## Q1 What type of service does your agency provide?

Answered: 154    Skipped: 1

| Service | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 017 Crisis Team -... | 1.30% |
| 055 Community Integration... | 6.49% |
| 109 Supplemental Residentia... | 2.60% |
| 110 Supplemental Day Servic... | 1.30% |
| 113 Specialized Residential... | 2.60% |
| 505 Activity Center | 2.60% |
| 510 Adult Development... | 11.69% |
| 515 Behavior Management... | 8.44% |
| 520 Independent Living Program | 5.84% |
| 702 Adult Day Health Center | 1.30% |
| 707 Speech Pathology | 3.90% |
| 855 Adult Day Care | 1.95% |
| 880 Transportation -... | 1.95% |
| 896 Supported Living Service | 8.44% |
| 905 Residential Facility -... | 7.79% |
| 915 Residential Facility -... | 25.32% |
| 920 Residential Facility -... | 0.65% |
| 930 ICF/DD-H | 0.65% |
| 950 Supported Employment... | 2.60% |
| 952 Supported Employment... | 2.60% |

# Service Provider Hiring Challenges

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 017 Crisis Team - Evaluation / Behavioral Intervention | 1.30% | 2 |
| 055 Community Integration Training Program | 6.49% | 10 |
| 109 Supplemental Residential Program Support | 2.60% | 4 |
| 110 Supplemental Day Service Program Support | 1.30% | 2 |
| 113 Specialized Residential Facility - Habilitative | 2.60% | 4 |
| 505 Activity Center | 2.60% | 4 |
| 510 Adult Development Center | 11.69% | 18 |
| 515 Behavior Management Program | 8.44% | 13 |
| 520 Independent Living Program | 5.84% | 9 |
| 702 Adult Day Health Center | 1.30% | 2 |
| 707 Speech Pathology | 3.90% | 6 |
| 855 Adult Day Care | 1.95% | 3 |
| 880 Transportation - Additional Component | 1.95% | 3 |
| 896 Supported Living Service | 8.44% | 13 |
| 905 Residential Facility - Adult - Owner Operated | 7.79% | 12 |
| 915 Residential Facility - Adult - Staff Operated | 25.32% | 39 |
| 920 Residential Facility - Child - Staff Operated | 0.65% | 1 |
| 930 ICF/DD-H | 0.65% | 1 |
| 950 Supported Employment Program - Group Services | 2.60% | 4 |
| 952 Supported Employment Program - Individual Services | 2.60% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

## Q2 During the COVID-19 pandemic, what percentage of direct support staff have left your agency?
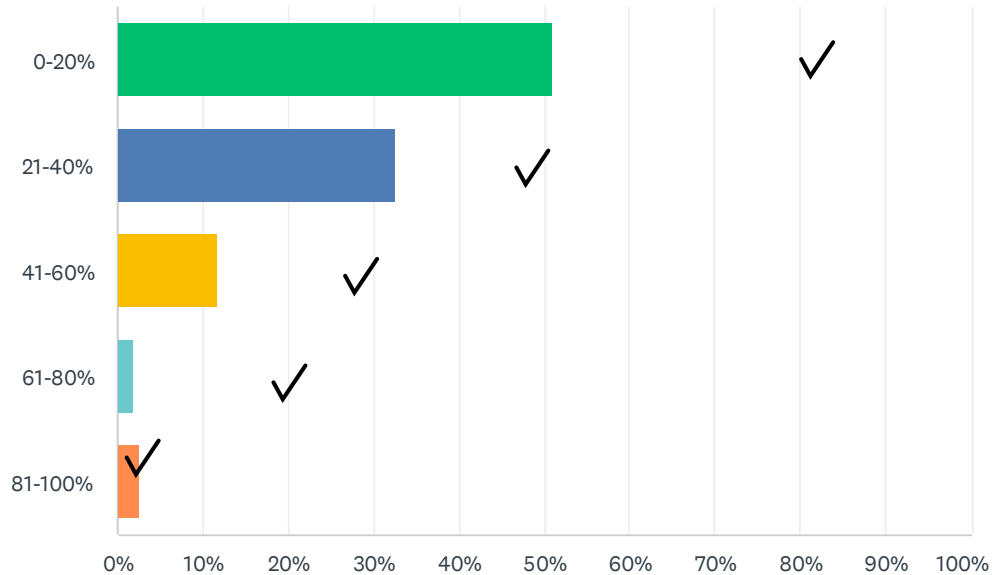
Answered: 154    Skipped: 1
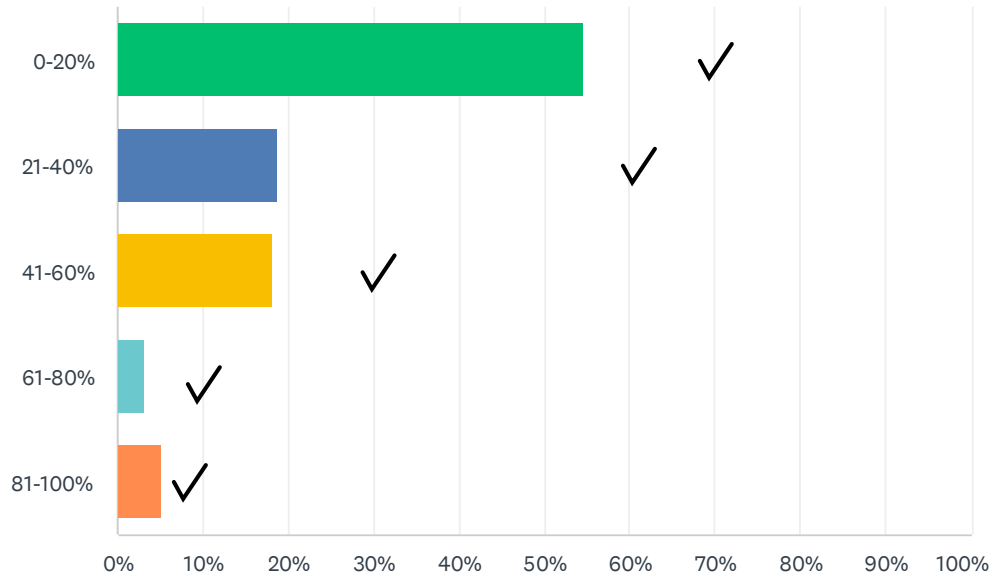
| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-20% | 54.55% | 84 |
| 21-40% | 18.83% | 29 |
| 41-60% | 18.18% | 28 |
| 61-80% | 3.25% | 5 |
| 81-100% | 5.19% | 8 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

*Check marks = Alta RC Response on RCOC survey*

*Alta RC had 185 respondents*

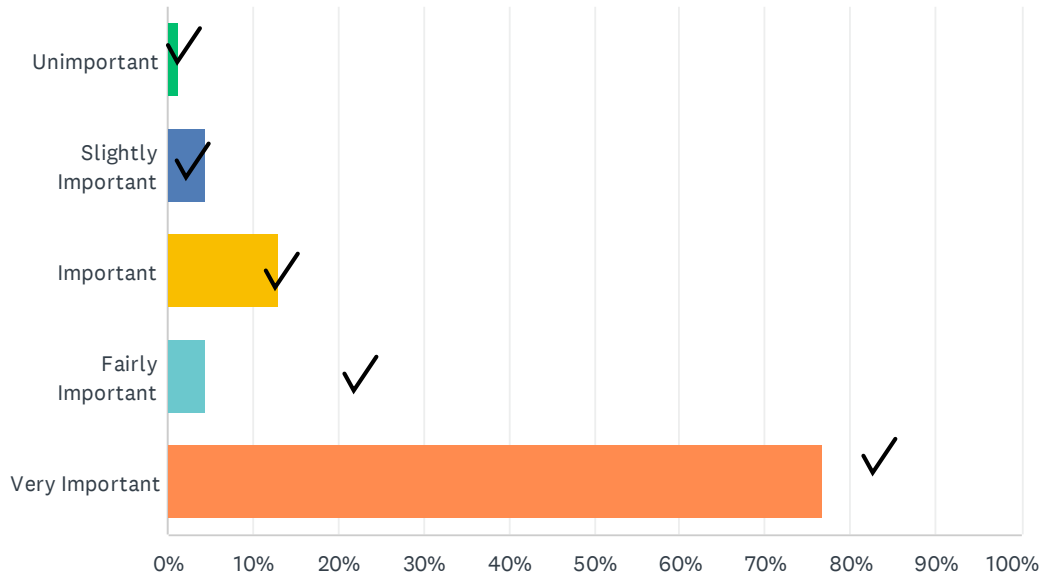# Q3 What percentage of available direct support staff positions are currently vacant?

Answered: 153    Skipped: 2



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-20% | 50.98% | 78 |
| 21-40% | 32.68% | 50 |
| 41-60% | 11.76% | 18 |
| 61-80% | 1.96% | 3 |
| 81-100% | 2.61% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 153 |

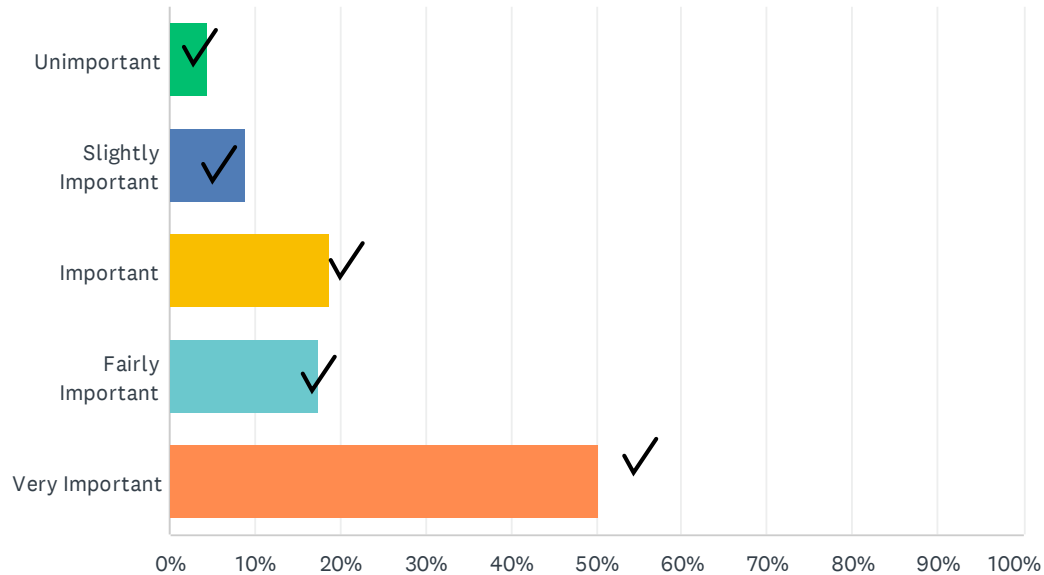# Q4 How important are starting wages in regard to your ability to fill available positions?

Answered: 155    Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Unimportant | 1.29% | 2 |
| Slightly Important | 4.52% | 7 |
| Important | 12.90% | 20 |
| Fairly Important | 4.52% | 7 |
| Very Important | 76.77% | 119 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

# Q5 How important are benefits offered in regard to your ability to fill available positions?
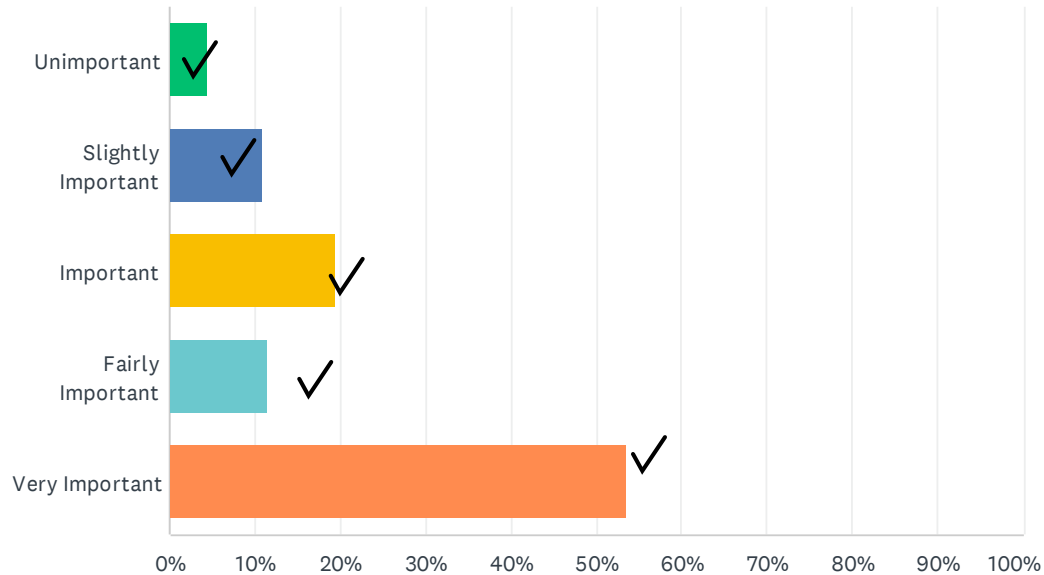
Answered: 155    Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Unimportant | 4.52% | 7 |
| Slightly Important | 9.03% | 14 |
| Important | 18.71% | 29 |
| Fairly Important | 17.42% | 27 |
| Very Important | 50.32% | 78 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

## Q6 How important is the ability to offer monetary incentives to your ability to fill available positions?
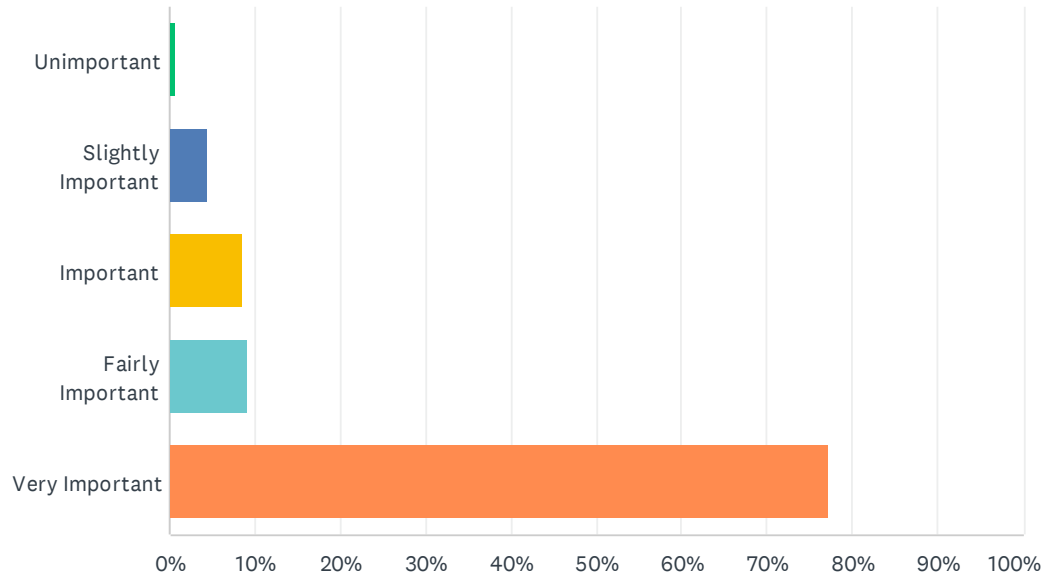
Answered: 155 Skipped: 0

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Unimportant | 4.52% | 7 |
| Slightly Important | 10.97% | 17 |
| Important | 19.35% | 30 |
| Fairly Important | 11.61% | 18 |
| Very Important | 53.55% | 83 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

# Q7 How important are current wages offered in regard to your ability to retain staff?
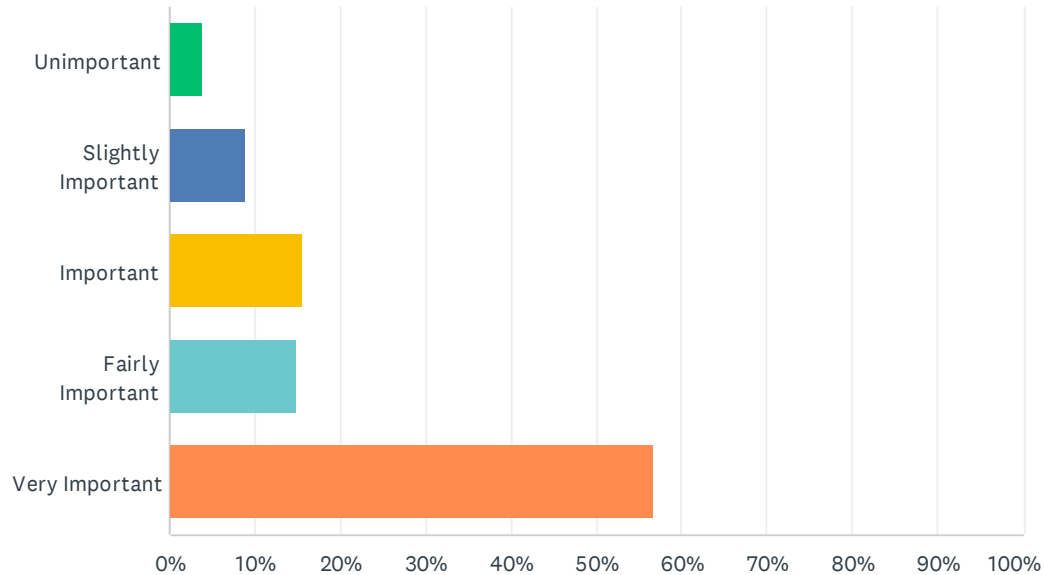
Answered: 154    Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Unimportant | 0.65% | 1 |
| Slightly Important | 4.55% | 7 |
| Important | 8.44% | 13 |
| Fairly Important | 9.09% | 14 |
| Very Important | 77.27% | 119 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

## Q8 How important are benefits offered in regard to your ability to retain staff?

Answered: 155     Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Unimportant | 3.87% | 6 |
| Slightly Important | 9.03% | 14 |
| Important | 15.48% | 24 |
| Fairly Important | 14.84% | 23 |
| Very Important | 56.77% | 88 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

# Q9 During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you had to make changes to minimum employment requirements for direct support positions in order to hire new staff?
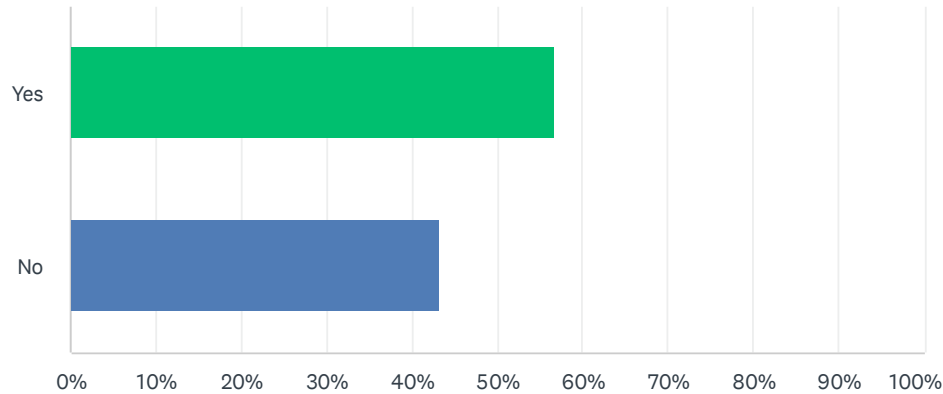
Answered: 154    Skipped: 1
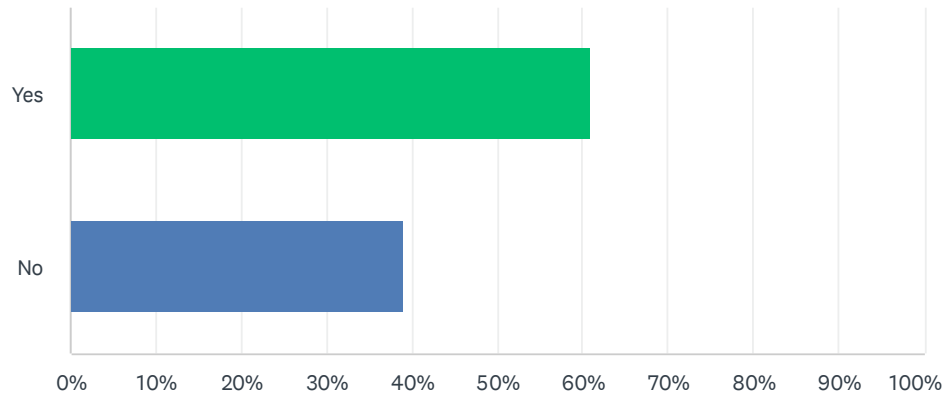


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 61.04% | 94 |
| No | 38.96% | 60 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

# Q10 Have you turned away or stopped accepting new referrals due to insufficient staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 155    Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 56.77% | 88 |
| No | 43.23% | 67 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

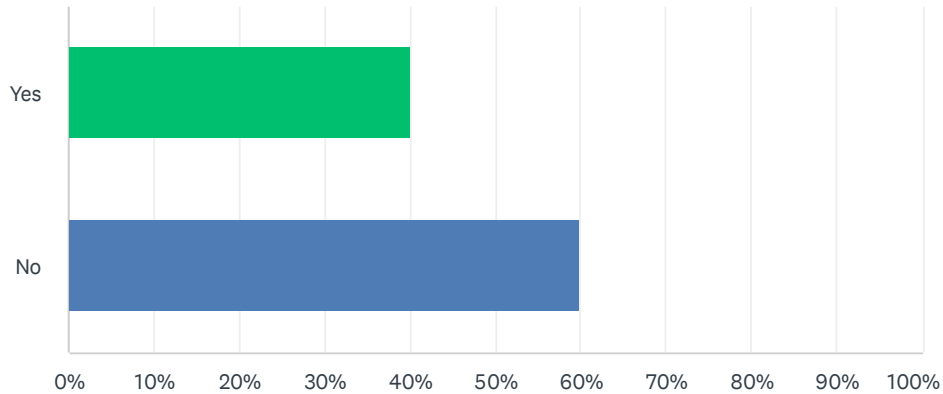**ANCOR - American Network of Community Options and Resources**

FACT: 77% of Providers are Turning Away New Referrals

Nearly 8 in 10 respondents indicated that they had turned away or stopped accepting new referrals due to insufficient staffing. This represents a 16.7% increase since the beginning of the pandemic.

➤ The limited number of available providers has left individuals with high support needs traveling significant distances outside of their communities to seek support and care, thereby furthering their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

## Q11 Have you discontinued programs or service offerings due to insufficient staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 155    Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 40.00% | 62 |
| No | 60.00% | 93 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

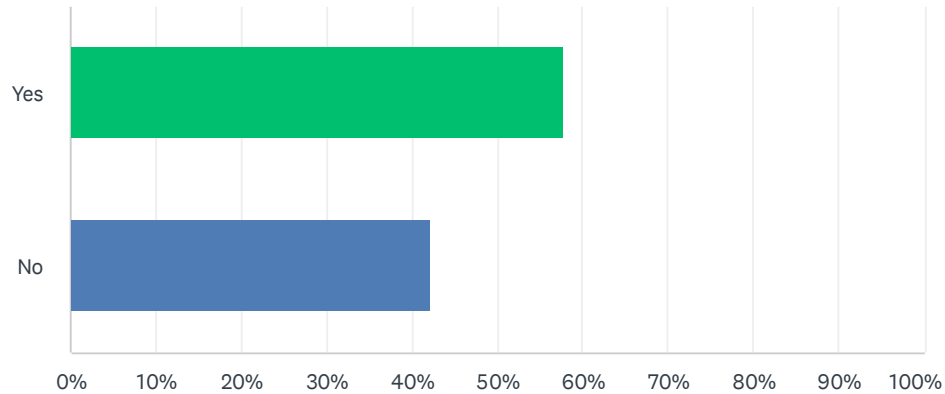### ANCOR - American Network of Community Options and Resources

FACT: 58% of Providers are Discontinuing Programs and Services

More than half of respondents indicated that they had discontinued programs or service offerings due to insufficient staffing. This represents a 70.6% increase since the beginning of the pandemic, as well as the most pronounced change wrought by the pandemic of all measures included in the survey.

➤ Without access to services, individuals with disabilities are at a higher risk of hospitalization and institutionalization at a time of limited capacity. As states begin announcing crisis standards of care in hospital settings, there remains a disparate impact to individuals with disabilities left unable to access services in their homes.

# Q12 Have you delayed the launch of new programs or service offerings due to insufficient staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 154    Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 57.79% | 89 |
| No | 42.21% | 65 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

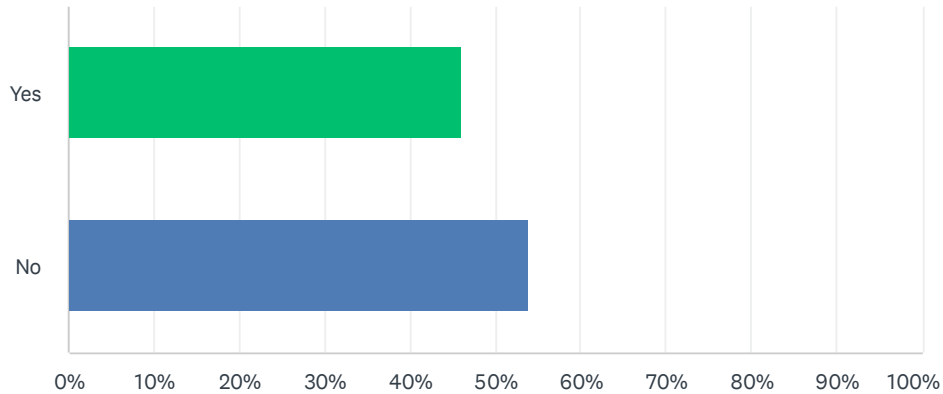### ANCOR - American Network of Community Options and Resources

FACT: 84% of Providers are Delaying the Launch of New Programs or Services

More than 8 in 10 respondents indicated that they had delayed the launch of new programs or service offerings due to insufficient staffing. This represents a 29.2% increase since the beginning of the pandemic.

➢ As the infrastructure of services deteriorates without the ability to provide staffing, there are nearly 600,000 people languishing on states' HCBS waiting lists. States will remain unmotivated to reduce waiting lists when no providers are available to provide supports after authorization.

# Q13 Have you experienced difficulties in achieving quality standards due to insufficient staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 154    Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 46.10% | 71 |
| No | 53.90% | 83 |
| TOTAL | | 154 |

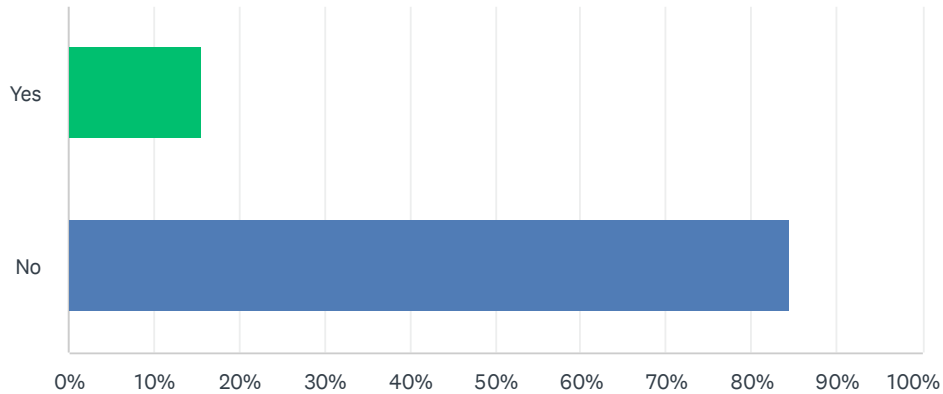**ANCOR - American Network of Community Options and Resources**

FACT: 81% of Providers are Struggling to Achieve Quality Standards

More than 8 in 10 respondents indicated that they had experienced difficulties in achieving quality standards due to insufficient staffing. This represents a 17.4% increase since the beginning of the pandemic.

➤ As a result, hiring standards are forced to be lower and providers are more likely to depend on emergency regulatory flexibilities to maintain minimum staffing requirements. When emergency orders are lifted, providers are left unable to comply with staffing requirements, in turn forcing immediate discharge of people who were once supported and, in the worst cases, complete and permanent agency closures.

## Q14 Have you experienced a higher frequency of reportable incidents due to insufficient staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 155    Skipped: 0

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 15.48% | 24 |
| No | 84.52% | 131 |
| TOTAL | | 155 |

### ANCOR - American Network of Community Options and Resources

FACT: 40% of Providers are Seeing Higher Frequencies of Reportable Incidents

More than 4 in 10 respondents indicated they are experiencing higher frequencies of reportable incidents than they had prior to their recruitment and retention challenges. ANCOR attributes the lack of increase in frequency of reportable incidents from pre-pandemic findings to the dedication of community providers to consistently offering quality services despite tremendous pressure and limited resources. It should be noted, however, that although it may be promising that this outcome remained unchanged, it may also be the case that there were the same or fewer reportable incidents due to the dramatic decrease in the number of people being served.

# Service Provider Hiring Challenges
# Survey Results

We see in the news the nationwide hiring and retention challenges facing businesses. We wanted to get  an idea of how it's impacting our local developmental disability service system and the clients we serve through a [Hiring Challenges Survey](). We are planning on running this same survey again in six months to compare the results.
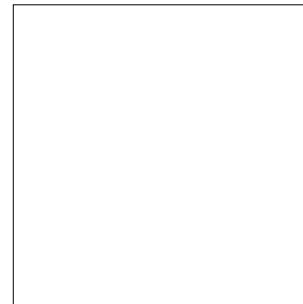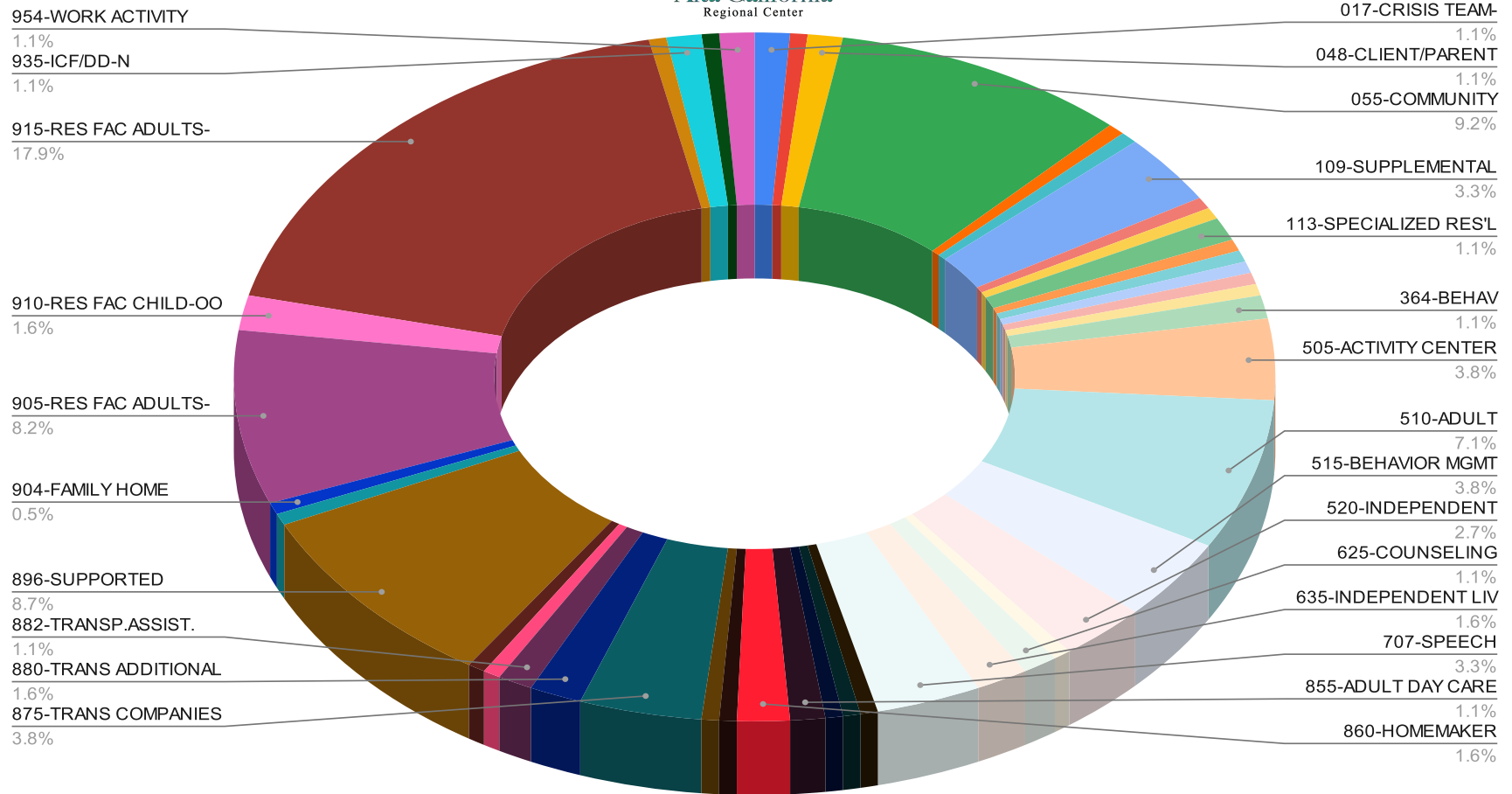
**Summary**:

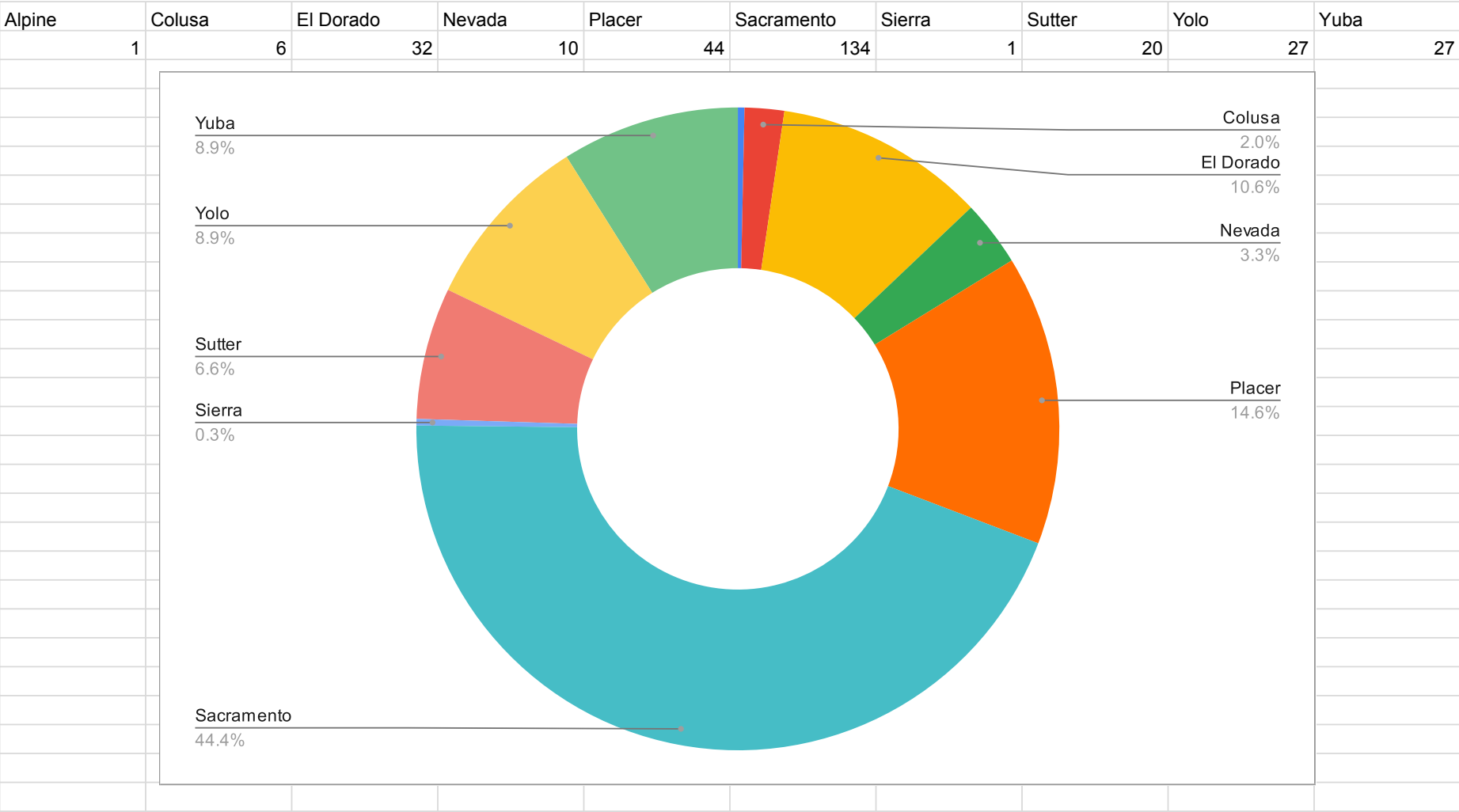185 respondents, representing 46 service codes and all ten counties.

1. Most respondents (38%) indicated that they lost 0-20% of staff from program during the last year of pandemic; the second largest group of respondents (~34%) lost 21-40% of staff.
   - Of programs that lost 61-100% of staff, 16/19 were residential (2/3 of ARFs, 1/3 of children's, all ICFs).
2. Prior to COVID, 85% of programs lost 0-20% of their staff each year; 10% of programs lost 21-40% of staff each year.
3.  Most respondents (46%) indicated that 0-20% of staff positions are currently unfilled.
   - Of respondents with 41-100% vacant shifts, most (46/49) were residential services.
4. Most respondents (84%) indicated that starting wages are "very important" in filling available positions.
5.  Location – Half of respondents (50%) indicated that location is either "very important" or "moderately important" in filling available positions.
6. Most respondents (55%) indicated that benefits are "very important" to fill positions.
7. Respondents indicated that the top three reasons that staff stay in their jobs are:
   - Feeling supported, respected, and appreciated
   - Making a difference
   - Work Schedule

- **Wages/compensation was 6<sup>th</sup> out of 7!**

8. Most respondents (49%) indicated that they definitely or probably would utilize a paid staffing recruitment service.

9. Respondents indicated that prior to COVID, staff tended to stay more than 5 years 38.6% of the time (more than any other length of time). More than 60% had staff stay longer than 3 years.

10. Only 29% of respondents reported they had to cancel services 40-100% of the time. This questions appears to have been answered inconsistently by day program providers, so data may not be helpful.

# ACRC Service Provider Hiring Challenges Survey - 185 Responses - Representing 46 Service Codes



954-WORK ACTIVITY
1.1%

935-ICF/DD-N
1.1%

915-RES FAC ADULTS-
17.9%

910-RES FAC CHILD-OO
1.6%

905-RES FAC ADULTS-
8.2%

904-FAMILY HOME
0.5%

896-SUPPORTED
8.7%

882-TRANSP.ASSIST.
1.1%

880-TRANS ADDITIONAL
1.6%

875-TRANS COMPANIES
3.8%

017-CRISIS TEAM-
1.1%

048-CLIENT/PARENT
1.1%

055-COMMUNITY
9.2%

109-SUPPLEMENTAL
3.3%

113-SPECIALIZED RES'L
1.1%

364-BEHAV
1.1%

505-ACTIVITY CENTER
3.8%

510-ADULT
7.1%

515-BEHAVIOR MGMT
3.8%

520-INDEPENDENT
2.7%

625-COUNSELING
1.1%

635-INDEPENDENT LIV
1.6%

707-SPEECH
3.3%

855-ADULT DAY CARE
1.1%

860-HOMEMAKER
1.6%

| Alpine | Colusa | El Dorado | Nevada | Placer | Sacramento | Sierra | Sutter | Yolo | Yuba |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 32 | 10 | 44 | 134 | 1 | 20 | 27 | 27 |



Yuba
8.9%

Yolo
8.9%

Sutter
6.6%

Sierra
0.3%

Sacramento
44.4%

Colusa
2.0%

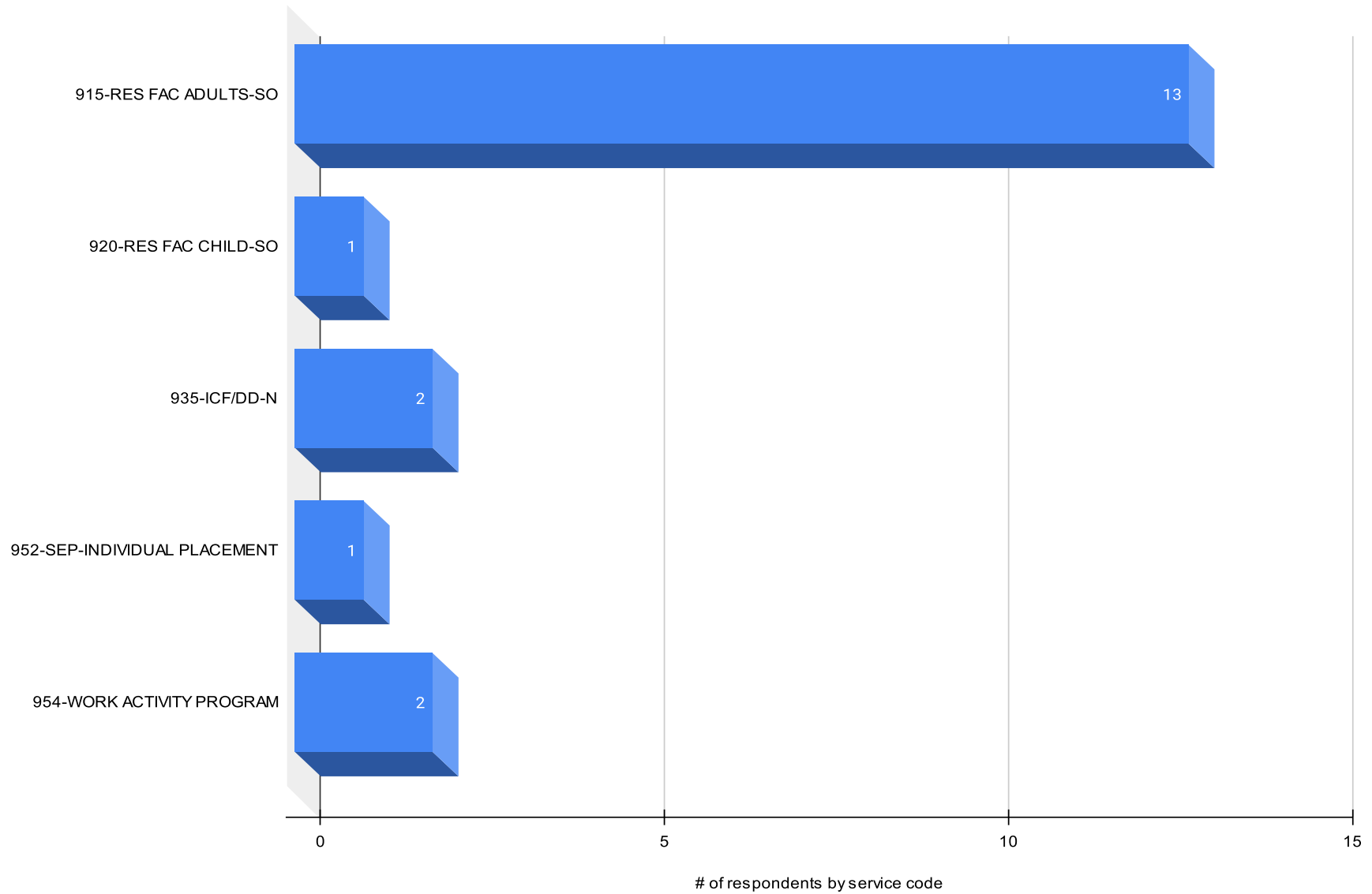El Dorado
10.6%

Nevada
3.3%

Placer
14.6%

# 1. During the last year of the pandemic, what percentage of staff have left your program?



185 Total Responses
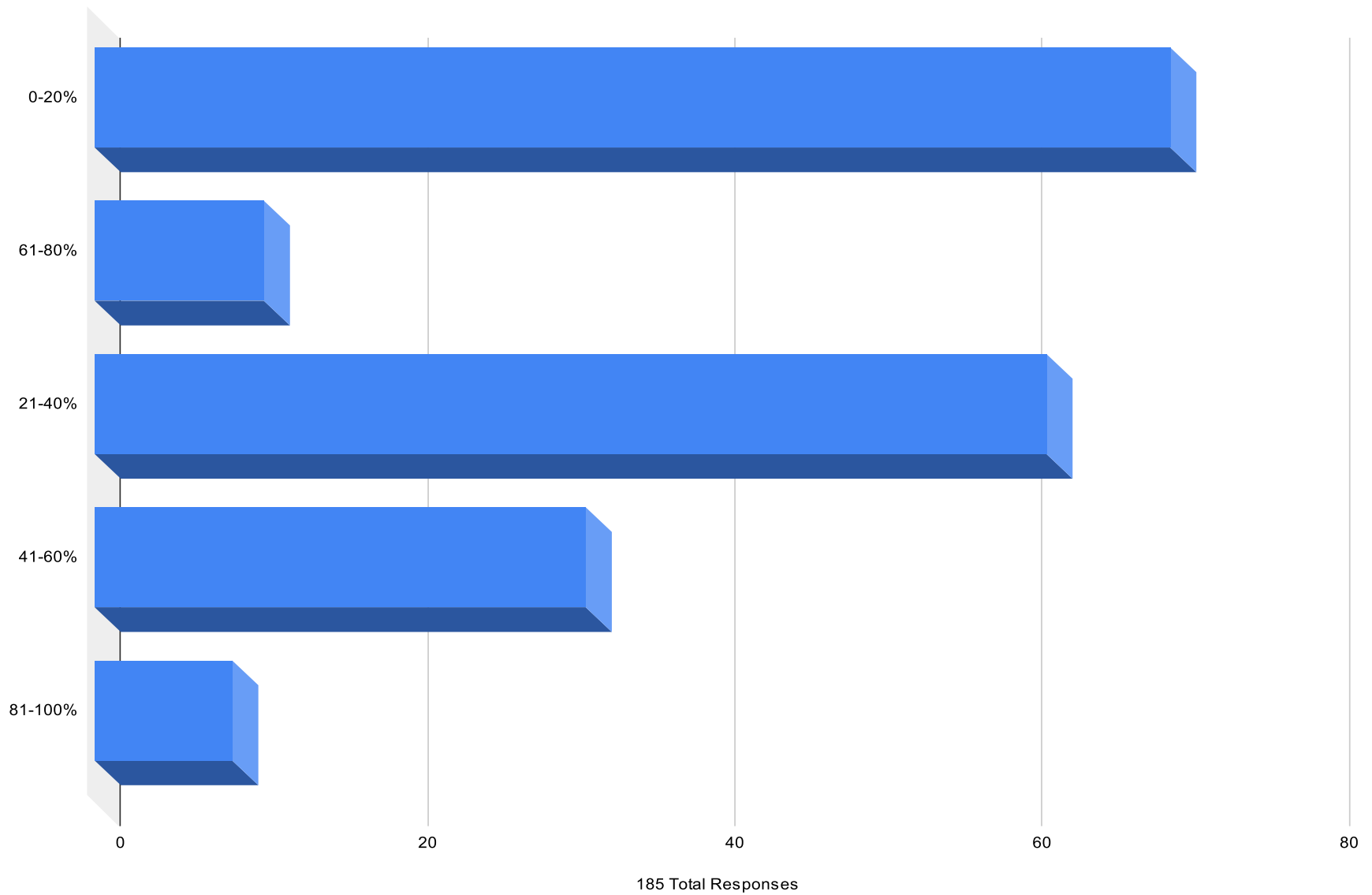
# Types of Services - Respondents indicating they lost between 61% - 100% of their staff during pandemic

| Service | # of respondents |
|---|---|
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | 13 |
| 920-RES FAC CHILD-SO | 1 |
| 935-ICF/DD-N | 2 |
| 952-SEP-INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT | 1 |
| 954-WORK ACTIVITY PROGRAM | 2 |

# of respondents by service code

## 2. Before the pandemic, what percentage of staff would leave your program each year?

61-80%
0.5%

21-40%
10.3%

41-60%
3.8%

0-20%
85.3%
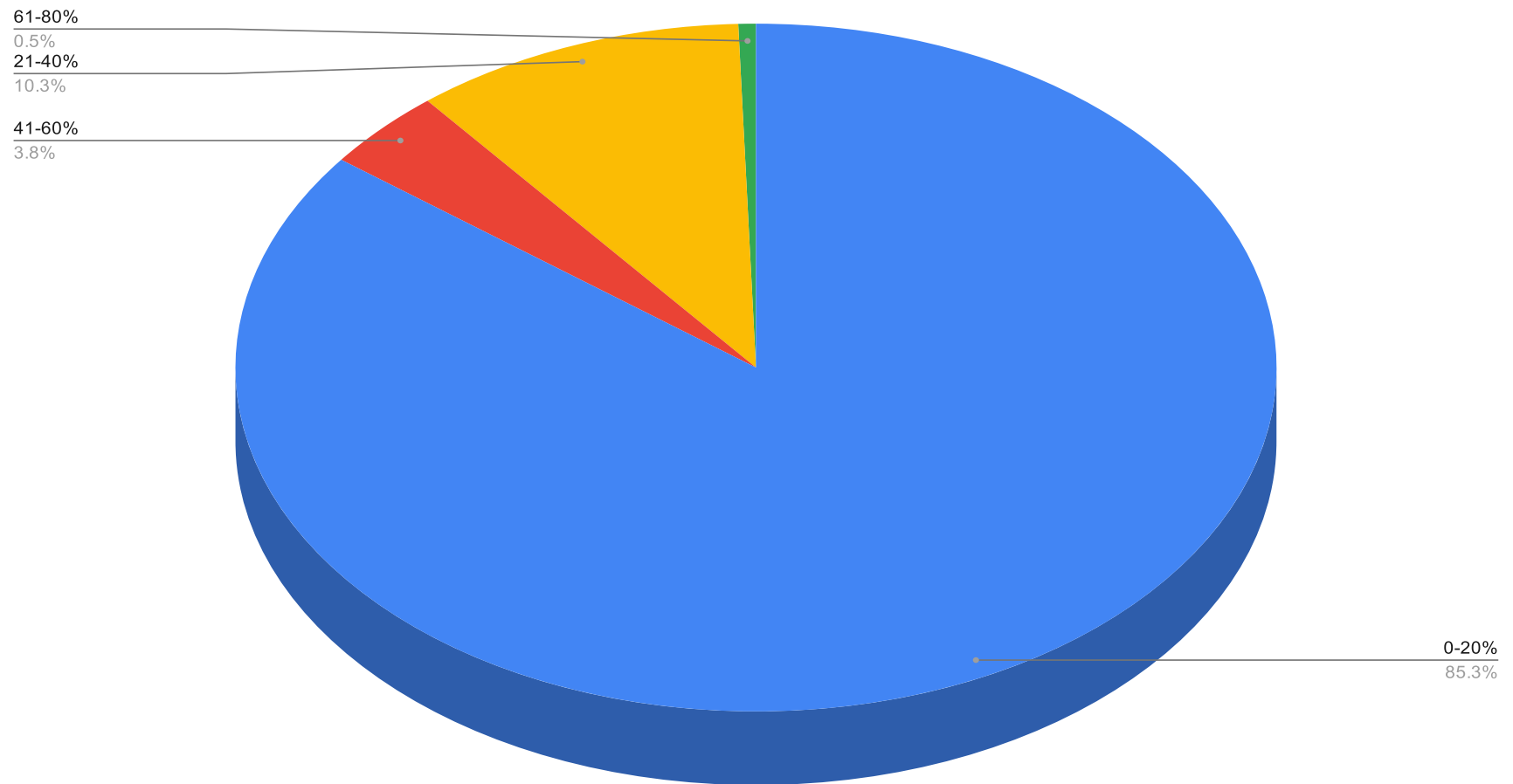
# 3. What percent of available staff positions are currently unfilled?
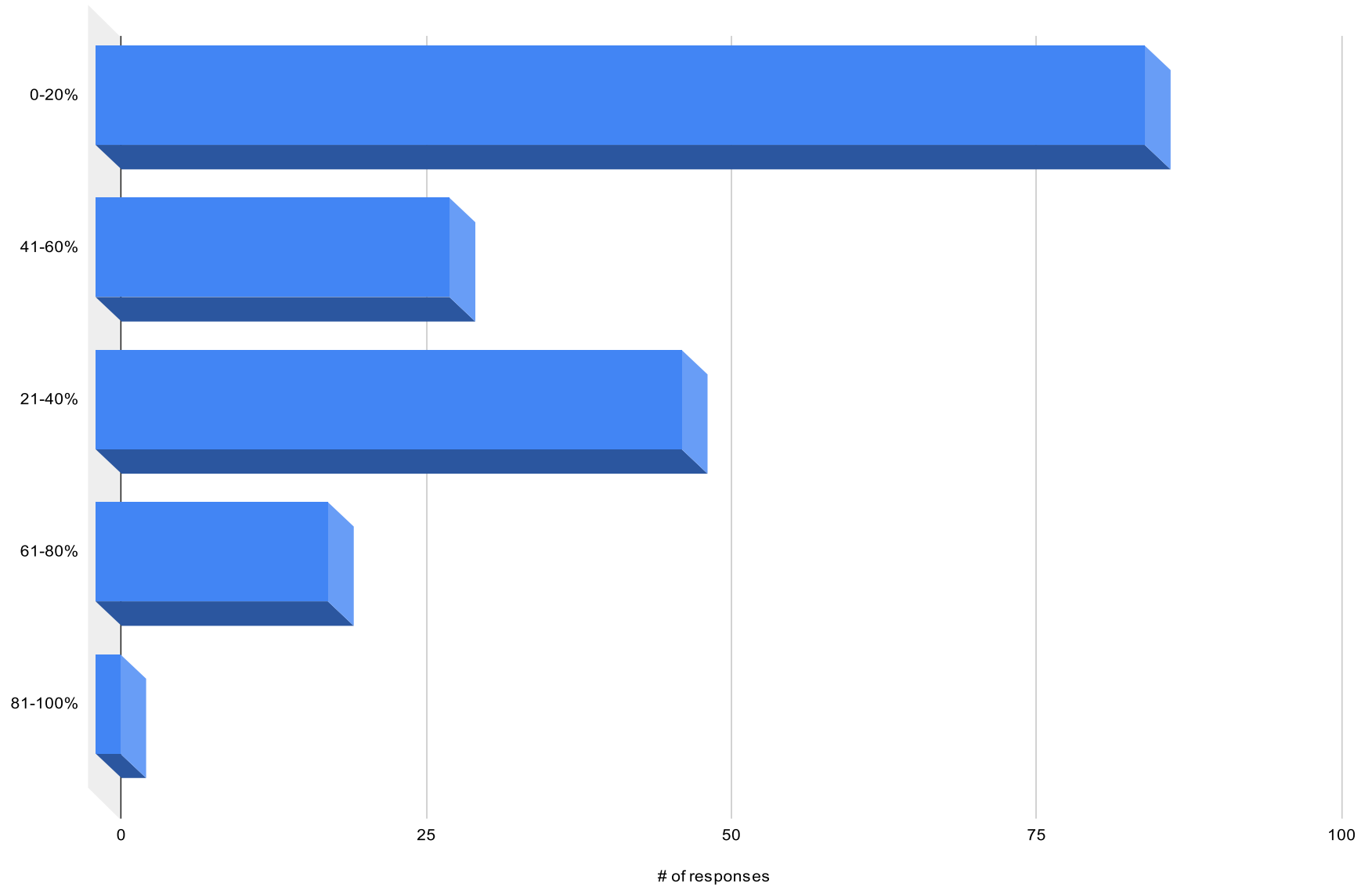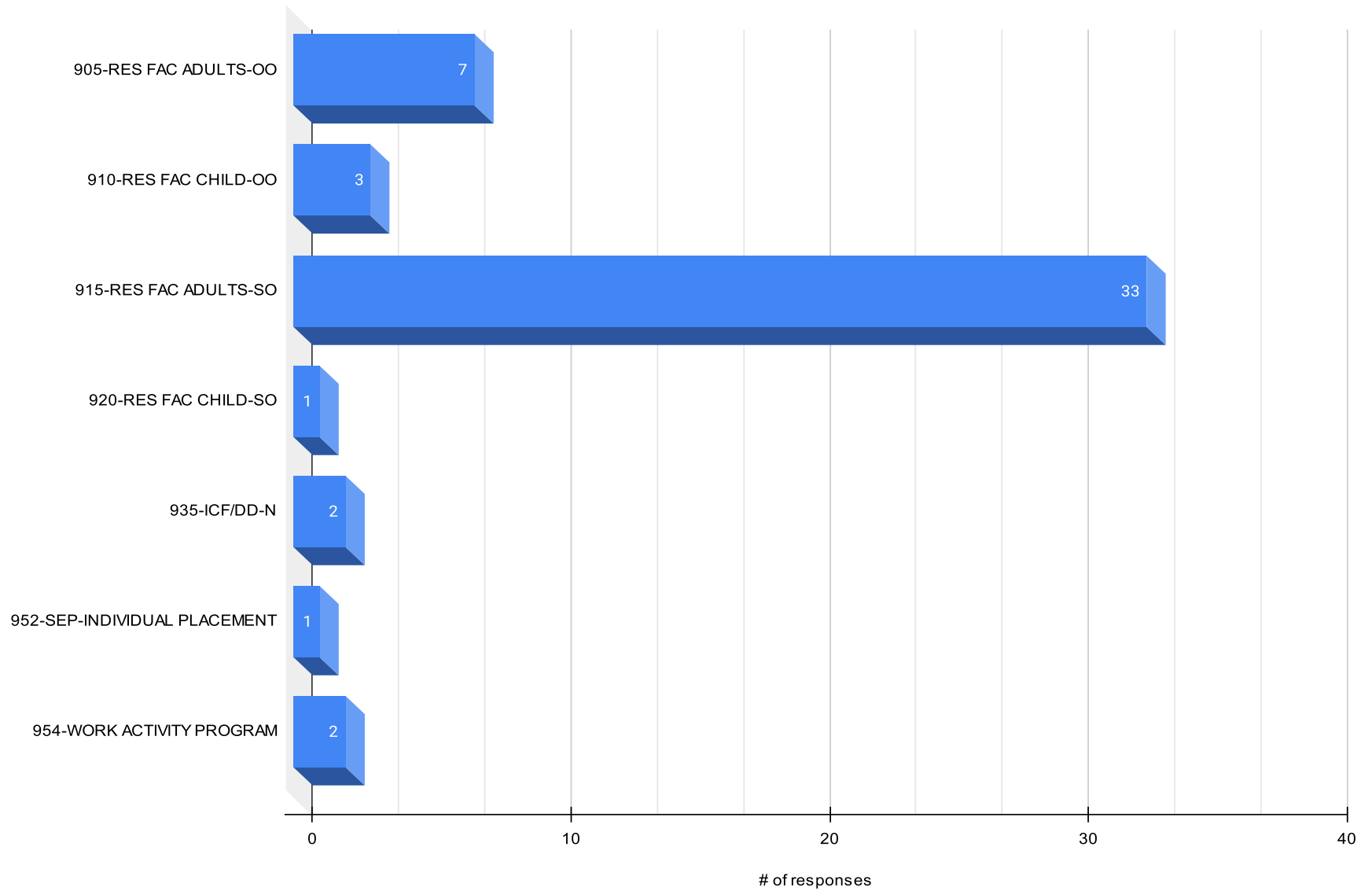


# of responses

# Types of Services - Respondents with 41% - 100% vacant shifts

| Service | # of responses |
|---|---|
| 905-RES FAC ADULTS-OO | 7 |
| 910-RES FAC CHILD-OO | 3 |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | 33 |
| 920-RES FAC CHILD-SO | 1 |
| 935-ICF/DD-N | 2 |
| 952-SEP-INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT | 1 |
| 954-WORK ACTIVITY PROGRAM | 2 |

# of responses

# 4. How important are starting wages in regard to your ability to fill available positions?

Unimportant
0.5%

Moderately Important
2.2%

Slightly Important
1.1%

Important
12.5%
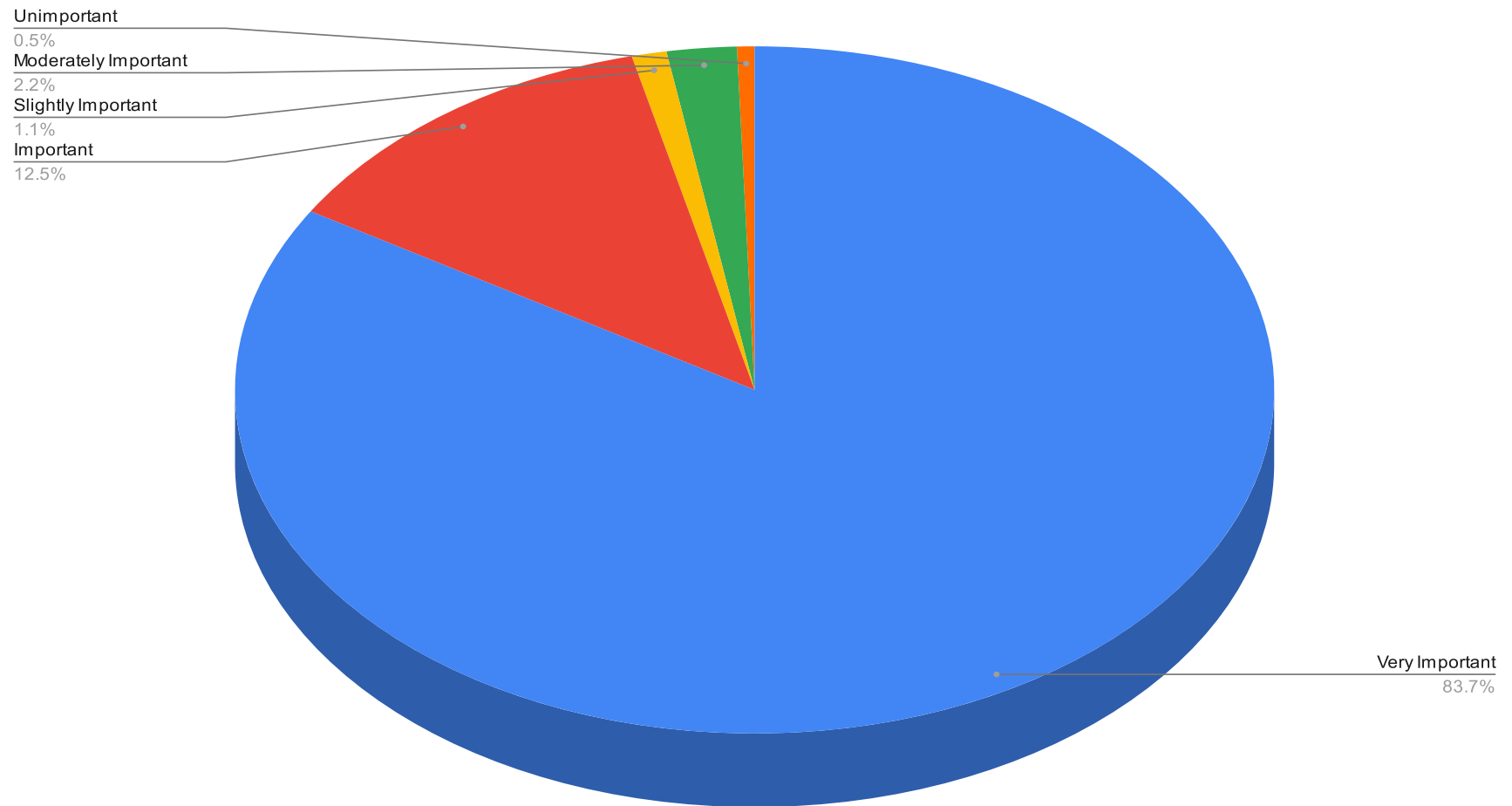
Very Important
83.7%

## 5. How important is location in regard to your ability to fill available positions?

Unimportant
7.6%

Slightly Important
14.1%

Very Important
34.8%

Important
27.2%

Moderately Important
16.3%
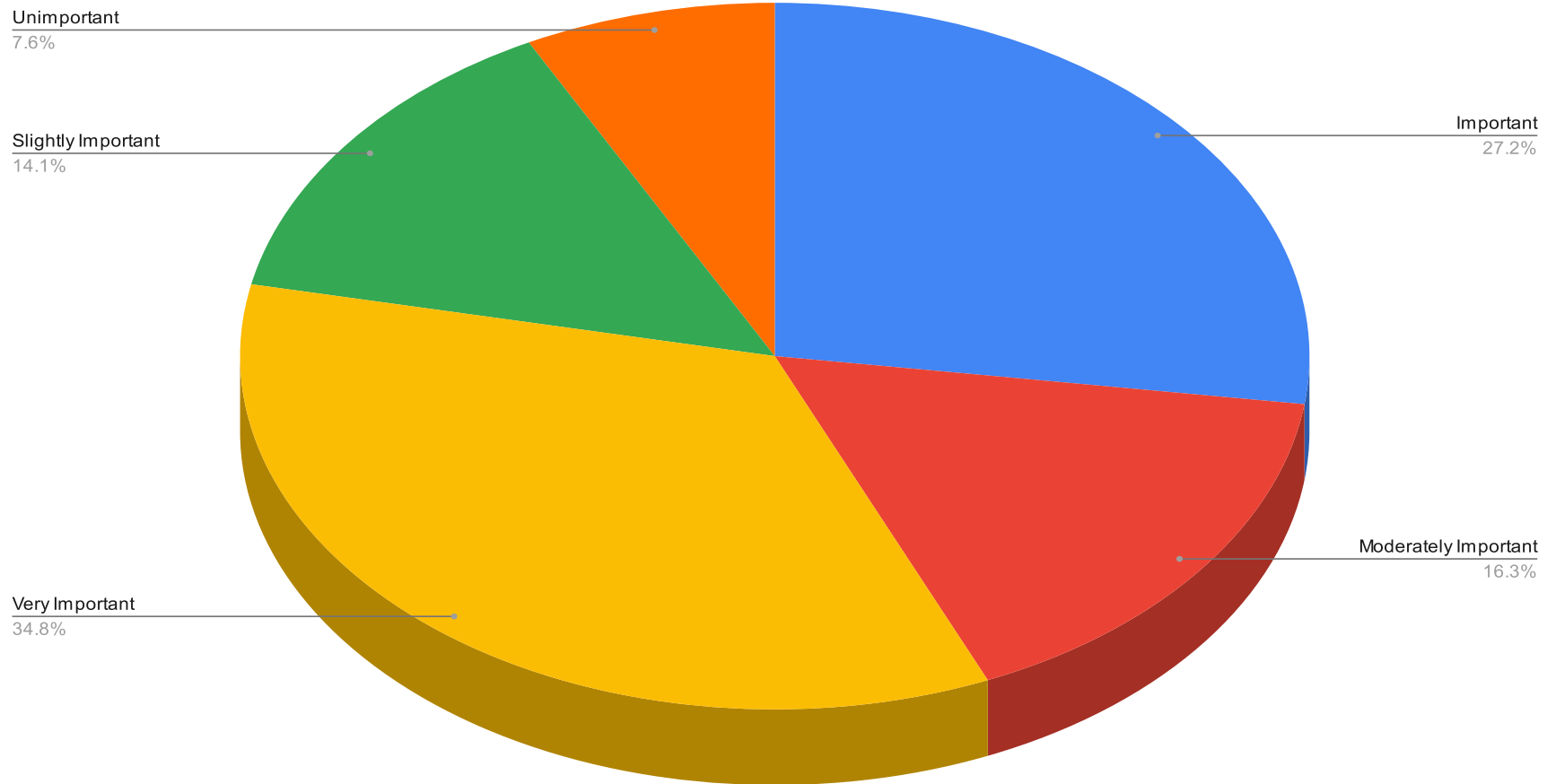
6. How important are benefits in regard to your ability to fill available positions?

Unimportant
2.7%

Slightly Important
6.0%

Moderately Important
16.3%

Important
20.1%

Very Important
54.9%

| Making a difference | Enjoy the people they support | Work schedule (flexible/c | Feeling supported/ respe | Enjoy coworkers | Career advancement opp | Compensation/ wages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 119 | 100 | 117 | 124 | 87 | 34 | 54 |

## Primary Reasons Staff Stay
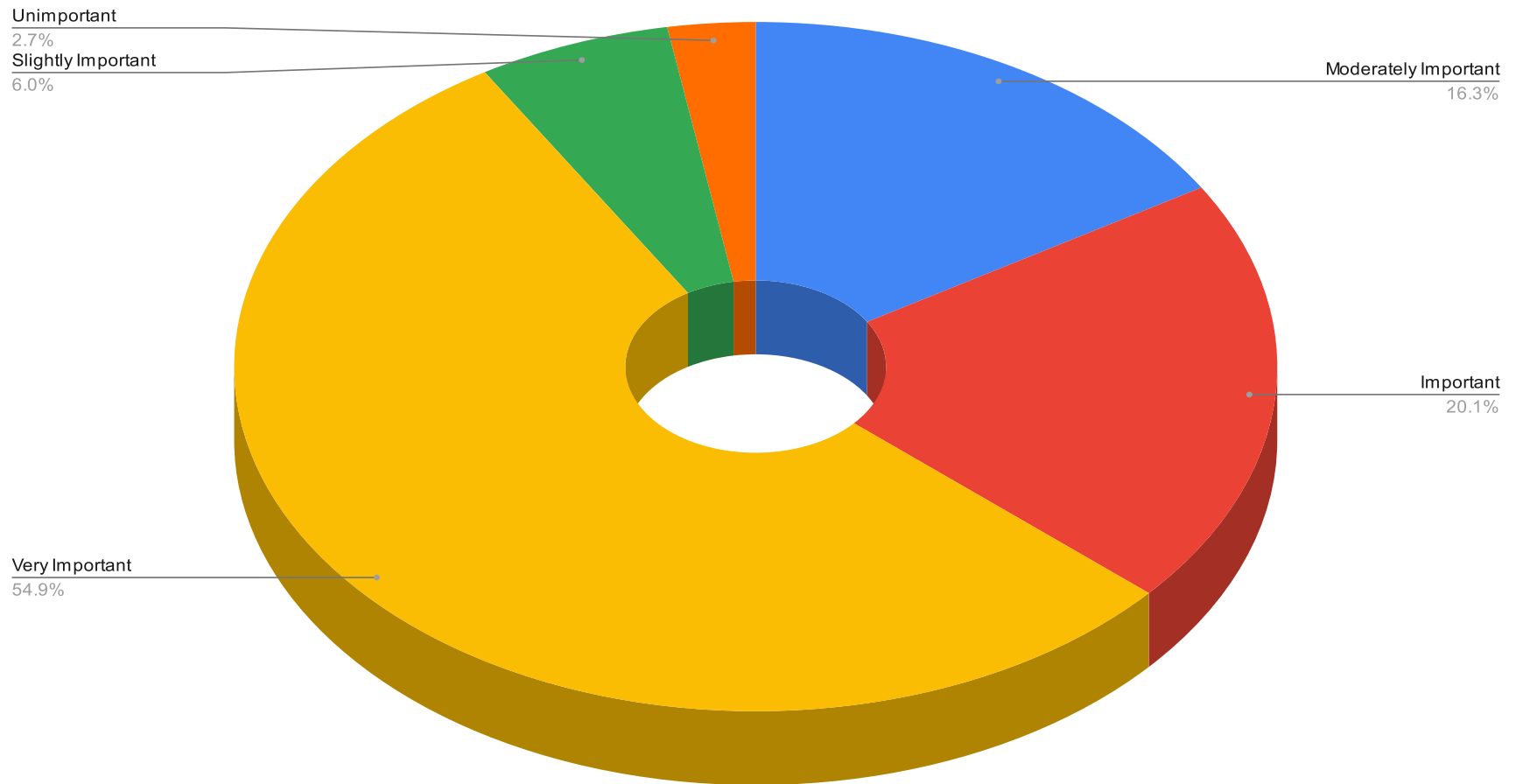
Making a difference

Enjoy the people they support

Work schedule (flexible/convenient)

Feeling supported/ respected/ appreciated

Enjoy coworkers

Career advancement opportunities

Compensation/ wages

0    25    50    75    100    125
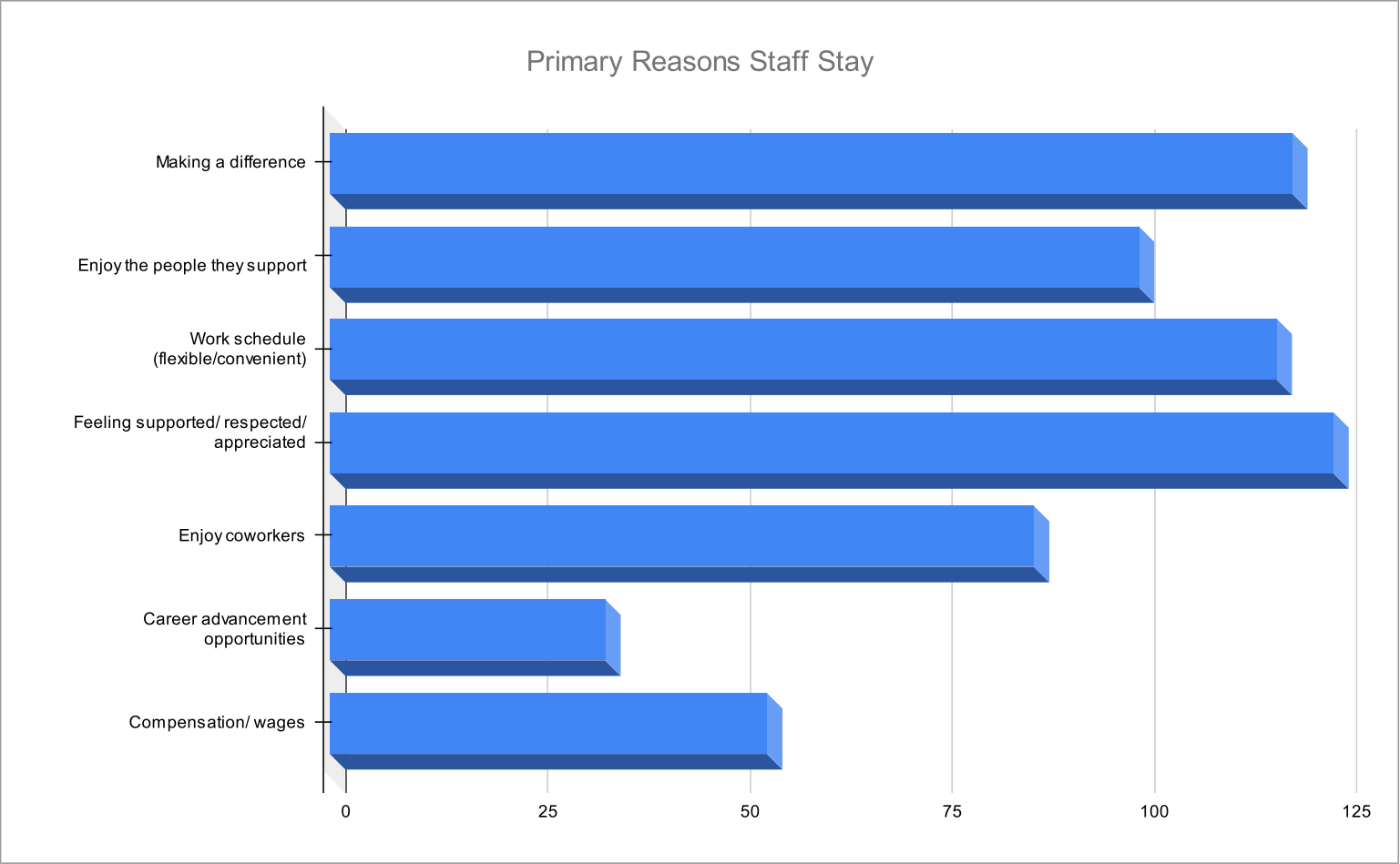
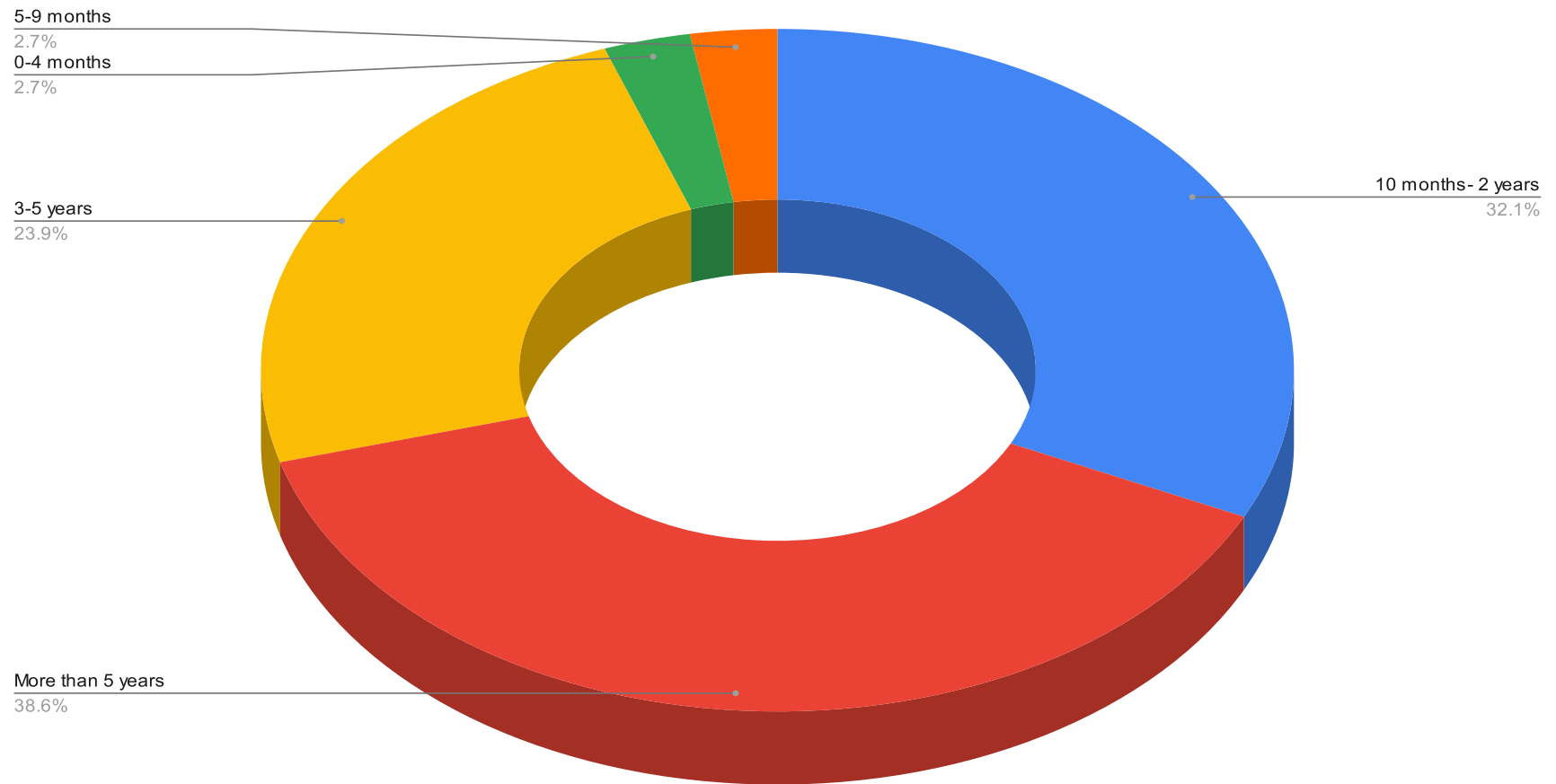8. How likely are you to use a paid staffing recruitment service (i.e., Zip recruiter, Indeed, etc.)?

Probably
10.9%

Possibly
27.2%

Definitely Not
6.0%

Probably not
17.9%

Definitely
38.0%
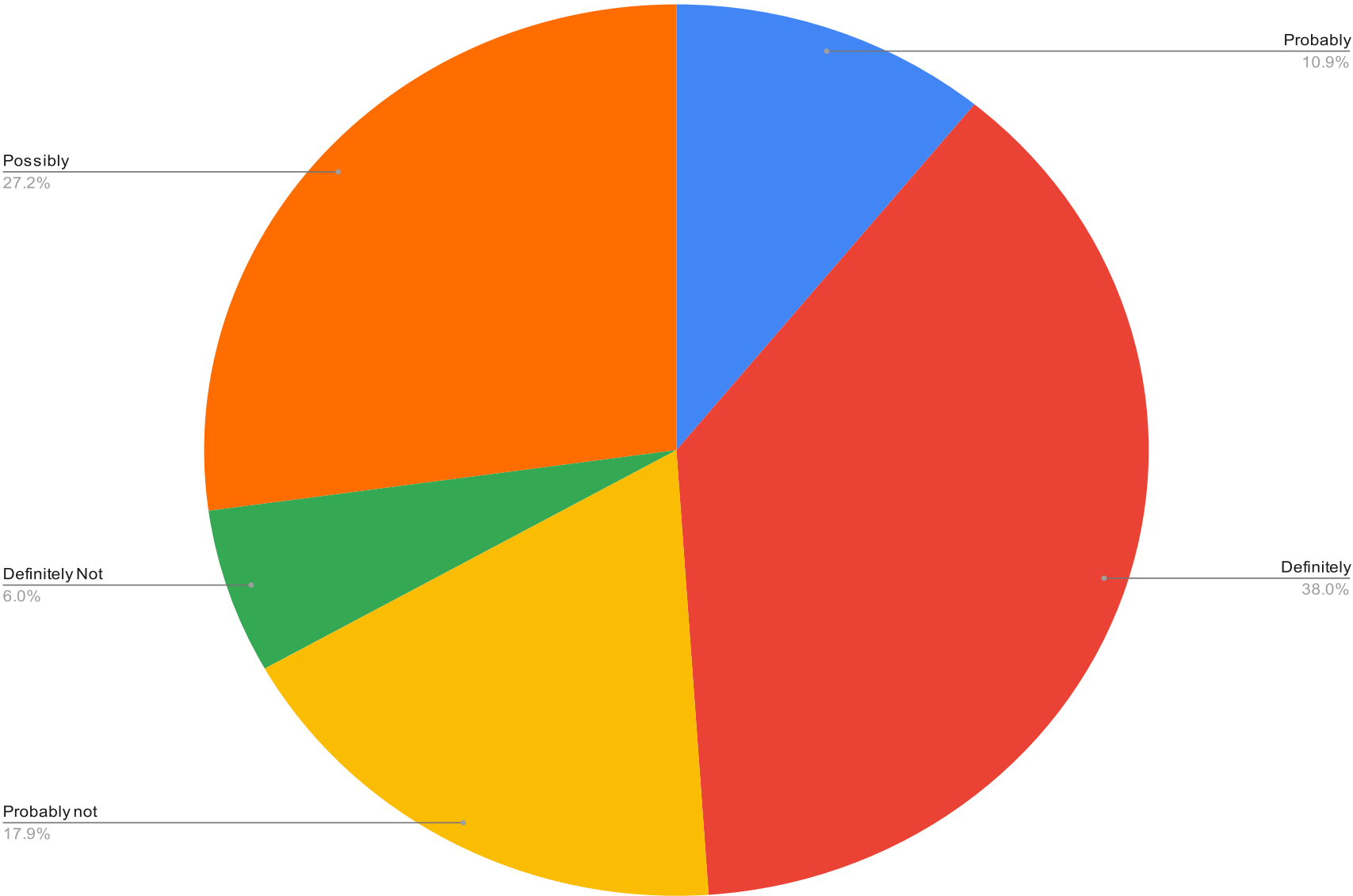
9. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how long did staff tend to stay in their role at your program before moving on?



- 5-9 months
  2.7%
- 0-4 months
  2.7%
- 3-5 years
  23.9%
- More than 5 years
  38.6%
- 10 months- 2 years
  32.1%

## 10. Over the past 6 months, what percentage of services had to be modified/ canceled due to scheduled staff being unavailable to provide services?
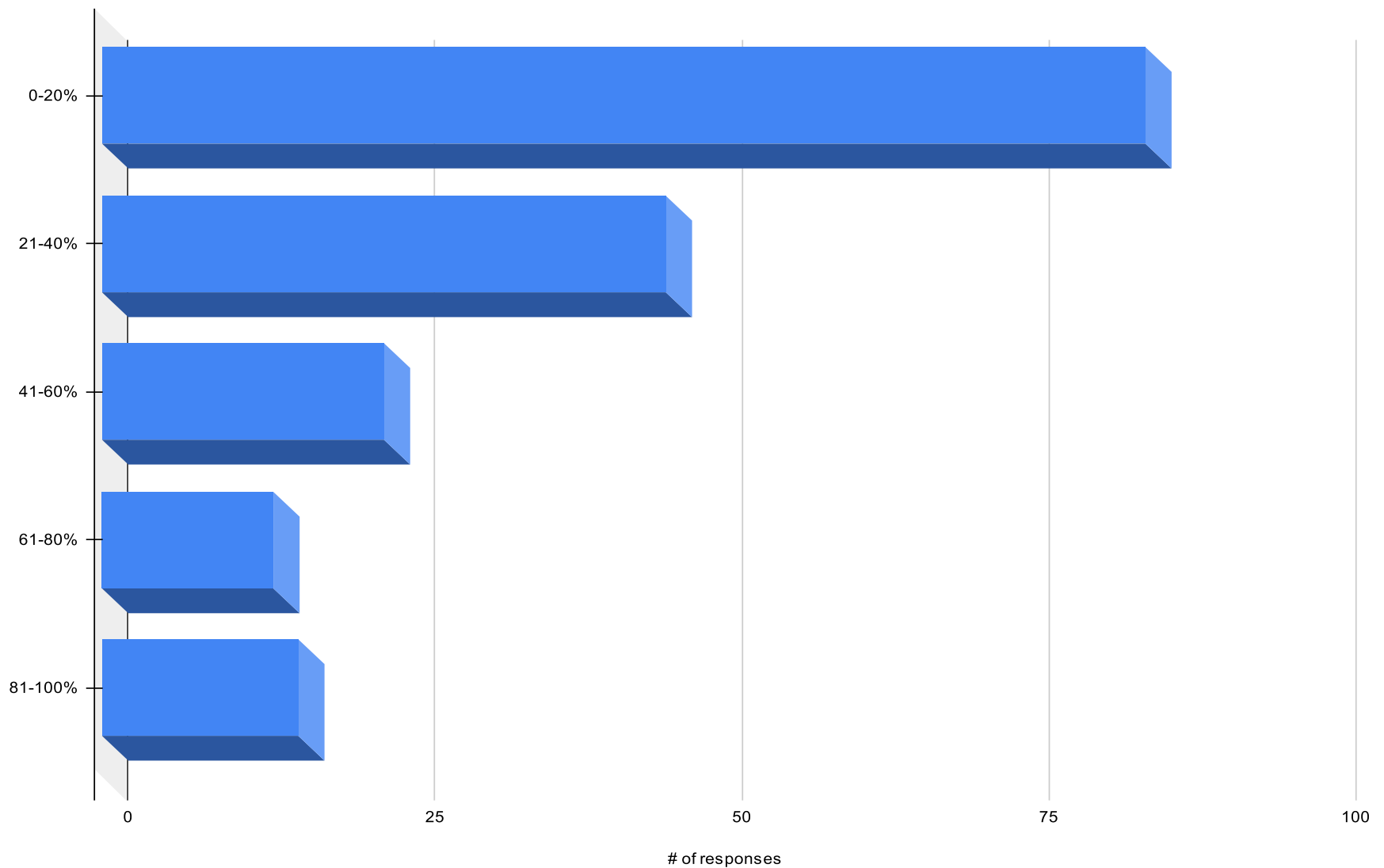


# of responses

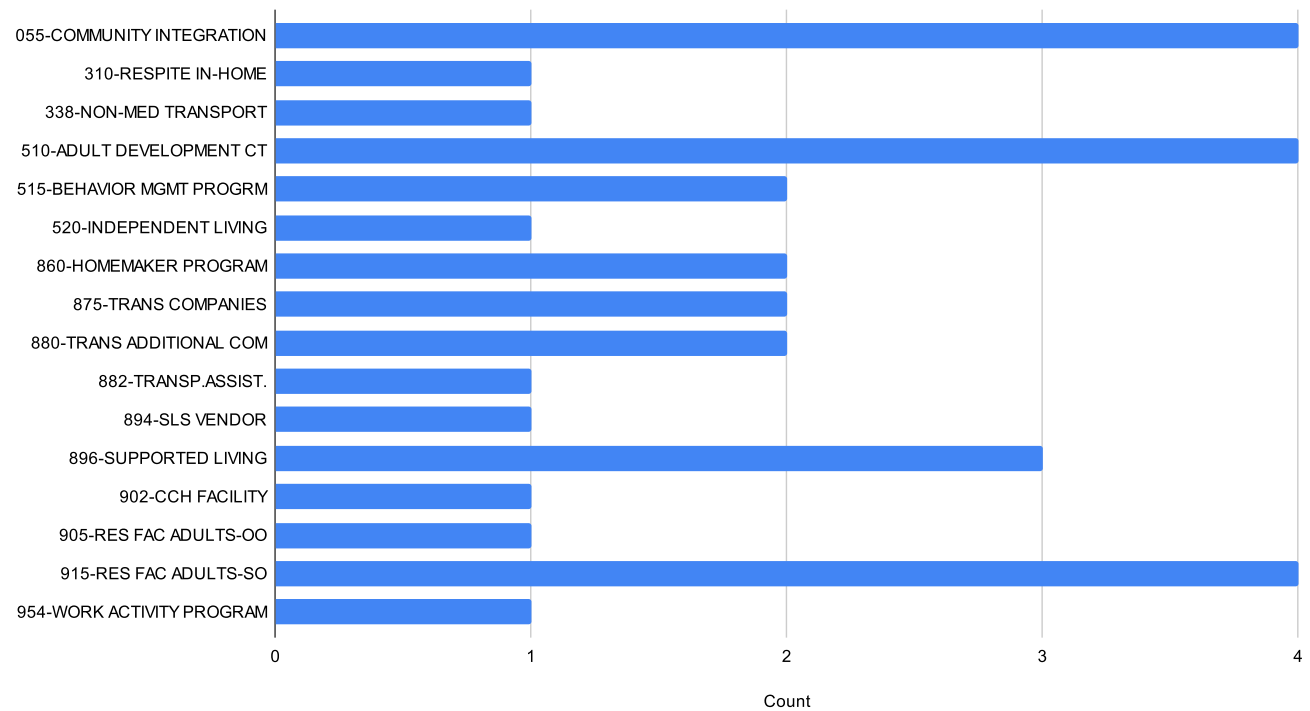| | |
|---|---|
| 055-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TRAINING | |
| 055-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TRAINING | |
| 055-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TRAINING | |
| 055-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TRAINING | |
| 310-RESPITE IN-HOME | |
| 338-NON-MED TRANSPORT | |
| 510-ADULT DEVELOPMENT CT | |
| 510-ADULT DEVELOPMENT CT | |
| 510-ADULT DEVELOPMENT CT | |
| 510-ADULT DEVELOPMENT CT | |
| 515-BEHAVIOR MGMT PROGRM | |
| 515-BEHAVIOR MGMT PROGRM | |
| 520-INDEPENDENT LIVING | |
| 860-HOMEMAKER PROGRAM | |
| 860-HOMEMAKER PROGRAM | |
| 875-TRANS COMPANIES | |
| 875-TRANS COMPANIES | |
| 880-TRANS ADDITIONAL COM | |
| 880-TRANS ADDITIONAL COM | |
| 882-TRANSP.ASSIST. | |
| 894-SLS VENDOR ADMINISTRATION | |
| 896-SUPPORTED LIVING | |
| 896-SUPPORTED LIVING | |
| 896-SUPPORTED LIVING | |
| 902-CCH FACILITY | |
| 905-RES FAC ADULTS-OO | |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | |
| 954-WORK ACTIVITY PROGRAM | |

Types of Services - Respondents indicating they have had to cancel 61% to 100% of services

| Service | Count |
|---|---|
| 055-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION | 4 |
| 310-RESPITE IN-HOME | 1 |
| 338-NON-MED TRANSPORT | 1 |
| 510-ADULT DEVELOPMENT CT | 4 |
| 515-BEHAVIOR MGMT PROGRM | 2 |
| 520-INDEPENDENT LIVING | 1 |
| 860-HOMEMAKER PROGRAM | 2 |
| 875-TRANS COMPANIES | 2 |
| 880-TRANS ADDITIONAL COM | 2 |
| 882-TRANSP.ASSIST. | 1 |
| 894-SLS VENDOR | 1 |
| 896-SUPPORTED LIVING | 3 |
| 902-CCH FACILITY | 1 |
| 905-RES FAC ADULTS-OO | 1 |
| 915-RES FAC ADULTS-SO | 4 |
| 954-WORK ACTIVITY PROGRAM | 1 |

Count

**2021**

# Relias DSP Survey

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Direct support professionals (DSPs) working for intellectual and developmental disability service providers give their input on supervisor support, recognition, and career advancement.

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High turnover and low retention of direct support professionals (DSPs) continues to be a top-of-mind concern for most intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) providers. While the national turnover rate for DSPs is **42.8%**, this rate can be as high as **64.8%** across individual states.[1]

One common cause for this high rate of turnover is that DSPs continue to experience low wages, with a median hourly wage in 2019 of $12.80 — only a **2%** increase since 2009.[2] However, the need for direct care is only expected to grow, with projected job growth of **26%** adding over 7 million job openings by 2029.[3]

While states and IDD providers continue to advocate for higher reimbursement rates for direct support services, what else can organizations do to combat the high turnover and create loyal employees?

In 2019, Relias conducted its first survey of DSPs working in IDD services. The survey was created with the goal of understanding different factors that contribute to DSP retention. The 2019 survey yielded several significant trends among DSPs, including the need for respect and appreciation, better-trained supervisors, and robust career advancement opportunities.

This survey sought to expand upon these themes and dive deeper into the meaning behind the numbers. With more targeted questions on job satisfaction, DSP supervision, showing appreciation, and thoughts on career advancement, the trends of this year's survey show that while many DSPs are satisfied with their current organizations, there is more that leaders could be doing to retain and engage their DSPs.

## Who is this report for?

This report is intended to be a resource for organization leaders in IDD services who are seeking insight into different aspects that affect DSP turnover and retention.

This report is also beneficial for IDD and DSP advocates who wish to use this data to inform policies for better working conditions that will increase DSP satisfaction with their organizations and, ultimately, positively affect the individuals whom DSPs serve.

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Our survey of **679** across **43** found the following:
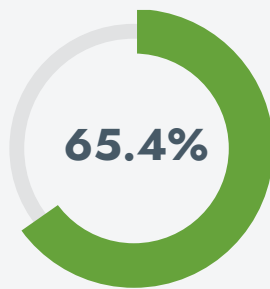
**DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

**STATES**

## Organization and Job Satisfaction

**+**

**65.4%**

Survey respondents who reported they were somewhat satisfied or completely satisfied working at their current organization.

**+** Overall, DSPs who had been working for their organization for less than one year, or who had one year or less total experience as a DSP, were more satisfied with their jobs, supervisors, and their organization's appreciation and recognition efforts. DSPs who had been working at their organization between one and six years, or who had a total of one to six years of experience as a DSP, were the least satisfied with their jobs, supervisors, organization appreciation and recognition efforts, and career advancement opportunities.
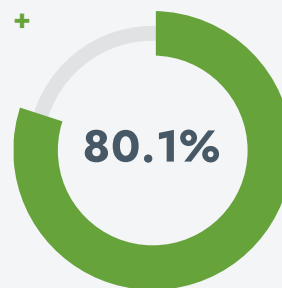
## Supervision

**+**

**73.8%**
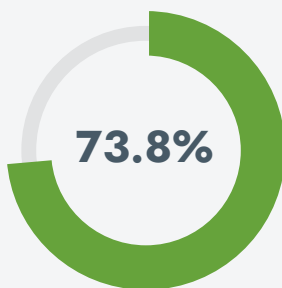
DSPs who were somewhat or completely satisfied with their supervisors.

**+** DSPs who were satisfied with their supervisors were significantly more likely to report that they enjoyed working at their current organization.

**+**

**80.1%**

A large majority of DSPs **(80.1%)** said having a safe platform to provide feedback about a supervisor was very or extremely important. But only **55.2%** said they had a current avenue to provide safe feedback.

**+** DSPs who were satisfied with their supervisors were significantly more likely to report having a safe avenue to provide feedback regarding their supervisors and more likely to report feeling comfortable talking to their supervisors about job-related stress and personal stress.
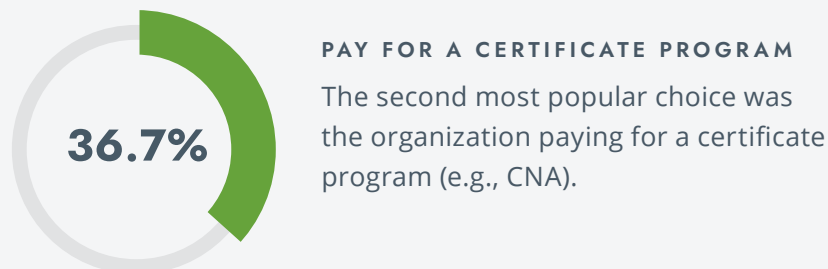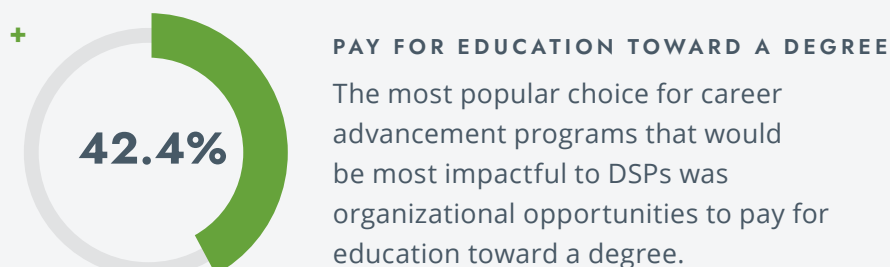
## Appreciation and Recognition

+ Receiving direct recognition from a supervisor was the most valuable form of appreciation for the DSPs surveyed, followed by the organization providing professional development opportunities and providing new leadership or career opportunities.

+ **34.5%**
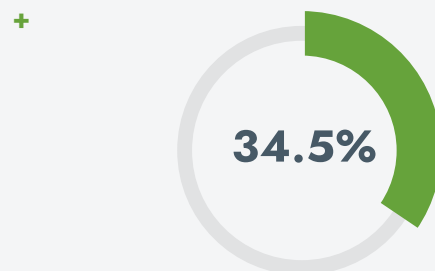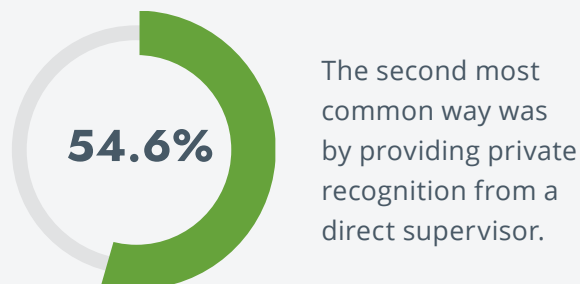
of the DSPs surveyed said they feel like they are not appreciated for their work.

+ **59.8%**

The most common way organizations showed appreciation was through offering a reward of some kind such as gift cards.

+ **52.3%**

The majority of respondents said they would be "much more likely" to stay if their organization showed greater appreciation for their work.

**54.6%**

The second most common way was by providing private recognition from a direct supervisor.

## Career Advancement

+ **42.4%**

**PAY FOR EDUCATION TOWARD A DEGREE**

The most popular choice for career advancement programs that would be most impactful to DSPs was organizational opportunities to pay for education toward a degree.

**OFFER A PROFESSIONAL LADDER TO A LEADERSHIP POSITION**

**36.5%**

The third most popular choice was a professional ladder to a leadership position in the company.

**36.7%**

**PAY FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

The second most popular choice was the organization paying for a certificate program (e.g., CNA).

+ DSPs also identified the need for ongoing, in-service, or on-the-job training as desirable career advancement opportunities.

**24%**
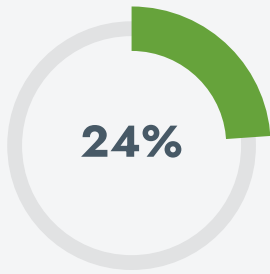
Almost one-quarter of respondents said their organization did not have any career advancement programs for DSPs.

**41.2%**

When asked how much more likely DSPs would stay at their current organization if they provided strong career advancement programs, **41.2%** said they would be much more likely to stay.

**20.6%**

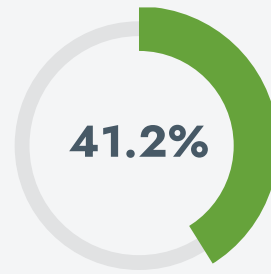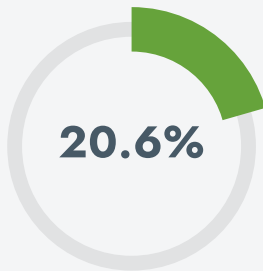of DSPs surveyed said they would be "very likely" or "extremely likely" to leave their current organization without the opportunity to advance in their career in the next one to two years.

## SURVEY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In partnership with Hanover Research and the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), the survey was distributed to direct support professionals in December 2020 and March 2021.

Statistical significance testing was performed across different groups with a **95%** confidence level using Chi squared or ANOVA tests with p = less than 0.05. Groups compared for the survey included:

+ DSPs who were satisfied vs. dissatisfied with their organization

+ DSPs who were satisfied vs. dissatisfied with their supervisor

+ DSPs who were satisfied vs. dissatisfied with their organization's appreciation efforts

+ DSPs based on years of experience
   (LESS THAN ONE YEAR, BETWEEN ONE AND SIX YEARS, AND MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS)

+ DSPs based on tenure at current organization
   (LESS THAN ONE YEAR, BETWEEN ONE AND SIX YEARS, AND MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS)

## Total Respondents

+ # 679

direct support professionals responded to the survey.

## Age

+ The average age of survey respondents was 44 years old. This is comparable with other reports that identify the median age across all direct care at 43 years old.[4] There was a wide distribution in age, with the youngest respondents at age 18 and the oldest respondents at age 73.

## Race and Ethnicity

+ The majority of survey respondents identified as white or Caucasian, with Black or African American respondents being the next largest group identified.

# 76%
**WHITE OR CAUCASIAN**

# 11.6%
**BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN**

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY?**
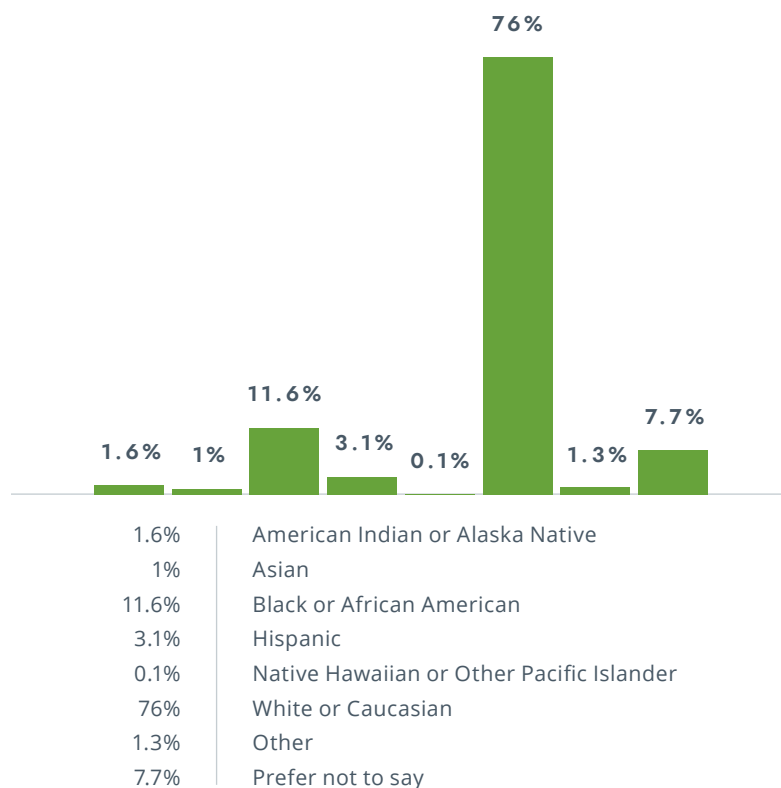


+ A **2018 survey of direct care workers** shows the race and ethnicity of DSPs in the United States to be much more varied, with more than half of all direct care workers identifying as people of color, and only **41%** identifying as white or Caucasian.[5]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.6% | American Indian or Alaska Native |
| 1% | Asian |
| 11.6% | Black or African American |
| 3.1% | Hispanic |
| 0.1% | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| 76% | White or Caucasian |
| 1.3% | Other |
| 7.7% | Prefer not to say |

# Geographic Area

**+ 43**

total states were represented in the survey. Most survey respondents resided in the Northeastern United States **(49.6%)**. The region with the least amount of representation was the Northwestern United States **(2.2%)**.

% of Respondents from that region

2.2%

34%

49.6%

8.8%

5.3%

# of Respondents from that region

| 15 | 60 | 231 | 36 | 337 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NORTHWEST | WEST | MIDWEST | SOUTH | NORTHEAST |
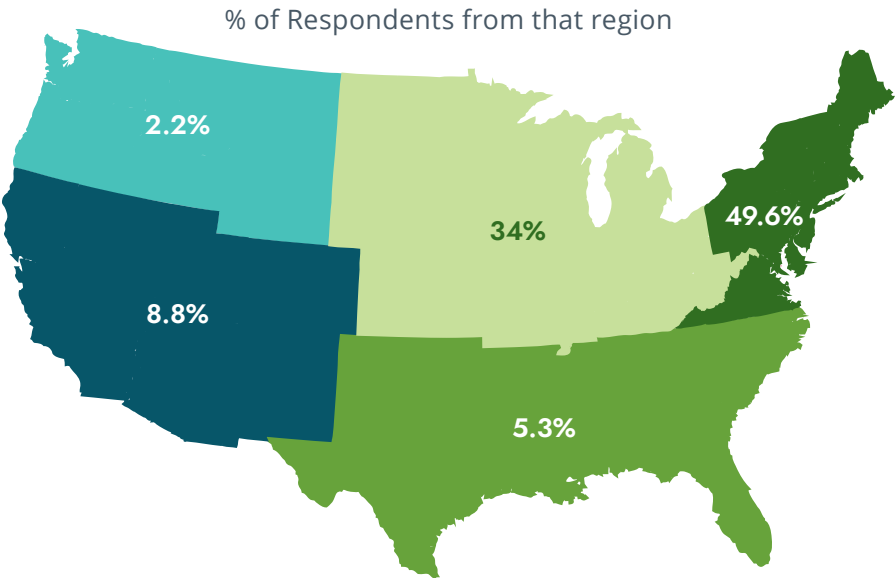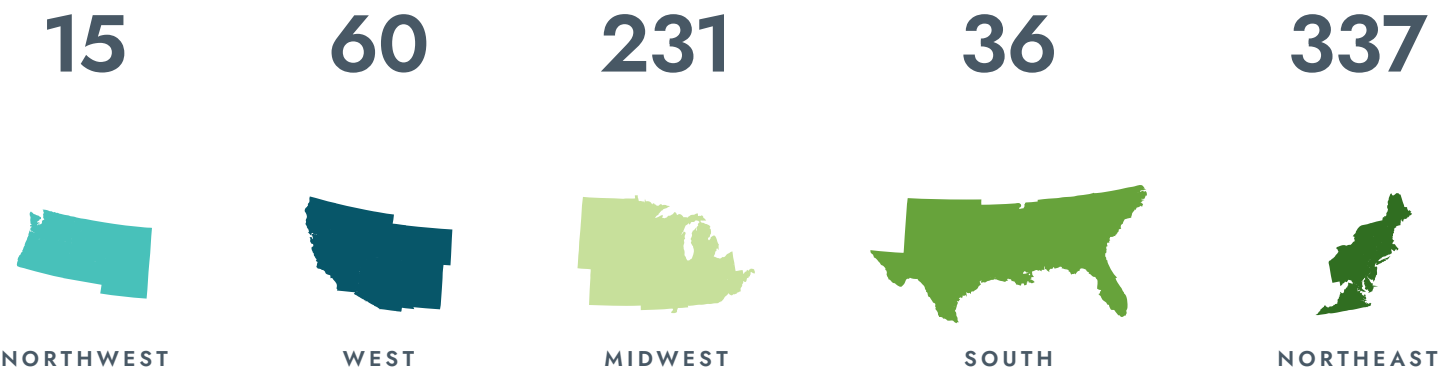
# of States Represented

| 3 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## Length of Time as a DSP

+ Over half of those who responded to the survey, **52.5%**, had worked as DSPs for longer than seven years; **22.4%** of these individuals have worked as a DSP for 16 years or more.

The second largest group of respondents were those who had worked as DSPs between one and six years, **40.7%**. Only **6.8%** of survey respondents have worked as a DSP for less than a full year.

QUESTION: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING AS A DSP?

# 6.8%
**LESS THAN 1 YEAR**

# 40.7%
**BETWEEN 1 AND 6 YEARS**

# 52.5%
**7 YEARS OR MORE**

## Length of Tenure at Current Organization

+ The majority of respondents **(48.6%)** reported having worked at their current organization between one and six years. Within this group, the largest subgroup who responded had worked as DSPs between one and two years **(19.9%)**. And **41%** of respondents had worked at their current organization for seven years or more, while **10.3%** had worked at their current organization for less than a year.

QUESTION: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A DSP AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION?

# 10.3%
**LESS THAN 1 YEAR**

# 48.6%
**BETWEEN 1 AND 6 YEARS**

# 41%
**7 YEARS OR MORE**

# Types of Support Provided

+ The majority of respondents **(56.3%)** reported that they work for in-home supports (support provided to individuals in their own home) or community residential supports (support provided in a home owned by a provider agency) **(50.1%)**. "Other" lines of service included public schools, supports coordinators, and benefits coordinators.

**9.4%** — Institutional Support
(e.g., in an institutional residential setting)

**11%** — Employment Support

**25.2%** — Non-Residential
(e.g., day programs and community support programs provided outside the home)

**50.1%** — In-Home
(e.g., support provided to individual in home where they live)

**56.3%** — Community Residential
(e.g., support provided to individual in home ownwed by agency)

**4%** — Other (Please Specify)
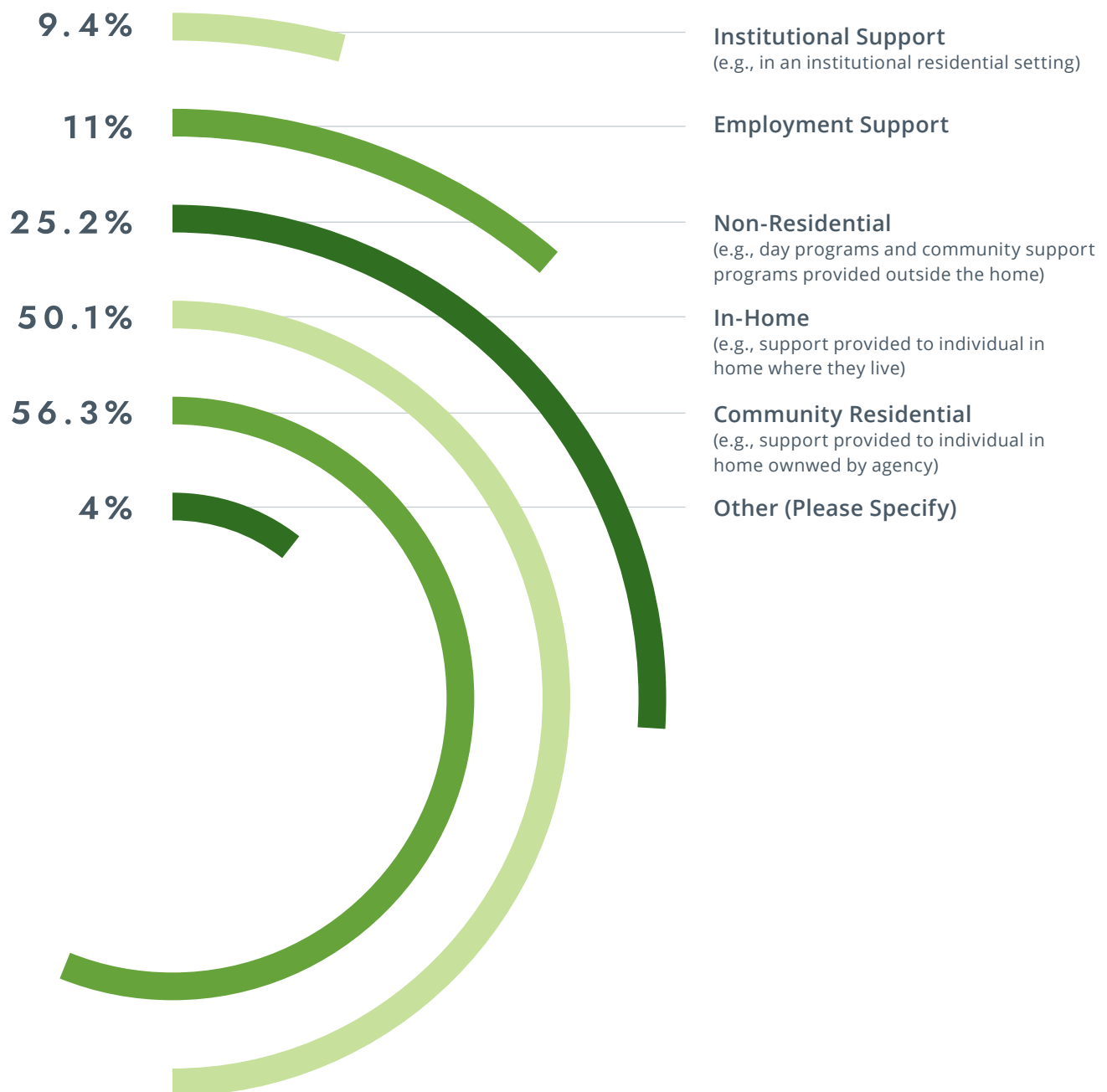
## ORGANIZATIONAL AND JOB SATISFACTION

The majority of respondents **(a total of 65.4%)** reported they were "somewhat satisfied" or "completely satisfied" working at their current organization, and **8.7%** were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their organization. Almost one-quarter of respondents **(23.9%)** reported they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "completely dissatisfied" with their organization.

**QUESTION: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WORKING AS A DSP AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION?**

# 6.5%
**COMPLETELY DISSATISFIED**

# 29.9%
**COMPLETELY SATISFIED**

# 17.4%
**SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED**
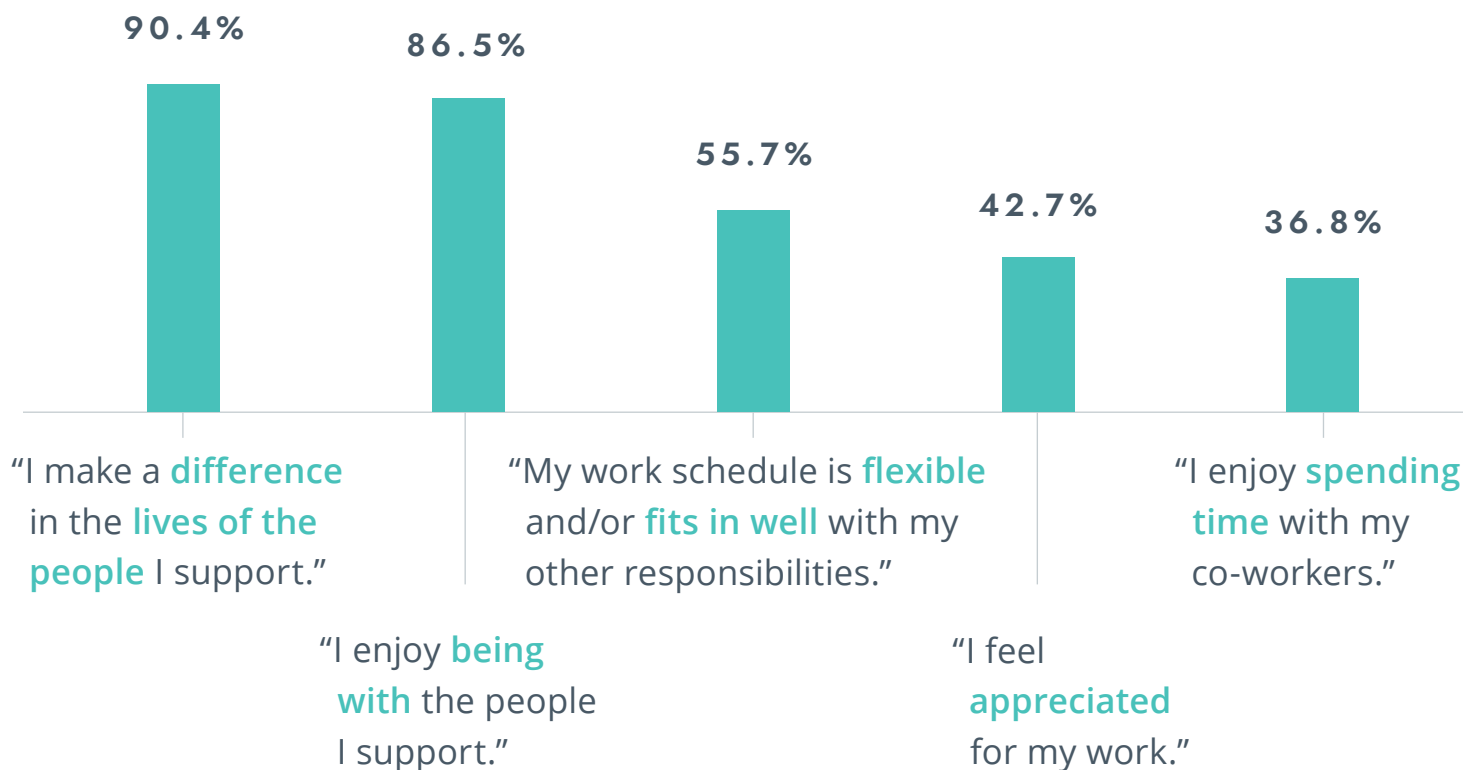
# 35.5%
**SOMEWHAT SATISFIED**

# 8.7%
**NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED**

Looking at DSPs who had been at their organization for less than one year, **72.8%** were satisfied with their current organization. That is more than those who had been at their organization for seven or more years **(66%)** or between one and six years **(63.4%)**.

## What DSPs Enjoy About Their Work

**+** When asked to choose which aspects of work they enjoyed as a DSP, the following were the most common answers:

**90.4%**

**86.5%**

**55.7%**

**42.7%**

**36.8%**

"I make a **difference** in the **lives of the people** I support."

"My work schedule is **flexible** and/or **fits in well** with my other responsibilities."

"I enjoy **spending time** with my co-workers."

"I enjoy **being with** the people I support."

"I feel **appreciated** for my work."

There were several significant differences when comparing DSPs who were satisfied with their organizations against those who were dissatisfied with their organizations.

**DSPs who were satisfied working at their organizations were more likely to report that they feel like they make a difference in the lives of the people they support, enjoy being with the people they support, and feel respected and appreciated.**

They were also significantly more likely than their dissatisfied counterparts to report that they enjoy spending time with co-workers and feel they are fairly compensated.

DSPs who were satisfied with their organizations were also more likely than dissatisfied DSPs to report that they received a lot of support for their work and that their organizations offered robust career advancement opportunities.

# What DSPs Enjoy About Their Work

**SATISFIED DSPS**

**DISSATISFIED DSPS**

"I feel fortunate because I feel what I do for a living matters."
— SURVEY PARTICIPANT

I make a difference in the lives of the people I support.
94.4%
81.3%

I enjoy being with the people I support.
88.5%
88.1%

My work schedule is flexible.
61.9%
43.2%

I feel respected and appreciated.
55.2%
22.7%

I enjoy spending time with my co-workers.
41.2%
29.5%

I feel fairly compensated for my work
23.6%
11.4%

I receive a lot of support for my work
36.7%
13.1%

My organization offers robust career advancement opporunities
18.5%
6.8%
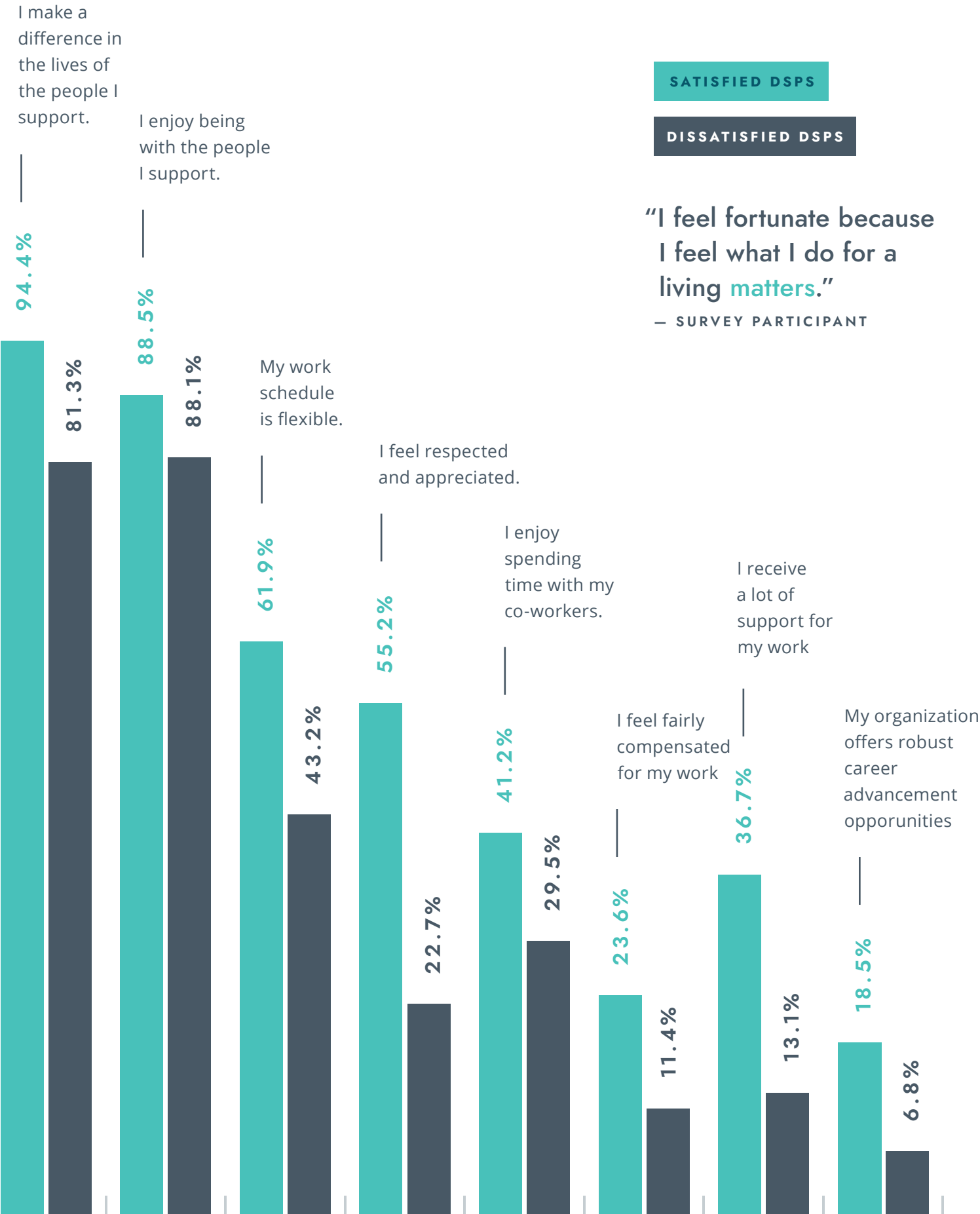
## What DSPs Dislike About Their Work

+ When asked to choose which aspects of work they least enjoyed as a DSP, the following were the most common answers:

**50.7%**

**49.3%**

**34.5%**

**25.9%**

"I **do not** receive enough support for my work."

"I feel like **I am not appreciated** for my work."

" I am **not fairly compensated** for my work."

"**COVID-19** has made my job significantly harder."

Write-in commentary from respondents identified other areas that caused them to dislike their jobs. Some of these included challenging behavior from persons served (e.g., "being abused and hit by my clients"), management turnover, lack of ongoing training, high volume of work, and low pay.

Between DSPs who were satisfied vs.dissatisfied with their organization, there continued to be several significant differences between the groups when it came to what they disliked about their work. Overall, dissatisfied DSPs were more likely to report that they did not feel like they were making a difference in the lives of the people they support.

They were also more likely to report that they did not enjoy their co-workers, did not feel appreciated for their work, felt like their job was hard, did not receive enough support for their work, or felt they were

fairly compensated for their work. Dissatisfied DSPs were much more likely to report that their work schedule was inflexible or conflicted with other responsibilities outside of work.

There was no significant difference between satisfied and dissatisfied DSPs who dislike working at their current organization because they do not enjoy spending time with the people they support, or who marked that COVID-19 had made their job significantly harder.

# What DSPs Dislike About Their Work

I am not fairly compensated for my work.

I feel like I am not appreciated for my work.

I do not receive enough support for my work.

My work schedule is inflexible or conflicts with other...

I do not enjoy spending time with my co-workers.

I feel like I am not making a difference in the lives of the people...

My job is too hard.

SATISFIED DSPS

DISSATISFIED DSPS

64.2%

57.4%

46%

40.8%

21.4%
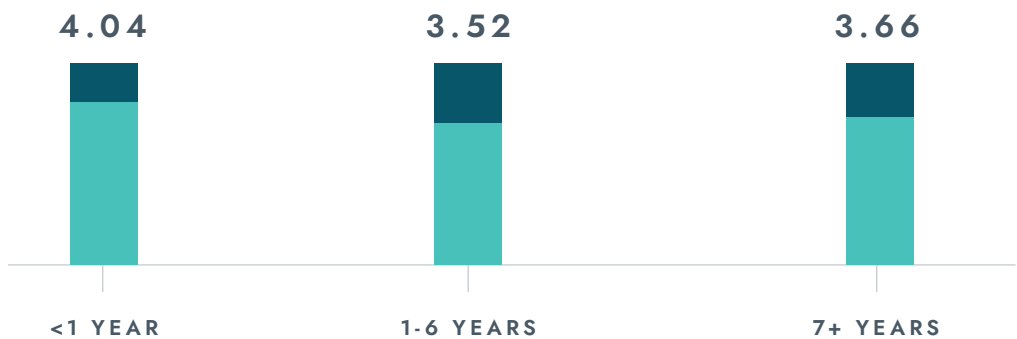
19.3%

15.3%

9.2%

8.5%

6.1%

4.5%

2.5%

0.9%
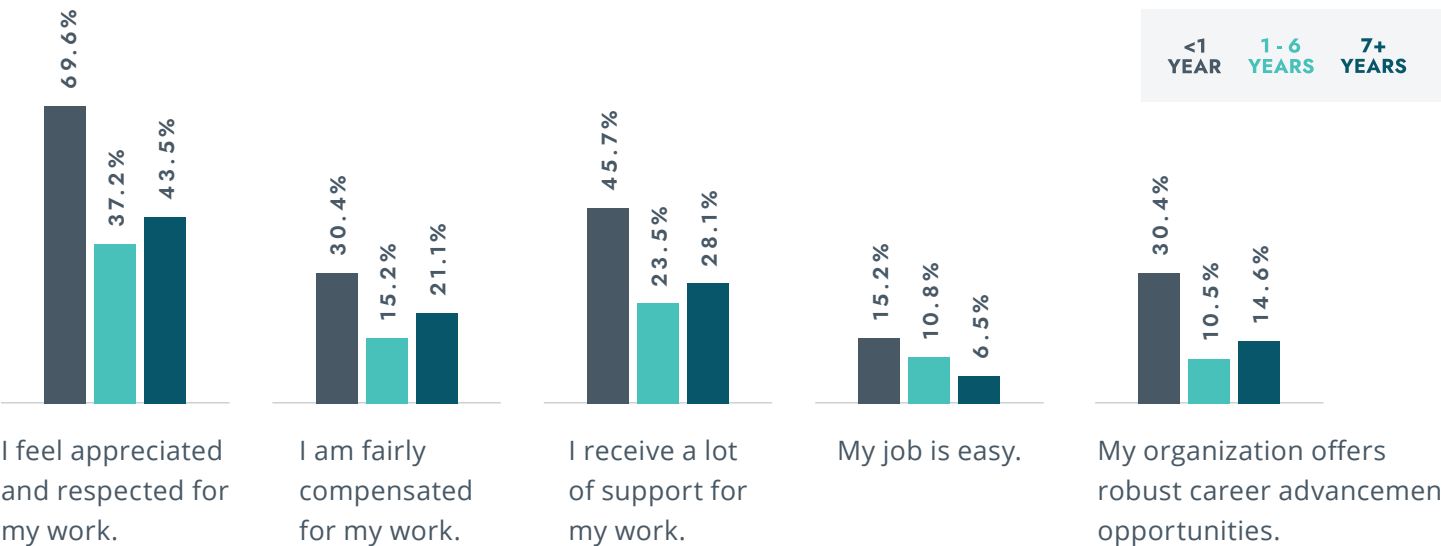
0.5%

# Comparing Years of Experience

+ DSPs with less than one year of experience were significantly more likely than DSPs with one to six years of experience to say they were satisfied with their current organization. They were also more likely to be satisfied with their current organization than those with more than seven years of experience.

+ DSPs with less than one year of experience were significantly more likely to say they felt fairly compensated, felt like their job was easy, and felt like they received a lot of support for their work. They also were significantly more likely to report that they liked working at their current organization because of robust career advancement opportunities and that they felt appreciated for their work.

QUESTION: **HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WORKING AS A DSP AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION? (RATED OUT OF 5)**



| 4.04 | 3.52 | 3.66 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |

QUESTION: **WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT WORKING AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION? (BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE)**



| | <1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I feel appreciated and respected for my work. | 69.6% | 37.2% | 43.5% |
| I am fairly compensated for my work. | 30.4% | 15.2% | 21.1% |
| I receive a lot of support for my work. | 45.7% | 23.5% | 28.1% |
| My job is easy. | 15.2% | 10.8% | 6.5% |
| My organization offers robust career advancement opportunities. | 30.4% | 10.5% | 14.6% |

+ There were no significant differences between the groups regarding the following reasons for enjoying their job: I enjoy being with the people I support, I make a difference in the lives of the people I support, I enjoy spending time with my co-workers, or my work schedule is flexible and/or fits well with my other responsibilities.

DSPs with less than one year of experience were significantly more likely to report that they did not dislike anything about their job.

+ There were some significant differences between the groups in regard to what they disliked about working at their current organization, specifically for DSPs who had been working between one and six years.

DSPs with one to six years of experience were significantly more likely to report they disliked working at their current organization because they did not feel appreciated for their work. They were also significantly more likely to report that they did not feel fairly compensated for their work, and that they did not receive enough support for their work.

**PERCENT OF DSPS WHO DON'T DISLIKE ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR JOB, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**



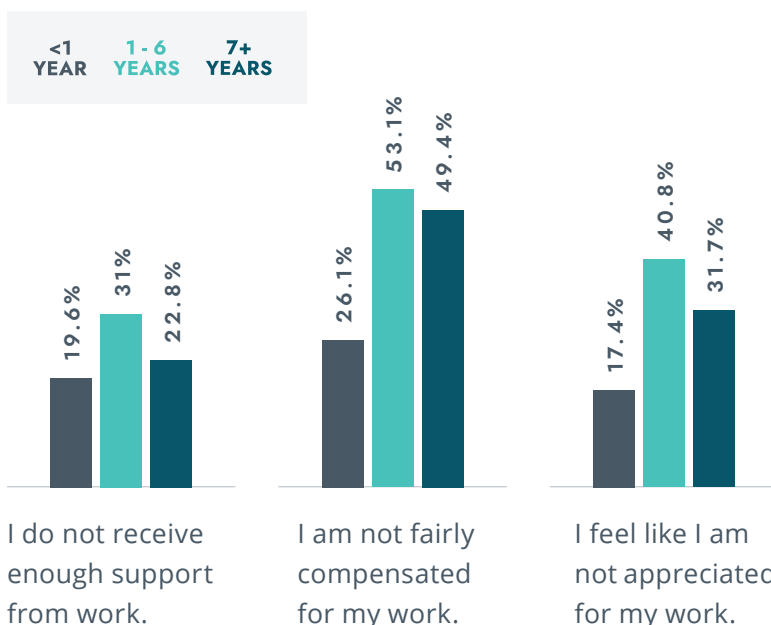| 43.5% | 13% | 12.1% |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |

**QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT WORKING AS A DSP AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION? (BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE)**



<1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS

I do not receive enough support from work. — 19.6% / 31% / 22.8%

I am not fairly compensated for my work. — 26.1% / 53.1% / 49.4%

I feel like I am not appreciated for my work. — 17.4% / 40.8% / 31.7%

+ There were no significant differences between the groups regarding the following reasons for disliking working as a DSP at their current organization: I feel like I am not making a difference in the lives of the people I support, I do not enjoy spending time with my co-workers, my job is too hard, and my work schedule is not flexible.

One important consideration for this year's report, which certainly cannot be overlooked, is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on DSPs and IDD services. Difficulty with COVID-19 was the most reported reason for disliking working as a DSP, with **50.7%** of respondents reporting this.

Other studies from IDD service industry leaders found comparable results. The National Association for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) and the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) released a join national survey regarding the DSP workforce and COVID-19 in April 2020 and issued a six-month follow-up in November 2020. In the follow-up report, respondents indicated that the pandemic had made staffing more difficult and increased the stress, expectations, and risk for those who remained in their positions. Over half of the respondents **(54%)** said their work life was getting worse.[6]

When asked to elaborate on the difficulties of the job, some of the comments DSPs provided in our survey included the following:

"It's upsetting. Especially since with COVID, my life has become work."

Respondents also indicated that the pandemic was hampering organizations' ability to provide employee appreciation and support:

"[Employee appreciation] is lacking with the pandemic."

Some DSPs reported that difficulty with regulations and safety during COVID-19 and barriers created by policies and procedures were hard to handle:

"The sheer volume and complication of providing needed services is MUCH too strict and with the pandemic, those rules and regulations are causing undue harm to service providers and the individuals."

When comparing years of experience, DSPs who had been working at their organization for seven or more years were significantly more likely to report that they dislike working as a DSP because COVID-19 has made their job significantly harder. DSPs who had been working at their organization for less than one year were the least likely to report this.

**PERCENT OF DSPS WHO DISLIKE WORKING AS A DSP AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION BECAUSE COVID-19 HAS MADE THEIR JOB SIGNIFICANTLY HARDER, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION.**
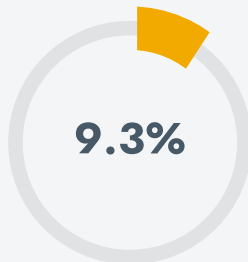
| <1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| 23.9% | 47.3% | 56.7% |
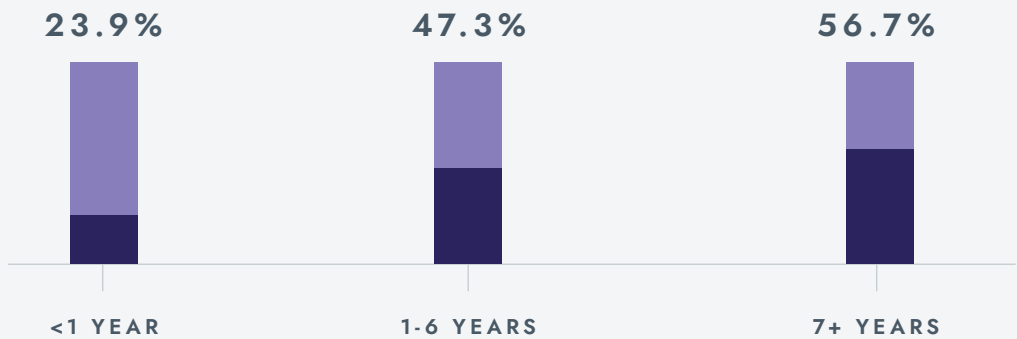
## Supervisor Satisfaction

**73.8%**
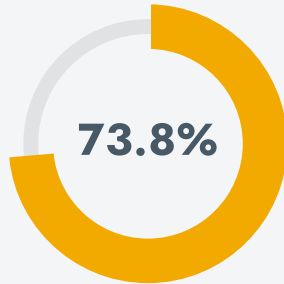
of survey respondents said they were "somewhat satisfied" or "completely satisfied" with their current supervisors.

**9.3%**

reported they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with their supervisors.
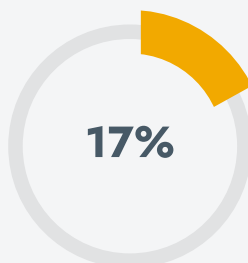
**17%**

reported they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "completely dissatisfied" with their current supervisors.

**QUESTION: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CURRENT SUPERVISOR?**
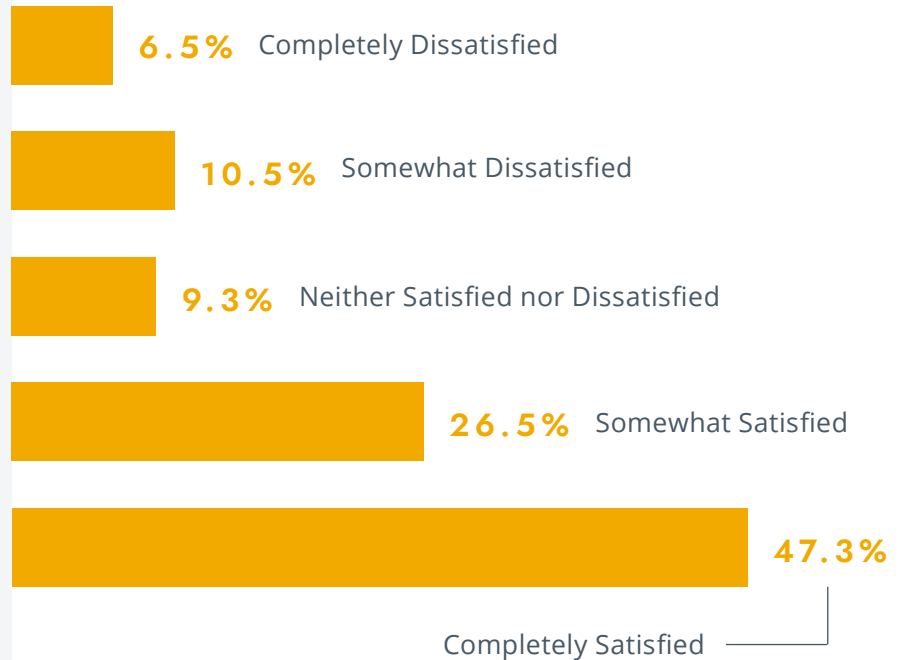
**6.5%** Completely Dissatisfied

**10.5%** Somewhat Dissatisfied

**9.3%** Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

**26.5%** Somewhat Satisfied

**47.3%**

Completely Satisfied

**DSPs who were satisfied with their supervisors were significantly more likely to report that they were also satisfied working as a DSP at their current organizations.**

# Supervisor Attributes

+ This survey asked DSPs to rank which attributes of a supervisor they found to be the most important. They were also asked to rank which attributes of a supervisor would most discourage them as a DSP.

  Among positive supervisor attributes, most DSPs reported "Shows respect for staff as an individual," "Open and transparent communication," and "Shows appreciation for a job well done."

QUESTION: AS A DSP, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES DO YOU FIND MOST IMPORTANT IN A SUPERVISOR? (SELECT UP TO 3)

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.4% | Other (Please Specify) |
| 8.4% | Provides Emotional Support |
| 18.3% | Provides Workplace Support |
| 36.5% | Has a Positive Attitude |
| 38.6% | Acts as a Mentor |
| 40.2% | Shows Respect for Staff as an Individual |
| 43.3% | Shows Appreciation for a Job Well Done |
| 49.3% | Holds All Staff Accountable in an Equal Manner |
| 51% | Open and Transparent Communication Surrounding Important issues |
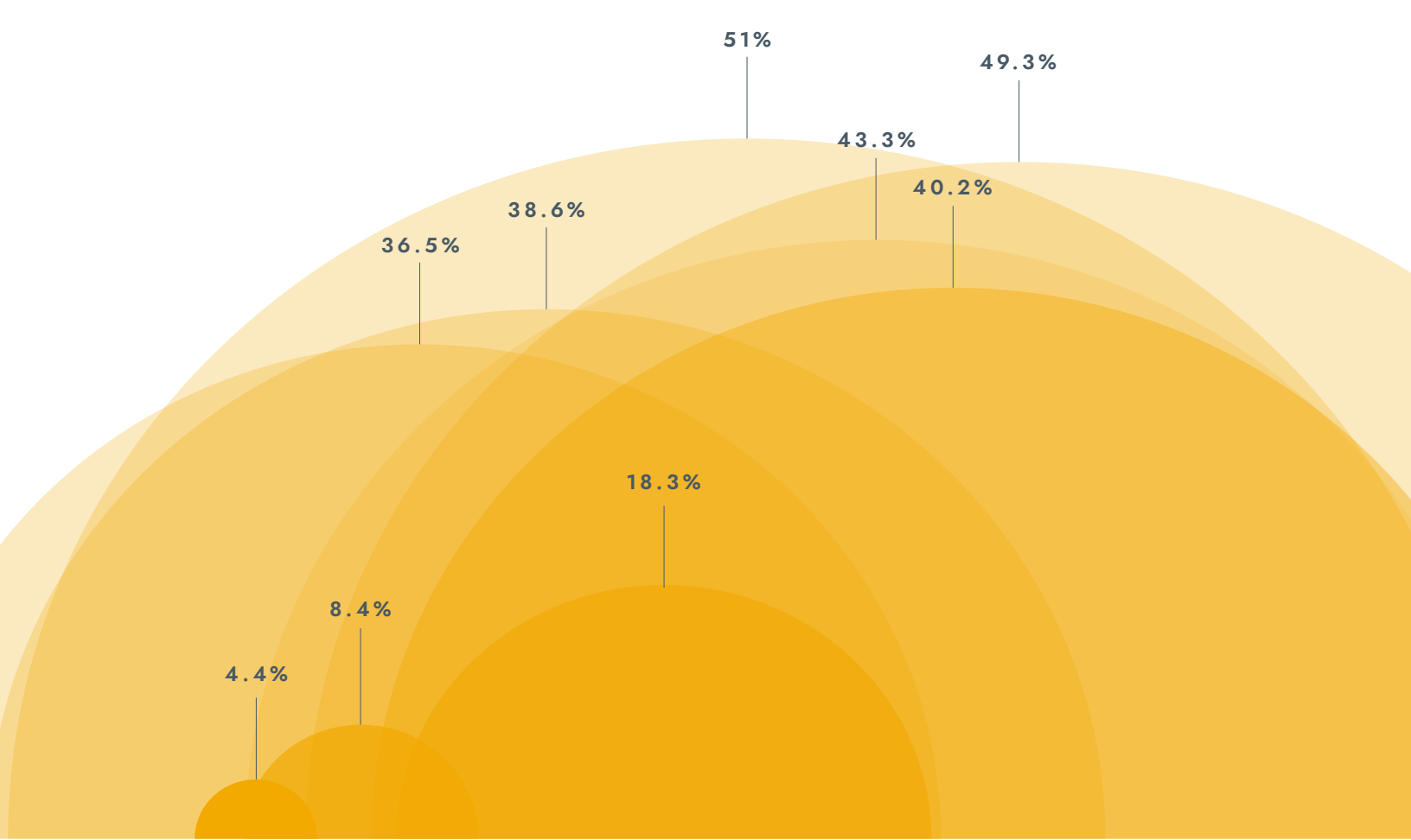
When asked to fill in a response for "other," many respondents answered that "all of these" were important attributes. Some other comments on positive supervisor attributes included the following:

## "Assists with day-to-day operations. Willing to step in and help!"

## "Is honest and transparent about the decision they make, follows ethical and professional standards."

## "Willing to voice an opinion and stand up for their employees."

Among negative supervisor attributes, most DSPs reported "Lack of communication among supervisors and staff," "Condescending/speaks down to staff," and "Makes me feel unappreciated and unimportant." Again, when asked to fill in a response for "other," many respondents reported that "all of these" attributes from a supervisor would discourage them.

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES IN A SUPERVISOR WOULD MOST DISCOURAGE YOU AS A DSP?**



Other — 4.9%
Holds a negative attitude. — 36.2%
Quick to point out shortcomings or problems. — 21.6%
Does not hold all staff equally accountable. — 42.9%
Make me feel unappreciated and unimportant. — 45.7%
Condescendint/ speaks down to staff. — 56.7%
Lack of communication among supervisor and staff. — 61.9%
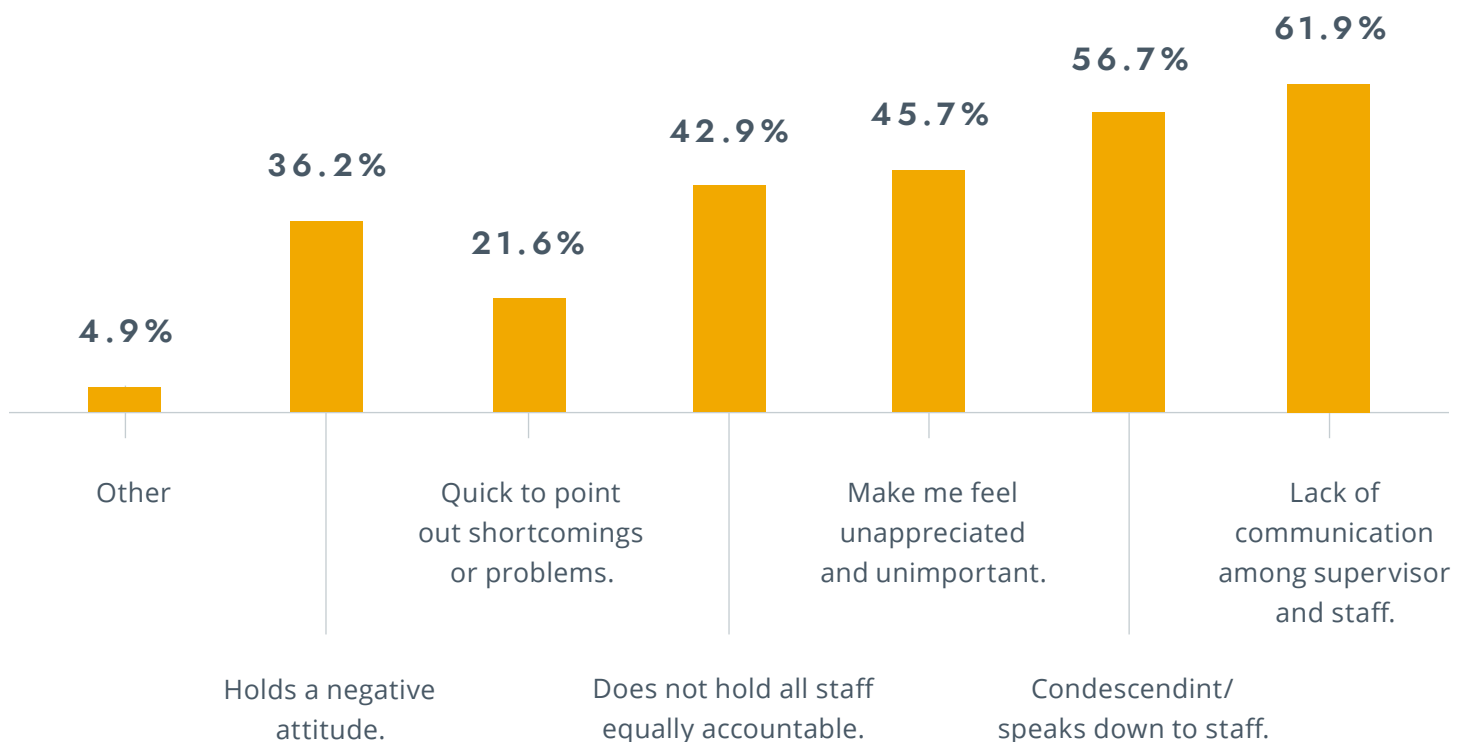
## Attitude Is Everything

+ DSPs who were satisfied with their
supervisors were more likely to value
attitude in their supervisors. They rated
"Has a positive attitude" significantly
more in their top three most important
supervisor attributes than those who were
dissatisfied with their supervisors. They
were also more likely to report "holds a
negative attitude" in their top three most
discouraging attributes in a supervisor.

## Holding Staff Accountable

+ DSPs who were dissatisfied with their
supervisors seemed to value accountability
as a supervision trait. They were more likely
to rate "Holds staff accountable in an equal
manner" in their top three most important
attributes in a supervisor than DSPs who were
satisfied with their supervisor. Conversely, they
were more likely to rate "Does not hold all staff
equally accountable" in their top three most
discouraging attributes in a supervisor.

When comparing experience, DSPs who had
been working at their organization for seven
or more years were significantly more likely
to report that supervisors who do not hold all
staff equally accountable as a top discouraging
attribute in a supervisor.

+ There was little statistical difference between
DSPs based on years of experience and
what attributes they found important or
discouraging in a supervisor. The only
difference was around accountability, with
DSPs with less than one year of experience
being less likely to report "holds all staff
accountable in equal manner" as an important
attribute in a supervisor.

**PERCENT OF DSPS WHO FIND IT DISCOURAGING
WHEN A SUPERVISOR DOES NOT HOLD ALL
STAFF EQUALY ACCOUNTABLE (BY YEARS OF
EXPERIENCE AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION):**

**31.4%**
<1 YEAR

**41.5%**
1-6 YEARS

**47.3%**
7+ YEARS
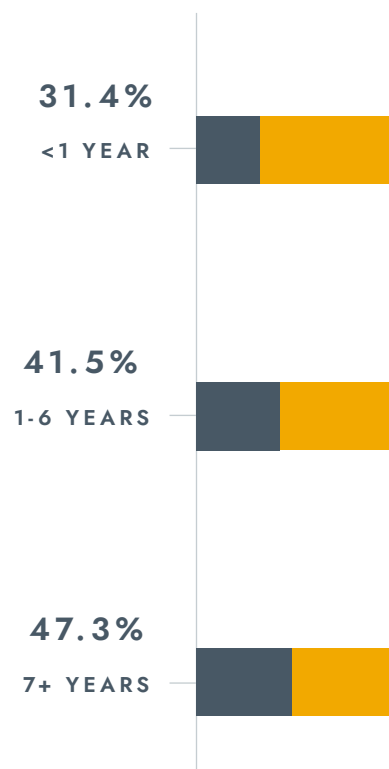
## Supervisor Feedback

+ When asked "How important is having a safe platform to provide feedback about a supervisor?" most respondents **(80.1%)** answered this was "very important" or "extremely important." However, when asked if they currently had a safe avenue to provide feedback about a supervisor, only **55.2%** said they "agree" or "strongly agree."

DSPs who were satisfied with their supervisor were **more likely** to agree that they had a **safe avenue** to provide feedback about a supervisor at their organizations.

## Comfort Speaking With a Supervisor

+ When asked, "How comfortable are you talking with your current supervisor about the stress/challenges you face at your job?" **69%** of respondents said they were "somewhat" or "extremely" comfortable.

However, when asked, "How comfortable are you talking with your current supervisor about the stress/challenges of your personal life?" only **48.6%** said they felt somewhat or extremely comfortable. And **23.9%** said they felt "neutral."

**COMFORT SPEAKING WITH MY SUPERVISOR ABOUT STRESS AND CHALLENGES OF MY JOB VS. MY PERSONAL LIFE**

Comfort talking about stress and challenges of:
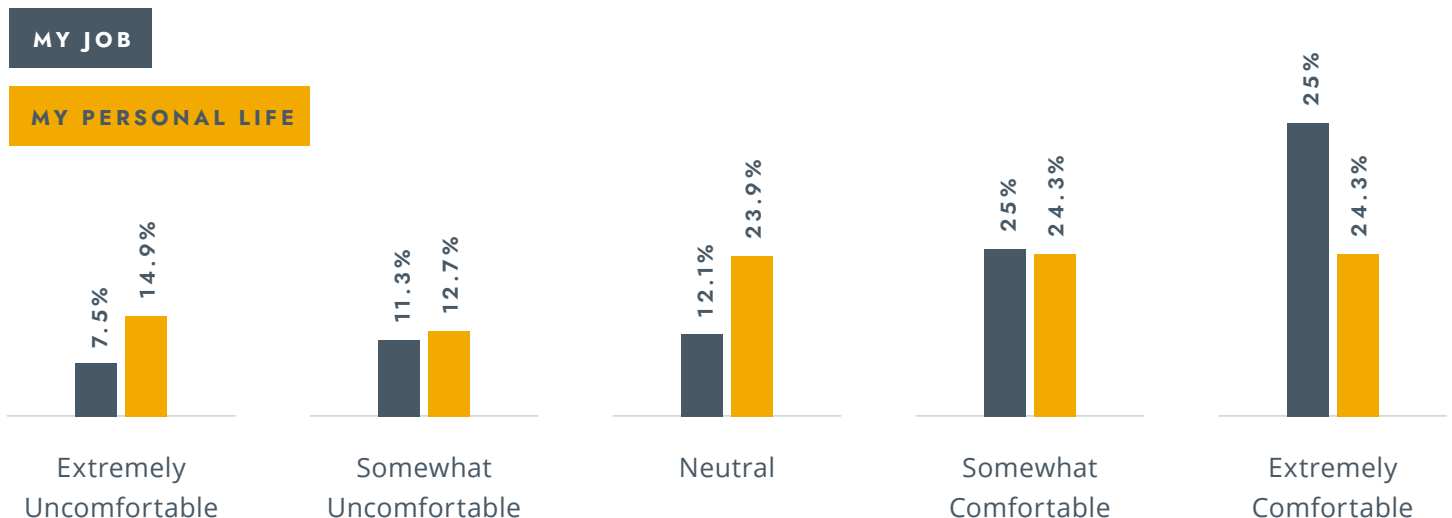
**MY JOB**

**MY PERSONAL LIFE**

| | Extremely Uncomfortable | Somewhat Uncomfortable | Neutral | Somewhat Comfortable | Extremely Comfortable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My Job | 7.5% | 11.3% | 12.1% | 25% | 25% |
| My Personal Life | 14.9% | 12.7% | 23.9% | 24.3% | 24.3% |

DSPs who were satisfied with their current organizations were significantly more likely to agree that they felt comfortable talking with their current supervisors about the stress and challenges faced at work. They were also more likely to agree that they felt comfortable talking with their current supervisor about the stress and challenges in their personal life.

When comparing DSPs who were satisfied or dissatisfied with their supervisors, it is not surprising that those who were satisfied with their supervisors were much more likely to agree that they felt comfortable speaking with their supervisors about the stress and challenges of their jobs as well as their personal lives.

**DSPS' COMFORT TALKING WITH THEIR CURRENT SUPERVISORS ABOUT JOB STRESS OR PERSONAL LIFE, BASED ON SATISFACTION/ DISSATISFACTION WITH CURRENT SUPERVISOR (AVERAGE SCORE OUT OF 5)**
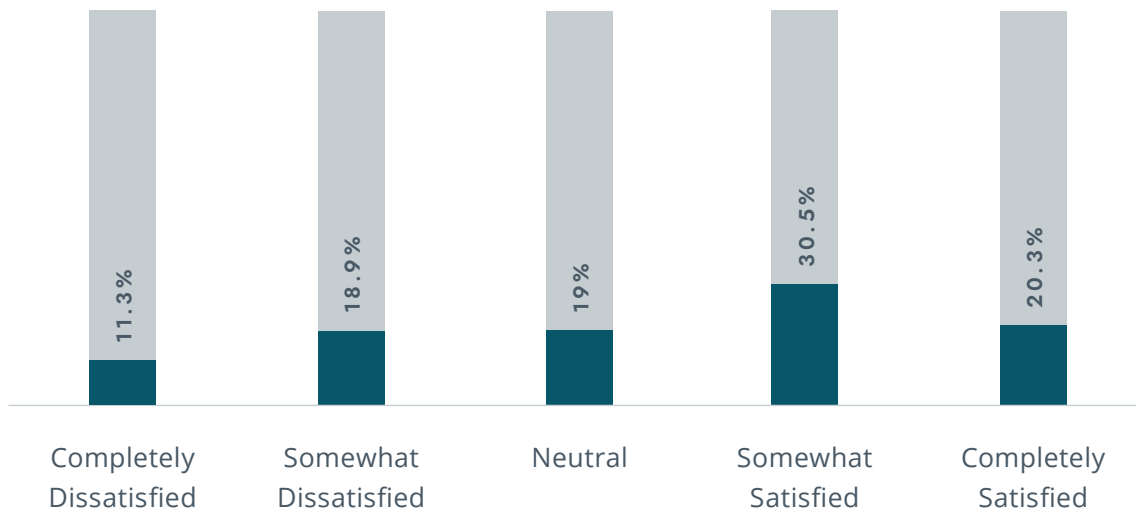
**SATISFIED WITH SUPERVISOR**

**DISSATISFIED WITH SUPERVISOR**

4.31/5

2.46/5

3.71/5

2.09/5

Stress and Challenges of my Job

Stress and Challenges of my Personal Life
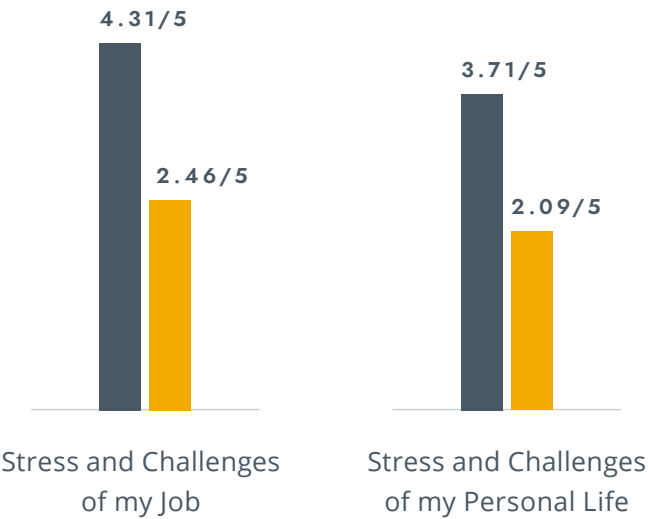
+ About half of the survey respondents **(50.8%)** said they were "somewhat" or "completely satisfied" with how their organization was showing appreciation for their work. While **30.2%** reported they were "somewhat" or "completely dissatisfied" with how their organization showed appreciation at work, **19%** were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

**QUESTION: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION AT SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR YOUR WORK?**

| Completely Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral | Somewhat Satisfied | Completely Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11.3% | 18.9% | 19% | 30.5% | 20.3% |

**BY AND LARGE,**

most DSPs who responded to the survey (83.9%) said it was "very important" or "extremely important" to receive appreciation from their supervisor.

A little over half **(52.8%)** said it was "very" or "extremely important" to receive feedback from co-workers. And **31.5%** said this was "moderately important."

Note that **59%** of DSPs reported it was very or extremely important to hear appreciation from the CEO or board of directors at their organization. And **23.6%** said it was moderately important.

Receiving appreciation from the people they support was rated very or extremely important by **59.4%** of DSPs.

**+** 59.4% — People I Support

**+** 52.8% — Co-Workers

**+** 83.9% — Supervisor

**+** 59% — CEO/Board of Directors

## Types of Appreciation

**+** DSPs in the survey were asked to rate how valuable they found different methods of showing appreciation. When asked how valuable public recognition in front of the team to show appreciation was, **32.5%** of DSPs said this was very or extremely valuable. While **30.6%** said it was moderately valuable, **36.8%** said it was slightly valuable or not valuable at all.

When asked about public recognition in front of the organization or CEO, **26%** said it was only moderately valuable, and **40.1%** said it was only slightly valuable or not at all valuable.

However, when it came to private recognition directly for a supervisor, **68.5%** of DSPs said this was very or extremely valuable. Only **2.2%** said it was "not at all" valuable.

When asked how valuable a reward offer was (e.g., gift cards), **56.1%** said this was very or extremely valuable. It was rated moderately valuable by **26.4%**.

When asked about providing professional development to show appreciation, **65.8%** of DSPs said this was very or extremely valuable. While **21.9%** said it was moderately valuable, only **3.7%** said this was not at all valuable.

When asked how valuable providing new leadership/career opportunities to show appreciation was for their work as a DSP, **63.1%** said this was very or extremely valuable.

Receiving direct recognition from a supervisor was the most valuable form of appreciation for DSPs, followed by providing professional development opportunities and providing new leadership/career opportunities.

**QUESTION: HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING WAYS TO SHOW APPRECIATION FOR YOUR WORK AS A DSP? (RESPONSES "VERY" OR "EXTREMELY" IMPORTANT)**
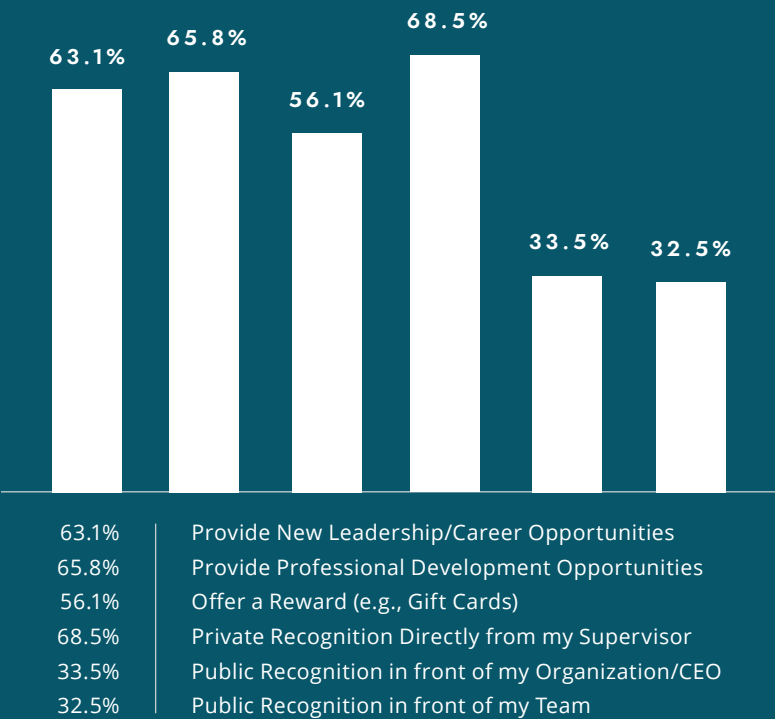
DSPs who were satisfied with the way their organization showed appreciation for their work were significantly more likely to say that they received private recognition directly from their supervisor — this is consistent with the high number of DSPs who report that this is the most valuable form of recognition to receive.

These same satisfied DSPs were also significantly more likely to report that their organization uses public recognition in front of teammates, show appreciation in front of the CEO or board of directors, provide professional development or career opportunities to show appreciation, and offer rewards.

| % | |
|---|---|
| 63.1% | Provide New Leadership/Career Opportunities |
| 65.8% | Provide Professional Development Opportunities |
| 56.1% | Offer a Reward (e.g., Gift Cards) |
| 68.5% | Private Recognition Directly from my Supervisor |
| 33.5% | Public Recognition in front of my Organization/CEO |
| 32.5% | Public Recognition in front of my Team |

**COMPARING DSPS WHO WERE SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY THEIR ORGANIZATION SHOWED SUPPORT AND THE TYPES OF SUPPORT MOST OFTEN RECEIVED.**

**SATISFIED DSPS**  **DISSATISFIED DSPS**

Private Recognition Directly from my Supervisor
- 68.7%
- 35.1%

Provides Rewards (e.g., Gift Cards)
- 68.7%
- 49.3%

Provides Professional Development Opportunities
- 39.1%
- 6.8%

Public Recognition in front of their Team
- 38.8%
- 9.3%

Provides New Leadership/Career Opportunities
- 35.7%
- 7.3%

Public Recognition in front of the CEO/Board Directors
- 27.5%
- 9.3%
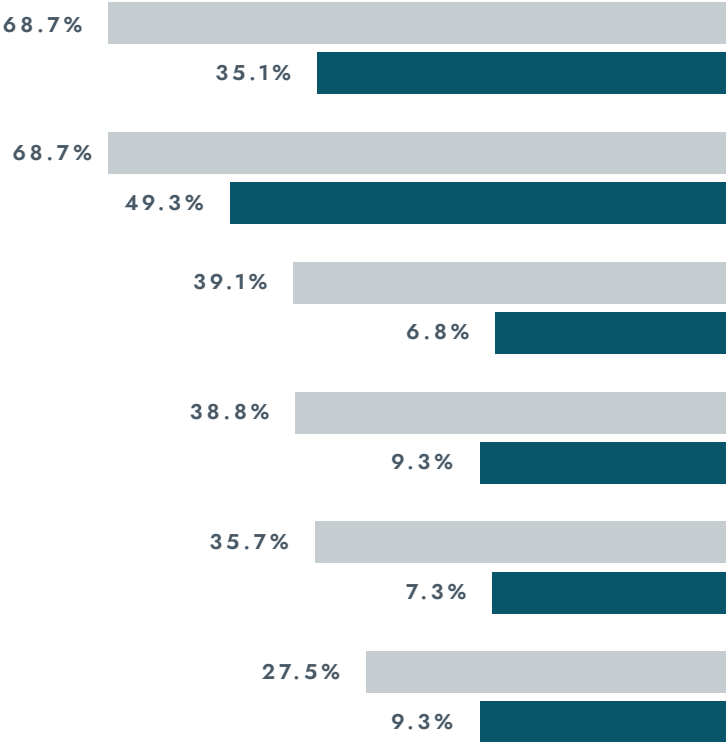
## How Organizations Show Appreciation

+ The most common way organizations showed appreciation was through offering a reward of some kind such as gift cards **(59.8%)**. The second most common way was by providing private recognition by a direct supervisor (only **54.6%**, despite this being the most valuable form of appreciation by DSPs).

Unfortunately, **11.2%** of respondents said their organization did not do anything to show appreciation for their work. DSPs who were dissatisfied with the way their organization show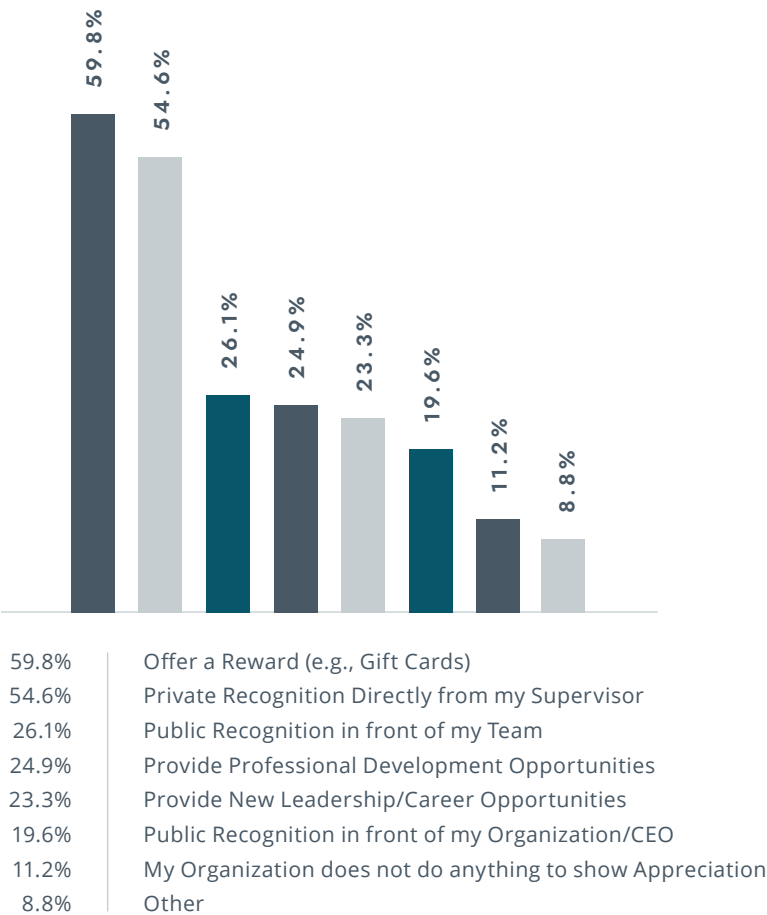ed appreciation were significantly more likely to report that their organization did not do anything to show appreciation for their work (**23.9%** of dissatisfied DSPs vs. only **2%** of satisfied DSPs).

QUESTION: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION USED TO SHOW APPRECIATION FOR YOUR WORK? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.)



| | |
|---|---|
| 59.8% | Offer a Reward (e.g., Gift Cards) |
| 54.6% | Private Recognition Directly from my Supervisor |
| 26.1% | Public Recognition in front of my Team |
| 24.9% | Provide Professional Development Opportunities |
| 23.3% | Provide New Leadership/Career Opportunities |
| 19.6% | Public Recognition in front of my Organization/CEO |
| 11.2% | My Organization does not do anything to show Appreciation |
| 8.8% | Other |

## The Impact of Showing Appreciation

+ The satisfaction DSPs had regarding their organization's appreciation efforts influenced other aspects of their work and the organization.

Overall, DSPs who were satisfied with how their organization showed support for their work were more likely to report that they were satisfied working at their organization.

For the question "What do you most enjoy about being a DSP?," there were significant differences between those who were satisfied with how their organizations showed appreciation and those who were dissatisfied.

> DSPs who were satisfied with the ways their organizations showed appreciation were significantly more likely to report that they enjoy being with the people they support and feel like they were making a difference in the lives of the people they support.

Additionally, DSPs who were satisfied with how their organizations showed support for their work were significantly more likely to enjoy their co-workers, feel like they were fairly compensated and feel like they were receiving support for their work. These DSPs were also more likely to report that their organizations also offered robust career advancement programs, and they were more likely to say they did not dislike anything about their jobs.

**COMPARING DSPS WHO WERE SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY THEIR ORGANIZATION SHOWED APPRECIATION FOR THEIR WORK AND WHAT THEY ENJOY ABOUT THEIR JOB.**

| SATISFIED DSPS | DISSATISFIED DSPS |

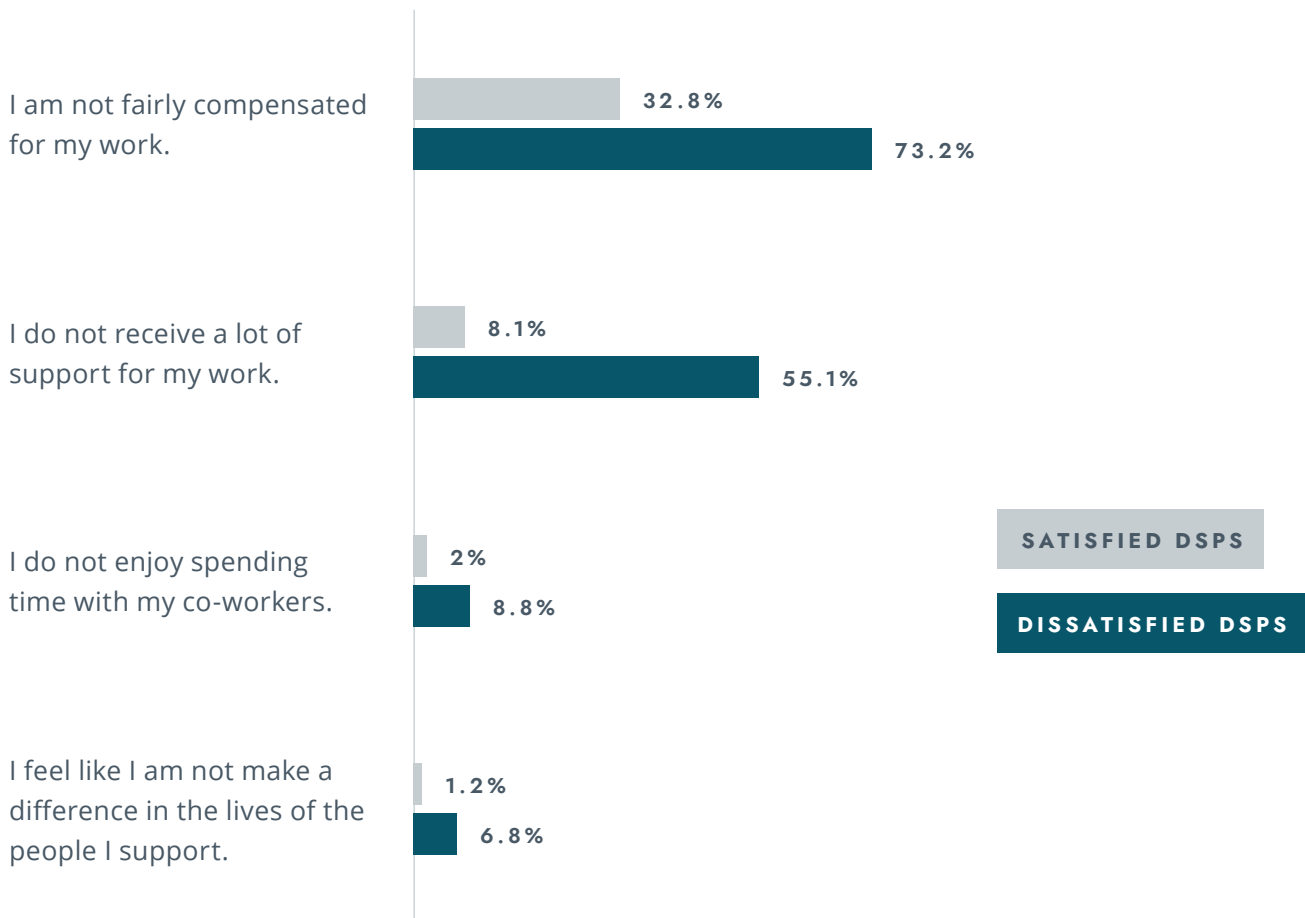| Statement | Satisfied | Dissatisfied |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| I enjoy being with the people I support. | 89.9% | 80.5% |
| I make a difference in the lives of the people I support. | 93.3% | 85.4% |
| I enjoy spending time with my co-workers. | 42% | 28.3% |
| I am fairly compensated for my work. | 27.2% | 8.8% |
| I receive a lot of support for my work. | 44.6% | 5.9% |
| My organization offers robust career advancement programs. | 23.8% | 0.5% |
| I do not dislike anything about my job. | 23.8% | 1.5% |

Conversely, for the question "What do you most dislike about being a DSP?," there were significant differences between those who were satisfied with how their organizations showed appreciation and those who were dissatisfied.

DSPs who were dissatisfied with the appreciation their organizations showed were more likely to report that they do not feel like they are fairly compensated for their work. They were also more likely to report that they did not feel like they receive enough support for their work. They were also significantly more likely to report that they did not feel like they were making a difference in the lives of the people they support and did not enjoy spending time with co-workers.

There were no significant differences between these groups regarding whether they enjoyed spending time with the people they support.

**COMPARING DSPS WHO WERE SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY THEIR ORGANIZATION SHOWED APPRECIATION FOR THEIR WORK AND WHAT THEY DISLIKE ABOUT THEIR JOB (AVERAGE SCORE OUT OF 5)**

I am not fairly compensated for my work.
32.8%
73.2%

I do not receive a lot of support for my work.
8.1%
55.1%

I do not enjoy spending time with my co-workers.
2%
8.8%

SATISFIED DSPS

DISSATISFIED DSPS

I feel like I am not make a difference in the lives of the people I support.
1.2%
6.8%

DSPs in the survey were asked to write in an answer to the question "How do you feel about your organization not taking action to show appreciation for your work?" Some of the responses included the following:

"I am burnt out. 90% of the time I feel I want to walk away...I need my position for my children."

"I am happy to be able to make a difference in the people I serve. Seeing them happy and knowing I have made someone happy and helped someone in need is enough for me."

"I've been here a long time and rarely, if ever, get recognition for work, showing up on time, covering extra shifts, etc. It is very disheartening."

**QUESTION: HOW MUCH MORE LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO STAY AT YOUR ORGANIZATION IF YOUR ORGANIZATION SHOWED GREATER APPRECIATION FOR YOUR WORK?**

**4.9%**
NO MORE LIKELY

**31.1%**
MODERATELY MORE LIKELY

**11.8%**
SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY

**52.3%**
MUCH MORE LIKELY
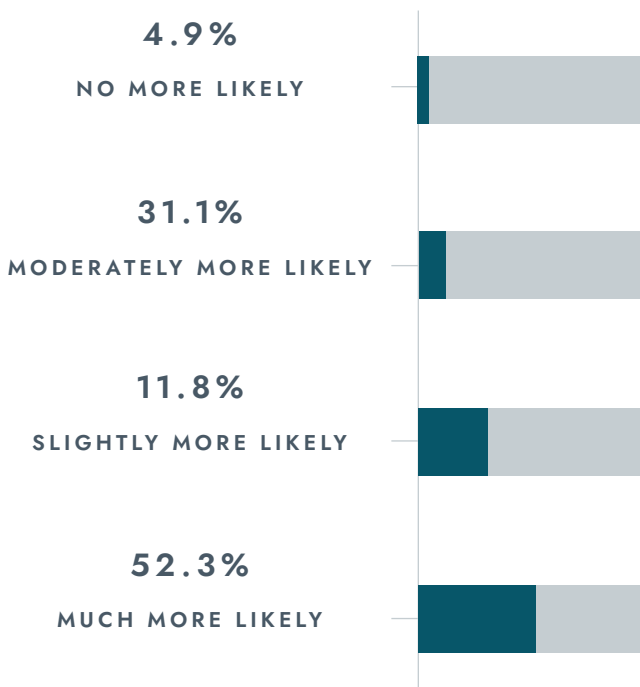
The majority of respondents **(52.3%)** said they would be "much more likely" to stay if their organization showed greater appreciation for their work.

DSPs who were dissatisfied with their organization's appreciation efforts were more likely to agree that they would be likely to leave their organization in the next one to two years unless offered an opportunity to move into a position with more authority.
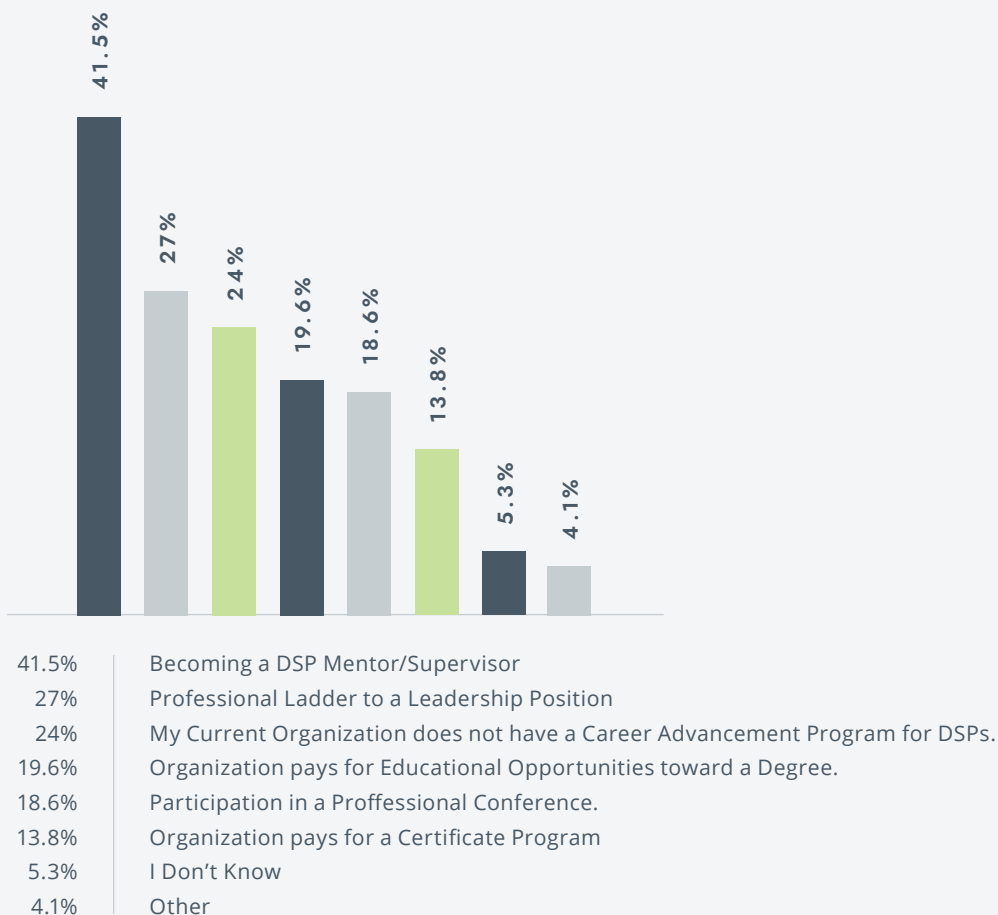
+ DSPs were asked to describe the types of career advancement opportunities at their current organizations, how satisfied they were with these opportunities at their organizations, and which career advancement opportunities would be most valuable to them.

Most DSPs reported that becoming a mentor or supervisor was available at their organization **(41.5%)**. A little over a quarter of respondents **(27%)** reported a professional ladder to a leadership position, and **19.6%** said their organization pays for educational opportunities toward a degree.

UNFORTUNATELY,

## almost one-quarter of respondents (24%) said their organizations did not have a career advancement program for DSPs.
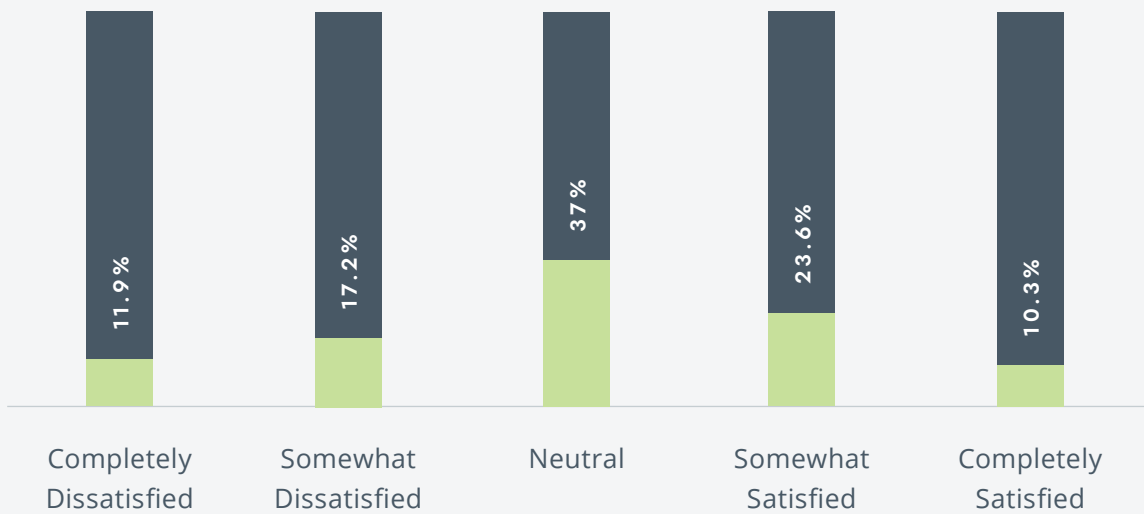
QUESTION: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.)



| | |
|---|---|
| 41.5% | Becoming a DSP Mentor/Supervisor |
| 27% | Professional Ladder to a Leadership Position |
| 24% | My Current Organization does not have a Career Advancement Program for DSPs. |
| 19.6% | Organization pays for Educational Opportunities toward a Degree. |
| 18.6% | Participation in a Proffessional Conference. |
| 13.8% | Organization pays for a Certificate Program |
| 5.3% | I Don't Know |
| 4.1% | Other |

## Satisfaction With Career Advancement Programs

**+** The satisfaction with current organizational career advancement opportunities was dispersed fairly evenly — **33.9%** of DSPs said they were "somewhat" or "completely satisfied," while **37%** said they were "neither satisfied or dissatisfied," and **29.1%** said they were "somewhat" or "completely dissatisfied." DSPs who had less than one year of total experience were the most likely to be satisfied with their organization's career advancement programs.

QUESTION: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION?

| Completely Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral | Somewhat Satisfied | Completely Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11.9% | 17.2% | 37% | 23.6% | 10.3% |

DSPs who were satisfied with their organizations were significantly more likely to agree that they were satisfied with the career advancement programs at their organizations. There was no significant difference between satisfied and dissatisfied DSPs on their satisfaction with other career advancement opportunities (such as the organization paying for education toward a degree, paying for a certificate program, or professional ladder to leadership position.)

Satisfied DSPs were also more likely to report that becoming a mentor or supervisor was available at their current organization **(47.3%)** vs. dissatisfied DSPs **(31.3%)**. Dissatisfied DSPs were significantly more likely to report that their organizations did not offer any career advancement programs — **32.4%** of dissatisfied DSPs vs. **20%** of satisfied DSPs.

Our survey analysis also compared DSPs who were satisfied with their current supervisors and how this impacted how they view their own career advancement. DSPs who were satisfied with their current supervisors were significantly more likely to report that their organizations offer the opportunity to become a mentor or supervisor as a career advancement program — **45.5%** vs. only **22.6%** of DSPs who were dissatisfied with their current supervisors.

**DSPs who were dissatisfied with their current supervisors were also more likely to report that their current organizations did not offer any career advancement programs.**
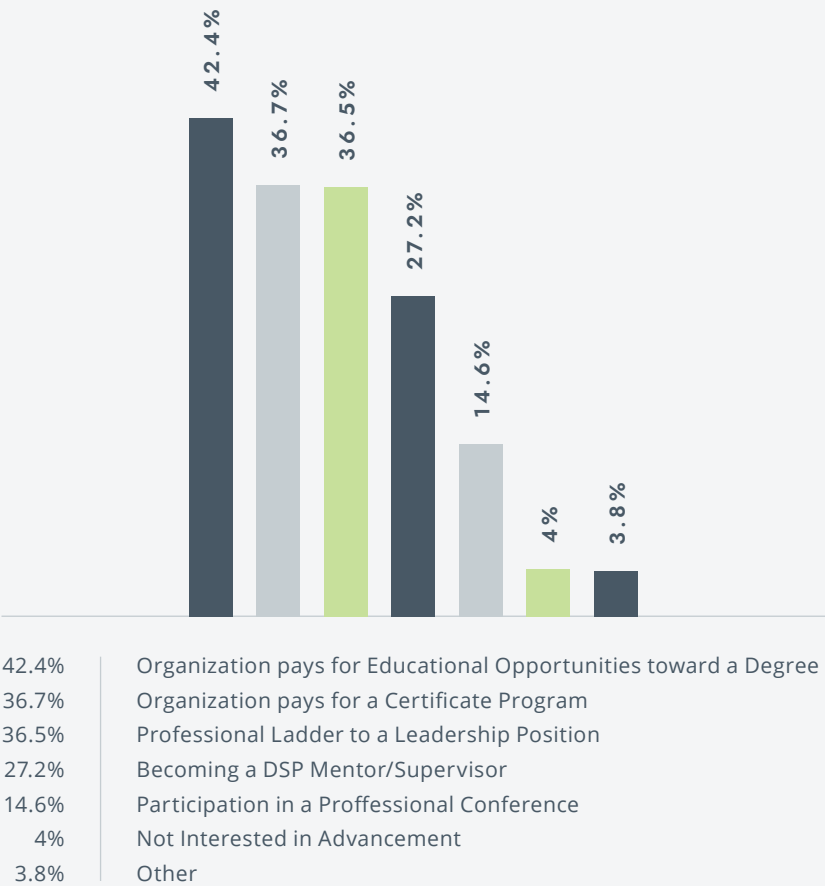
## The Impact of Career Advancement Programs

**+** DSPs were asked to choose which types of career advancement programs would be most impactful to them continuing to work as a DSP at their current organization.

The most popular choice for career advancement programs that would be most impactful to DSPs was organizational opportunities to pay for education toward a degree **(42.4%)**. The second most popular choice was the organization paying for a certificate program (e.g., CNA) **(36.7%)**, and the third most popular choice was a professional ladder to a leadership position in the company **(36.5%)**.

A few of those DSPs who indicated "Not interested in advancement" were more likely to be more experienced DSPs (seven or more years) who were close to retirement age and therefore did not want to seek advancement.

QUESTION: WHICH CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS WOULD BE MOST IMPACTFUL TO YOU CONTINUING TO WORK AS A DSP AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.)



| | |
|---|---|
| 42.4% | Organization pays for Educational Opportunities toward a Degree |
| 36.7% | Organization pays for a Certificate Program |
| 36.5% | Professional Ladder to a Leadership Position |
| 27.2% | Becoming a DSP Mentor/Supervisor |
| 14.6% | Participation in a Proffesional Conference |
| 4% | Not Interested in Advancement |
| 3.8% | Other |

Respondents provided an array of "other" career advancement programs that would be impactful to them. Many of the DSPs who responded to the survey identified the need for ongoing, in-service, or on-the-job training as desirable career advancement opportunities:

"In-service training."

"Computer training."

"On-the-job training for the management positions."

"Trainings to advance more to help people
 we support the right way."

"Ongoing, in-house training for issues we may
 face (especially medical and behavioral)."

## Organizational Satisfaction and Career Advancement Opportunities

+ When comparing DSPs who were satisfied with their organization vs. those who were dissatisfied, the satisfied DSPs were significantly more likely to report that becoming a mentor would be an impactful career advance program and encourage their work as a DSP at their current organization.

  However, this was the only significant difference between satisfied and dissatisfied DSPs — there was no difference of opinion regarding the importance of other career advancement programs (paying toward an educational degree, paying for a certificate program, participation in professional conferences, or professional ladder to leadership positions.)

  When asked how important it was that DSPs are involved in creating career advancement programs, **57.1%** said this was very or extremely important to them. DSPs who were satisfied with their organization overall were much more likely than dissatisfied DSPs to agree that involving DSPs in career advancement opportunities was important.

QUESTION: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT DSP ARE
INVOLVED IN CREATING CAREER ADVANCEMENT
PROGRAMS AT YOUR CURRENT ORGANIZATION?

**36.8%**

**26.8%**

**20.3%**

**7.2%**        **8.8%**

NO AT ALL IMPORTANT          MODERATELY IMPORTANT          EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

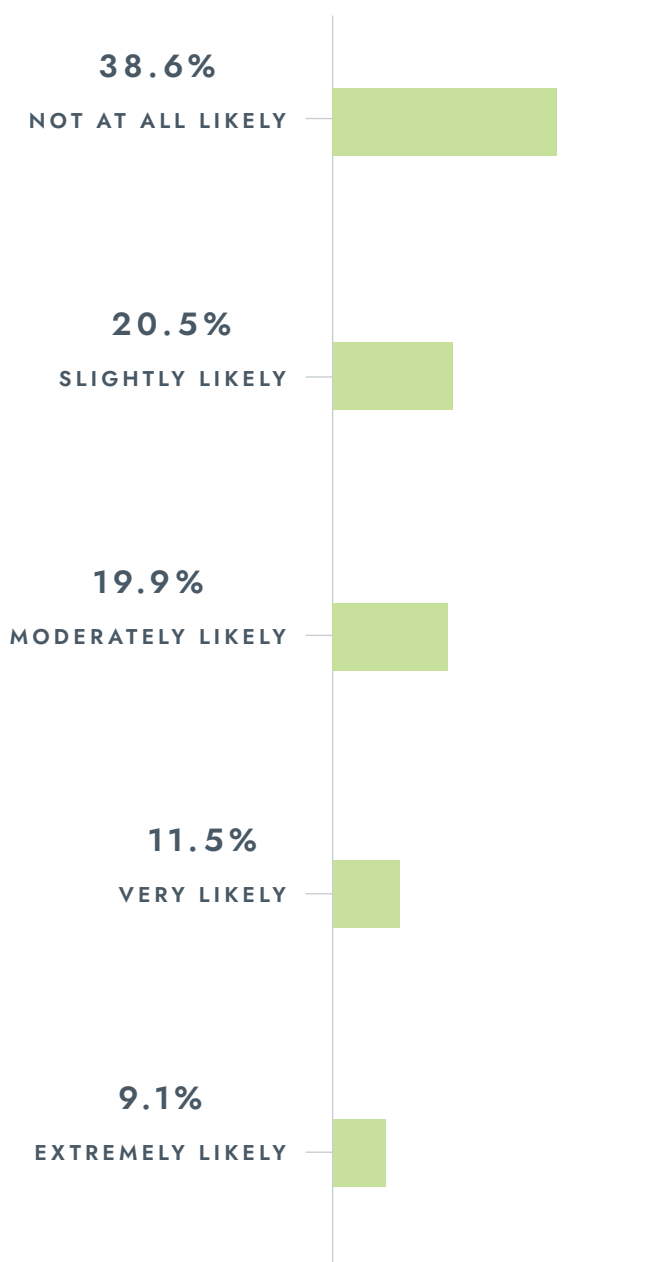SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT                VERY IMPORTANT
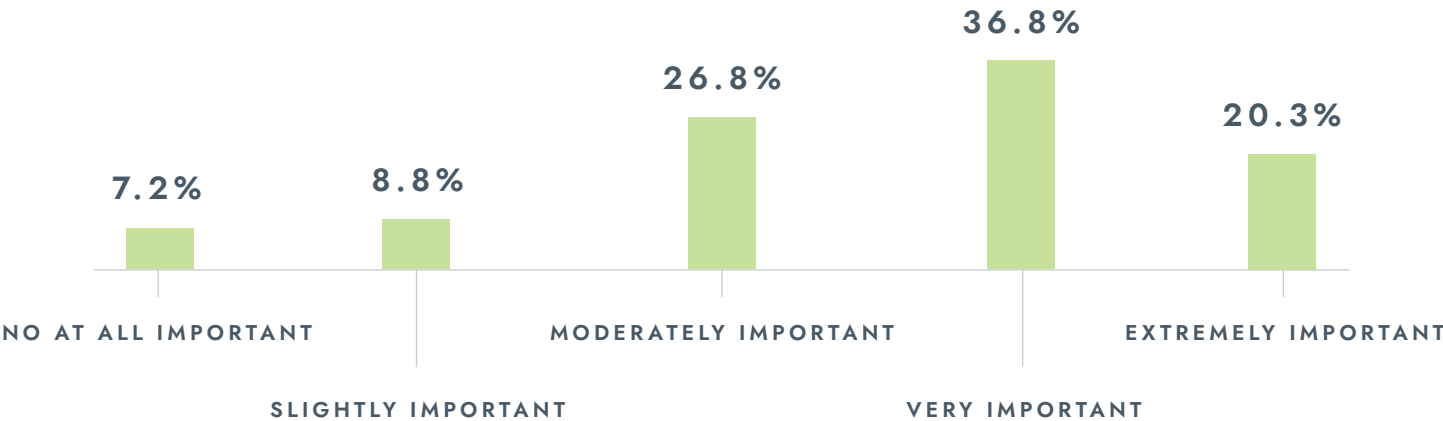
## Career Opportunities and Retention

When asked how much more likely DSPs would
be to stay at their current organizations if they
provided strong career advancement programs,
41.2% said they would be much more likely to stay.

QUESTION: HOW MUCH MORE LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO
STAY AT YOUR ORGANIZATION IF YOUR ORGANIZATION
PROVIDED STRONG CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS?

**41.2%**

**32.1%**

**15.6%**

**11%**

NO MORE LIKELY          SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY

MODERATELY MORE LIKELY          MUCH MORE LIKELY
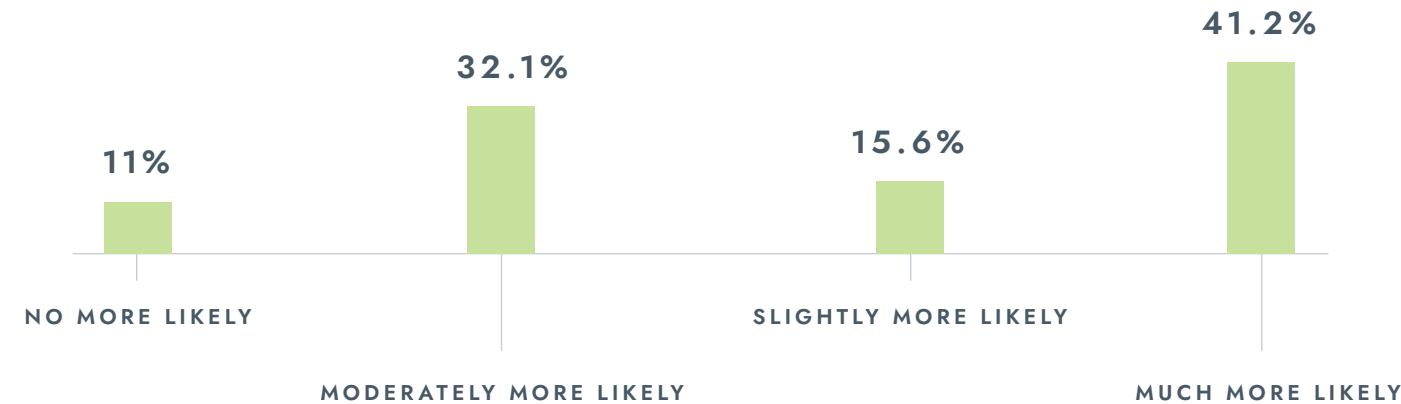
Interestingly, if not provided with an opportunity to move into a position with more authority in the next one to two years, **38.6%** of DSPs said this would not likely affect the likelihood to leave their organizations. Only **20.6%** said they would be very or extremely likely to leave without these opportunities in the next one to two years.

**QUESTION: IF YOU ARE NOT PROVIDED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE INTO A POSITION WITH MORE AUTHORITY IN THE NEXT ONE TO TWO YEARS, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO LEAVE YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

**38.6%**
NOT AT ALL LIKELY

**20.5%**
SLIGHTLY LIKELY

**19.9%**
MODERATELY LIKELY

**11.5%**
VERY LIKELY

**9.1%**
EXTREMELY LIKELY

DSPs with one to six years of total experience were more likely to report that they would be more likely to stay at their current organization if provided the opportunity to move into a position of authority within the next one to two years. The same stood for DSPs who had between one and six years of experience at their current organization.

The survey analysis compared DSPs who were satisfied or dissatisfied with their organization's appreciation and recognition efforts and how this impacted their views on career advancement.

NOTABLY,

DSPs who were dissatisfied with their organization's appreciation efforts were more likely to report that having their organization pay for a certificate program, like CNA certification, would be very impactful to continuing to work at their current organization.

## Career Advancement and Years of Experience

**+** There were several notable differences between DSPs with differing years of experience in the field and the career advancement opportunities at their organizations.

DSPs with seven or more years of experience were more likely to report that their organization offers participation at professional conferences. These DSPs were also more likely to report that their organization offers a professional ladder to a leadership position in their company.

**PERCENTAGE OF DSPS WHO REPORT THEIR ORGANIZATION OFFERS PARTICIPATION AT A PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**
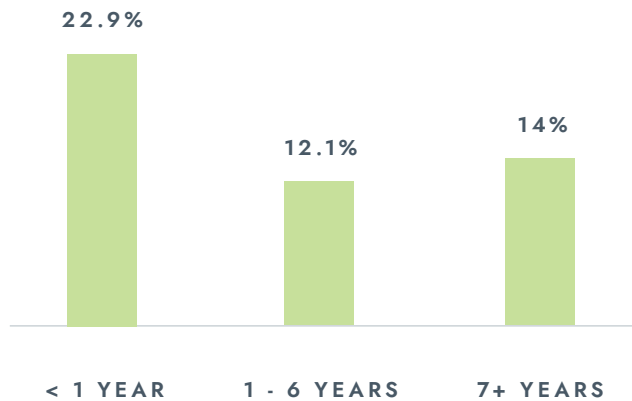


| < 1 YEAR | 1 - 6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 13% | 14.1% | 22.8% |
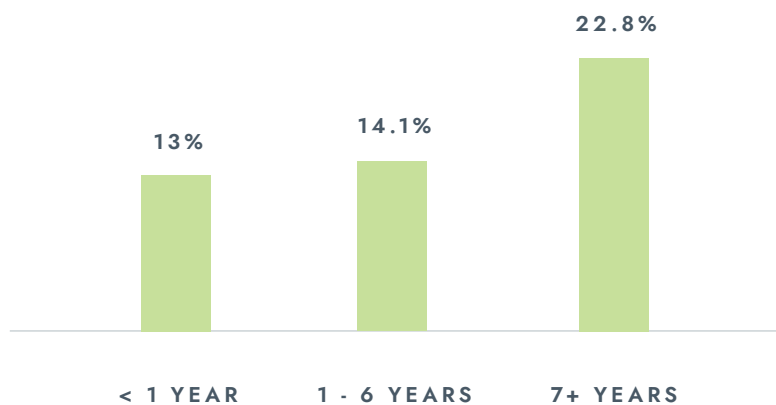
**PERCENT OF DSPS WHO REPORT THEIR ORGANIZATION OFFERS A PROFESSIONAL LADDER TO A LEADERSHIP POSITION IN THEIR COMPANY, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**



| < 1 YEAR | 1 - 6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 28.3% | 21.7% | 30.9% |
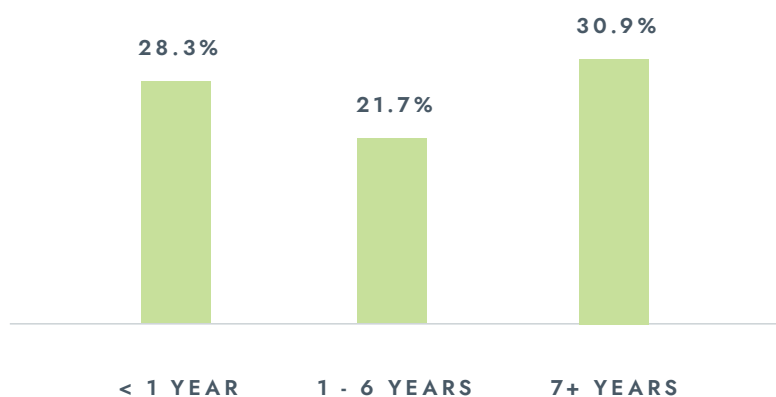
DSPs with less than one year of tenure at their current organizations were more likely report that they enjoy working at their organizations because of the robust career advancement opportunities.

**PERCENTAGE OF DSPS WHO LIKE WORKING AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS BECAUSE OF THE ROBUST CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS.**
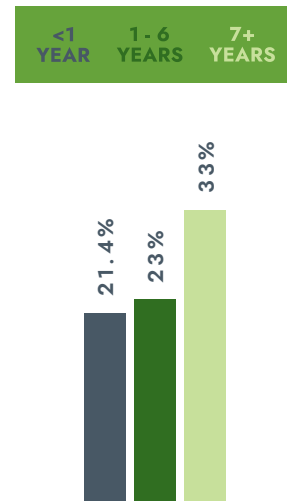
**PERCENTAGE OF DSPS WHO REPORT THE FOLLOWING CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES, BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS**



| <1 YEAR | 1-6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |
| --- | --- | --- |

| 22.9% | 12.1% | 14% |
| --- | --- | --- |
| < 1 YEAR | 1 - 6 YEARS | 7+ YEARS |

DSPs who had seven or more years of tenure at their current organizations were significantly more likely to report that their organizations pay for education toward a degree, provide opportunities for participation at professional conferences, and provide a professional ladder to leadership positions.

As mentioned previously, the availability of career advancement programs had a significant impact on the likelihood of DSPs with less tenure at their organization would stay at their jobs. DSPs with less than one year of tenure and DSPs with one to six years of tenure were significantly more likely to say they would stay with their organizations if provided with strong career advancement programs.

Additionally, DSPs with one to six years of tenure at their organization were significantly more likely to agree that they would leave their organizations if not provided the opportunity to move into a leadership position in the next one to two years.
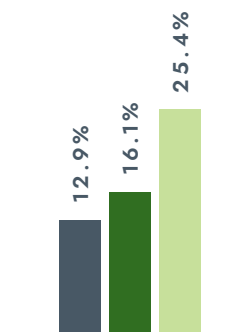
**21.4%  23%  33%**

My Organization Provides a Professional Ladder to a Leadership Position.

**11.4%  16.4%  22.9%**
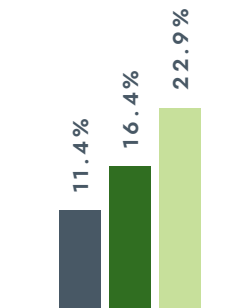
My Organization Provides Opportunities to Participate in Professional Conferences.

**12.9%  16.1%  25.4%**

My Organization Pays for Educational Opportunities toward a Degree.

## Summary

+ The depth and breadth of the analysis available in this year's survey provides deeper understanding of the themes discovered in the previous DSP survey. This sample of DSPs offers organizations many lessons that can help inform DSP supervision best practices, appreciation and recognition efforts, and career advancement opportunities.

## DSP Supervision

+ The majority of respondents in this survey reported that they were satisfied with their current supervisors. DSPs who were satisfied with their supervisors were significantly more likely to report that they enjoy working at their current organizations and were also more likely to report having a safe avenue to provide feedback to their supervisors.

However, while a large majority of DSPs reported that having a safe avenue to provide feedback to their supervisors was "very" or "extremely" important, a little over half reported actually having a current avenue to provide feedback. Organizations can take heed to ensure that their DSP staff has confidential or emotionally safe ways to provide feedback to their supervisors.

The survey also highlights the importance of having safety and camaraderie within the DSP-supervisor relationship, as DSPs who reported being satisfied with their supervisors were significantly more likely to report they felt comfortable talking with their supervisors about job stress as well as personal stress.

## Appreciation and Recognition

+ Most commonly, organizations offered rewards to show appreciation and sought to offer public recognition in front of teammates or organizational leadership. However, overwhelmingly, DSPs who responded to this survey wanted (and most valued) private recognition provided directly by their supervisors. Again, this speaks to the importance of the DSP-supervisor relationship mentioned previously. DSPs also found professional development opportunities and opportunities for leadership or career advancement to be highly valuable forms of appreciation and recognition.

Unfortunately, appreciation and recognition efforts seemed to be lacking for many of the respondents. Over one-third of the DSPs in this survey said they feel like they are not appreciated for their work, with a smaller portion of the respondents saying their organizations did not do anything to show appreciation. The ability of organizations to show appreciation also seemed to wane significantly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of organizational efforts to show appreciation seem to yield great results. DSPs who were satisfied with how their organizations showed support were significantly more likely to enjoy being with the people they support and feel like they were making a difference in their lives. These results highlight the importance of how feeling appreciated can trickle down to positively affect the lives of persons served.

DSPs who were satisfied with how their organizations showed support were happier with their organizations overall. The majority of respondents indicated that they would be "much more likely" to stay at their organizations if shown greater appreciation for their work. This supports themes from our previous DSP survey — that meaningful appreciation and recognition efforts can have a significant impact on your organization's DSP retention efforts.

# Career Advancement Opportunities

+ The most valuable career advancement opportunities to DSPs who responded to this survey included organizational opportunities to pay for education or certificate programs. Professional ladders to leadership positions were also highly valued. In addition to these opportunities, many DSPs also indicated in their comments that they desired ongoing, in-service, or on-the-job training as a career advancement opportunity.

These opportunities were somewhat reflected in what organizations were actually providing their DSPs. The majority reported that their organization offered becoming a DSP mentor or supervisor as a career advancement program, followed by a professional ladder to a leadership opportunity, and then paying for an educational program toward a degree. Those DSPs who were longest serving were significantly more likely to report that their organization offered professional ladders to leadership positions.

Similar to appreciation and recognition efforts, the actual availability of career advancement opportunities was lacking. Almost one-quarter of respondents said that their organizations did not offer any career advancement programs, with nearly one-third of DSPs who were dissatisfied with their organization reporting that there were no career advancement programs available to them. Overall satisfaction with organizational career advancement programs was lukewarm, with the majority saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with these programs.

The results of this survey deliver significant proof that providing robust career advancement opportunities can have several positive outcomes. In terms of retention, 40%of DSPs said they would be much more likely to stay at their organization if provided strong career advancement opportunities. This was much more significant for DSPs with one to six years of experience, who were much more likely to report that they would stay at their current organization if given these opportunities to advance in their career.

The profession of direct support in IDD services is critical to advancing the equity, inclusion, and human rights of people with disabilities. These individuals who give so much of their time and talent to improving the lives of those they support and upholding their dignity should be given our utmost respect.

Provide the best support and appreciation to your DSPs. To learn how Relias and ANCOR can help you support your DSPs, contact us today.

**LEARN MORE**

## About Relias

+ **Relias** is a global software company that specializes in education and training solutions for healthcare and human service providers. For more than 11,000 organizations around the world, Relias continues to help its clients elevate the performance of teams to get better at maintaining compliance, developing staff, and promoting consistent, high quality care.

## About ANCOR

+ The **American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)** is a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1,600 private community providers of services to people with disabilities. Our mission is to advance the ability of our members in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in their communities.

## About Hanover Research

+ **Hanover Research** provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

# 2021 DSP Survey Questions

+ **How old are you? [Open-ended Numeric Response]**

+ **Are you currently working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?**
  Yes
  No

+ **In which state do you currently work as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?** [Answers from the United States only included]

+ **What is the name of the organization where you work as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?** [open-ended response]

+ **How long have you been working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?**
  Less than 1 full year
  1 to 2 years
  3 to 4 years
  5 to 6 years
  7 to 10 years
  11 to 15 years
  16 years or more

+ **For how many organizations have you been employed as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) since you began working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?**
  1
  2
  3
  4
  5 or more

+ **Thinking about all the organizations you have worked at as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) so far, what is the longest time you have worked at an organization?**
  Less than 1 full year
  1 to 2 years
  3 to 4 years
  5 to 6 years
  7 to 10 years
  11 to 15 years
  16 years or more

## Working Experience

The next questions will ask you about your experiences working as a
Direct Support Professional (DSP).

**+ Which of the following types of support do you provide as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?** Select all that apply.

Institutional Support (e.g., in an institutional residential setting)

Community Residential (e.g., support provided to individual in home owned by agency)

In-Home (e.g., support provided to individual in home where they live)

Non-Residential (e.g., day programs and community support programs provided outside the home)

Employment Support

Other (Please specify): _____


**+ Which type of support do you provide the most as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?**

Institutional Support (e.g., in an institutional residential setting)

Community Residential (e.g., support provided to individual in home owned by agency)

In-Home (e.g., support provided to individual in home where they live)

Non-Residential (e.g., day programs and community support programs provided outside the home)

Employment Support

Other (Please specify): _____


**+ How satisfied are you working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?**

Completely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Completely satisfied


**+ Which of the following do you like about working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?** Select all that apply.

I enjoy being with the people I support

I make a difference in the lives of the people I support

I enjoy spending time with my co-workers

I am fairly compensated for my work

My job is easy

I receive a lot of support for my work

My work schedule is flexible and/or fits well with my other responsibilities

My organization offers robust career advancement programs (i.e., educational opportunities)

I feel appreciated and respected for my work

Other (Please specify): _____

I do not like anything about my job


**+ Which of the following do you dislike about working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?** Select all that apply.

I feel like I am not making a difference in the lives of the people I support

I do not enjoy spending time with my co-workers

I feel like I am not appreciated for my work

I am not fairly compensated for my work

My job is too hard

I do not receive enough support for my work

My work schedule is not flexible and/or conflicts with my other responsibilities

I do not enjoy spending time with the people I support

COVID-19 has made my job significantly harder

Other (Please specify): _____

I do not dislike anything about my job


## Supervisor Expectations

For the next set of questions, we are going to ask you about your expectations for a supervisor.


**+ As a Direct Support Professional (DSP), which of the following attributes do you find most important in a supervisor?** Select up to three (3).

Open and transparent communication surrounding important issues

Holds all staff accountable in an equal manner

Shows appreciation for a job well done

 Shows respect for staff as an individual

Acts as a mentor

Has a positive attitude

Provides workplace support

Provides emotional support

Other (Please specify): _____

**+ Which of the following attributes in a supervisor would most discourage you as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?** Select up to three (3).

Lack of communication among supervisor and staff

Condescending/speaks down to staff

Make me feel unappreciated and unimportant

Does not hold all staff equally accountable

Quick to point out shortcomings or problems

Holds a negative attitude

Other (Please specify): _____

**+ How important is having a safe platform to provide feedback about a supervisor to you?**

Not at all important

Slightly important

Moderately important

Very important

Extremely important

**+ To what extent do you agree that you currently have a safe avenue to provide feedback about a supervisor?**

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

## Experience with Current Supervisor

Now, we are going to ask you about your experience with your current supervisor.

**+ How satisfied are you with your current supervisor?**

Completely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Completely satisfied

**+** **How do you rate your current supervisor on the following attributes?**

[Very Poor, Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent]

Open and transparent communication surrounding important issues

Holds all staff accountable in an equal manner

Shows appreciation for a job well done

 Shows respect for staff as an individual

Acts as a mentor

Has a positive attitude

Provides workplace support

Provides emotional support

**+** **How comfortable are you talking with your current supervisor about the stress and challenges you face at your job?**

Extremely uncomfortable

Somewhat uncomfortable

Neutral

Somewhat comfortable

Extremely comfortable

**+** **How comfortable are you talking with your supervisor about the stress and challenges you face in your personal life?**

Extremely uncomfortable

Somewhat uncomfortable

Neutral

Somewhat comfortable

Extremely comfortable

## Appreciation at Work

For the next set of questions, we are going to ask you about the appreciation you receive as a Direct Support Professional (DSP).

**+** **How important is receiving appreciation from the following individuals in encouraging you to work as Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?** [Not at all, Slightly Important, Moderately Important, Very Important, Extremely Important]

Supervisor

Co-workers

CEO/Board of Directors

The people I support

**+** **How valuable are the following ways to show appreciation for your work as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?** [Not at all valuable, slightly valuable, moderately valuable, very valuable, extremely valuable]

Public recognition in front of my team

Public recognition in front of my organization/CEO

Private recognition directly from my supervisor

Offer a reward (e.g., gift cards)

Provide professional development opportunities

Provide new leadership/career opportunities

**+** **How satisfied are you with your organization at showing appreciation for your work?**

Completely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Completely satisfied

**+** **Which of the following has your organization used to show appreciation for your work?** Select all that apply.

Public recognition in front of my team

Public recognition in front of my organization/CEO

Private recognition directly from my supervisor

Offer a reward (e.g., gift cards)

Provide professional development opportunities

Provide new leadership/career opportunities

Other (Please specify): _____

My organization has not done anything to show appreciation for my work

**+** **How do you feel about your organization not taking action to show appreciation for your work?** [open-ended response]

**+** **How much more likely would you be to stay at your organization if your organization showed greater appreciation for your work?**

No more likely

Slightly more likely

Moderately more likely

Much more likely

## Career Advancement

Now, we are going to ask you about the career advancement opportunities at your current organization.

**+ How important is it that Direct Support Professionals (DSP) are involved in creating career advancement programs at your current organization?**

Not at all important

Slightly important

Moderately important

Very important

Extremely important

**+ Which of the following career advancement programs would be most impactful to you continuing to work as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at your current organization?** Select up to two (2).

Organization pays for educational opportunities toward a degree

Organization pays for certificate program (e.g., CNA)

Participation in a professional conference

Professional ladder to a leadership position in my company

Becoming a mentor/supervisor

Other (Please specify): _____

**+ How satisfied are you with the career advancement programs available at your current organization?**

Completely dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Completely satisfied

**+ Which of the following career advancement programs are available at your current organization?** Select all that apply.

Organization pays for educational opportunities toward a degree

Organization pays for certificate program (e.g., CNA)

Participation in a professional conference

Professional ladder to a leadership position in my company

Becoming a mentor/supervisor

Other (Please specify): _____

My current organization does not have any career advancement programs available Exclusive

**+** **How much more likely would you be to stay at your organization if your organization provided strong career advancement programs?**

No more likely

Slightly more likely

Moderately more likely

Much more likely

**+** **If you are not provided with an opportunity to move into a position with more authority in the next 1 to 2 years, how likely would you be to leave your organization?**

Not at all likely

Somewhat likely

Moderately likely

Very likely

Extremely likely

Demographics

**+** **What year were you born?** [Open-ended Numeric Response]

**+** **Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?** Select all that apply.

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White or Caucasian

Other (Please specify) _____

Prefer not to say

**+** **How long have you been working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?**

Less than 1 full year

1 to 2 years

3 to 4 years

5 to 6 years

7 to 10 years

11 to 15 years

16 years or more

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