



# All Hands on Deck: Federal Initiatives to Strengthen and Support the Direct Care Workforce

2023 HCBS Conference

August 29th, 2023

# Introductions

- U.S. Department of Labor
  - Chris Button, Office of Disability and Employment Policy
  - Lauren Smith, Office of Apprenticeship
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - Caroline Ryan, Administration for Community Living
  - Todd Wilson, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
  - Helen Lamont, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation



# The Workforce is in Crisis

- Annual Turnover Rates: 42.8% – 64.8%
- Vacancy Rates: 8.5% -11.2%
- Demand for workers exceed available working age adults
- Low wages and few benefits

# Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers

- More than 50 directives to nearly every cabinet-level agency to expand access to affordable, high-quality care, and provide support for care workers and family caregivers.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/04/18/executive-order-on-increasing-access-to-high-quality-care-and-supporting-caregivers/>

# HCBS Conference August 2023

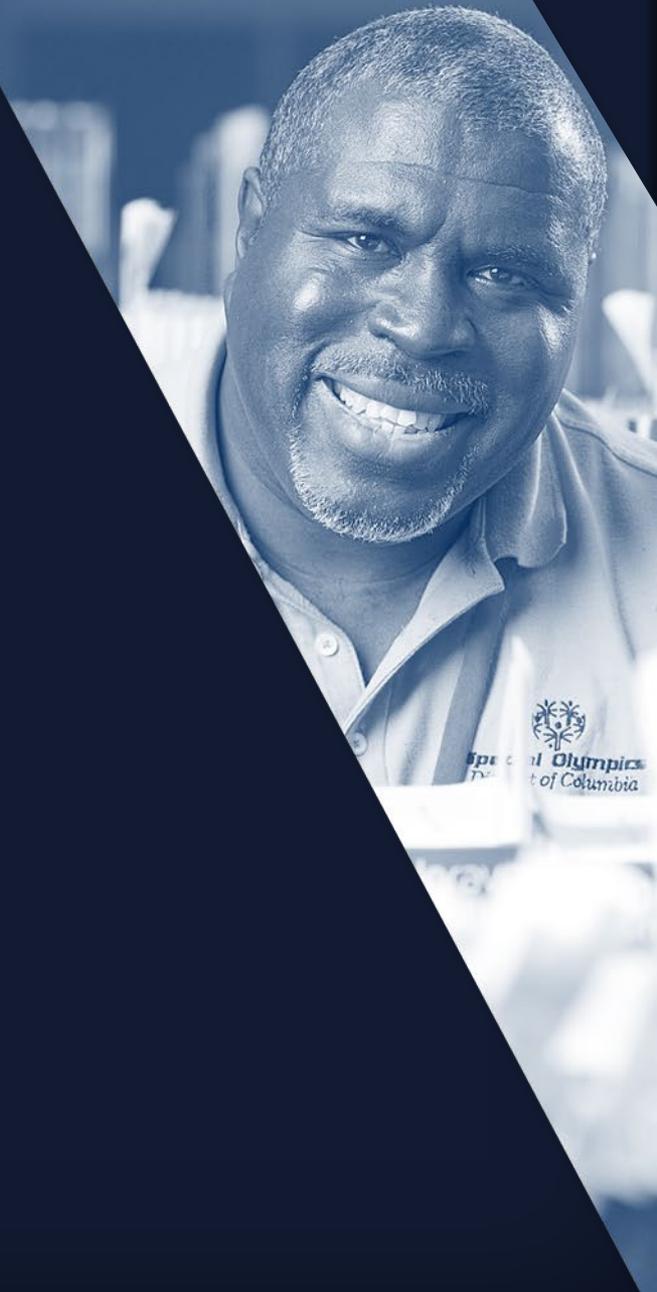
## ODEP's Efforts to Address the DSP Crisis

Christopher Button, PhD, Supervisory Policy Advisor  
Office of Disability Employment Policy  
US Department of Labor



# ODEP

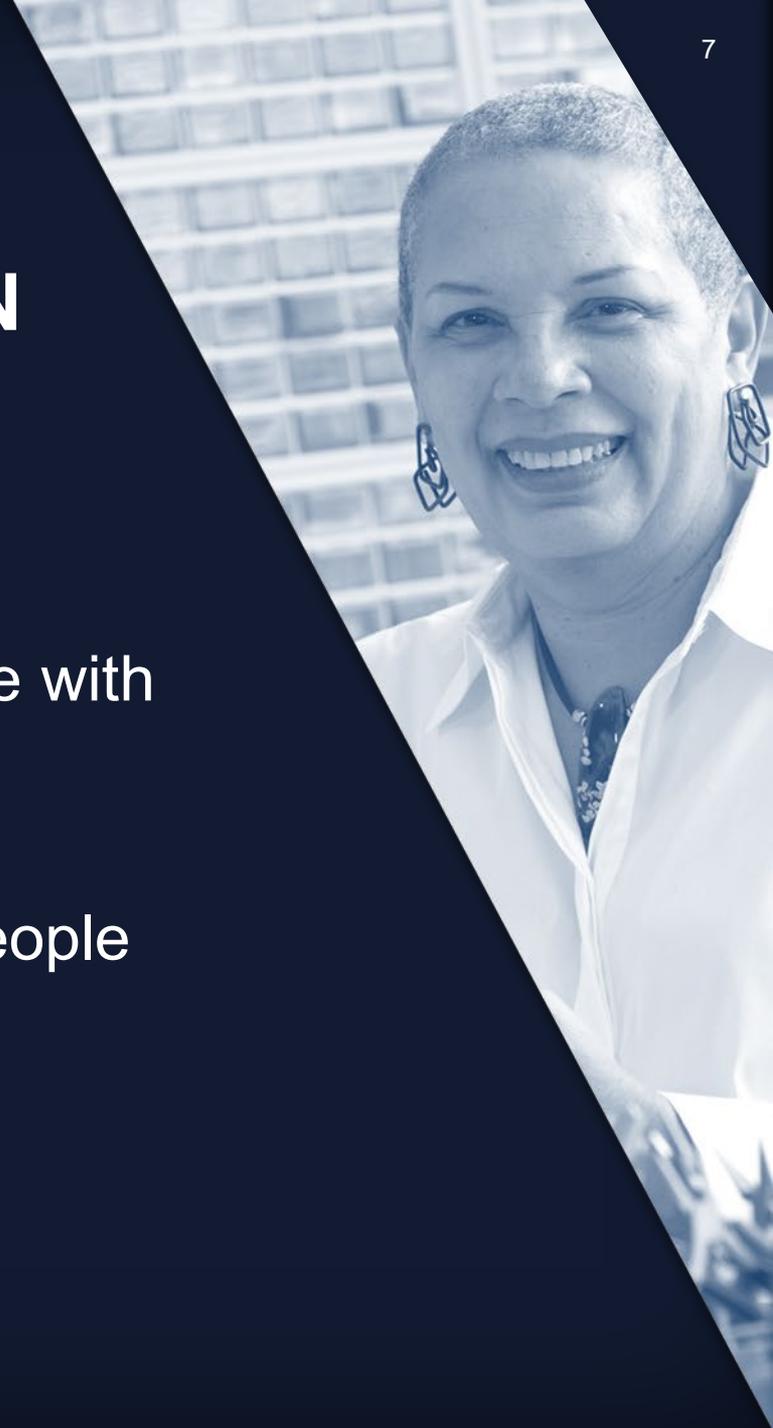
The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.



# ODEP'S MISSION & VISION

ODEP's Mission: "To develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities."

ODEP's Vision: "A world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities."



# DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSP) THINK TANK RECOMMENDATIONS BRIEF

- Expanding and Improving Training and Career Pathways
- Facilitating DSP Professionalization Through Improved Data Collection
- Setting and Raising Standards for Job Quality, Pay, and Benefits
- Supporting People with Disabilities to Enter the DSP Profession



## EXPANDING DSP CAREER PATHWAYS AND TRAINING

- Develop policy guidance that identifies minimum requirements for competency-based credentialing for different categories of DSPs to ensure that competency-based credentialing is consistent across and within states.
- Explore restructuring of Medicaid reimbursement rates to reflect credential-based pay for DSPs and to support state investments in training and career pathways.



## PROFESSIONALIZING DSPS AS A DISTINCT OCCUPATION

- Differentiate and standardize occupational categories that are similar to and/or overlap with DSP work (e.g., home health aides) to improve data quality.
- Decide whether to categorize DSPs as a distinct primary category (either with or without subcategories) or as a subcategory of another primary category (e.g., direct care workers).
- Integrate DSP occupation tracking into federal systems and data collections (e.g., SOC, O\*NET, OEWS) to improve accuracy of DSP workforce data.



## ENHANCING DSP WAGES AND BENEFITS

- Ensure that standards for state reimbursement rates support adequate wages and benefits, differentiation of wages by specialization, and a pay scale based on levels of training and experience. Standards for state reimbursement rates should also leverage existing legislative and regulatory authority to affect how programs operate and encourage state and corporate cooperation.
- Support DSP unionization, where needed, to improve wages, working conditions, and staff turnover.
- Improve DSP job quality in consumer-directed services.



# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO ENTER THE DSP PROFESSION

- Create, invest in, and promote/disseminate models that support existing and aspiring DSPs with disabilities.
- Eliminate barriers for people with disabilities becoming DSPs. Replace criteria-based requirements with competency-based requirements.
- Clarify how existing funding sources can be used to support DSPs with disabilities.



## RESOURCES

- [Direct Support Professionals \(DSP\) Think Tank Recommendations Brief](#) (Feb. 2022)
- [Adding Value Through Direct Care Work](#) blog (April 2022)
- [Direct Support Professional Careers for People with Disabilities Webinar](#) (Aug 2022)
- [Direct Support Professionals Webpage](#)



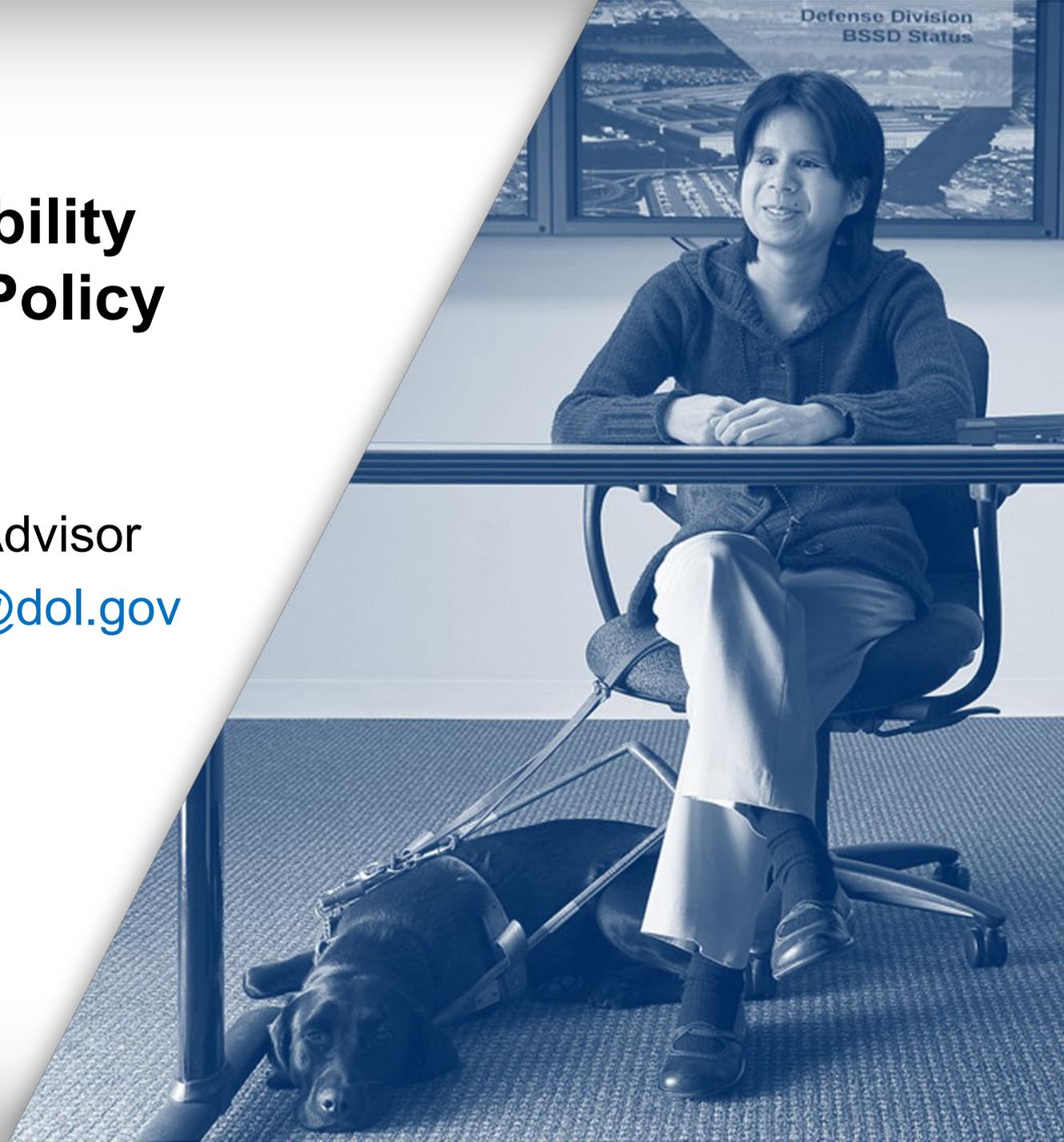
# Office of Disability Employment Policy

Dr. Chris Button

Supervisory Policy Advisor

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202-693-4923





**REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES**



## Social Assistance Sector

### Scope of Social Services

- Individual and Family Services
- Community Food and Housing, Emergency Relief Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Child Day Care Services

### Why is there a shortage?

- Death due to COVID, many working age adults
- An aging population
- Aging care workforce
- High cost of childcare
- Relatively low pay for the rigors of the profession
- Burnout / fatigue as result of shortages

### Data Points

- Healthcare is projected to grow 13% 2021-2031.
- About 2 million new jobs required over the decade.
- Healthcare support occupations median annual wage of \$29,880 in May 2021
- Credentials are required for 74.9% if support workers
- Prior work experience required for 20.3%
- On-the-job training required for 87.8%
- 99.4 % not eligible for telework
- Verbal interactions are required 31.4% of the time

## Apprenticeship Focus

### Career Pathways

- Assessment of prior learning
- Dual enrollment strategies
- Multiple entrance and exit opportunities
- Engagement beyond entry-level positions
- Opportunity to progress to a living wage
- Stacking occupations and related credentials

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA)

- Active outreach, recruitment, selection, and employment of applicants who reflect the communities they serve.
- Affirmative Action Planning to reach all interested in quality apprenticeship programs

### High Demand Occupations

- Working with healthcare stakeholders to approve new and emerging occupations

### Competency-based Models

- Allows apprentices to work at their own pace to completion
- Recognizes differences in learning

# INDUSTRY OVERVIEW



**CHILDCARE  
WORKERS**

**\$13.32 / \$27,710**



**CHILD, FAMILY, &  
SCHOOL SOCIAL  
WORKERS**

**\$21.85 / \$45,460**



**PERSONAL AND  
HOME CARE AIDES**

**\$14.39 / \$29,930**



**SOCIAL AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE MANAGERS**

**\$31.09 / \$64,670**



**SOCIAL AND  
HUMAN SERVICE  
ASSISTANTS**

**\$18.10 / \$37,640**

## June 2023

### Earnings and Hours of All Employees

Average Hourly Earnings \$21.49

Average Weekly Hours 30.8

### Earnings and Hours of Production and Nonsupervisory Employees

Average Hourly Earnings \$19.49

Average Weekly Hours 29.6



## **PROVEN** **WORKFORCE SOLUTION**

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Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential.



## Seven Components of a Registered Apprenticeship



Industry-Led



Paid Job



On-the-Job  
Learning/Mentorship



Supplemental  
Education



Diversity



Quality &  
Safety



Nationally-Recognized  
Credentials



# INTERMEDIARIES

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## Arbor E&T, LLC d/b/a Equus Workforce Solutions

Healthcare, Healthcare IT, and Public Service

**Michelle Day:**

[michelleday@equusworks.com](mailto:michelleday@equusworks.com)

<https://equusworks.com/services/discov-er-apprenticeship/>

## District I 199C Training and Upgrading Fund

Care Economy (Healthcare, Early Childhood Education)

**Teresa Collins:** [tcollins@1199ctraining.org](mailto:tcollins@1199ctraining.org)

<https://www.1199ctraining.org/>

## Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP)

Healthcare

**Rebecca von Lowenfeldt:**

[rebecca.vonloewenfeldt@hcapinc.org](mailto:rebecca.vonloewenfeldt@hcapinc.org)

<https://www.hcapinc.org/>

## Net.America Healthcare

Healthcare and Healthcare IT

**Clare Hines:** [clarehines@netamerica.net](mailto:clarehines@netamerica.net)

<https://discovernetamerica.com>

## Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS), a project of Tides Center

Early Childhood Education

**Randi Wolfe, Ph.D.:** [randiwolfe@ecepts.org](mailto:randiwolfe@ecepts.org)

<https://ecepts.org/>

## WRMA, Inc.

Early Childhood Education

**Anne Goldstein:** [agoldstein@wrma.com](mailto:agoldstein@wrma.com)

<https://wrma.com/>

## LIAISONS

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# THANK YOU



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Apprenticeship Training Program Specialist



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617-788-2822



# ACL Direct Care Workforce Initiatives

Caroline Ryan  
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Administration for Community Living  
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# RAISE - The Recognize, Assist, Include, Support & Engage Family Caregivers Act

## One Strategy | Four Components

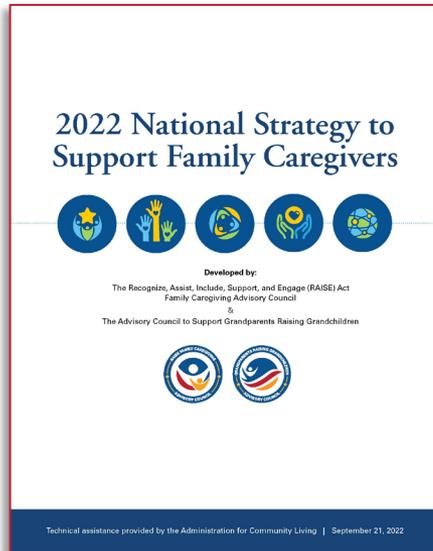
[2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#) - An overview and description of the strategy's goals and intended outcomes

[First Principles: Cross-Cutting Considerations for Family Caregiver Support](#) - Describes the four key principles that must be reflected in all efforts to improve support to family caregivers

[Federal Actions](#) - Nearly 350 actions that 15 federal agencies will take in the near term to begin to implement the strategy.

[Actions for States, Communities, and Others](#) - More than 150 actions others can take.

[The RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center](#)



# ACL Direct Support Prize Challenge

- Focused on innovative solutions that would strengthen the direct support professional (DSP) workforce and increase the overall stability of home and community-based services for individuals with ID/DD.
- [The Collaborative for Citizen Directed Supports – NJ](#) won the Prize Challenge
  - developed an interactive map that indicates where self-directed employees and DSPs are located so that clients can contact them about their services.
  - Built a network of over 700 people who can share and promote the map and DSP support solutions. DSP agencies can submit lists of their available staff to the map, and SDEs can submit information about their staffing preferences. .

# ACL Living Well Grants



## Capacity Building

- Forming new partnerships and expanding of existing partnerships. These partnerships include various governmental and private organizations with a wide range of specialties;
- Engaging self-advocates and family members of people with I/DD in various ways from project leadership to specific initiative development ensuring that all viewpoints are represented and included; and,
- Developing and implementing a range of trainings for a variety of audiences. Examples of trainings being developed and/or implemented include courses in professionalism for direct support professionals (DSPs) and healthy relationships trainings for people with I/DD.



# Direct Care Workforce: A Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Initiative

- 5-year Grant to establish a Direct Care Workforce Capacity Building Center
  - Central hub for state, private, and federal entities involved in the hiring, recruitment, training, and workforce development associated with the delivery of home and community-based services
- A collaboration between ACL, the Department of Labor, CMS, and other HHS agencies

<https://acl.gov/programs/direct-care-workforce>



# DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGIES CENTER



## **Environmental Scan**

Assess current resources, consult stakeholders, identify best practices



## **Virtual Information Hub**

Website and information hub for stakeholders and those interested in TA



## **Capacity Building Hub**

Self-directed learning, virtually facilitated engagements, in-person support and convenings



## **Stakeholder Groups**

Formal steering committee and lived-experience and subject matter expert informed advisory working groups



## **DCW Support Services**

Resources that target front-line direct care workers seeking information and resources



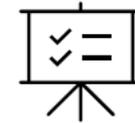
## **DCW Data Warehouse**

Data clearinghouse for employers, state agencies, and systems leaders



## **Consumer & Caregiver Data Warehouse**

Data clearinghouse to support decision making for consumers and caregivers



## **Evaluation Program**

Formal evaluation framework to support ongoing enhancements to approach and TA

# **CMS Direct Care Workforce (DCW) Resources & Initiatives to Enhance or Expand Home and Community-Based Services**

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**Todd Wilson, Team Lead**

Money Follows the Person Demonstration  
Division of Community Systems Transformation  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

# CMS Direct Care Workforce Resources

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a series of resources to strengthen the direct service workforce (DSW) in January 2023. The **Direct Care Workforce Resources** page (<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/workforce-initiative/index.html>) includes links to the following:

- Strengthening the DSW in Rural Areas
- The Self-direction Briefing Paper Series:
  - Origins and Benefits of Self-direction
  - Key Components of Self-directed Services
  - Operational Considerations for Self-directed Service Delivery Models
  - Self-direction Research Compendium
- Emerging Strategies for States: DSW Learning Collaborative Summary

**Online Training: Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Direct Service Workers to Provide Self-directed Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) -**  
<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/direct-care-workforce/online-training-for-self-directed-hcbs/index.html>

# American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Section 9817

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Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides an opportunity for states to identify and implement changes aimed at addressing existing HCBS workforce and structural issues, expand the capacity of critical services, and begin to meet the needs of people on HCBS waitlists and family caregivers.

**Strengthening and Investing in Home and Community Based Services for Medicaid Beneficiaries: American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Section 9817**

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/guidance/strengthening-and-investing-home-and-community-based-services-for-medicaid-beneficiaries-american-rescue-plan-act-of-2021-section-9817/index.html>

# Data to Inform Policy: ASPE's Research on the Direct Care Workforce

Helen Lamont, Ph.D.  
Director, Division of Disability & Aging Policy  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# ASPE's History of DCW Work

- The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) advises the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy development in health, disability, human services, data, and science; and provides advice and analysis on economic policy.
- Long history of supporting data infrastructure and policy research on the direct care workforce including:
  - 1997 Cash & Counseling Demonstration Project
  - 2004 Symposium, “Pathway to the Future: How workforce development and quality jobs can promote quality of care”
  - 2004 National Nursing Assistant Survey
  - 2007 National Home Health Aide Survey

# Impact of COVID on Nursing Home and Home Care Workforces

## • COVID-19 Intensifies Nursing Home Workforce Challenges

- Focused on challenges in staffing and how government and facility policies addressed these challenges
- Environmental scan and interviews with 9 key informants
- March – July 2020; Released October 2020

## • COVID-19 Intensifies Home Care Workforce Challenges

- Focused on challenges in PPE and staffing, how government and agency policies addressed these challenges, and plans to address future needs
- State policy scan and interviews with 25 key informants
- October 2020 – March 2021; Released May 2021

# Improving Home Care Workers' Job Quality: Mitigating Workforce Injuries

- DCWs have high rates of musculoskeletal injuries due to lifting, transferring, and repositioning clients.
- Assistive technologies (AT) and home modifications can be used to assist with these tasks to help reduce the strain from conducting manual lifting
- Barriers to implementing AT in home care:
  - few providers focus on assess the for or obtaining AT
  - client resistance
  - difficulty identifying appropriate assistive technologies and home modifications,
  - limited insurance coverage and difficulty covering out-of-pocket costs; and
  - environmental issues in the home;
- Convened two groups of experts to identify opportunities to overcome these barriers;
- [Evidence Review](#) (April 2022); Expert Panel Summary forthcoming

# State Efforts to Improve Direct Care Workforce Wages

- Examined the wages of DCWs to workers in other entry-level jobs to better understand the extent of the wage gap between DCWs and other workers by State
- Reviewed State Efforts to Improve Direct Care Workforce Wages
  - Conducted case studies to understand state policies and the barriers and challenges with implementation
  - Examined impact of these policies on wages relative to other entry-level jobs
- Issue briefs forthcoming

# Adding DCW Supplement to National Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Survey (NPALS)

- National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) conducts the National Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Survey (NPALS) every two years to collect data on:
  - Nursing homes
  - Residential care settings (including assisted living)
  - Adult day services centers.
- Opportunity to pilot a study of direct care workers using the NPALS infrastructure
- Design and test a sampling protocol, questionnaire, and contact strategies
- New questionnaire includes questions used in previous surveys to allow for comparisons over time and capture emerging trends in the field
- Pilot testing beginning in Fall 2023.

# Additional Projects In Process

- Exploratory Study of the Effects of State Medicaid Policies on the Home Care Workforce in New Jersey
- Modeling the Potential Impact of Increasing Wages for Direct Care Workers on Long-Term Care Spending
- Direct Care Worker Training Programs for High School Students

# Identifying Gaps in Data on the HCBS Workforce

- Care Executive Order

*The Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, in consultation with relevant agencies and external experts and organizations, jointly conduct a review to identify gaps in knowledge about the home- and community-based workforce serving people with disabilities and older adults; identify and evaluate existing data sources; and identify opportunities to expand analyses, supplement data, or launch new efforts to provide important data on the home- and community-based care workforce and ensure equity for people with disabilities and older adults. The Secretaries shall publicly release the findings and recommendations of this review no later than April 2024.*

# Identifying Gaps in Data on HCBS Workforce

- *Goal: “To ensure that children and adults with disabilities and older adults have ready access to a high-quality trained care workforce that can meet their goals of living independently and participating in their community; that the workforce may receive family sustaining wages and benefits, is empowered to advocate for themselves and those they support; and that there is available data to ensure that these goals are being met.”*
- *Charge: “To understand and address gaps, to inform workforce planning efforts and policies to support home care workers, and to measure the impacts of policies over time.”*

# Federal Partners

## Department of Health & Human Services

- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- National Center for Health Statistics
- Health Resources & Services Administration
- Administration for Community Living
- National Institute on Aging

## Department of Labor

- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy
- Office of Disability and Employment Policy
- Women's Bureau

# Next Steps

- Listening session today– Thank you!
  - What are the priority populations of HCBS workers?
  - What are the priority data needs and gaps in knowledge?
  - What data collections exist or do not exist to address gaps in knowledge?
  - How can we fill gaps in knowledge?
  - What new data collections are needed?
- Send additional feedback and information on data sources to [marie.squillace@hhs.gov](mailto:marie.squillace@hhs.gov) and [helen.lamont@hhs.gov](mailto:helen.lamont@hhs.gov)
- Findings of group will be shared in Spring 2024

**Thank you!**

Contact:

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