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Direct Support Professional (DSP) Workforce Survey Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

***** Register for DSP 2023 Workforce Survey: [CLICK HERE](#) *****

The California DSP Workforce Survey FAQ has been created to answer common questions about the annual survey. Topics include eligibility, registration, survey access, survey submission, and incentive payment. If you need more information about the DSP Workforce Survey or if you have additional questions, please email us at DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov.

What to Know:

The Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) Workforce Survey is a survey that gathers annual data from agencies employing DSPs who serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. California is entering its third year of data collection. This year's survey gathers payroll, benefits, compensation, retention, recruitment, bonuses, overtime, and supervision data about the DSP workforce in calendar year 2023. These data establish baseline information about factors impacting the DSP workforce and provide insight into opportunities for system improvement.

Highlights:

- Agencies providing residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential supports are eligible to participate.
- Only those agencies operating for at least 6 months in 2023 are eligible.
- Survey participation is voluntary.
- Participating agencies that complete the entire survey will receive an incentive payment of \$8,000.
- Agencies are eligible for the incentive regardless of whether they have participated in previous years.

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General Information

Q1: How is a Direct Support Professional (DSP) defined? What is a direct service professional (DSP)?

A1: For this survey, DSPs are defined as paid workers who spend at least 50% of their hours providing direct support to children and/or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). DSPs are funded by the regional center. Their primary responsibility is to provide direct support tasks, such as:

- Helping people with skills development and personal assistance
- Supporting people to learn new things, and help people continue to do as much as they can on their own
- Ensuring optimal health and safety for individuals
- Helping with the upkeep of a person's home to assure it is clean, safe, and hazard free

If your agency employs DSPs, according to the definition above, your agency is eligible to participate in the DSP Workforce Survey.

Q2: What survey is used to collect data about the DSP workforce in California?

A2: California administers the National Core Indicators (NCI) Staff Stability Survey as its annual DSP Workforce Survey. This is a national survey tool developed by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) in collaboration with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). The survey is used by 26 other states and is the only nationally used and recognized survey that specifically focuses on the DSP workforce supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Additional customizations to the national survey tool are made to gather workforce data specific to California, including not limiting the survey to only those DSPs supporting adults.

Q3: Who will be invited to participate in the survey?

A3: All agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) as defined below are invited to complete the survey:

- Funded by Regional Center(s)
- Been in business for 6 consecutive months in the calendar year 2023
- Support children and/or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Q4: Who fills out the workforce survey?

A4: DDS suggests that organizational staff in your Human resources or Payroll departments complete this survey.

Q5: Can my agency decline to participate in the survey?

A5: Yes. Survey participation is voluntary.

Q6: Is my agency ineligible if we have participated in past years?

A6: No. Your agency can participate and will be eligible for the \$8,000 incentive for completing the survey with workforce data for calendar year 2023.

Survey Eligibility

Q7 Who is eligible to participate in the survey?

A7: Vendor agencies who employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are eligible to participate in the survey if the agency meets the following eligibility criteria:

- Provides residential support, in-home support, and/or non-residential support (See Questions 8-11 for definitions of support types and eligible service codes);
- Employs DSPs, funded by the regional center, who spend at least 50 percent of their time doing direct support tasks for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD);
- In operation for at least six consecutive months between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023;
- Had DSPs on the payroll as of December 31, 2023;

See Question 1 for definition of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Question 3 for definition of eligible vendor agencies.

Q8: Who is not eligible to participate in the survey?

A8: The following are not included as a DSP, even if a portion of their work involves providing direct support:

- Staff paid through a funding source other than the regional center, such as health insurance or a school district,
- Behavioral specialists, behavioral technicians, or behavioral clinicians (e.g., RBTs, BCBAAs),
- Clinically licensed or certified staff (e.g., CNAs, nurses, therapists, social workers),
- Staff who only provide transportation, home modification, and/or meal delivery services,
- Staff hired through a temporary personnel agency,
- Staff who are contract or 1099 workers,
- Staff who are on-call or PRN workers,
- Staff who volunteers, or
- Administrative or supervisory staff, unless they spend 50% or more of their time doing direct support work

Q9: What are residential supports?

A9: Residential supports are services provided to a person in a home or apartment that is owned or operated by a vendor agency. This includes residential services delivered to people who DO NOT live in their family's home or their own private home/apartment which they rent or own. Residential supports include:

- Residential services
- 24-hour supports such as a group home or agency-operated apartments and
- Host home or foster home services

If the service recipient holds a lease with your provider agency, this is considered a residential support or service.

Q10: What are in-home supports?

A10: In-home supports are services provided to a person in a home or apartment that is not owned or operated by your agency. This includes supports provided to a person in their own private home or apartment, or a private home/apartment they live in with their family (only if their home or apartment is not owned or operated by your agency). This category can include homemaker and personal care services.

Q11: What are non-residential supports?

A11: Non-residential supports are services provided in a day program, community program, or work setting. This includes:

- Adult day services
- Community supports, such as supports provided to assist a person to participate in community activities and
- Employment or vocational services, including supports to help people who are looking for work or work supports such as job coaching or employment support

Q12: What are residential supports, in-home supports, and non-residential support service codes that are eligible for participation in the California DSP Workforce Survey?

A12: The table on Page 5 maps the service codes in California to the support categories in the survey instrument (residential, in-home, and non-residential). Some service codes may fall within more than one category of support. Survey data should be reported separately for each category of support if possible. If a service code is not listed, please respond based on which category best describes the support service (residential, in-home, and/or non-residential).

Q13: My agency has multiple locations, multiple vendor IDs, and/or multiple service codes. How many survey links will we receive?

A13: One survey link will be provided per agency for submitting survey data across all service locations. Note that only one incentive payment will be issued per agency. If you have questions, please contact DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov.

Residential Supports Service Codes Include	In-Home Supports Service Codes Include	Non-Residential Supports Service Codes Include
090 - Crisis Intervention Facility/Bed 091 - In-Home Day Program 096 - Geriatric Facility 109 - Supplemental Residential Program Support 113 - DSS Licensed–Specialized Residential Facility (Habilitation) 114 - Specialized Residential Facility (Health) 868 - Out-Of-Home Respite Services 869 - Respite Facility 900 - Enhanced Behavioral Supports Home–Facility 901 - Enhanced Behavioral Supports Home–Individual Services 902 - Community Crisis Home Facility Component 903 - Community Crisis Home Individualized Services and Supports Component 904 - Family Home Agency 905 - Residential Facility Serving Adults–Owner Operated 910 - Residential Facility Serving Children–Owner Operated 915 - Residential Facility Serving Adults–Staff Operated 920 - Residential Facility Serving Children–Staff Operated 925 - Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled (ICF/DD) 930 - Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled-Habilitative (ICF/DD-H) 935 - Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled-Nursing (ICF/DD-N) 940 - Nursing Facility	028 - Socialization Training Program 062 - Personal Assistance 111 - Supplemental Program Support (Other) 465 - Participant-Directed Respite Service–Family Member 515 - Behavior Management Program (May Apply to Non-Residential Supports) 520 - Independent Living Program 635 - Independent Living Specialist 805 - Infant Development Program 856 - Home Health Aide 858 - Homemaker 860 - Homemaker Service 862 - In-Home Respite Services Agency 864 - In-Home Respite Worker 891 - Personal Support Service 892 - Training and Habilitation Service (May Apply to Non-Residential Supports) 896 - Supported Living Service	055 - Community Integration Training Program 063 - Community Activities Support Services 094 - Creative Art Program 110 - Supplemental Day Services Program Support 455 - Participant-Directed Day Care Service–Family Member 475 - Participant-Directed Community-Based Training Service for Adults 505 - Activity Center 510 - Adult Development Center 515 - Behavior Management Program (May Apply to In-Home Supports) 525 - Social Recreation Program 702 - Adult Day Health Center 851 - Child Day Care 855 - Adult Day Care 892 - Training and Habilitation Service (May Apply to In-Home Supports) 950 - Supported Employment Program–Group Services 952 - Supported Employment Program 954 - Work Activity Program

Q14: My agency is vendored with multiple regional centers. How many survey links will we receive?

A14: One survey link will be provided per agency for submitting survey data across all service locations and across multiple regional centers. For example, a vendor agency that has multiple vendor numbers with four different regional centers will receive one survey link to report their agency's data as a whole. If you have any questions, please contact DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov.

Q15: My agency supports both adults and children with I/DD. Will I need to fill out separate surveys for adults and children?

A15: Agencies do not need to fill out separate surveys for adults and children. When working on the survey, there are opportunities to report data separately for DSPs working with children compared to DSPs working with adults. These questions in the survey make a clear distinction between children and adults. If you cannot separate the data, you may report the combined information on the same survey.

Q16: I want to participate but my service code isn't on the eligible service code list. What should I do next?

A16: If your service code is not on the eligible service codes table (Page 5), please contact DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov with more information about your agency, including the service code for which your agency employs DSPs.

Registration

Q17: How do I register for the survey?

A17: [Click here](#) to register for the DSP 2023 Workforce Survey.

Q18: What information do I need to register for the survey?

A18: The following information is needed for the registration portal:

- Vendor Organization Name
- Primary (Vendoring) Regional Center
- Contact Person and Relationship to Organization
- Primary Email Address
- Primary Phone Number
- For Each Vendor Number (i.e., DDS Vendor ID):
 - Vendor Name
 - Service Code(s) for Residential Supports, In-Home Supports, and Non-Residential Supports
 - Tax ID Number
 - Primary Regional Center
 - Months in 2023 Serving DDS Consumers
 - Business Structure (e.g., Sole Proprietor, LLC, Corporation, Other

Q19: How long does registration take?

A19: Approximately 10-15 minutes, depending on the number of vendor numbers to register and whether the required information is readily available.

Q20: Can I save my information in the registration form?

A20: No. At this time, data entered into the registration form cannot be saved. The registration form will timeout after 30 minutes of inactivity. Any data before the inactivity timeout will not be recorded and will have to be re-entered.

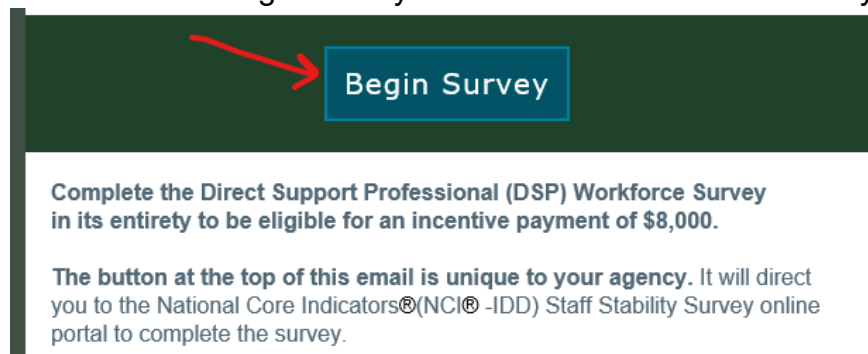
Q21: Do I need to register if I registered last year?

A21: Yes. Your agency must register to receive a survey link.

Q22: What happens after I submit registration for the survey?

A22: After submitting your registration, you will receive a confirmation number by email. Our team will process your registration and contact you if we have any questions. Registration requests are processed in the order received. Survey links will be sent to providers as soon as possible, after the survey portal is available. The unique survey link will be sent from staffstability@hsri.org.

When you receive your email survey invitation, please look for your survey link at the top of the email. Select the “Begin Survey” button to start the online survey.



Survey Logistics

Q23: I completed registration, but I have not received a survey link. What should I do?

A23: Please check your email’s spam or junk folder, in the event that your survey link was accidentally directed to those locations. If you are unable to locate the e-mail in your inbox, spam, or junk folders, please contact DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov with your registration confirmation number. Upon receiving your email, we can assist with having the link resent to you.

Q24: Can more than one person in my agency work on the survey at the same time?

A24: Yes. However, please note that only one person can work on the survey at any time. If two individuals are using the same link at the same time, it can result in overwriting data or unknowingly submitting incomplete data.

Q25: How long does it take to complete the survey?

A25: Approximately 45-60 minutes if the data is readily available.

Q26: What information do I need to gather for the survey?

A26: Broadly, the following information will be helpful to gather for the survey:

- Number of DSP Employees (Full-Time and Part-Time)
- Number of Children and Adults Supported
- DSP Employee Demographics (Age, Sex, and Race-Ethnicity)
- DSP Employee Benefits (Health, Dental, and Vision)
- DSP Payroll Information (Wages, Bonuses, Overtime)
- DSP Retention (Length of Employment, Recruitment)
- DSP Language Diversity
- DSP Front-Line Supervisors

Q27. Can I see the survey questions to help me with gathering the required data before I start the survey?

A27: Yes. Click on “Begin Survey” in your survey invitation and download a blank PDF copy of the survey questions.

Q28: What are the system requirements to complete the survey?

A28: The survey is completed in a secure web-based software platform called Verity Analytics. The survey works best when accessed using the latest version of Google Chrome.

Q29: Can I save my survey and then come back later to complete it?

A29: Yes, you can begin the survey, save it, and then use the survey link in the e-mail to come back to the survey later. Your data will be saved, and you can resume where you left off.

Q30: My survey is frozen, and I cannot move forward. What can I do?

A30: The portal times out after being open without any activity for some time. You may need to save the survey, exit, and then click back into the survey to move forward. In addition, the survey software works best when accessed using the latest version of Google Chrome. If that has not resolved the issue, please reach out to DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov. Your issue will be addressed within one to three business days.

Q31: Question 37 requests data about average starting wages across services and settings. What does this mean?

A31: Question 37 is asking for the average starting wage your vendor agency pays across all services and settings (residential, in-home, and non-residential supports). If your vendor agency provides services in more than one type of setting, the subsequent question (Question 38 a-c) asks for the average wage specific to each support category (residential, in-home, and non-residential). Below is how the question appears in the survey:

37. What is the average starting wages of DSP's across all services and settings?

Average starting wages of DSPs across services and settings

\$ ____ (per hour)

Note: Some response options are not required for Question 38, based on how you responded to Questions 11-13. If helpful, please review your responses to Questions 11-13 (click the Previous button to return to those questions) before responding to Question 38.

38. What was the average (mean) STARTING hourly wage paid to DSPs in each of the following types of services in 2023?

	Average (mean) STARTING hourly wage for DSPs
a) Residential supports (as defined under "Types of Supports" at the beginning of this survey): Average starting wages of DSPs providing residential supports.	\$ ____ (per hour)
b) In-home supports (as defined under "Types of Supports" at the beginning of this survey): Average starting wages of DSPs providing in-home supports)	\$ ____ (per hour)
c) Non-residential services and supports (as defined under "Types of Supports" at the beginning of this survey): Average starting wages of DSPs providing non-residential services and supports	\$ ____ (per hour)

Q32: When answering Questions 38 and 40 with an average salary of more than \$20 per hour, the survey gives me a warning that the average hourly wage is too high. How to I complete these questions?

A32: For these questions, you can enter the correct number for your agency and ignore the error message. The warning message displays automatically for any amount over \$20 per hour, but the survey will let you continue.

Q33: Question 59 asks about the percentage of the health care premium that DSP employees pay for. None of these options apply to my agency.

A33: If none of the options apply to your agency, please select "Don't know." The available options will be updated in the next survey cycle to better address the premiums paid by DSPs.

Survey Submission

Q34: I submitted the survey for my agency. How can I confirm that it's complete?

A34: If you would like to review your survey answers, please follow these steps:

- Select "Begin Survey" from your original survey invitation.
- You will be redirected to the survey portal.
- Select "Review", to download a PDF copy of your survey with your answers.
- Select "Print" at the bottom of your survey to save an electronic copy as a PDF or to print your survey out.

Q35: I completed the survey. Can I print my survey answers?

A35: From your original survey invitation e-mail, please follow these steps::

- Select "Begin Survey" from your original survey invitation.
- You will be redirected to the survey portal.
- Select "Review", to download a PDF copy of your survey with your answers by.
- Select "Print" at the bottom of your survey review to save an electronic copy as a PDF or print your survey out.

Q36: I submitted the survey for my agency, but now I need to edit some answers. How do I edit my survey answers?

A36: Please send an email to DSPWorkforce@dds.ca.gov to request that your survey be reopened and include the following information:

- Vendor Tax ID
- Vendor Number/ID
- Name of Vendor and Vendor Organization
- Agency Name
- Agency Address
- Primary Vendor Contact Name
- Primary Vendor Contact Email Address

After our team receives your email, we will process the request to reopen the survey. The survey will be reopened within 3-5 business days. You will receive an email from staffstability@hsri.org after the survey has been reopened. You can then reenter the survey, make the edits, and resubmit the survey.

Survey Results

Q37: When will the survey results be available?

A37: Initial survey results will be available in late 2024.

Q38: How will the data submitted by my agency be used?

A38: Survey data will be analyzed and reported in aggregate on the Department of Developmental Services website.

Incentive Payment

Q39: Who is eligible to receive an incentive payment?

A39: A vendor agency will be eligible for an incentive payment if they meet eligibility criteria described in Question 6 (Page 3) and complete all survey questions in the DSP Workforce Survey.

Q40: Who will receive the incentive payment, the agency or the individual completing the survey?

A40: The incentive will be issued to the vendor agency by the regional center.

Q41: I started the survey but was found ineligible to continue based on my responses to the screening questions. Am I still eligible for the incentive?

A41: No. The incentive is payable to eligible vendor agencies who complete the survey in its entirety. If your vendor agency is ineligible to participate in the survey, then the agency is not eligible to receive the incentive.

Q42: My agency completed more than one survey because we have multiple locations, do we receive an incentive payment for each location?

A42: No, only one incentive will be paid per vendor organization regardless of the number of surveys completed.

Q43: When does my agency receive the incentive?

A43: The Department anticipates instructing regional centers to issue incentive payments in December 2024.

Q44: What happens to the incentive payment if my vendor number or vendor organization closes?

A44: If your vendor number (e.g., DDS vendor ID) is closed, the primary regional center will inform our team. Our team will work on identifying a different vendor number belonging to your vendor organization that we can authorize for an incentive payment.