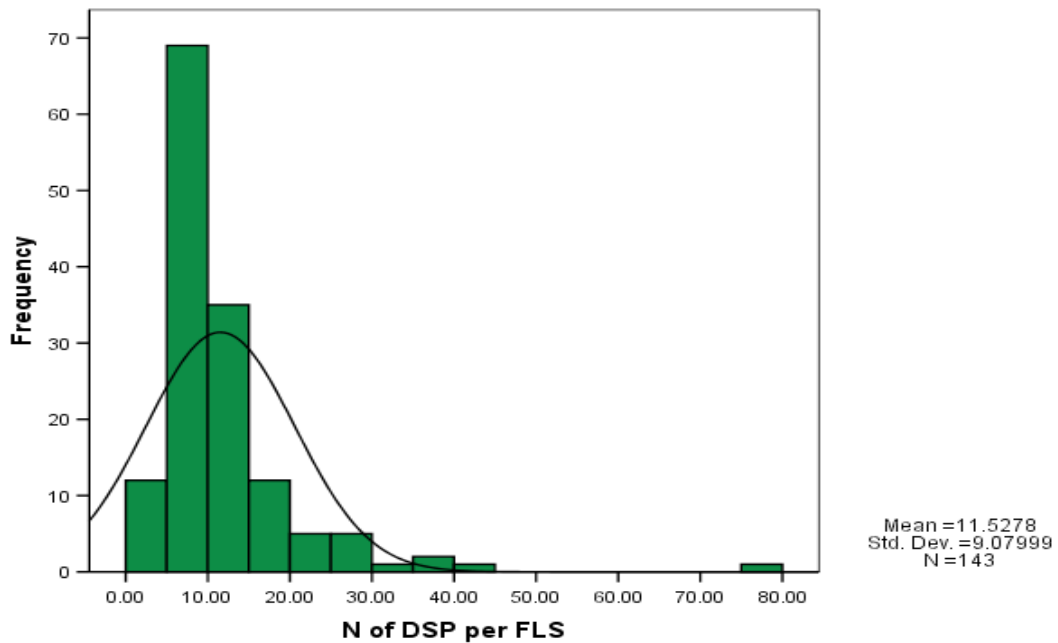
Number of FLS Positions in Organizations

Histogram



Most organizations reported having fewer than 20 FLS positions

Number of DSPs Supervised per FLS

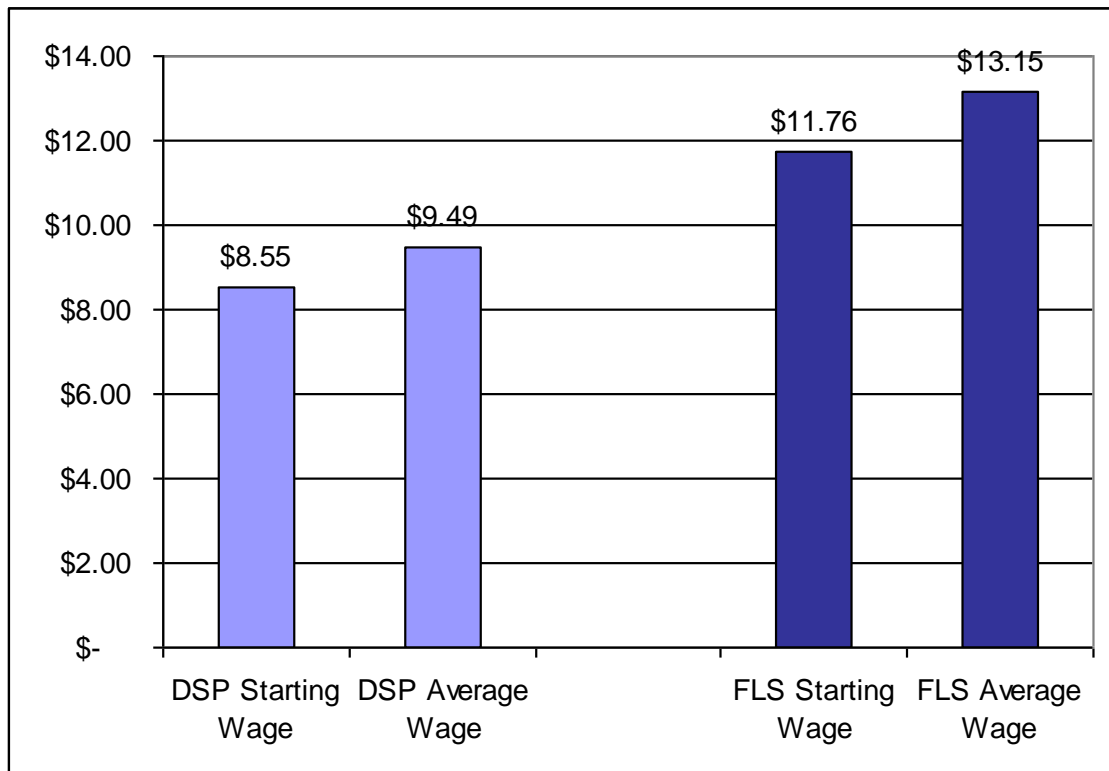


Most respondents employed one supervisor for every 5 to 15 DSPs.

Wages

- DSP wages averaged \$9.49 per hour and started at an average of \$8.55; there were no significant wage differences based on region.
- FLS wages averaged \$13.15 per hour and started at an average of \$11.56 per hour; there were no significant differences by region.
- DSP starting wages were lower in organizations where each supervisor was responsible for more DSPs.

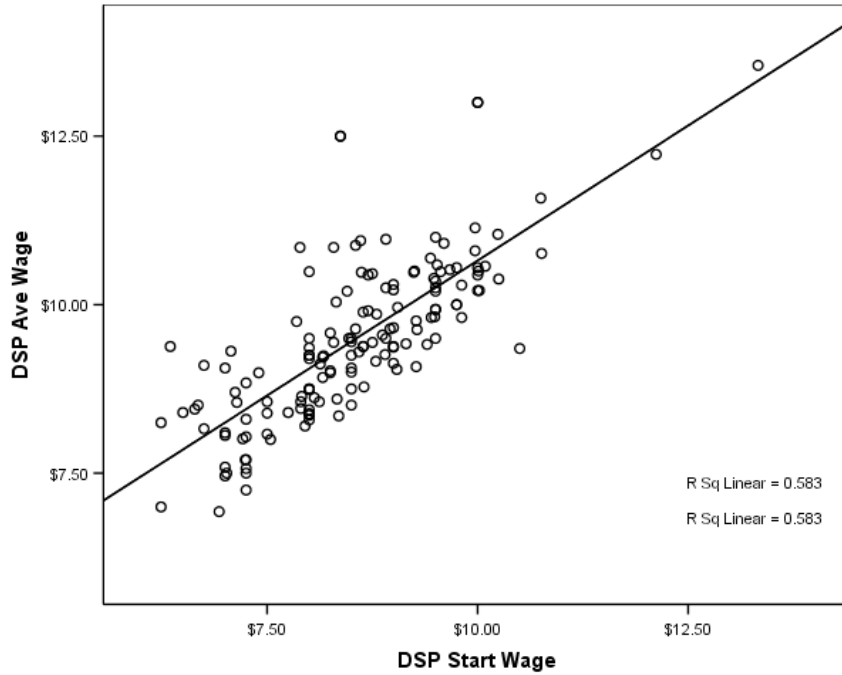
2005 Wages for Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors



1999 Average DSP = \$8.13; Average FLS = \$11.21

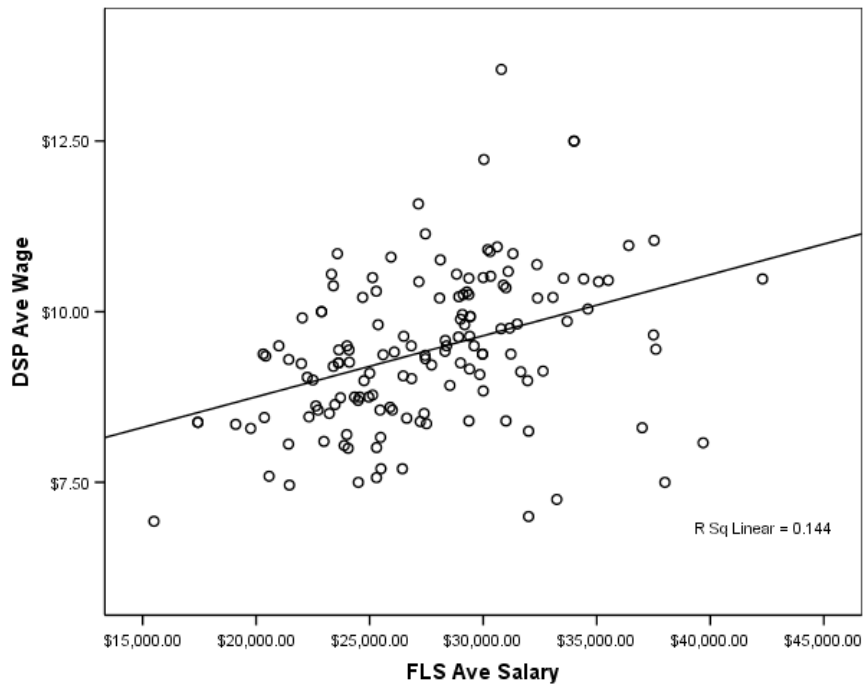
As reported by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance committee

Correlation between DSP starting wage and DSP average wage



DSP starting and average wages are highly correlated.

Correlation between DSP average wage and FLS average wage

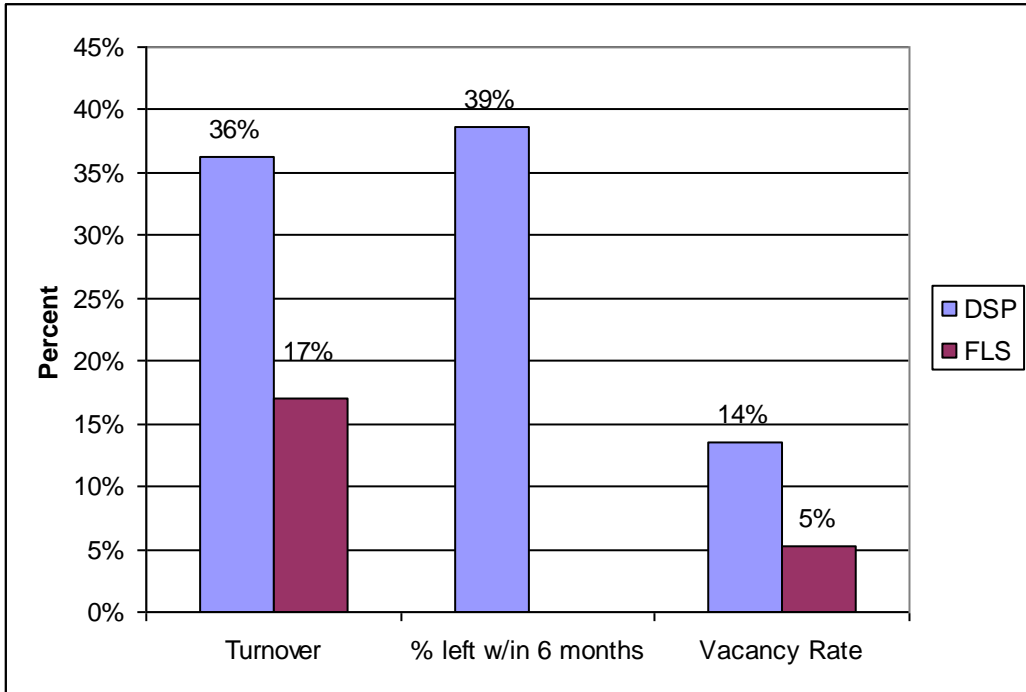


The correlation between average DSP wage and average FLS salary is lower.

Vacancy/Turnover

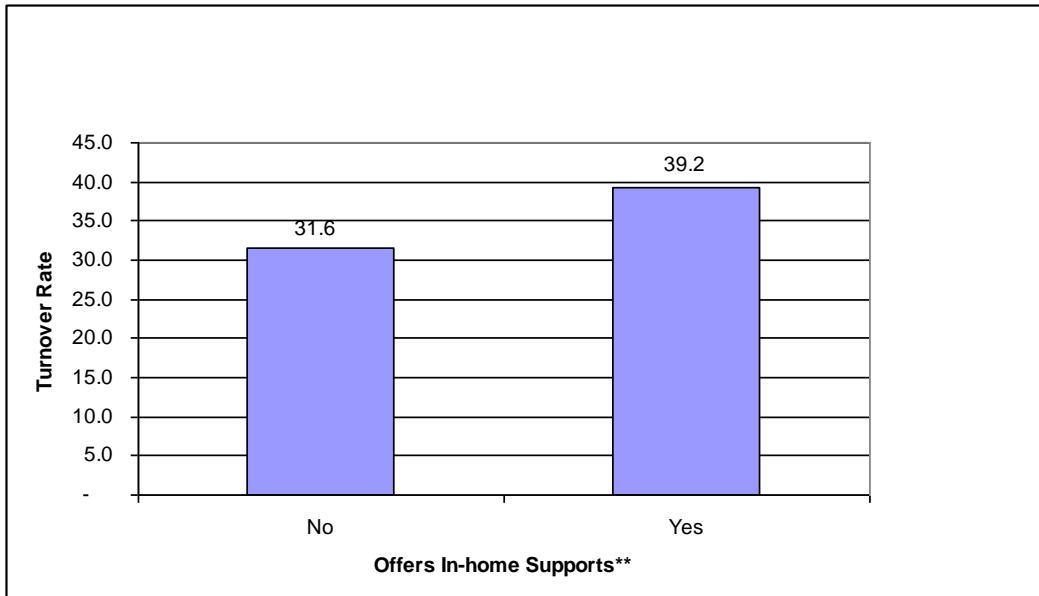
- DSP turnover was measured using a crude separation rate. DSP average turnover was 36.3%; the range was 0 to 151%. There were no significant differences by region. This was lower than the rate of 42% reported by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance committee in 1999.
- DSP turnover was significantly correlated with FLS turnover and DSP vacancy rates. Organizations that had higher DSP turnover also had higher FLS turnover rates and higher DSP vacancy rates.
- DSP turnover rates were also higher in organizations that provided in-home services. Specifically, organizations that offered in-home supports reported turnover rates of 39.2% compared to organizations that did not provide in-home supports. The latter group reported turnover rates of 31.8%.
- DSP early turnover (within the first 6 months) averaged 38.7%; the range was 0 to 100%.
- FLS turnover averaged 17%; the range was 0 to 100%.
- FLS turnover was significantly correlated with DSP and FLS vacancy rates. Organizations that reported higher vacancy rates also reported higher FLS turnover rates.
- DSP vacancy rates averaged 13.5%; range was 0 to 50%; FLS vacancies averaged 5.3%; the range was 0 to 100%.
- Organizations that offered either vocational or educational services as well as residential services reported having significantly higher rates of DSPs leaving within the first six months after hire (42.3% vs. 28.4%), significantly higher FLS turnover rates (19.8% vs. 10.2%), and significantly higher FLS vacancy rates (6.6% vs. 1.7%) than organizations that only provided residential services.

2005 PA OMR Turnover and Vacancy

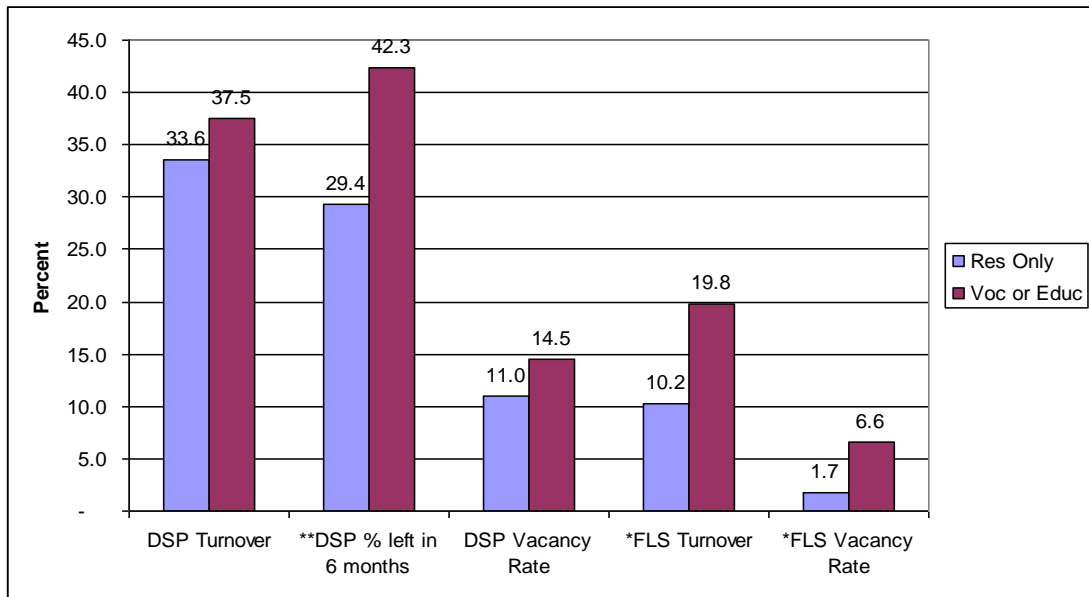


DSP turnover rate was 42% in 1999, as reported by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance committee

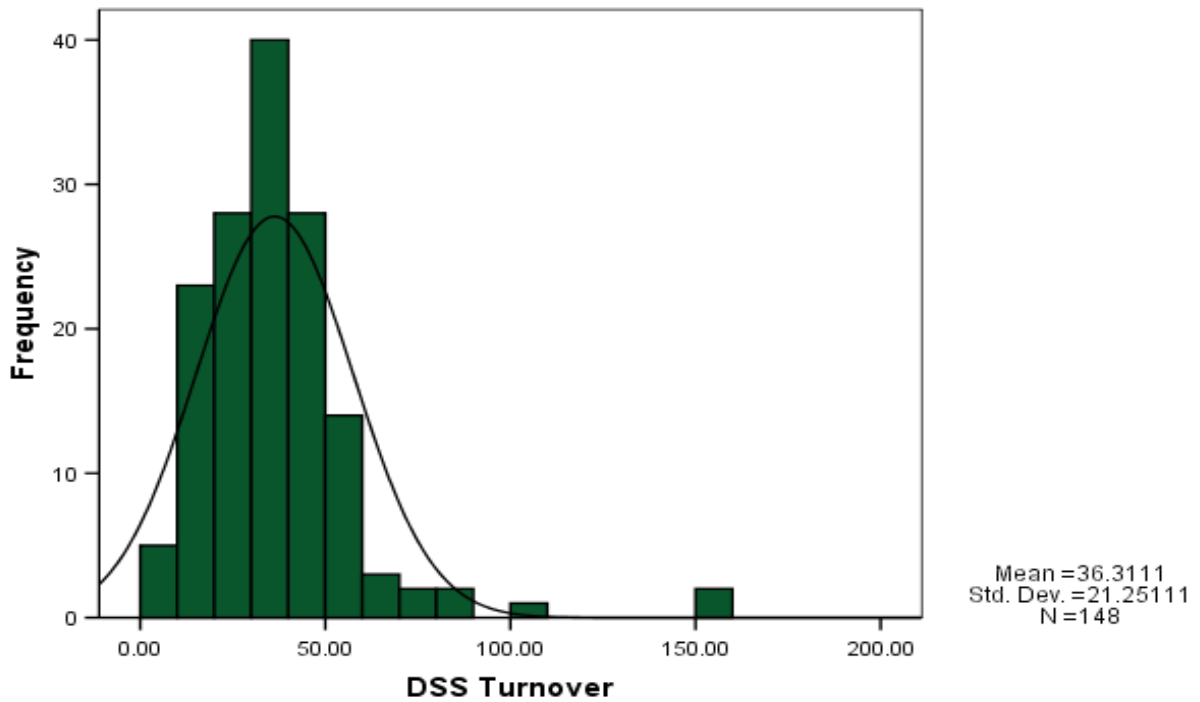
DSP Turnover in Organizations providing In-Home Supports



Vacancy and Turnover rates for organizations providing residential services only compared to those providing vocational and/or educational services in addition to residential services



Distribution of DSP Turnover Rates



VI. Interpretations

The results of the survey completed in PA are consistent with other studies of this type completed in the past several years across the United States (Larson and Hewitt, 2005).

What the survey results tell us:

- Turnover in this sample is consistent with other studies of multi service providers.
- Vacancy rates are quite high overall.
- DSP turnover is related to recruitment challenges and to FLS turnover. Therefore:
 - Recruitment and retention must be addressed together because they are related.
 - DSP turnover cannot be addressed without addressing FLS competency and support.
- Turnover is higher in organizations that provide in home support.
- Multi service provider struggle more with early DSP leaving, and FLS turnover and vacancies than do single service (residential) providers.
- High vacancy rates for FLS and DSPs puts additional pressures on supervisors which may be why FLS turnover is significantly higher in organizations with higher vacancy rates.

What the survey results do not tell us:

- Average tenure of DSP and FLS
- Turnover and vacancy by position and service type
- Site level turnover
- Person served level turnover (movement within organizations but in/out of people's lives)

VII. Implications for future surveys as identified by current survey findings

- Communicate results of this effort with provider community to encourage participation in future efforts.

- Clearly describe the size and scope of the total provider community so that it can be determined if response group is representative.
- Gather data on number of people served by organization.
- Gather data by service type within organization if possible.
- Increase response rate.

VIII. Recommendations

- Continue to develop and implement a technical assistance and training/support model to support organizations in developing and implementing workforce development interventions.
 - Emphasize the importance of training and supporting both frontline supervisors and direct support professionals.
 - Support organizations as they implement and evaluate their successes.
- Consider statewide use of a realistic job preview to give potential recruits a clear idea of the type of work they are considering.
- Identify, share and provide networking opportunities to spotlight promising and emerging practices in direct support workforce outcomes.
- Tenure turnover and vacancy measures should be imbedded in quality management efforts.
- Agencies should consider continued use of the survey tool to examine their vacancy and turnover rates and to chart their progress. They should also consider random sampling of site level tenure and turnover data to get a better understanding of the implications of turnover on people served.

In response to the survey's findings and the above listed recommendations, OMR is continuing to work with the System Capacity and Capabilities Standing Subcommittee to promote workforce development and strategies to improve retention and recruitment.

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