



NCI-AD successfully completed the State of the Workforce (SotW) Pilot!



In 2022, National Core Indicators-Aging and Disabilities (NCI-AD) launched a pilot to test the NCI-AD State of the Workforce Survey (SotW), which was administered to provider agencies employing direct support workers (DSW) within the aging and disabilities LTSS sector. The survey was piloted with five participating states: Missouri, Washington, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Indiana.

The goal of the pilot was to assess the feasibility of collecting this information and to finetune the survey instrument. ***The pilot survey and analysis found that the NCI-AD State of the Workforce effort can reliably collect data from provider agencies on the DSW workforce supporting the AD population.***

Key Takeaways for Success

These takeaways come from themes we heard from pilot states, providers, and a systematic review of data that were collected. As part of the pilot, NCI hosted monthly meetings with pilot states to discuss best practices and challenges. The NCI-AD SotW survey tool also offered opportunity for providers to give immediate feedback about the their impressions of the survey, including ease of data collection and any challenges to understanding or answering questions. After data collection was complete, pilot states also completed a feedback survey to give their impressions of the SotW survey, the resulting data, and overall process. Finally, analysis of data collected helped decipher where there were inconsistencies and outliers, suggesting a need for changes to the tool or training.

Takeaway

1

An up-to-date and comprehensive list of eligible providers enhances efficiency in data collection.

The challenge:

Some states faced difficulty in determining the total eligible provider population. This was indicated both through state contact feedback and by the number of respondents who self-identified as ineligible for various reasons. Eligibility determination is important to know early in the process to enhance efficiency in data collection and support survey participation by all eligible providers.

How we're improving:

- National NCI-AD team will continue to provide targeted TA support to states.
- States can develop more targeted methods to accumulate their lists of eligible provider agencies through regular data collection and maintenance infrastructure, out-reach to provider agencies or other means to narrow down the lists.
- Screening questions in the survey will be refined to determine eligibility for the survey.

2

A robust response rate is critical to ensuring accurate data.

The challenge:

Most states faced challenges reaching a robust response rate. The response rate is important in order to hear collectively from providers, improve representativeness, and increase the generalizability of the data. State response rates ranged from 1.1% to 40.0%, with margins of error ranging from 5.6% to 16.5% (states target a 5% or lower margin of error).

States expressed challenges in reaching their target response rate goals, including:

- Provider unfamiliarity with the survey
- Limited time frame of survey administration
- Length of survey
- Provider unfamiliarity with terminology
- Lack of time in provider schedule to complete the survey



How we're improving:

- Develop resources and materials to support states communications to increase provider awareness of the survey
- Continue to hold webinars with new states to introduce the survey to providers
- States may consider providing financial support to providers to complete the survey
- States can also engage in outreach to ensure providers are aware of the survey, understand its importance, and know the meaning of specific terms in the survey

Survey questions and language used must be clearly defined to make data collection accessible to all providers.

The challenge:

Providers indicated some challenges with completing the survey including the length of the survey and some difficulty understanding specific questions in the survey tool.

How we're improving:

- The survey tool will be shortened.
- The NCI team will work to provide clearer definitions and add clarifying context where possible
- States may work to create glossaries or guides to send along with the survey
- The data entry portal can be adapted to prevent the entry of out-of-range numbers, to minimize outliers.

More Background on the State of the Workforce Survey

The NCI-AD first launched in 2015. The initiative grew from a desire of state aging and disability staff for quantifiable data on the experiences of people receiving state LTSS and whether those services and systems were helping them achieve valued outcomes such as self-determination, access to the community, satisfaction with home and daily activities. Our flagship survey, the Adult Consumer Survey, hears directly from people served by publicly funded long-term services and supports programs—known as LTSS. Recently, NCI-AD piloted a State of the Workforce Survey (SotW).



The service systems providing long-term services and supports (LTSS) to older adults and people with disabilities are currently struggling with challenges recruiting and retaining Direct Support Workers (DSWs). Without an adequate workforce providing support, people receiving services from these systems do not have the quality or continuity of supports they need to live and thrive in their homes. However, to date there is a gap in uniform data collection on the DSW workforce within states and across the nation.

The National Core Indicators-Aging and Disabilities (NCI-AD) State of the Workforce Survey aims to collect crucial indicators of stability and quality of the workforce such as turnover, length of employment, vacancy rates, and more. In addition, the survey collects data to describe the workforce and workforce circumstances, such as demographic information, information on the types of supports provided, wages, benefits, etc. Information collected through this effort is critical to understanding the true scope of the workforce crisis and to provide better a context to support state efforts to recruit and retain DSWs.

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Questions? Comments.

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