

Direct Support Provider Survey Report

Executive Summary

In 2021, the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) received concerns from support coordinators, providers, families, and other stakeholders, that Utah was experiencing a direct support staffing shortage. DSPD developed the Direct Support Provider Survey to gather more information to understand the extent of the situation over time (longitudinally). All current support coordinators received an email in January 2022 (time 1), and again in August 2022 (time 2), asking them to voluntarily participate in the survey. Due to the response rate (52% and 57% respectively¹), DSPD is confident that the survey results are representative of support coordinators (SCs). Notable results are summarized below:



- Creating a total score from the survey items that used rating scales (Getting Worse: 0-Getting Better: 100), the average score was 29% at time 1 and 51% at time 2.² The overall sentiment is that issues have slightly improved or stayed the same over the past six months.
- At time 1, 69% of the clients represented in the survey have been reportedly impacted by at least one of the six general issues (see figure 4), however at time 2 that decreased to 50%.
- At time 2, the top issues rated as getting 'a lot worse' in the past six months include:
 - Direct support professionals (DSPs) feeling frustrated or burned out (a top issue at time 1 also)
 - Inexperienced direct support professionals without proper training on the needs of individuals they serve
- At both timepoints, the services that were most impacted included day programs, residential, and in-home.
- At time 1, the overwhelming majority of respondents suggested that an increase in compensation would help mitigate staffing shortages in the next six months. At time 2, compensation was still expressed as well as increased training for DSPs to handle complex medical and behavioral situations.
- Between time 1 and time 2, there was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of clients who reported:
 - Having to relocate to access services (12% at time 1 to 5% at time 2).
 - Being unable to access services they were funded for (34% at time 1 to 18% at time 2).
 - Having to wait more than 90 days for a service they needed (13% at time 1 to 9% at time 2).
- Between time 1 and time 2, there was no statistically significant change in the percentage of clients who have been discharged from residential settings (2% at time 1 and 2% at time 2).

¹ All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number in the executive summary.

² Subscores were added together (see table 1) and divided by the max score (139) to obtain a percentage score.

Introduction

The Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) administered a follow up Direct Support Provider Survey using the online Qualtrics platform between August 31, 2022 and October 2, 2022. All DSPD support coordinators (SCs) were emailed asking them to share their opinions about the direct support provider (DSP) staffing shortage as it relates to individuals who were receiving services prior to July 1, 2022. This survey is a follow up survey to an identical survey completed in January 2022. Throughout this report, **Time 1** references the first survey conducted in January 2022 and is represented as a turquoise color; **Time 2** references the second survey conducted August-October 2022 and is represented as a purple color. It is estimated that at Time 1, 64.21% of clients in DSPD services were represented, compared to 51.09% at Time 2. Statistical analysis was conducted with R/R Studio software. Continuous variables at Time 1 and Time 2 were compared using Welch Two Sample t-test and categorical variables were compared using Pearson's Chi-squared test. The significance level is set at the standard p-value < 0.05.

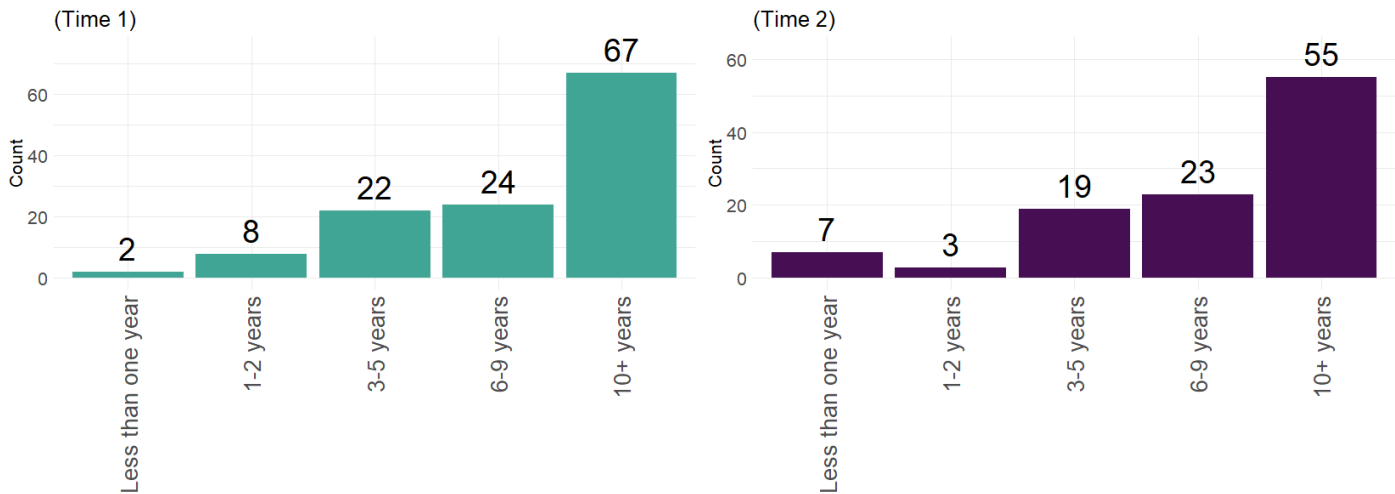
Limitations

This survey used a convenience sample; however the response rate was fairly high at 57% and we are confident that the results are representative of the population. Much of the survey asks SCs about DSPs, and SCs may not accurately relay the true experiences and thoughts of DSPs. To further understand any inferences from the subsequent report, additional research may be required.

Demographics

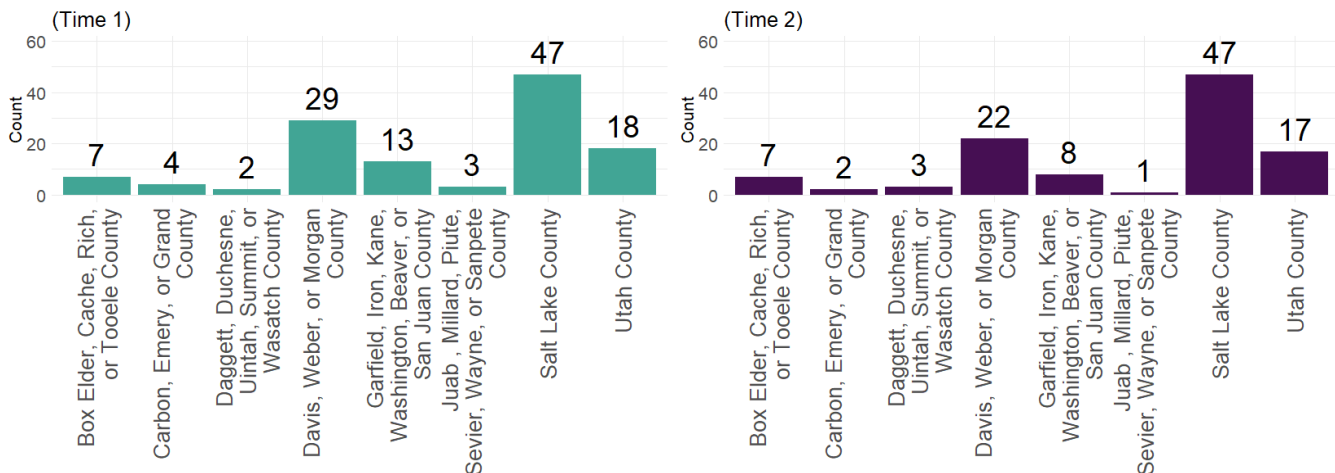
The respondents in Time 1 and Time 2 did not significantly differ on the years they have been working as a SC ($p=0.250$; see figure 1). At both timepoints, the largest percentage of respondents have been working as a SC for ten or more years. At Time 1, the average number of clients on a SC's caseload was 31.74 (Standard Deviation (SD)=11.30; Range: 2-46). At Time 2, the average number of clients on a SC's caseload was 30.35 (SD=11.87; Range: 1-46). The difference between the number of clients at each time point was not significantly different ($p=0.365$).

Figure 1: Years of Support Coordination Experience



Likewise, the respondents for both timepoints did not significantly differ on the primary areas they served ($p=0.890$). Not surprisingly, the majority of the respondents served the Wasatch Front Counties (Davis, Weber, Morgan, Salt Lake, and Utah County) for both timepoints.

Figure 2: Primary County Served



Total Score

A total score and subscores were created by adding response values. These scores were calculated using the following question sets and values summarized in table 1. The question set refers to the topic of the questions and the variable type describes the questions' response category. The negative attitude and positive attitude state the range of values for that question set and what values are associated with negative responses (e.g. A lot worse) and positive responses (e.g. A lot better). Some of the question sets were reversed for the total score calculation so that lower total scores are indicative of negative attitudes and issues are worsening, while higher total scores are indicative of positive attitudes and issues are improving—at least relatively from time 1 to time 2. Mean imputation was used for unanswered or not applicable values to avoid inflating or deflating the total score and subscores.

Question Set (Subscore)	# of Questions	Variable Type	Negative Attitude	Positive Attitude	Reverse for Calculation
General 1-6 (set 1)	6	Likert	1	5	No
General 7-13 (set 2)	7	Likert	3	1	Yes
Health & Safety	4	Likert	1	5	No
Quality of Services	4	Likert	1	5	No
Choice	3	Likert	1	5	No
Provider Access	6	Likert	1	5	No
Discharged to: Institution Homelessness Home	3	Binary	No (0)	Yes (1)	Yes

Figure 3: Total Score Time 1 v Time 2

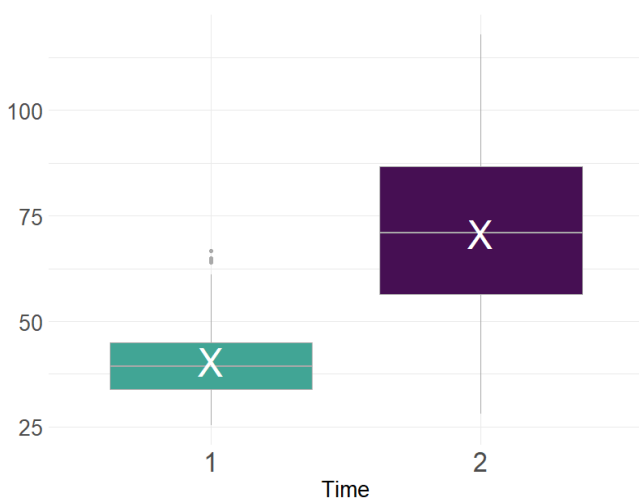
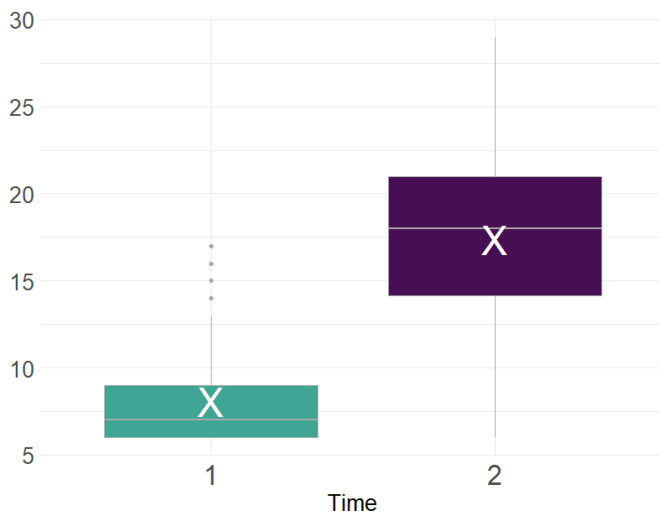


Figure 3 shows the total scores for time 1 and time 2. The “X” represents the average score, the line in the center of the box represents the median score, the colored box represents the middle 50% of the responses, and the dots represent outliers or extreme values. In figure 3, time 1 shows an average total score of 40.54 (SD=9.63; range=25.33 - 66.72) and time 2 shows an average total score of 70.81 (SD=18.92; range= 28.06 - 118). Time 1 has a significantly lower total score than time 2 ($p<0.001$), meaning that overall the attitude toward DSP staffing issues has improved between January 2022 and October 2022. To obtain the percentage score summarized in the executive summary, the average total scores are divided by the max total score (139; time 1 = 28.17% and time 2 = 50.94%).

General Questions:

Even when breaking down the total score into each question set (subscore), the improvement trends continue. For the general question set 1 (G set 1), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average G set 1 subscore was 8.08 (SD=2.55), and for time 2 the average G set 1 subscore was 17.39 (SD=5.33). Time 1 had a significantly lower G set 1 subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 4). Figure 5 and 6 shows the number of response values for each question with the darker colors indicating more responses for that value and question. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1. When SCs were asked how many individuals in services have been impacted by the issues asked about in the G set 1 questions, the average at time 1 was 21.55 individuals (SD=12.66) and the average at time 2 was 15.12 individuals (SD=11.50). This shows that significantly fewer individuals in services are being impacted by these issues at time 2 as compared to time 1 ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4: General Set 1 Subtotal Scores



General Set 1 Questions included:

Over the past 6 months, the issue is getting... *a lot better (5), a little better (4), about the same (3), a little worse (2), a lot worse (1).*

- G1. Programs being understaffed
- G2. Actual staffing ratios not appropriate to meet needs of individuals being served
- G3. Supervisory staff needing to take direct support professional shifts
- G4. Direct support professionals feeling frustrated or burned out
- G5. Inexperienced direct support professionals without proper training on the needs of individuals they serve
- G6. Overall, lack of staffing leading to profound health and safety concerns

Figure 5: General Set 1 Responses at Time 1

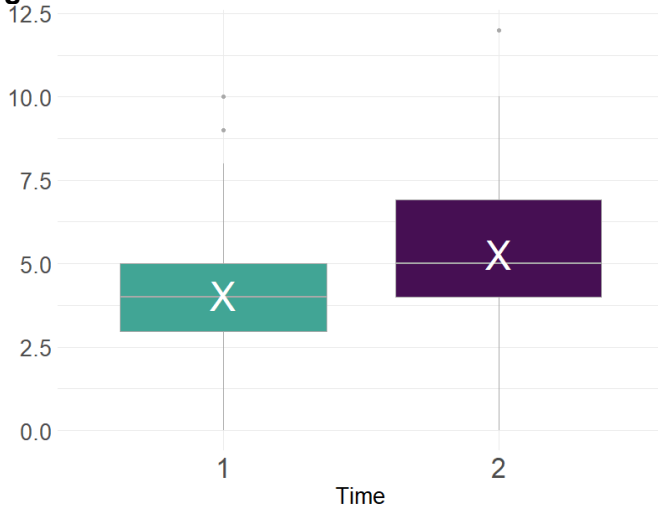
Not applicable	1	3	7	2	2	1
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0	0	0
4=A little better	0	0	0	0	0	0
3=About the same	6	7	3	3	20	14
2=A little worse	12	27	27	13	36	30
1=A lot worse	104	86	86	105	65	78
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6

Figure 6: General Set 1 Responses at Time 2

Not applicable	1	2	5	0	0	0
5=A lot better	7	8	9	1	1	9
4=A little better	41	23	21	17	18	25
3=About the same	37	47	43	45	41	42
2=A little worse	13	16	18	23	26	22
1=A lot worse	8	11	11	21	21	9
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6

For the general question set 2 (G set 2), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average G set 2 subscore was 4.06 (SD=2.06), and for time 2 the average G set 2 subscore is 5.28 (SD=2.25). Time 1 had a significantly higher G set 2 subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 7). Figure 8 and 9 shows the number of response values for each question at both timepoints. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1. Note that values were reversed for total score.

Figure 7: General Set 2 Subtotal Scores



General Set 2 Questions included:

In the last 6 months, which services were impacted by the issues you indicated [in the G1 question set]? *Very impacted (3), somewhat impacted (2), not impacted (1)*

- G07. In-home supports
- G08. Residential
- G09. Day programs
- G10. Supported Employment
- G11. Behavior Consultation
- G12. Nursing Services
- G13. Host Home/Professional Parent Services

Figure 8: G3 Responses at Time 1

Not applicable	1	10	3	7	6	24	23
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4=A little better	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3=Very Impacted	79	99	107	58	36	30	24
2=Somewhat Impacted	40	13	13	50	58	42	51
1=Not impacted	3	1	0	8	23	27	25
	G07	G08	G09	G10	G11	G12	G13

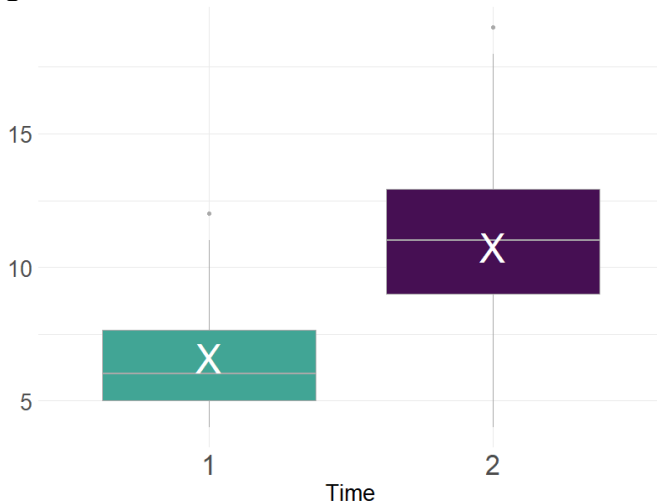
Figure 9: G3 Responses at Time 2

Not applicable	6	7	6	11	6	24	19
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4=A little better	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3=Very Impacted	64	59	60	38	43	25	11
2=Somewhat Impacted	30	36	41	43	34	28	36
1=Not impacted	7	5	0	15	24	30	41
	G07	G08	G09	G10	G11	G12	G13

Health & Safety Questions:

For the health and safety question set (HS), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average HS subscore was 6.60 (SD=1.81), and for time 2 the average HS subscore was 10.75 (SD=3.19). Time 1 had a significantly lower HS subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 10). Figure 11 and 12 shows the number of response values for each question at both timepoints. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1.

Figure 10: HS Subtotal Scores



HS Questions included:

Over the past 6 months, the issue is getting...*a lot better (5), a little better (4), about the same (3), a little worse (2), a lot worse (1).*

- HS1. Individuals not having their medical needs met (e.g. missing medications or health treatments)
- HS2. Individuals not having their behavior needs met (e.g. incorrect use of restraints or mismanaging aggression)
- HS3. Direct support professionals working extra shifts to the point of exhaustion
- HS4. New providers unequipped to handle complex medical or behavioral issues

Figure 11: HS Responses at Time 1

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0
4=A little better	1	0	0	0
3=About the same	38	31	2	8
2=A little worse	51	47	15	25
1=A lot worse	26	36	102	81
	HS1	HS2	HS3	HS4

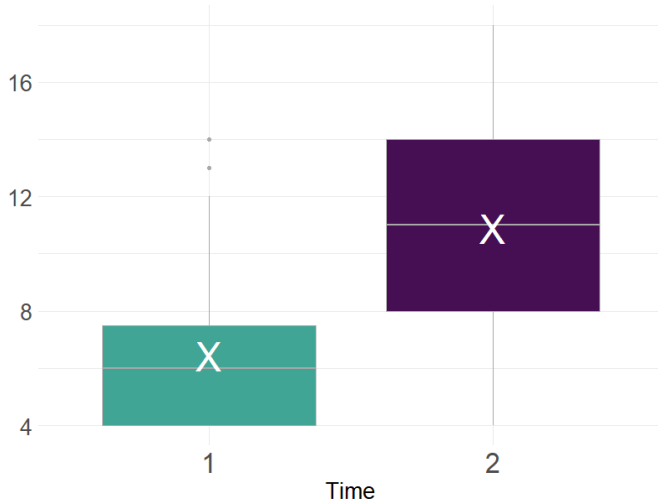
Figure 12: HS Responses at Time 2

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	9	1	6	1
4=A little better	15	14	26	5
3=About the same	47	44	32	37
2=A little worse	16	21	26	24
1=A lot worse	7	14	14	29
	HS1	HS2	HS3	HS4

Quality of Services Questions:

For the quality of services question set (QOS), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average QOS subscore is 6.44 (SD=2.25), and for time 2 the average hs subscore is 10.89 (SD=3.46). Time 1 had a significantly lower QOS subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 13). Figure 14 and 15 shows the number of response values for each question at both timepoints. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1.

Figure 13: QOS Subtotal Scores



QOS Questions Include:

Over the past 6 months, the issue is getting...*a lot better (5), a little better (4), about the same (3), a little worse (2), a lot worse (1).*

- QOS1. Less communication between providers and families
- QOS2. Less communication between providers
- QOS3. Lack of ability to access community, activities desired by client (related to staff shortage and not pandemic more generally)
- QOS4. Lack of progress working towards goals on person-centered plan

Figure 14: QOS Responses at Time 1

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0
4=A little better	3	2	1	1
3=About the same	21	20	5	11
2=A little worse	51	52	22	34
1=A lot worse	46	46	93	75
	QOS1	QOS2	QOS3	QOS4

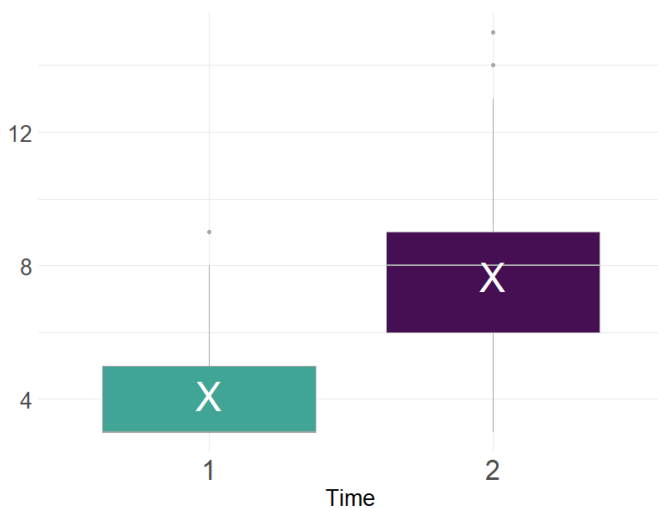
Figure 15: QOS Responses at Time 2

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	1	1	2	2
4=A little better	26	15	23	29
3=About the same	40	49	28	31
2=A little worse	31	24	36	30
1=A lot worse	8	14	16	12
	QOS1	QOS2	QOS3	QOS4

Choice Questions:

For the choice question set (C), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average C subscore is 4.12 (SD=1.63), and for time 2 the average C subscore is 7.68 (SD=2.90). Time 1 had a significantly lower C subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 16). Figure 17 and 18 shows the number of response values for each question at both timepoints. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1.

Figure 16: C Subtotal Scores



C Questions Include:

Over the past 6 months, the issue is getting...*a lot better (5), a little better (4), about the same (3), a little worse (2), a lot worse (1).*

- C1. Individuals having limited choice between providers
- C2. Individuals having limited choice between service types
- C3. Individuals having limited choice between sites or settings

Figure 17: C Responses at Time 1

Not Applicable	0	0	0
5=A lot better	0	0	0
4=A little better	0	0	0
3=About the same	7	17	12
2=A little worse	16	27	19
1=A lot worse	97	76	89
	C1	C2	C3

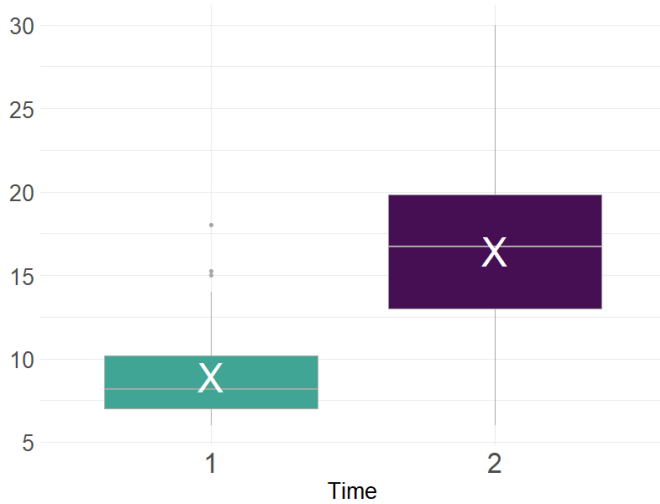
Figure 18: C Responses at Time 2

Not Applicable	0	0	0
5=A lot better	2	2	2
4=A little better	15	15	17
3=About the same	37	46	42
2=A little worse	27	26	23
1=A lot worse	25	17	19
	C1	C2	C3

Provider Access Questions:

For the provider access question set (PA), values were added to create a subscore. For time 1 the average PA subscore is 8.92 (SD=2.55), and for time 2 the average PA subscore is 16.47 (SD=5.05). Time 1 had a significantly lower PA subscore than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see figure 19). Figure 20 and 21 shows the number of response values for each question at both timepoints. These results suggest that there are more positive attitudes toward DSP issues at time 2 as compared to time 1.

Figure 19: PA Subtotal Scores



PA Questions include:

Over the past 6 months, the issue is getting...*a lot better (5), a little better (4), about the same (3), a little worse (2), a lot worse (1).*

- PA1 Closures of day programs or after school programs
- PA2 Not being able to find in-home support providers
- PA3 Waiting lists for day programs or after school programs
- PA4 ISOs going unanswered
- PA5 Families using caregiver compensation who would prefer using providers if they were available.
- PA6 Individuals being asked to stay home temporarily from day or after school programs due to lack of staff

Figure 20: PA Responses at Time 1

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	0	0	0	0	3	0
4=A little better	2	0	0	0	1	0
3=About the same	14	8	14	9	12	7
2=A little worse	40	17	24	13	42	36
1=A lot worse	61	96	71	86	44	67
	PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5	PA6

Figure 21: PA Responses at Time 2

Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
5=A lot better	14	2	4	2	1	10
4=A little better	25	14	18	12	15	20
3=About the same	37	38	34	34	40	36
2=A little worse	10	24	20	20	16	20
1=A lot worse	8	27	16	31	12	11
	PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5	PA6

When asked about the number of individuals on SCs' caseload who have been relocated to be able to access the services they need (in the last 6 months), time 1 had a significantly higher average number than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see table 2). This means that more individuals were relocated to be able to access the services they needed during the time 1 period than the time 2 period. T-tests were conducted to calculate the p-values shown in table 2-4.

Table 2	Time 1	Time 2	p-value
Average (Mean)	3.84	1.55	<0.001
St. Dev. (SD)	5.56	2.29	
Min	0	0	
Max	35	12	
Total Individuals (% of sample)	472 (12.09%)	166 (5.11%)	

When asked about the number of individuals on SCs' caseload who have not been able to access the services that they are funded for (in the last 6 months), time 1 had a significantly higher average number than time 2 ($p < 0.001$; see table 3). This means that more individuals could not access the services they were funded for during the time 1 period compared to the time 2 period.

Table 3	Time 1	Time 2	p-value
Average (Mean)	10.72	5.42	<0.001
St. Dev. (SD)	8.62	5.63	
Min	0	0	
Max	40	30	
Total Individuals (% of sample)	1319 (33.79%)	580 (17.86%)	

When asked about the number of individuals on SCs' caseload who have waited more than 90 days to be placed in a service that they need (in the last 6 months), time 1 had a significantly higher average number than time 2 ($p = 0.030$; see table 4). This means that more individuals waited more than 90 days to get the services they needed during the time 1 period than the time 2 period.

Table 4	Time 1	Time 2	p-value
Average (Mean)	4.12	2.84	0.030
St. Dev. (SD)	4.97	3.93	
Min	0	0	
Max	24	20	
Total Individuals (% of sample)	507 (12.99%)	304 (9.36%)	

Finally, SCs were asked if they had observed individuals in residential settings being discharged to different settings. There was no significant difference among individuals in residential settings being discharged to institutional placements, hospitals, jails, or nursing homes ($p = 0.883$; see figure 22a). There was a significant difference among individuals in residential settings being discharged to homelessness. However, unlike the other trends in this survey, time 2 had a higher count than time 1 ($p = 0.030$; see figure 22b). There was no significant difference among individuals in residential settings being discharged to home ($p = 0.122$; see figure 22c).

Figure 22a. Discharged to institutional placements hospital, jail, nursing home, ICF, USDC

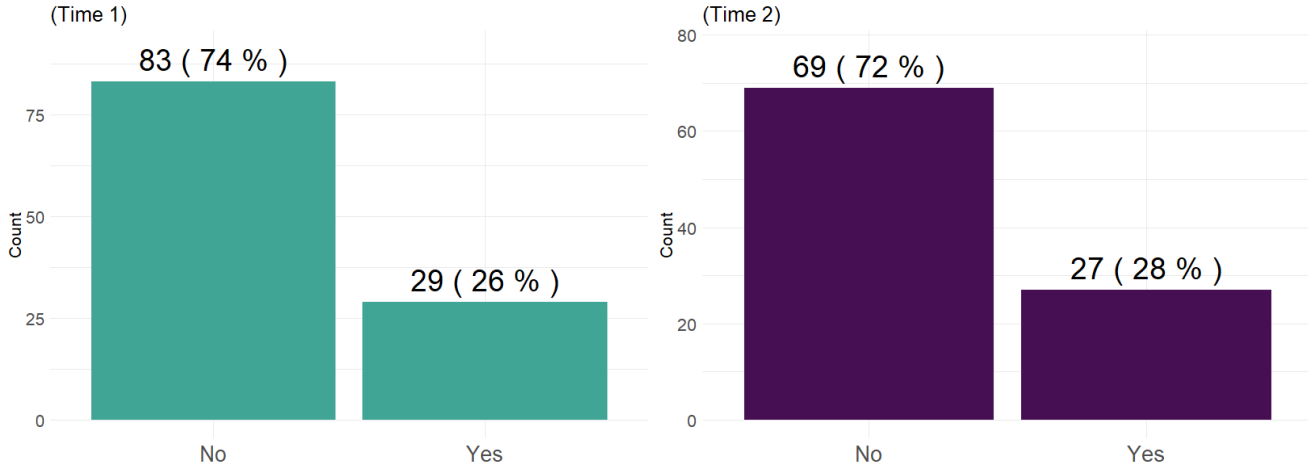


Figure 22b. Discharged to homelessness

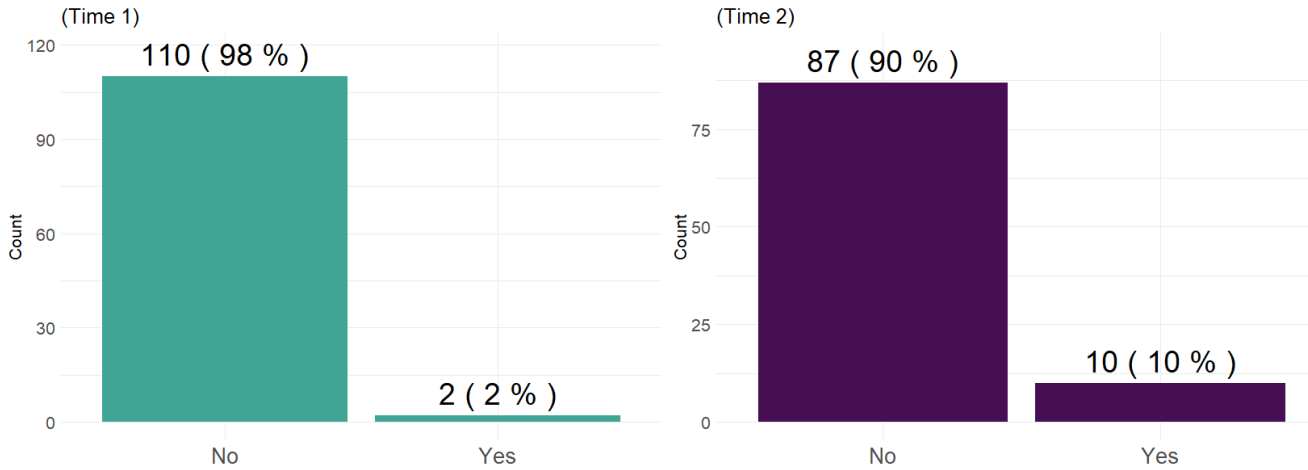


Figure 22c. Discharged to home

