



# DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

OFFICE  
OF THE  
DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT:** Summary Results of DDDS Staff Vacancy Survey

DDDS is well aware of the ongoing staffing and workforce challenges facing many of our providers sharing anecdotes of the impact that these conditions are creating for their operations. However, we have been missing a more comprehensive view of these challenges, and their impacts, on our system as a whole.

To gain a more data-informed perspective on the workforce challenges facing the intellectual and developmental disabilities service system, DDDS conducted a survey of its provider system in November 2021. Of the approximately 38 providers currently operating in the State of Delaware, 36 of the organizations provided responses. Providers were asked questions in three categories: overall change in staffing/staff vacancies compared to pre-pandemic totals; impact on operations; and efforts taken to address shortages. Takeaways from this survey include:

- Scale of Shortages by total numbers:
  - 63% (n=22) of respondents indicated staffing shortages of between 0-20
  - 23% (n=8) have shortages between 21-50
  - 14% (n=5) have **greater than 50 staff vacancies**
- Scale of Shortages by percent of workforce:
  - 28% (n=10) are missing between 20-30% of their workforce
  - 30% (n=11) are missing **between a third and a half of their total workforce**
- Impacts on operations:
  - 66% (n=24) indicated that senior leadership are providing direct services
  - 61% (n=22) have postponed program expansion
  - 50% (n=18) have not been able to accept new referrals, and 25% have been unable to welcome back all *existing* service recipients,
  - 11% (n=4) providers **permanently closed a program site decreasing overall capacity**
  - 42% (n=15) indicated that they have **lowered expectations for quality** in their efforts to recruit staff
- Efforts taken by providers:
  - 78% (n= 28) have increased communications and outreach to potential applicants,
  - 42% (n=15) increased interactions between leadership and staff, e.g., hosting town halls
  - 56% (n=20) offered recruitment and retention bonuses from their own general budget
  - 39% (n=14) have used CARES Act, Health Care Relief, or other COVID-related funding to support recruitment and retention efforts
  - 42% (n=15) have offered more flexible work schedules and provided financial incentives to employees to work longer shifts

This snapshot of current operations within the I/DD provider network are concerning not only for the number of open positions and proportion of vacancies left unfilled within agencies of all sizes, but the long-term impact this is going to have on service quality and service availability for years to come.