

Providing Employment for People with Disabilities and Assisting with the Staffing Shortage in our Special Education Schools and OPWDD Supports and Services

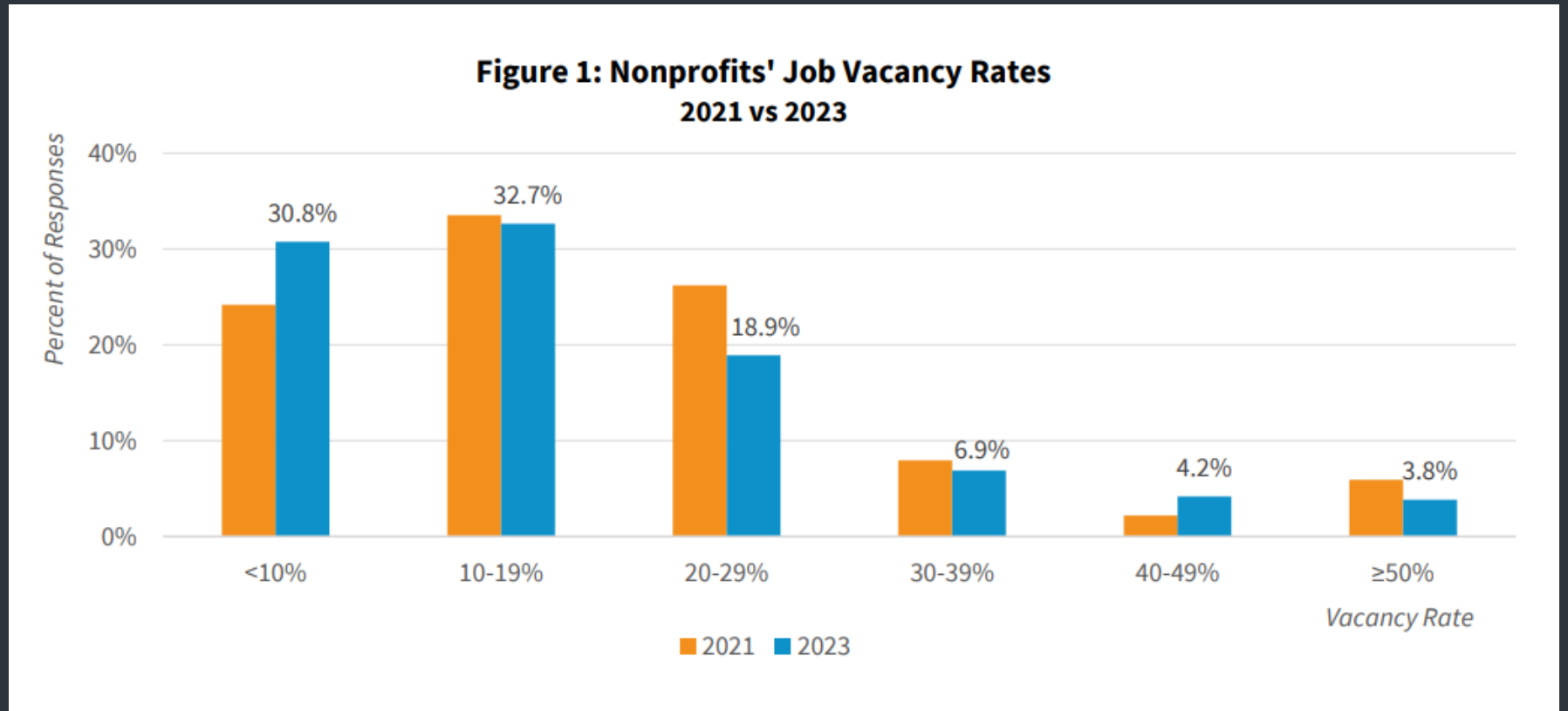
Brian Monaco : Director of Employment and Transportation Services



ISSUE: STAFFING SHORTAGE

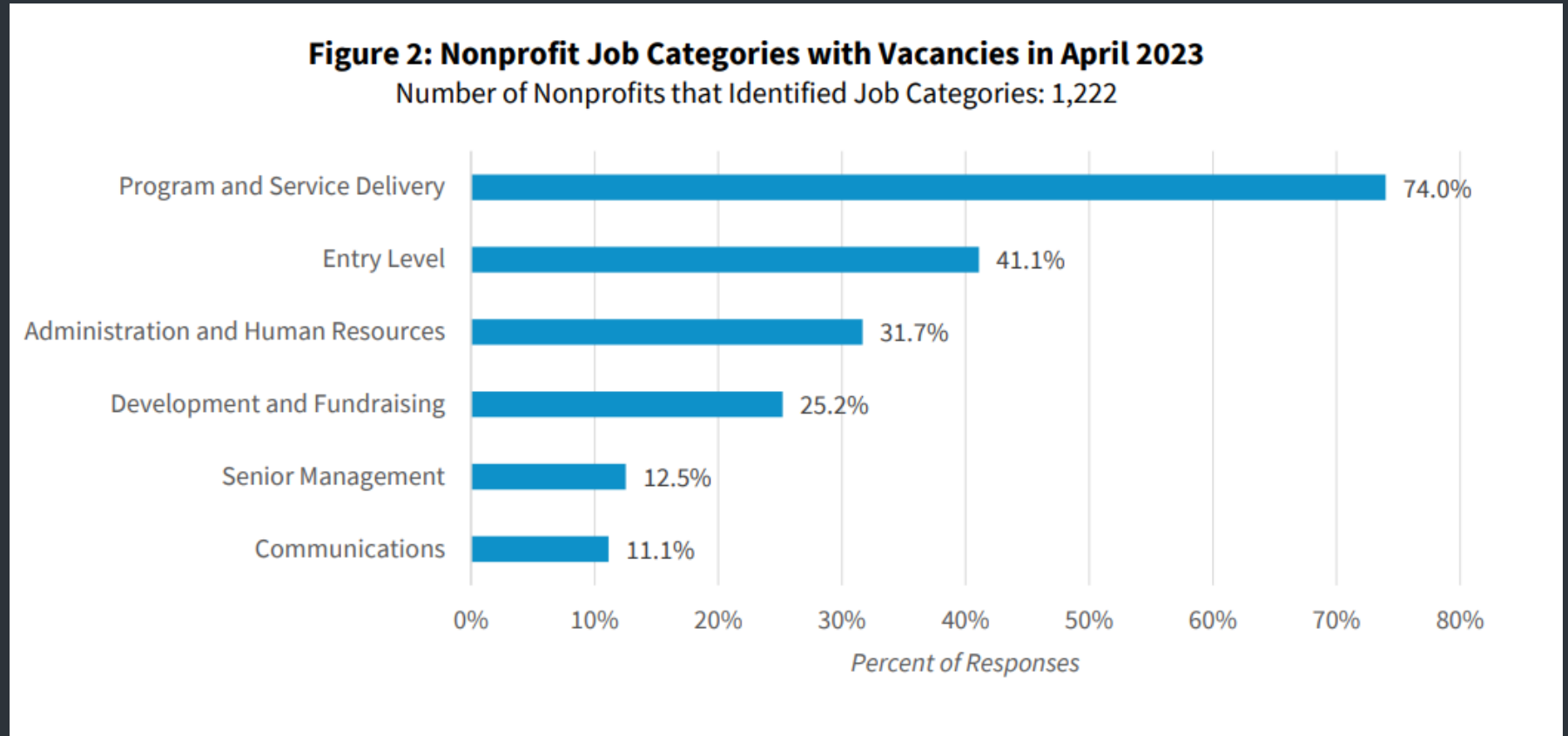
- Staffing Shortages are especially affecting the Non-Profit world
- According to a 2023 Nationwide Nonprofit workforce Survey, nearly 3 out of 4 nonprofits (74%) identified program and service delivery positions as their highest vacancy. (Approx 69.3 % in NY)

RECENT STATISTICS : Job Vacancy Rates



SOURCE: Council of Non Profits (2023)

RECENT STATISTICS : Vacancies by Job Categories



SOURCE: Council of Non Profits (2023)



WHY ARE STAFF LEAVING?

- Burnout
- Stress
- Low Wages
- Exploring other careers
- Child Care

RECENT STATISTICS

Table 2: Factors Affecting Nonprofit Recruitment and Retention

| Factor Affecting Recruitment and Retention | Number of Responses | Percent of Responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| Salary competition | 1,183 | 72.2% |
| Budget constraints/insufficient funds | 1,087 | 66.3% |
| Stress/burnout | 823 | 50.2% |
| Challenges caused by government grants/contracts | 338 | 20.6% |
| Other | 332 | 20.3% |
| Lack of child care | 239 | 14.6% |
| Not Sure | 166 | 10.1% |
| COVID-19 and vaccinations | 107 | 6.5% |

SOURCE: Council of Non Profits (2023)



WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- ▶ When nonprofits cannot hire enough employees to provide vital services, the public suffers
- ▶ Data from this survey and others show that along with increased demands for services, there are longer waiting lists, reduced services, and sometimes elimination of services.
- ▶ When any of those happen, the ripple effects cannot be ignored
- ▶ Communities lose access to food, shelter, mental health care, and other vital services on which people depend

SOURCE : National Council of Nonprofits

RECENT STATISTICS : Vacancies and Waiting Lists

Table 1: Vacancies and Waiting Lists in April 2023 Compared to March 2020

| | Changes Observed in April 2023 vs. March 2020 | Percent of Responses In 2023 |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Vacancies | More job vacancies | 51.7% |
| | Fewer job vacancies | 6.5% |
| | No change to vacancies | 9.0% |
| Waiting List | Longer waiting list for services | 28.1% |
| | Shorter waiting list for services | 2.4% |
| | No change to waiting list | 13.1% |
| Other | Other | 5.1% |
| | Did not select an option | 25.4% |

SOURCE: : Council of Non Profits (2023)



POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Higher Wages
- Bonuses
- Increased Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Enhanced Benefits



CAVEAT

- These solutions require increased monies that are not always available to us.



WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- Hiring individuals, generally receiving supported employment services, into vacant positions within our agency.
- Positions include DSP, activities assistant, transportation aide, facility aide.



HOW ARE WE DOING THIS?

- ▶ Utilizing services such as community based work assessment (CBWA), ETP discovery, Work Try Out (WTO) to help individuals explore the world of human services/direct care
- ▶ Developing needed skills through an innovative Work Readiness Curriculum. We have found that the use of technology helps the prospective employee improve on the skills to make them successful.



BENEFITS

- ▶ Employees with disabilities bring unique viewpoints and experiences to the workplace
- ▶ Inclusive hiring practices promote a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture, which can boost morale and engagement among all employees.
- ▶ A commitment to diversity and inclusion can enhance your company's reputation and give you a competitive edge in the market.
- ▶ Employees with disabilities may exhibit strong loyalty and retention rates when they feel valued and supported by their employer.
- ▶ Non-disabled DSPs typically have a better understanding of what it takes to support and individual with physical/intellectual disabilities. This tends to translate into a more supportive work environment.
- ▶ If applicable, having a job coach to provide support.
- ▶ Fills vacancies



Innovative Employment, Recruitment and Retention: Thinking Outside of the Box

William Schwartz

Senior Director of Disability
Services

Opportunities for Individuals Supported

Preschool

Clerical

Cleaning/Custodial

New Opportunities for Individuals Supported Through Day Hab and Community Habilitation



Day Hab
Science Classes at
Inspire Kids Goshen,
Newburgh, and
Monroe

Community
Habilitation
Individuals
volunteer with Com
Hab worker

Active Participation
from Individuals

Learning Skills while
volunteering



Bonus to Schools

Extra set of hands for
crafts and children

Potential Staff in the
future

School
Administration get to
observe and provide
direction ongoing
and consistent





New opportunities for Clerical Assistance

Opportunities for skill building for those looking to work in the field

Opportunities for anyone coming into the space to work with a person supported

Individual gets to set timeline for working without any affect on staffing.



Benefit to Everyone involved

Individual sets the
pace

Training is taking
place from
multiple people.

Tasks that are
typically pushed to
the side are able
to get completed
faster



New opportunities for Cleaning Assistance

Opportunities for skill building for those looking to work in the field

Opportunities for anyone coming into the space to work with a person supported

Individual gets to set timeline for working without any affect on staffing.



Benefit to Everyone involved

Individual sets the
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**CP Unlimited provides opportunities for
people with intellectual and
developmental disabilities to achieve
fulfilling lives.**

Peer Companions



The thought process

Reasons

- Direct care staff shortage is the biggest problem facing I/DD field. The demand for Direct care workers is projected to increase nationwide for the next 10 years.
- Direct care staffing shortage is affecting the quality of life of people we support and is making it difficult for new individuals to access services.
- Lack of community integration for individuals who uses wheelchairs
- Inability to expand our voluntary worksites for day hab without walls
- We have many individuals who want to work and are capable of providing direct care supports.

Challenges (Barriers)

- Justice center issues
 - Background checks
 - Incident classifications
- Documentation / compliance requirements/Medication administration requirements
- Union requirements
- Training requirements
- Living arrangements - Certified /Non certified
- Day program /SEMP



The thought process

Solutions

- Pick qualified individuals who live in non certified settings.
- Pick non-union residences
- Create a new title with modified direct care responsibilities (Peer Companion)
- Identify specific tasks
- Customize trainings to fit needs

Benefits

- More community integration /vocational opportunities for people we support
- Employment opportunities for people we support
- **Understanding people we support and their needs through people we support.**
- **Promote diversity and inclusion**

Question

- **Can a person with a disability (staff) relate more to another person with disability (service recipient) ? Can this position teach us more about the needs and choices that our individuals really like to see ?**
- **Do we (DD community) really know about the needs of people we support ?**



More Questions

- What is OPWDD and Justice center's position on this?
- If peer companion is a subject of allegation of abuse or neglect can they live in a certified setting ?
- Can a person who receives services in a certified setting provide supports to a person living in another certified setting?
- Will this position disqualify the staff from getting approval for day programs / residential services in the future?

CP Unlimited is collaborating with OPWDD ,ACCES-VR and DDPC on this pilot project.



Peer Companions

- The position will perform specific direct care activities that supports individuals in certified residences and day programs.
- Complete all background checks (CBC,MHL,SEL,SCR)
- The positions pays minimum wage or above minimum wage
- Coded under CFR 200 codes (Direct support other)
- Will not be performing medication administration and billing

Staff A

- Lives in an ISS setting
- Prior work experience working at FQHC clinic as a patient transporter
- Will be working in an ICF site
- Job involves helping individuals who use wheelchair explore their neighborhood.(recreational sites, local stores, parks, libraries etc).
- OPWDD SEMP recipient

Staff B

- Lives independently with wife and kids
- Prior work experience working as a scanning /documentation clerk
- Will provide support individuals at VA hospital in the Bronx (Day hab without walls)
- OPWDD SEMP recipient



Understanding people



Image Credits – Ben Drew (Open futures learning)



Understanding people



**IF MY STAFF
HAD BEHAVIOR
SUPPORT PLANS**



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future
learning
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Image Credits – Ben Drew (Open futures learning)



Understanding people

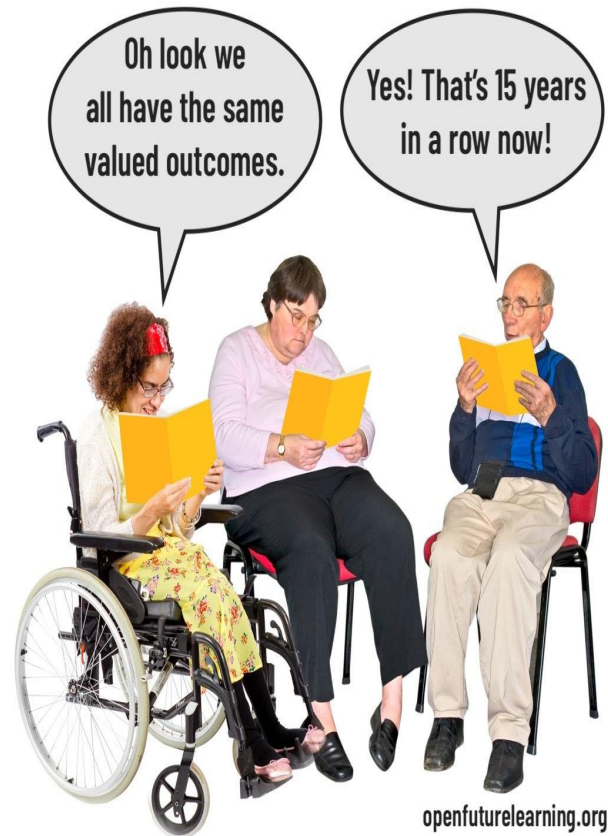


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Thank you !!!



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