



**PROTECTION & ADVOCACY PROJECT**  
**400 E. BROADWAY, SUITE 409**  
**BISMARCK, ND 58501**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2023

Contact: Veronica Zietz

Phone: 701.328.2950

Email: [vzietz@nd.gov](mailto:vzietz@nd.gov)

**Olmstead Commission Releases Report on North Dakota's Direct Support Workforce**

(Bismarck, ND) The Olmstead Commission, a governor-appointed board, is tasked with moving North Dakota towards greater community integration and inclusion for persons with disabilities. A robust direct support workforce is essential to achieving this goal. Seeing great challenges in this area, the Olmstead Commission wanted to explore challenges and find solutions to the issues facing the direct support workforce.

To address this issue, the Olmstead Commission, the ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities (NDSCDD), and the Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A) launched a project to capture data on the direct service professional workforce within the intellectual/developmental disability field. This effort was generously funded by the NDSCDD. Julie Horntvedt, Executive Director of the NDSCDD noted, "Due to the workforce shortage the disability field is experiencing, the Council felt it was important to examine the "why" behind staff turnover."

A survey of 570 direct support professionals (DSP) in the State was completed by the University of North Dakota Bureau of Evaluation and Research Services. This survey offered insight through the recent release of a report.

- The most common services DSPs provide are residential habilitation, in home supports, and day habilitation.
- 55% of DSPs got into the job to help others.
- 71% of DSPs agreed skills training is helpful to improving the support they provide.
- 40% of DSPs agreed higher wages would make it easier to join or stay in the profession.

The full report is available at <https://www.olmstead.nd.gov/>.

The mission of the NDSCDD is to advocate for policy changes that promote choice, independence, productivity, and inclusion for all North Dakotans with developmental disabilities. It's sister agency, P&A protects the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play. NDSCDD and P&A both have representation on the Olmstead Commission.

###