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# ACDS Survey 2021

## Organizational Wellness and Workforce

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50 YEARS - *Influencing - Strengthening - Connecting*

## Acknowledgements

We thank all service providers who submitted the information needed to compile this report. We sincerely appreciate your effort. This data will provide vital information of our workforce and help ACDS in our collective advocacy.

The *ACDS Survey 2021* was funded in part by the Government of Alberta Ministry of Community and Social Services, Disabilities, Inclusion and Accessibility Division, and supported by membership dues.

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## About ACDS

The Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) is a non-profit association of community-based service providers supporting individuals with disabilities.

**Vision:** People with disabilities live full lives as citizens supported by a vibrant network of services in their communities.

**Mission:** ACDS is the collective voice of our members, advancing excellence and best practices, advocating for effective public policy, and championing professional disability services.

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# ACDS Survey 2021

## Organizational Wellness and Workforce

### Executive Summary

#### Introduction

The ACDS Annual Survey has been collecting information on the Community Disability Services (CDS) sector workforce since 2009; this year, the survey targeted ongoing pandemic effects, the CDS workforce, and organizational capacity.

Data collection for this survey occurred in November and early December 2021. 54 organizations responded, representing 63 regional service locations for an overall response rate of 41%, slightly higher than in previous years. Regional response rates: Calgary: 45% (15); Central: 46% (13); Edmonton: 31% (14); Northeast: 40% (4); Northwest: 62% (8); South: 35% (9).

Results are generalizable to the PDD-funded CDS sector at a provincial level. Due to small regional sample sizes, regional-level statistics should be interpreted with caution.

#### Respondent Profiles

**Populations Supported:** In addition to supporting adults with developmental disabilities, services were provided for seniors (68%), youths aged 16 to 18 (40%), and children under the age of 16 (30%). Services also included supports for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (90%), fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (87%), dual diagnosis (78%), brain injury (73%), medically fragile (71%), and complex behaviours (65%).

**Programs Offered:** Organizations offered: community access and recreation (84%), overnight staffed residences (70%), supported independent living (63%), employment supports (54%), out-of-home respite (48%), support homes / supportive roommate models (46%), and in-home respite (35%).

**Financial Profile:** On average, PDD funded 85% of each organization's revenue. Other funding came from other Alberta Government sources (4.3%) and social enterprise (3.1%). Organizations with larger budgets were overrepresented in the Edmonton region, while smaller organizations were overrepresented in the Northeast, Northwest, and South regions.

#### Continued Effects of COVID-19

**Outbreaks and Active Cases in Employees and Individuals in Service:** 17% of organizations had active COVID-19 cases within their organization at the time of survey response, and 92% of organizations had dealt with cases within their organization since the onset of the pandemic. At the time of survey response, there had been an average of 25 cases in each agency since the beginning of the pandemic.

**Operational Challenges:** 83% of respondents continue to struggle with an increased workload and 76% continue to combat staff burnout and fatigue. 70% of organizations felt that staff absences due to stress leave or mental health were either already, or expected to soon become, an issue for their agency.

**Program Closures:** While all overnight staffed residences remained open throughout the entirety of the pandemic, 49% of community access and recreation programs, 41% of employment support programs, and 27% of out-of-home respite programs experienced temporary closures since the onset of the pandemic. At the time of survey response, 58% of community access programs, 44% of employment supports, and 28% of supported independent living programs were operating with modifications.

**Finances:** 44% of organizations reported that their operating expenses had increased compared to pre-pandemic, 34% said expenses had remained the same, and only 23% said their expenses had decreased. On average, across all organizations, operating expenses had increased by 1.2%. 51% of organizations reported decreased operating revenues, 33% reported no change, and only 16% had revenue increases. On average, operating revenues had decreased by 4.7%.

59% of respondents expected the financial health of their organization to remain the same, and 17% expected it to worsen. Recent increases in business costs, for example insurance rate hikes and 30-year highs in inflation, plus inadequate funding for indirect and administrative costs, are adding to financial challenges for organizations.

## Organizational Capacity

**Demands and Adaptability:** 90% of organizations reported that demands on their organization had increased compared to pre-pandemic. Though demands had increased, 76% of organizations stated that their ability and capacity to adapt to new challenges had also increased.

**Rating Organizational Capacity:** Organizational capacity was scored on various indicators within the topics of financial management, governance, program design and management, organizational management, and human resources (1=none/minimal; 4=excellent). Overall, organizations scored highly on financial documentation (3.73), financial systems (3.67), governing or advisory board (3.52), mission (3.52), and financial status (3.44). In contrast, organizations scored low on volunteers/interns (2.31), compensation (2.85), staffing plans (2.90), documentation and communication strategy (3.00), and succession (3.05).

## Workforce

**Employment Status and Position:** 58% of workers in the CDS sector had full time hours, comparable to 2019 (60%) and 2020 (62%). Frontline positions made up 89% of the total workforce, and 70% of all workers were employed as either Community Disability Service Workers (CDSW) or Community Disability Service Practitioners (CDSP).

**Furloughs and Re-Hires:** While the size of the workforce decreased by 7% in 2020, there was moderate workforce restoration in 2021. Between January and October 2021, the size of the CDS workforce increased by 2%, showing some regrowth, although it is too early to say if this trend will result in full recovery.

**Industry Turnover:** Annualized industry turnover in 2021 was 23%. Turnover rates in the South (37%), Northwest (35%), and Central (29%) regions were higher than the provincial average. Turnover was highest among the frontline positions of Employment Specialists (32%), CDSW and CDSP (27%) and Complex Support Needs Workers (24%).

**Organizational Turnover:** Organizations reported average turnover of 21.1% for the period between January and October 2021, which corresponds to an average annualized organizational turnover rate of 25.4%. The highest turnover experienced by a single organization was 67% during the ten-month period.

**Reasons for Turnover:** 79% of employees who left between January and October 2021 resigned voluntarily. 16% were employer decision/terminations, and 4% were layoffs due to COVID-19 or the economy. The remaining 1% left the organization due to other reasons/unknown.

**Vacancies:** The CDS sector had an average vacancy rate of 7.4% at the time of survey response. Vacancy rates were highest in the frontline positions of Employment Specialists (19.4%), other direct service positions (14.2%), and CDSW and CDSP (8.1%). Vacancy rates ranged from 3.8% in Edmonton to 15.8% in the South region.

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# ACDS Survey 2021

## *Organizational Wellness and Workforce*

### Introduction

The ACDS Annual Survey has been collecting information on the Community Disability Services (CDS) sector workforce since 2009, providing data to aid in evidence-based human resource policies and strategies.

The ACDS Survey 2021 collected data on the ongoing effects of the pandemic as well as workforce data such as turnover and vacancy rates. In addition, information was collected on each organization's capacity in order to identify areas in which organizations might require additional supports to remain sustainable, efficient, and impactful.

### Data Collection and Analysis

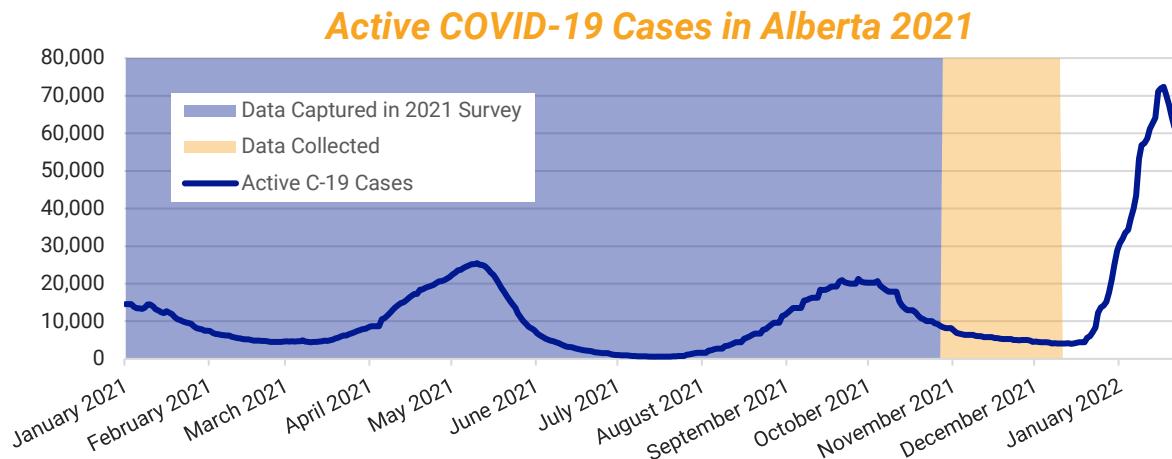
#### Data Collection

The invitation to participate in the survey was emailed on October 28, 2021, with an embedded link to the MS-Excel survey tool. The tool consisted of one instruction page and six identical regional worksheets so that multi-region agencies could complete a separate worksheet for each region in which they operate. As the annual ACDS survey has sections that often need to be completed by different employees within an organization, the MS-Excel format allowed respondents to save their responses and email the completed file to the ACDS researcher upon completion. The response deadline was December 10, 2021, and all recipients were emailed reminders on November 24 and December 6, 2021.

During the data collection window (October 28 to December 10, 2021), active COVID-19 cases in Alberta were relatively low (see graph below). Since survey data was collected, active cases have increased rapidly, causing significantly more outbreaks and staff shortages than at any previous time throughout the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> COVID-related issues raised in this survey were only magnified in the few months following data collection.

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<sup>1</sup> In mid-December 2021, COVID-19 PCR tests were restricted to healthcare workers and high-risk individuals due to limited supply; active cases in the graph for late December/January almost certainly under-represent the actual case count in the population.



## Response Rate and Representativeness

The survey population consisted of all 138 ACDS member agencies, operating a total of 155 service locations across Alberta.

54 organizations responded to the 2021 survey, representing 63 regional service locations for an overall response rate of 41%.<sup>2</sup> The response rate is acceptable for this survey method and slightly higher than rates achieved in previous years (2020: 38%, 2019: 36%, 2018: 31%).

Regional response rates (no. of organizations) are as follows: Calgary: 45% (15); Central: 46% (13); Edmonton: 31% (14); Northeast: 40% (4); Northwest: 62% (8); South: 35% (9). The Edmonton region was under-represented, and smaller organizations (serving fewer individuals) were over-represented in the Calgary and Northeast regions.

The survey results are generalizable to the PDD-funded CDS sector at the provincial level. Due to small regional sample sizes, regional-level statistics should be interpreted with caution.<sup>3</sup>

## Data Analysis

Identifying information was stripped from surveys and each survey was given a unique, confidential ID code. Fields left blank were coded as “non-responses” and data was analyzed in MS-Excel.

Where applicable, year-over-year comparisons are provided at the provincial level. Yearly comparisons should be limited to assessing general sector trends. Additional information on data analysis, representativeness, and margin of error is available in Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> 41% response rate represents 63 of 155 regional service locations in ACDS' membership.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for more information on assessment of generalizability.

## Respondent Profiles

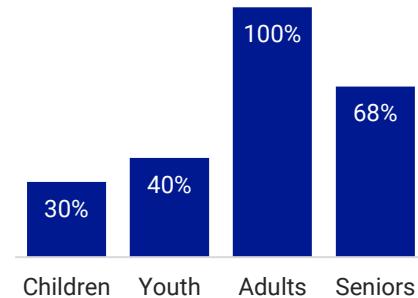
### Populations Supported

A total of 7,614 individuals were being provided services by survey respondents; each organization had an average of 121 individuals in service, with a median of 71.

#### Populations Supported:

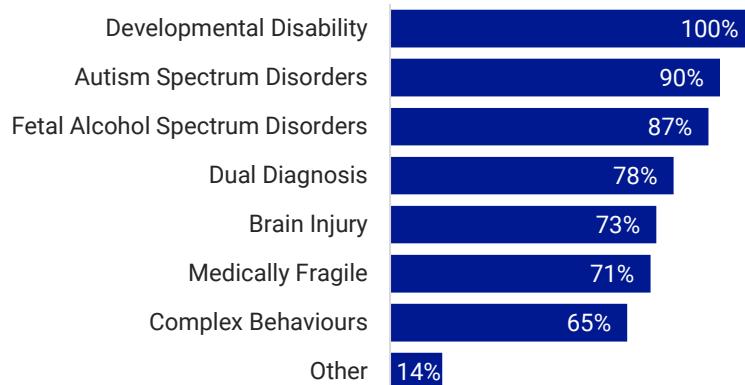
##### Age Groups

Provincial Data 2021 (n=63)



#### Populations Supported: Disability Type

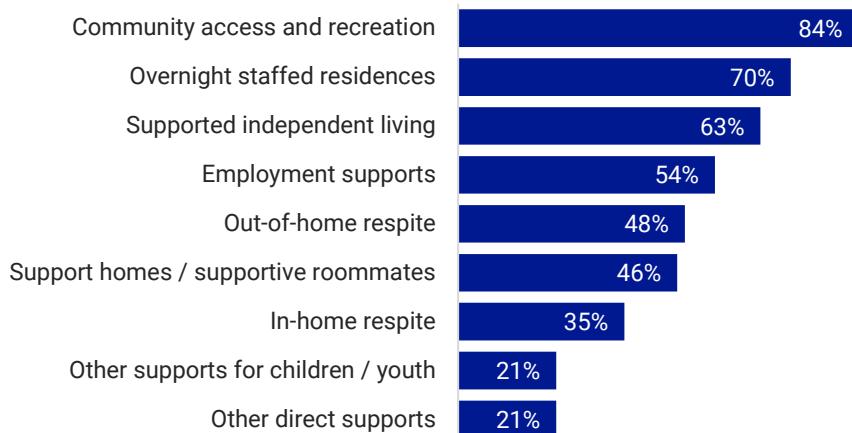
Provincial Data 2021 (n=63)



Other populations receiving supports from responding organizations include people with physical disabilities, people seeking harm reduction supports, and people involved with the Justice system.

#### Programs Offered

Provincial Data 2021 (n=63)



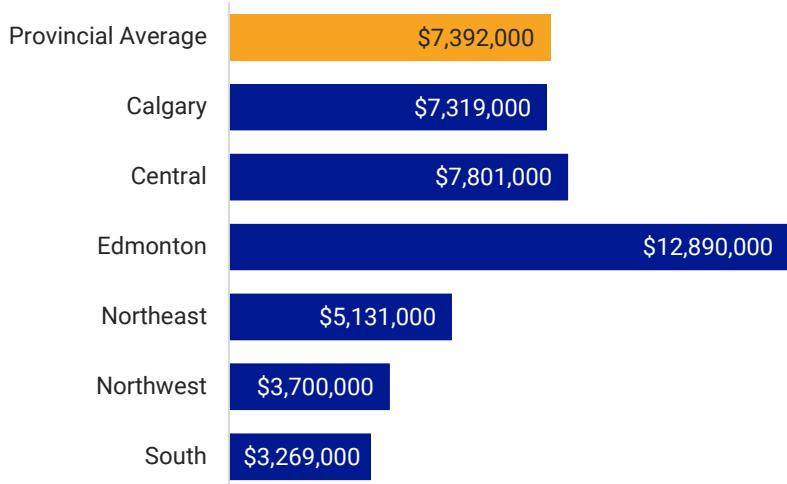
## Financial Profile

The average annual budget of survey respondents was just under \$7.4 million.

Larger organizations with bigger budgets were overrepresented in the Edmonton region, while smaller organizations made up a larger percentage of the sample in the Northeast, Northwest, and South regions.

### Average Operating Expenses

Provincial and Regional Data 2021/22 (n=61)



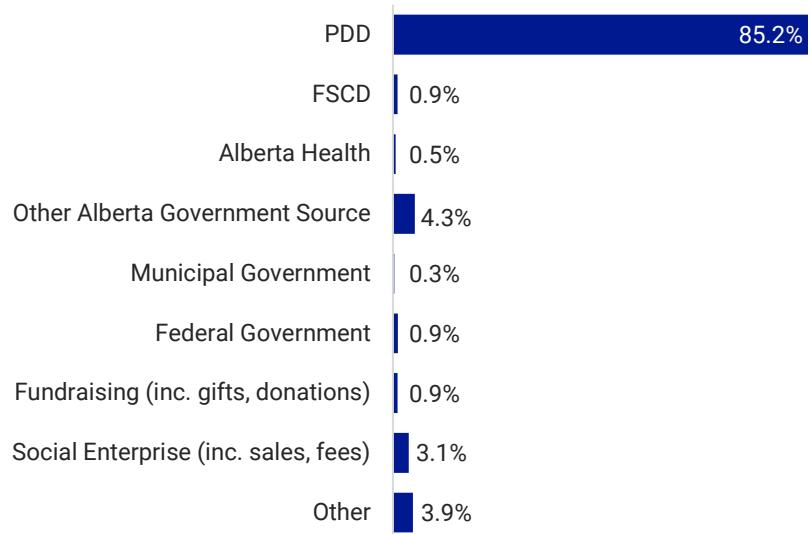
PDD is the primary funding source for survey respondents. Other funding sources accounted for 3.9% of funding and included rental income, interest income, non-government grants, and other government funding bodies.

Federal government funding made up 1% of average revenues in 2021, a slightly larger percentage than in previous years due to federal COVID-19 supports such as wage subsidies.

See Appendix B for regional breakdown of respondent profiles.

### Sources of Operating Revenues

Provincial Data 2021/22 (n=63)

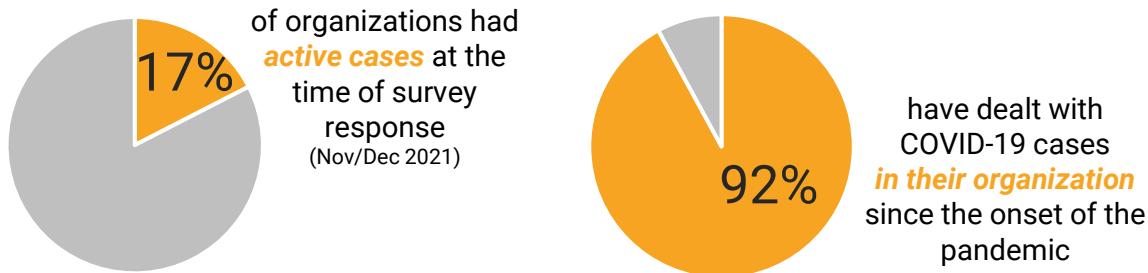


## Continued Effects of COVID-19

### Outbreaks and Active Cases

At the time of survey response, though COVID-19 cases in Alberta were relatively low,<sup>4</sup> 17% of organizations were dealing with active cases at that time, among either their employees or individuals in service. 92% of organizations had dealt with positive cases since the onset of the pandemic, a number which has likely increased due to the exponential rise in active cases since the time of data collection in early December.

In October 2020, 49% of organizations had not yet experienced any active COVID-19 cases within their organization;<sup>5</sup> by October 2021, only 8% of organizations had not yet had a brush with active cases within their agency.



*"[When outbreaks occurred], non-vaccinated staff were sent home, putting the burden on the vaccinated staff"*

### COVID-19 Cases Since the Onset of the Pandemic

Provincial Data 2021 (n = 63)

COVID-19 Cases within Organizations	Average Cases	Median Cases	% of Organizations that have had Cases in their Organization
Employees with COVID-19	17.7	6.0	86%
Individuals in Service with COVID-19	7.5	3.0	78%
All Cases of COVID-19 in Organization	25.2	11.0	92%

<sup>4</sup> During the survey response period, Alberta fluctuated between approximately 4,000 to 7,000 active cases. Government of Alberta. "COVID-19 Alberta statistics." Last accessed January 17, 2022. [www.alberta.ca/stats/covid-19-alberta-statistics.htm](http://www.alberta.ca/stats/covid-19-alberta-statistics.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. 2021. *ACDS Survey 2020: COVID-19 Impact on CDS Workforce*. Calgary, AB.

## Operational Challenges

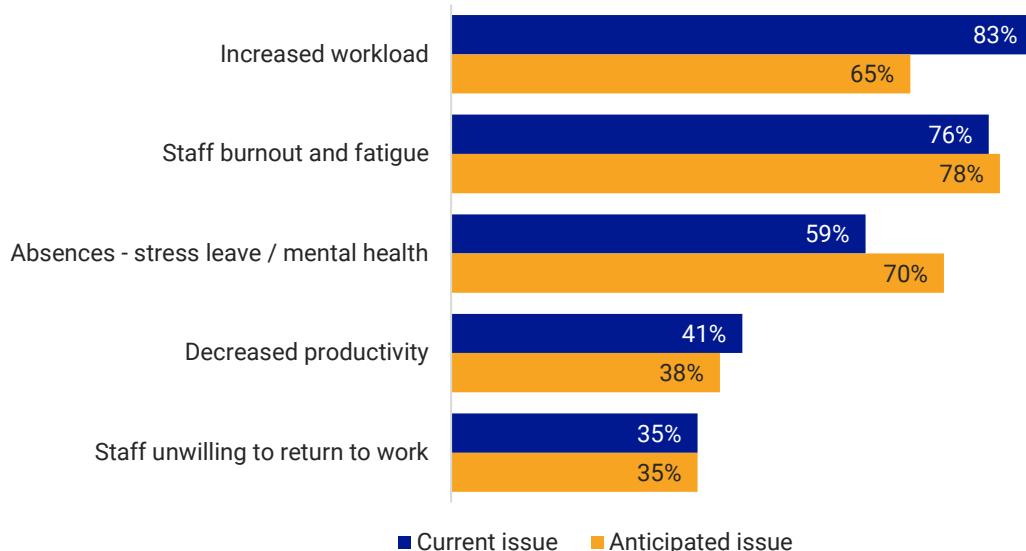
At the time of data collection (November and early December 2021), despite low active COVID-19 case counts in Alberta, operational challenges related to COVID-19 persisted. 83% of organizations were struggling with increased workloads and 76% were dealing with staff burnout and fatigue.

*"Many employees are working in isolation, and/or restricted to cohorts. Employees have expressed increased feelings of isolation which is impacting mental health and morale."*

59% of organizations reported that stress leave / mental health absences were a current issue within their organization, while an additional 11% felt that the issue would soon affect their organization as well.

### Current and Anticipated Operational Issues

Provincial Data 2021 (n = 63)



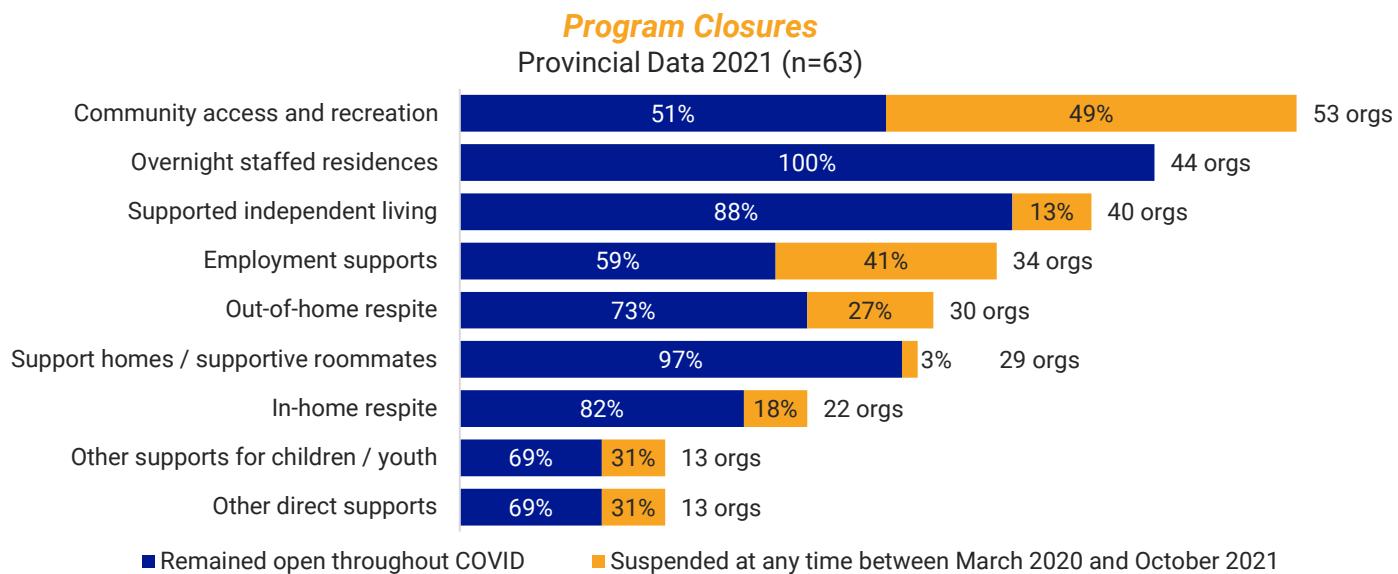
Organizations were also concerned about:

- Employee retention
- Employee recruitment
- Staff shortages
- Staff morale
- Devaluation of workforce by society/funder
- Standards and licensing requirements
- Public health orders
- Navigating mandatory vaccination policies
- Finances

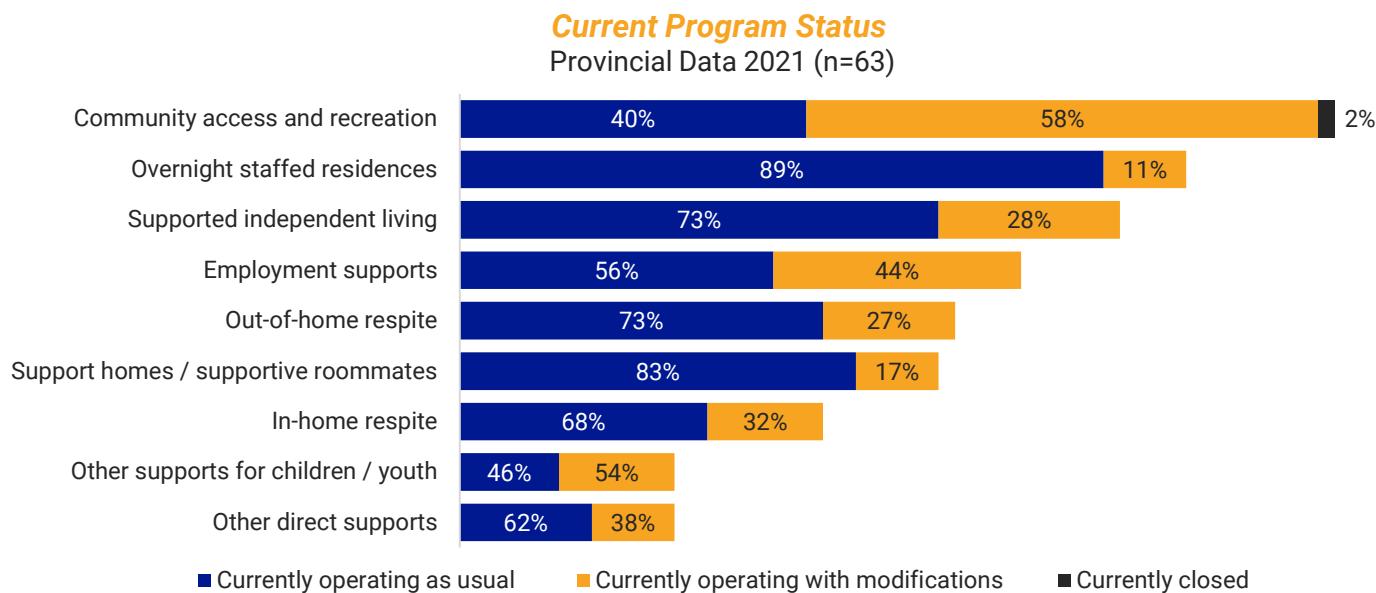
*"Core group of staff did hours of multitasking due to layoffs; [staff] are burnt out and tired"*

## Service Closures

Some organizations either chose or were forced to temporarily suspend certain programs due to the pandemic and related health regulations. Approximately half (49%) of community access programs were temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 over the past 18 months, and 41% of employment support programs underwent temporary closures. Closure, however, was not an option for programs such as overnight staffed residences (0 closures of 44).



At the time of data collection, all programs and services were operational, with or without modifications. Only 2% of community access and recreation programs were still closed.

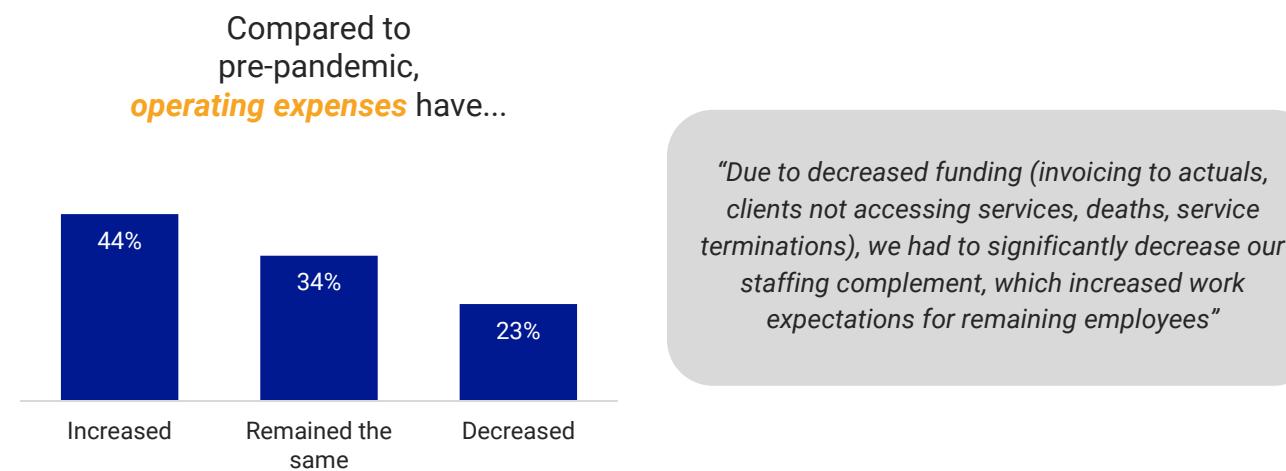


## Finances

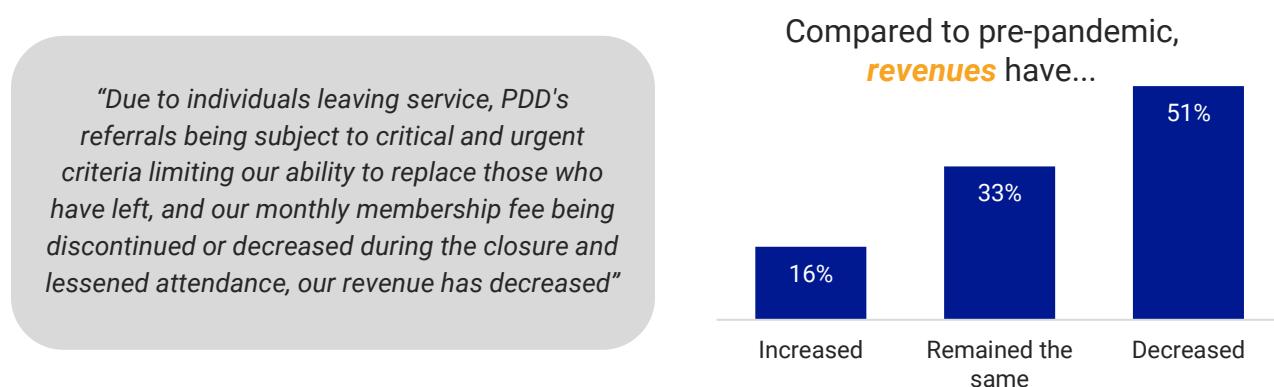
As organizations have navigated changing public health restrictions, isolation requirements, staffing restrictions, and staffing shortages, they have had to adapt their finances to incessant modifications. In October 2020, CDS organizations reported that their operating expenses had dropped by an average of -2% due to the pandemic, and their revenues had dropped by 3%. In the first eight months of the pandemic, COVID-related expenses had a major effect on 32% of organizations' finances.<sup>6</sup>

As federal, provincial, and municipal COVID-related supports have both started and ceased over the past year, organizations have continued to adapt throughout 2021. Many organizations in the CDS sector have had to acclimatize to increasing expenses and decreasing revenues.

On average, operating expenses in all organizations have increased by 1.2% over the course of the pandemic.

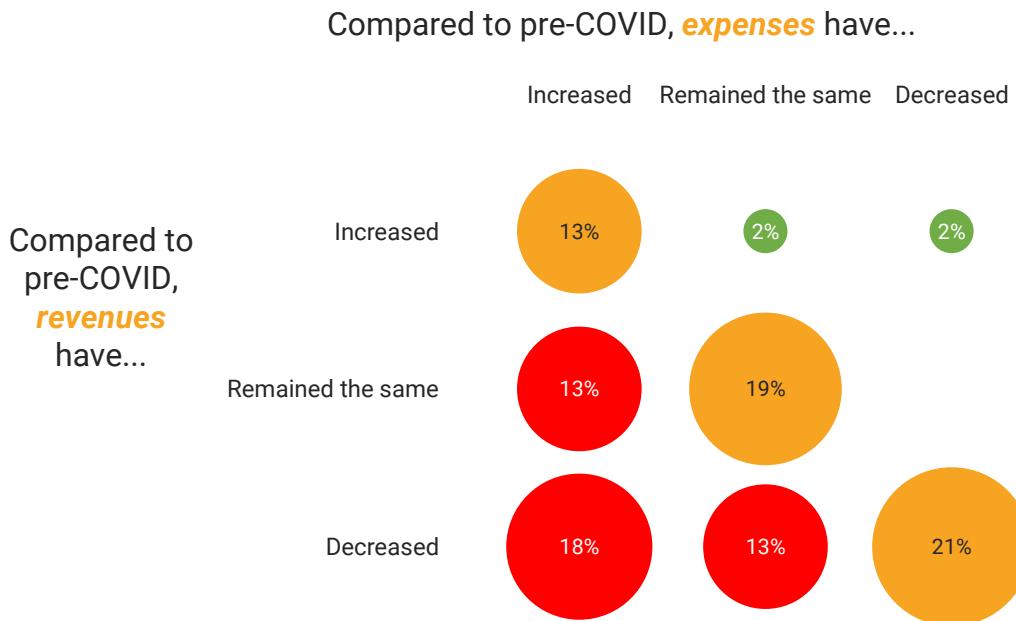


Average operating revenues in all organizations have decreased by 4.7%.



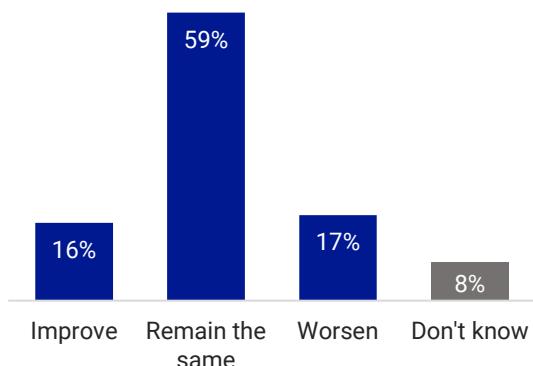
<sup>6</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. 2021. *ACDS Survey 2020: COVID-19 Impact on CDS Workforce*. Calgary, AB.

Financial stability is essential for organizational planning and preparedness. Despite an increase in expenses compared to pre-COVID, 31% of organizations reported that their revenues had remained the same (13%) or decreased (18%). An additional 13% reported that although their expenses had remained the same, their revenues had decreased compared to pre-COVID.



*"For the majority of our contracts, we do not expect to see any increase. When this reality is added to the ever-increasing poverty line/cost of living, we expect to see our financial situation continue to deteriorate into the future."*

Over the next 12 months, organizations expect the **financial health** of their organization to...



The majority of organizations (59% of n=63) expect that the financial health of their organization will remain the same over the next 12 months.

One organization reported that they are attempting to broaden their revenue streams, while another indicated that though their funding is sufficient, it is only because they are currently being funded for hours of service worked outside of their contract. For others, funding caps, difficulties filling vacancies, limited referrals, and increased business costs such as insurance are barriers to developing and maintaining a sustainable financial model.

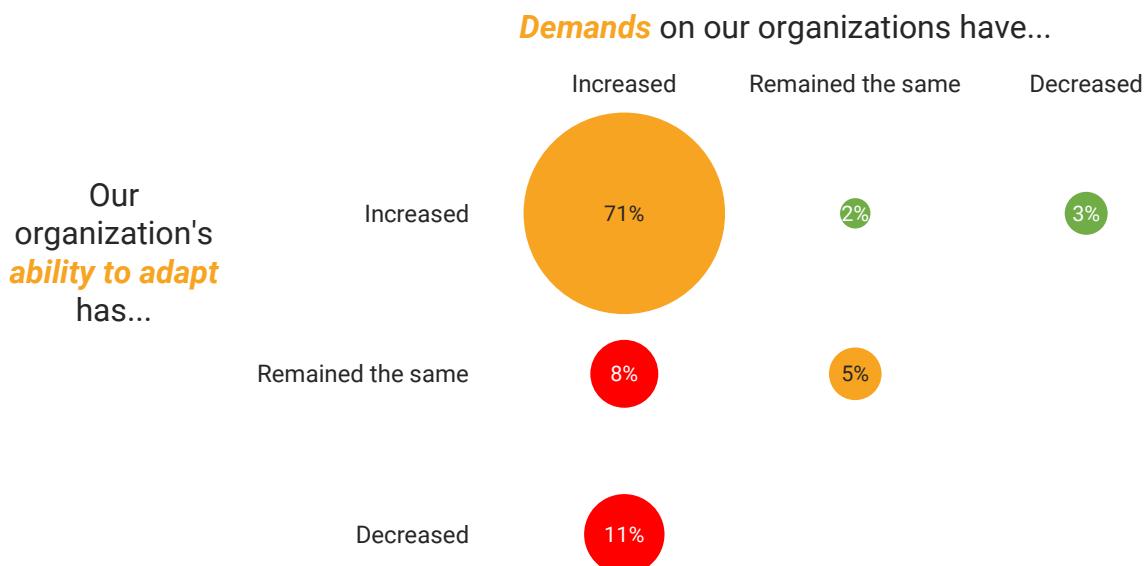
## Organizational Capacity

### Organizational Demands versus Adaptability

Since the pandemic began to impact Albertans in March 2020, community disability service agencies have been required to adapt to changing health orders, alternative service delivery methods, staffing struggles, and other organizational challenges.<sup>7</sup>

Increased demands are manageable if an organization has a corresponding increase in ability to adapt. 90% of respondents (n = 63) reported that demands on their organization had increased compared to pre-pandemic. 71% stated that their ability to adapt had increased alongside rising demands. However, 19% of organizations reported having increased demands, but with either no change (8%) or a decrease (11%) in their ability to adapt. If the stressors on these 19% continue, organizational sustainability may be at risk.

Overall, 76% of community disability service providers in this sample report an increased ability to adapt compared to pre-pandemic. Of these, 5% reported that their ability to adapt exceeds the demands placed on their organization; these organizations may be able to shed light for others on what makes them more resilient.



*"Cause for demands increase: program adaptations, new contracts, change initiatives (e.g. implementation of data systems, remote service technologies, and related workflow adjustments)"*

<sup>7</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. October 2020. *Impact and Insights: COVID-19 and Alberta's Community Disability Services Sector*. Calgary, AB.

## Assessing Organizational Capacity

The COVID-19 pandemic has stretched community disability service agencies on multiple fronts. Organizational capacity was assessed to determine areas in which service providers felt that improvement was needed to strengthen sector infrastructure for pandemic recovery and long-term sector resiliency.

Capacity was scored on a variety of indicators relating to topics of financial management, governance, program design and management, organizational management, and human resources.<sup>8</sup>

Each category was scored on a scale of one to four, with 1 meaning ‘none or minimal capacity’ (indicators absent or present as a bare minimum), and 4 meaning ‘excellent capacity’ (all/almost all indicators present with consistent and solid application).

### Assessed Areas of Organizational Capacity

Topic	Overall Average Capacity Score	Assessed Categories
Financial management	3.62	Financial system
		Financial documentation
		Financial status
Governance	3.34	Mission
		Governing or advisory board
		Succession
		Operational policies and procedures
		Risk management framework
Program design and management	3.21	Community engagement strategy
		Operational plans
		Monitoring and evaluation plan
Organizational management	3.11	Strategic plan
		Business plan
		Documentation and communication strategy
		Primary stakeholders
		Staffing plan
Human resources	2.81	Compensation
		Staff performance management
		Volunteers/interns

<sup>8</sup> The capacity components assessed in this survey are derived from [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool \(OCAT\), July 2018 \(advancingpartners.org\)](https://advancingpartners.org/resource/organizational-capacity-assessment-tool-ocat-july-2018). Various versions of OCAT have been widely used globally to assess capacity in community-based programming in health and related areas.

# Financial Management

Overall Average Score: 3.62

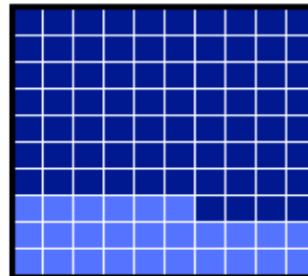
Percentage of respondents with:

■ Excellent capacity ■ Good capacity ■ Some capacity ■ None or minimal capacity

## Financial documentation

- **processes** are thorough, known and adhered to, and reviewed and updated as needed
- financial files are stored in a **secure location** and regularly **backed up**
- a **designated staff member** manages the financial files

(n=60)



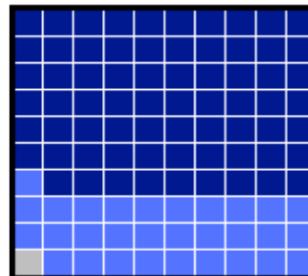
Average Score:

**3.73**

## Financial system, accounting, and internal control procedures

- **well documented**, appropriate, and have all required components for a fully operational and compliant system
- systems and procedures are **consistently adhered to**
- regularly **reviewed and updated**
- **known and understood** by trained staff

(n=61)

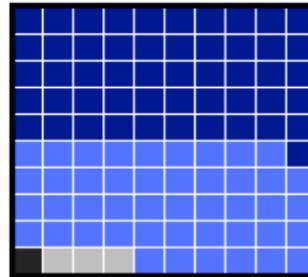


**3.67**

## Financial status

- **viable** and sustainable
- organization has the **cash flow** to operate its programs, meet financial obligations and overhead costs
- organizational **debt** is non-existent or easily manageable
- **healthy balance of revenue sources** including diverse grant funding, income-generating activities, and unrestricted income to meet budgeted expenditures
- financial strategy **aligns with the strategic plan** and is reviewed regularly

(n=61)



**3.44**

*"Significant deficit accumulating year after year; [we are] unable to sustain 2014 funding and wages with annual increases/inflation due to staff benefits, insurance, and more legal costs"*

# Governance

Overall Average Score: 3.34

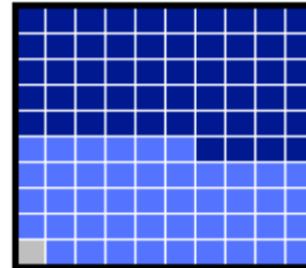
Percentage of respondents with:

Excellent capacity Good capacity Some capacity None or minimal capacity

## Mission, vision and philosophical approach

- clearly stated, **well-known** and broadly held by all staff
- **consistently used** to set direction and priorities

(n=62)



Average Score:

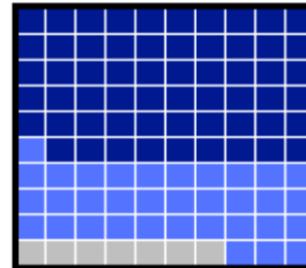
**3.52**

*"[Our mission, vision, and philosophical approach] were successful and fundamental in guiding us through the pandemic"*

## Governing or advisory board

- **strong and engaged** with diverse and relevant experience
- **aware** of changing community needs and realities
- provides **effective oversight** of strategic goals, programs and policies, financial status, and CEO/ED performance

(n=56)

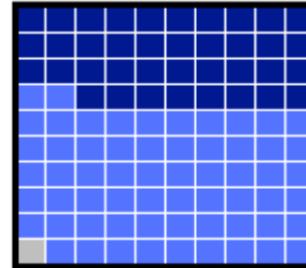


**3.52**

## Operational policies and procedures

- **well documented**
- **compliant** with all relevant regulations
- **known and followed** by all staff
- reviewed and **updated** on a regular schedule

(n=61)

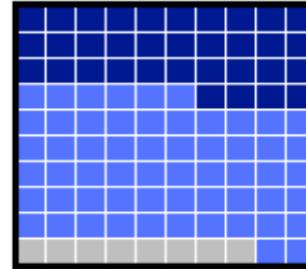


**3.36**

## Risk management framework

- **complete** and up to date
- used to **assess** and **plan** responses to manage potential threats in areas including governance, strategy, finance, compliance, human resources, program delivery, and organizational reputation

(n=60)

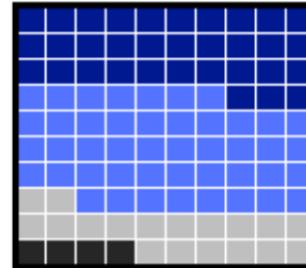


**3.25**

## Succession

- clear **succession plan** for the CEO/ED
- good depth in the senior management team to achieve a **smooth transition** without any significant risk to funding, program delivery or community relationships

(n=61)



**3.05**

# Program Design and Management

Overall Average Score: 3.21

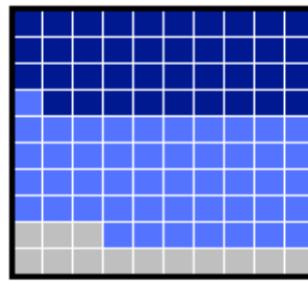
Percentage of respondents with:

■ Excellent capacity ■ Good capacity ■ Some capacity ■ None or minimal capacity

## Operational plans

- sufficiently **detailed**
- address program **goals, activities, and timelines**
- **reviewed** regularly
- programs have the **budget** and **staff** to implement successfully

(n=60)



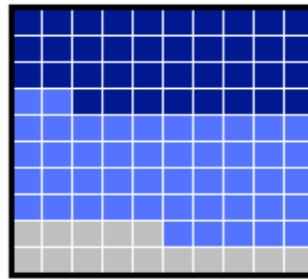
Average Score:  
**3.25**

"Operational plans are detailed, program monitoring of goals, activities and timeline in place and reviewed regularly, [however, we] DO NOT have the adequate budget or staff to implement successfully"

## Monitoring and evaluation plan

- **well-defined**
- clear **targets** and **indicators** for outcomes and impact
- staff have skills to collect, analyze and **report** data
- staff use **findings** to improve processes and outcomes
- there is a plan to **share information** regularly with stakeholders

(n=59)

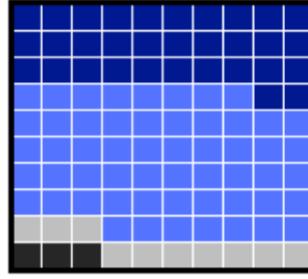


**3.22**

## Community engagement strategy

- **informs** individuals, families, and other program beneficiaries about programs and services
- mechanisms exist to **integrate** community's views into program design and revision

(n=60)



**3.15**

"Some engagement participation with local schools, [but] with the freeze to new intakes and current PDD intake preapproval / referral process, we have not actively promoted services"

# Organizational Management

Overall Average Score: 3.11

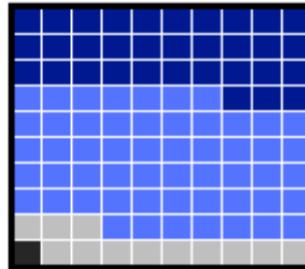
Percentage of respondents with:

■ Excellent capacity ■ Good capacity ■ Some capacity ■ None or minimal capacity

## Strategic plan

- developed with **staff input**
- **reviewed** periodically
- **measurable** goals, outcomes, operational workplan
- activities supported by an **approved budget**

(n=58)

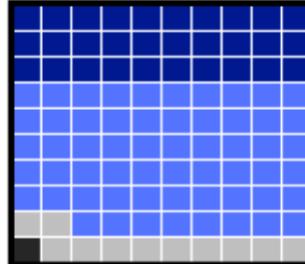


Average Score:  
**3.17**

## Business plan

- **sustainable**
- sufficient **funds** to support planned activities and priorities
- general operations **do not rely on a single program**
- capacity to submit **proposals** to attract new funding
- capacity to engage in **partnerships** to leverage resources

(n=54)

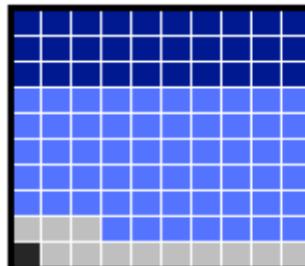


**3.15**

## Primary stakeholders

- stakeholders are **well known** and **strongly linked** to the organization through mechanisms for regular connectivity, information sharing or collaboration
- **formal agreements** or Memoranda of Understanding have been developed with one or more critical partners

(n=58)

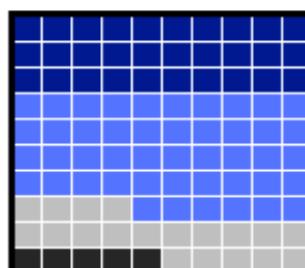


**3.14**

## Documentation and communication strategy

- contains **policies** and **templates** for information recording, storage and reporting, recognized branding, organizational promotional materials
- **website** and **social media** are up-to-date and used to share information
- communication function has **dedicated staff** for implementation and oversight

(n=57)



**3.00**

# Human Resources

Overall Average Score: 2.81

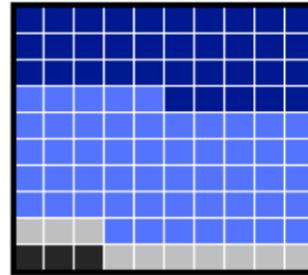
Percentage of respondents with:

Excellent capacity Good capacity Some capacity None or minimal capacity

## Staff performance management

- conducted **regularly**
- clear **objectives**, assessment **criteria, feedback**
- **supervisors** are aware of their responsibilities and trained to provide supportive supervision
- performance appraisals are conducted after probationary periods for **new staff** and at least annually for **all staff**

(n=61)



Average Score:

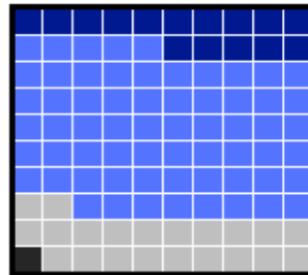
**3.18**

*"We have processes in place, but poor performance for ensuring consistent regular annual appraisals are completed; it is just another task of continually growing tasks for supervisors to complete"*

## Staffing plan

- identifies **roles** and **positions** needed by the organization to achieve strategic and program goals
- detailed **job descriptions** and list of competencies and qualifications
- **qualified** and **skilled** staff in all positions
- **turnover** and **absenteeism** are minimal
- **vacancy** data is documented
- **recruitment** to fill vacancies is rapid and effective

(n=61)

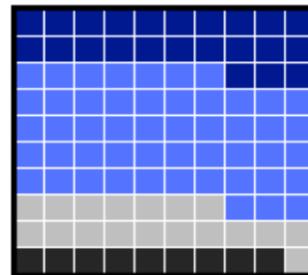


**2.90**

## Compensation

- compensation for paid positions is **aligned with industry standards**
- **competitive** wages
- wide range of **perks and benefits**, professional development opportunities, and long term incentives such as contribution to pension and registered saving plans

(n=62)



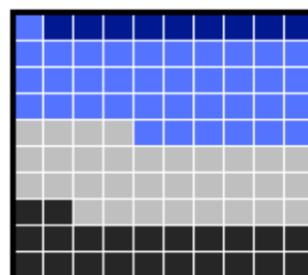
**2.85**

*"The sector cannot even compete any longer. Staff [are] able to find unskilled jobs in other sectors with better hourly wage starts and benefits we cannot offer"*

## Volunteers/interns

- recruited and managed based on a **comprehensive policy** that includes guidance on selection, supervision, engagement, and performance review
- **selected** for their skills, **trained, recognized**, and provided **opportunities** to grow and contribute meaningfully to the organization
- **turnover** is minimal
- **vacancies** are filled rapidly and effectively

(n=35)



**2.31**

*"Since our agency has put in place that all staff, volunteers, and contractors have to be fully vaccinated, this has decreased the amount of people volunteering"*

## Highest-Rated Capacity Categories

### Financial management

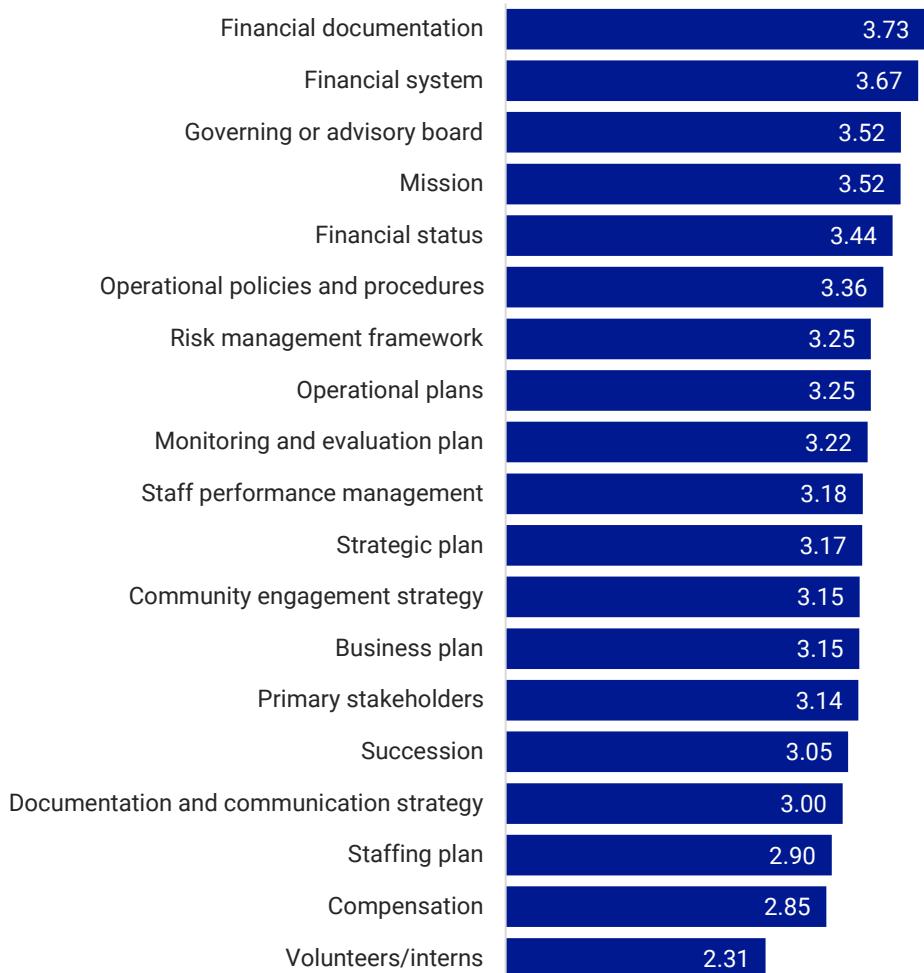
**(3.62):** Overall, organizations scored their capacity as high in aspects of financial management (financial documentation (3.73), financial systems (3.67) and financial status (3.44)). These are all areas that are integral for the operations of an organization, and in the confusion and urgency of a pandemic, were likely prioritized due to necessity. Reported concerns in these categories included organizations working to diversify funding, struggles with stagnant funding, micromanagement, and difficulties fundraising during the pandemic.

### Mission, vision, and philosophical approach

**(3.52):** Many organizations felt that their values and mission were widely known and upheld through the organization. This was, however, not a universal opinion; some organizations indicated that COVID-related burnout had impacted staff's usual behaviours and adherence to their values.

### Overview: All Organizational Capacity Scores

Provincial Data 2021



*"We have found during COVID that employees do not have the same drive in their work beliefs or habits; I believe this is due to being tired."*

**Governing or advisory board (3.52):** Similar to the categories of financial management, respondents rated their relationships with their governing or advisory board as very high.

## Lowest-Rated Capacity Categories

**Volunteers/interns (2.31):** While only 35 organizations reported using volunteers or interns in their organization, those who did so reported that they had little capacity to recruit, train, recognize, and replace volunteers/interns in a timely and efficient manner, and that these issues had only been magnified due to the pandemic.

**Compensation (2.85):** Wages have been a chronic issue in the CDS sector; the average hourly wage in 2020 was \$21.50, and 54% of the entire CDS workforce made less than \$20.00 an hour. Frontline CDSW have an average hourly wage of \$18.76, and wages in the CDS sector remain much lower than in other social services.<sup>9</sup> With the second-lowest score of all categories (2.85), low wages and demanding work remain strong barrier to recruitment and retention in the sector.

*"We have no long-term incentives such as pension plans and registered saving plans. With the bulk of our supervisory positions aging, this is probably one of the biggest drawbacks [of] working in this field. Some of us have been working for 25 to 40 years and when we retire, we leave with nothing."*

**Staffing plans (2.90):** Staffing plans are dependent on many other ongoing sector issues, including high turnover in low-wage frontline positions, recruitment in a small and overstretched workforce, and finding qualified and skilled staff in a sector that has limited post-secondary training opportunities.

*"Although we have excellent HR practices, we have had major challenges with recruitment and coverage of program areas during the pandemic, especially during outbreaks. We are still experiencing challenges in recruitment."*

**Documentation and communication strategy (3.00):** Engaging stakeholders without clearly articulated communication plans or inconsistent documentation can hinder communicative consistency across an organization. The relatively low score in this area suggests that organizations may need to invest additional time and reflection in this area when the stresses of the pandemic lessen and internal capacity allows.

## Summary

Though most CDS organizations have experienced increased demands, the majority also feel that they have had the ability to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic. There are, however, a notable number of organizations that are struggling. Though organizational capacity overall was quite high, organizations were weakest in compensation and staffing capacity – areas that are critical for providing consistent, quality supports. If quality services are to be maintained, these areas need an urgent and impactful response.

<sup>9</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. 2021. *ACDS Survey 2020: COVID-19 Impact on CDS Workforce*. Calgary, AB.

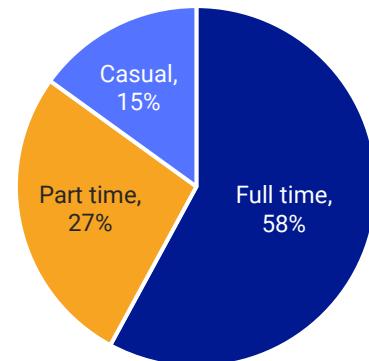
## Workforce

### Employment Status

The proportion of employees working full time as opposed to part time or casual workers has remained relatively consistent over the past six years. 58% of CDS employees (n=8,310) in October 2021 were working full time, slightly lower than 2019 (60%) and 2020 (62%).

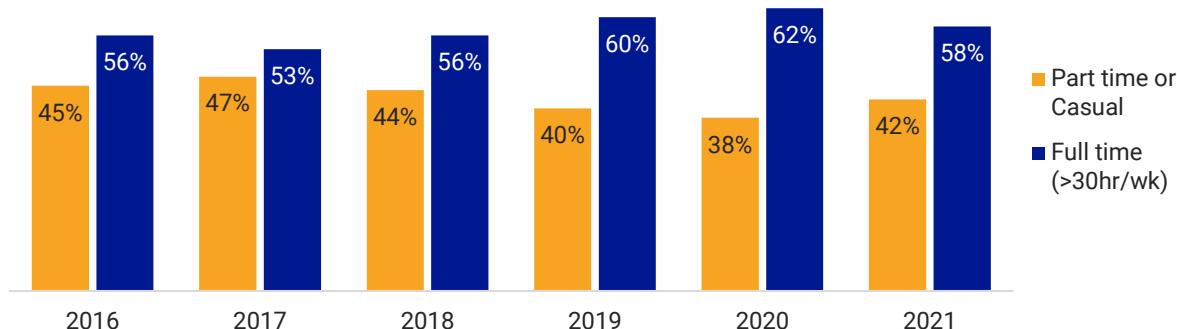
#### Employment Status

Provincial Data 2021



#### Employment Status 6-Year Trend

Provincial Data 2016-2021

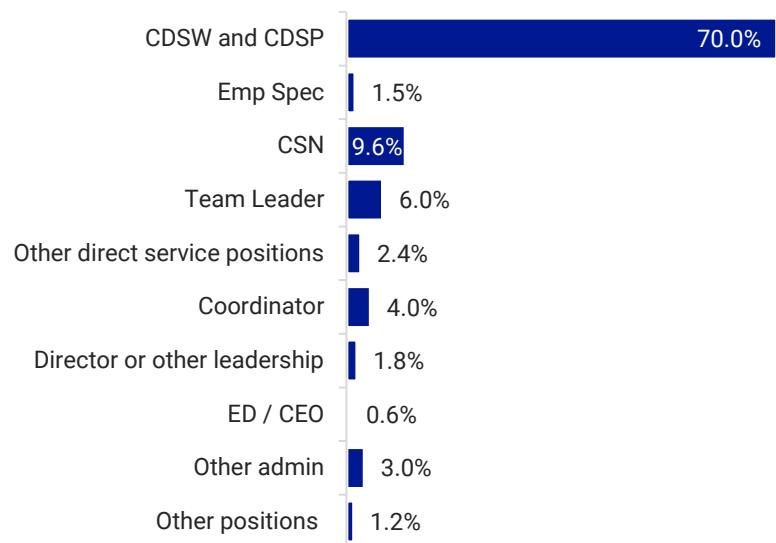


### Position

Frontline positions (Community Disability Service Workers [CDSW], Community Disability Service Practitioners [CDSP], Employment Specialists, Complex Support Needs Workers [CSN], Team Leaders, and other direct service positions) represent the vast majority of the CDS sector at 89% of the total workforce.

#### Positions in the CDS Sector

Provincial Data 2021 (n=60, 8,348 workers)



## COVID-Related Furloughs and Re-Hires

While the size of the workforce decreased by 7% in 2020,<sup>10</sup> there was moderate workforce restoration in 2021. Between January and October 2021, the size of the CDS workforce increased by 2%, showing some regrowth, though it is too early to say if this trend will result in full recovery.

3.2% of the October 2021 workforce consisted of employees who had been furloughed in 2020 and were rehired between January and October 2021. Of the 9,037 working employees in the sample, only an additional 104 previously employed workers were still expected to be rehired in the future (an additional 1.2%).

## Turnover

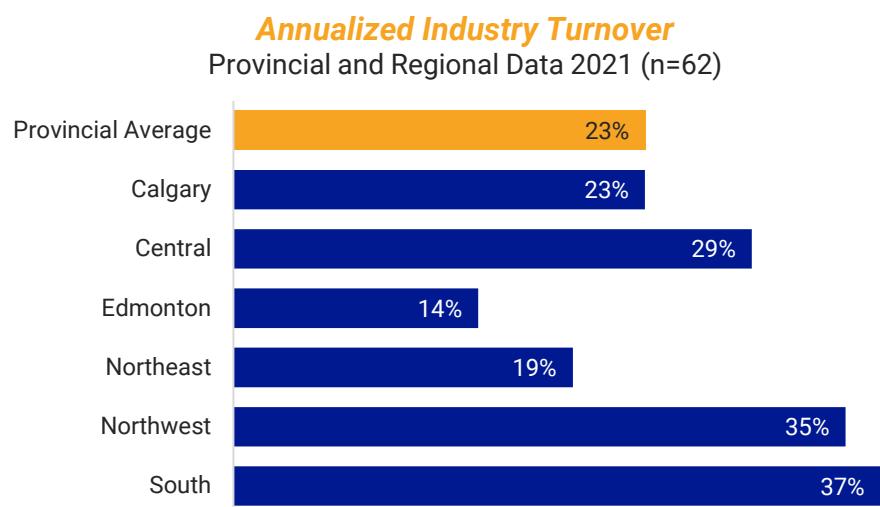
Industry turnover is the ratio of (a) the aggregate number of employees leaving their workplaces across all organization in the sample, to (b) the aggregate number of employees in these organizations over the same period. This is different from organizational turnover, which is the turnover experienced by an individual organization.<sup>11</sup>

*“[Our organization had 27% turnover in four months], resulting in a massive staffing crunch as an exhausted workforce exited the sector.”*

### Industry Turnover

In 2021, 1,740 employees left their jobs across 62 organizations during the 10-month period covered by ACDS Survey 2021, for an approximate annualized industry turnover rate of 23.3%.<sup>12</sup>

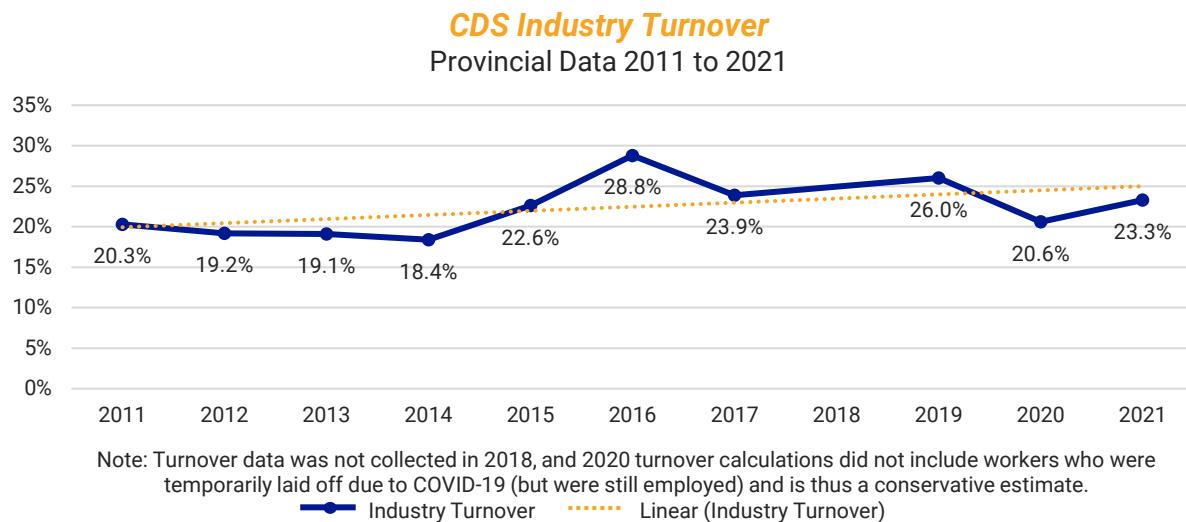
Industry turnover has displayed a trend of slowly increasing over the past 10 years, and has ranged between 18% to 28% annual turnover.



<sup>10</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. 2021. *ACDS Survey 2020: COVID-19 Impact on CDS Workforce*. Calgary, AB.

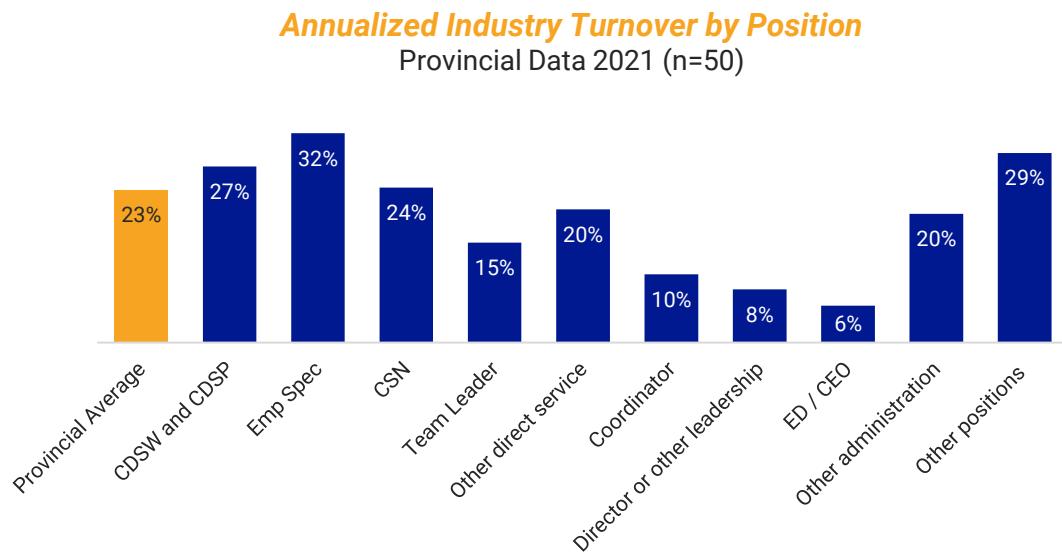
<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A for more information on industry and organizational turnover calculations.

<sup>12</sup> The turnover data for 2021 was collected between January 1 and October 31, 2021. The findings reported have been annualized, with the assumption that the turnover rate from November 1 to December 2021 would occur at approximately the same rate as the previous 10-month period.



### Industry Turnover by Position

Turnover by position was reported by 50 organizations. Turnover was highest among Employment Specialists (32%), Community Disability Service Workers and Practitioners (27%) and Complex Support Needs Workers (24%). Other non-frontline positions (which included social enterprise workers, project specialists, etc.) also had a high turnover rate at 29%.



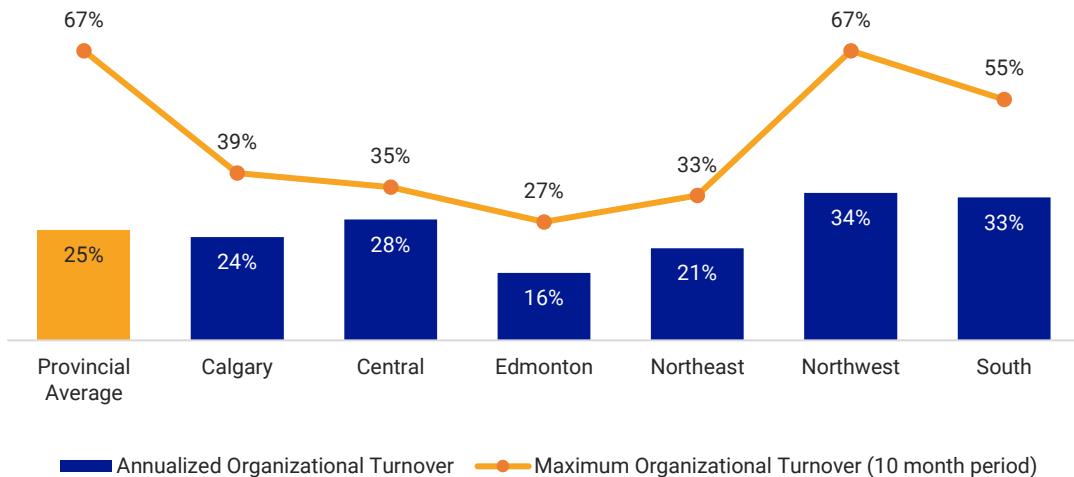
### Organizational Turnover

The average annualized organizational turnover in 2021 was 25.4% (21.1% turnover between January and October). The highest turnover experienced by a single organization was 67% in this ten-month period.

The Northwest and South regions had the highest organizational turnover, at an average of 34% and 33% turnover per organization. The Northwest region also had the highest single organizational turnover, with one organization reporting 67% turnover in the ten-month period.

### **Annualized Organizational Turnover and Maximum Reported Turnover**

Provincial and Regional Data 2021 (n=62)

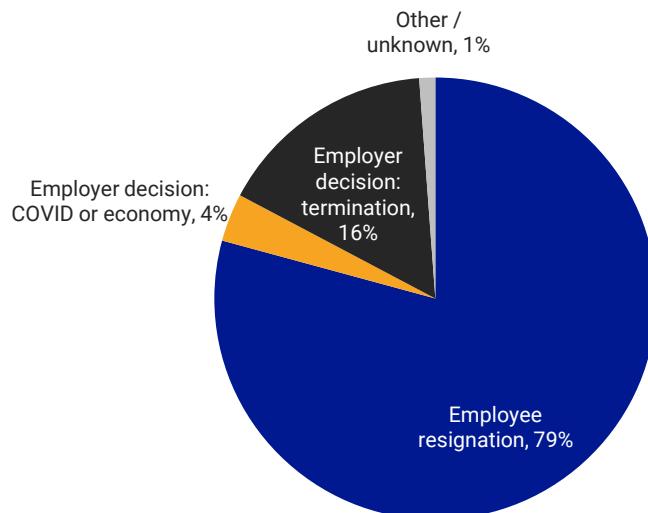


### **Reasons for Turnover**

57 organizations reported the reason for turnover of a total of 1,622 CDS employees. The vast majority (79%) of employees who left between January and October 2021 resigned voluntarily. In 2020, voluntary resignations were lower at 51% of turnover as many workers were laid off due to COVID-19 and economic concerns. However, in 2019 prior to the pandemic, employee resignations only made up 66% of turnover, considerably less than the 79% recorded in 2021.

### **Reasons for Turnover**

Provincial Data 2021 (n=57)



### **Reasons for Turnover**

Provincial and Regional Data 2021

Reason for Turnover	Provincial Average	Calgary	Central	Edmonton	Northeast	Northwest	South
	n = 57	n = 14	n = 12	n = 12	n = 4	n = 7	n = 8
<b>Employees in Sample</b>	1,622	351	502	326	57	114	272
Employee resignation	79%	69%	84%	83%	75%	67%	85%
Employer decision: COVID or economy	4%	4%	2%	2%	7%	15%	3%
Employer decision: termination	16%	27%	14%	14%	18%	10%	11%
Other / unknown	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	9%	1%

## Vacancies

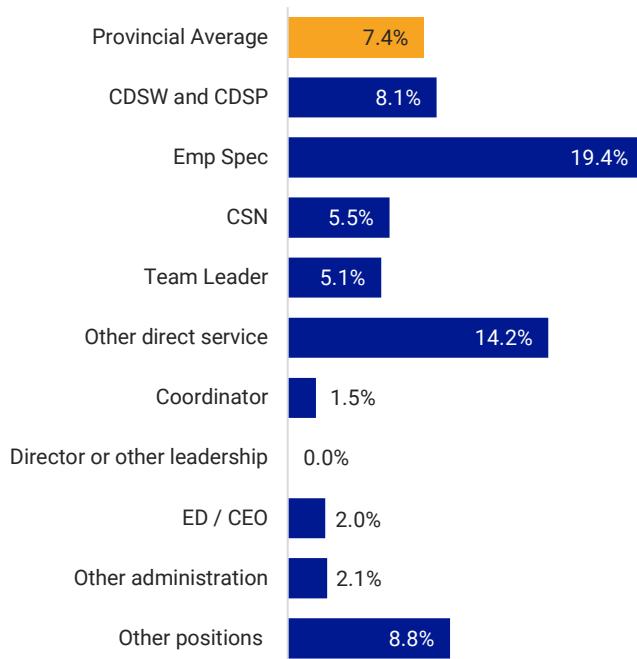
At the time of data collection (November to early December 2021), 579 vacancies were reported by 53 organizations, with an average vacancy rate of 7.4% (compared to 5.9% in 2020 and 5.4% in 2019).

Vacancy rates were highest in the frontline positions of Employment Specialists at 19.4%, other direct service positions at 14.2%, and CDSW and CDSP at 8.1%.

Vacancy rates varied greatly across the regions, ranging from 3.8% in Edmonton to 15.8% in the South region.

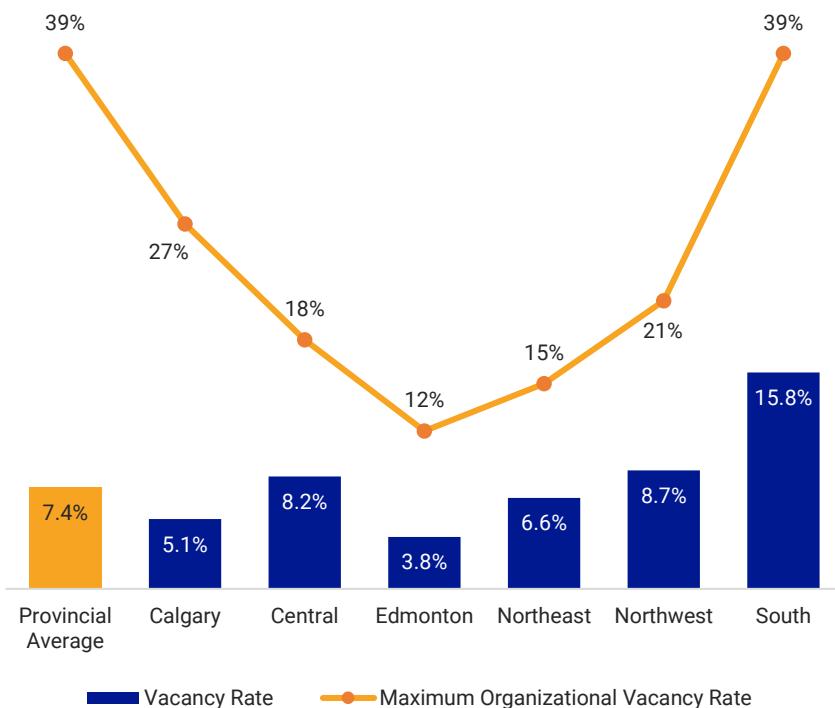
### Vacancy Rate by Position

Provincial Data 2021 (n=53)



### Average and Maximum Vacancy Rates

Provincial and Regional Data 2021 (n=53)



*“Due to regional issues, we are unable to hire employees fast enough to fill vacancies. [We] currently have 50+ vacant positions.”*

## Appendix A: Technical Notes on Research and Data Analysis

### Representativeness of the Sample

The survey population consists of ACDS member agencies, the majority of whom are contracted directly by PDD. 80% of all 171 PDD-contracted agencies are ACDS members.<sup>13</sup>

The survey sample represents 37% of all PDD-funded organizations. The respondents provide services to a total of 7,614 individuals, the majority of whom make up a large percentage of the 12,578 Albertans receiving supports and services from the PDD program.<sup>14</sup>

Sample representativeness was assessed relative to: (i) the population of all PDD-contracted organizations (a larger population than just ACDS member organizations), and (ii) the number of individuals supported by the PDD program as at December 31, 2020. Edmonton region service providers were under-represented, while smaller organizations (serving fewer individuals) were over-represented in the Calgary and Northeast regions.

Region	Number of PDD-funded Service Providers				Organization Size (Individuals in Service)			
	Population <sup>a</sup>		Survey Sample		Population <sup>b</sup>		Survey Sample	
	n	%	Representative n (% x N)	Actual n (%)	n	%	Representative n (% x N)	Actual n <sup>c</sup>
Calgary	37	22%	14	15 (24%)	4,080	32%	2,445	1,808 (24%)
Central	35	20%	13	13 (21%)	2,001	16%	1,199	1,371 (18%)
Edmonton	47	27%	17	14 (22%)	3,903	31%	2,339	2,678 (35%)
Northeast	11	6%	4	4 (6%)	710	6%	425	259 (3%)
Northwest	20	12%	7	8 (13%)	579	5%	347	400 (5%)
South	21	12%	8	9 (14%)	1,433	11%	859	1,098 (14%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>N = 63 (100%)</b>		<b>12,706</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>N = 7,614 (100%)</b>	
<b>Sample representation</b>		<b>37% of PDD-funded agencies</b>			<b>59.9% of all individuals in service</b>			

(a) Number of known service locations contracted by PDD in each region (171 regional service locations; 173 excluding 2 sites directly run by AHS).

(b) Government of Alberta Open Data Portal. *PDD Active Caseload*. Data from December 2020 (most recent available at time of writing). Total cases taken as sum of regional totals rather than rolling average as presented in PDD Active Caseload data.

Alberta regions have changed since 2019, with the absorption of North Central into the Northeast and Northwest regions. As the vast majority of service providers were moved from North Central to the Northeast region, North Central individuals in service were added to Northeast for an approximate total.

(c) Aggregate sum of individuals in service as at October 31, 2021, as reported by survey respondents.

<sup>13</sup> Alberta Council of Disability Services. Internal Accreditation data; total number of PDD-contracted agencies includes multi-regional sites, minus PDD-funded AHS sites.

<sup>14</sup> Alberta Community and Social Services. Alberta Government Open Data: PDD Data Visualization – to December 2020. Last updated April 1, 2021.

## Year-Over-Year Comparisons

Comparisons should be made with caution and limited to assessing general sector trends as ACDS Annual Survey respondents fluctuate from year to year. Additionally, during data collection in 2020, cases were at their to-date highest, whereas during data collection in 2021, active COVID-19 cases were relatively low.

Due to the timing and nature of the survey, data was only collected from January to October 2021. As Omicron cases only began to surge in December, this survey does not include data or analysis of the late 2021 surge of Omicron in Alberta.

## Margin of Error for Proportional Survey Questions

The ACDS Survey 2021 has a survey population of 155 regional service providers that make up ACDS' membership. With a finite survey population of 155, the margin of error for proportional survey statistics can be calculated with finite population correction, as seen in the formula below:

$$\text{Margin of error} = Z * \frac{\sqrt{p * (1 - p)}}{\sqrt{\frac{(N - 1) * n}{N - n}}}$$

**The margin of error for the overall proportional provincial statistics reported is estimated to be 8.01% at a 90% confidence level** (N=155, n=63, p=0.5), though this is approximate due to issues of participation bias inherent in a survey of this type.

The variable p represents the proportion of respondents who have responded positively to a proportional survey question, e.g., 77% of respondents indicated they provided community living services. As p varies depending on the proportional response, margins of error differ depending on the proportion of respondents who chose the response in question –i.e., a question with an answer of 2% will have a much smaller margin of error than a question with an answer of 50% of the survey sample. To calculate the most conservative margin of error for provincial percentages, a p of 0.5 (50%) was used –in practice, province-level statistics for proportional survey questions likely have a margin of error lying somewhere between 1% and 8%.

## Turnover Calculations

Turnover rates were calculated at provincial and regional levels.

**Industry turnover (overall turnover)** was calculated based on the aggregate number of employees. In the 2020 ACDS Workforce Survey, data was not annualized due to the unusual circumstances of the pandemic and the uncertainty of the remainder of the year. Prior to 2020, turnover data was regularly annualized to provide an easily comparable annual turnover rate, and thus data was once again annualized for comparison purposes in the ACDS Survey 2021.

$$\text{Industry turnover (\%)} = \frac{(\# \text{ employees who left between Jan 1 and Oct 31 2021}) * 1.2}{(\# \text{ employees on Jan 1 2021} + \# \text{ employees on Oct 31 2021})} \div 2$$

Similarly, the following formula used to calculate turnover by position:

$$\text{Turnover by position (\%)} = \frac{(\# \text{ employees in position who left between Jan 1 and Oct 31 2021}) * 1.2}{(\# \text{ employees on Jan 1 2021} + \# \text{ employees on Oct 31 2021})} \div 2$$

**Organizational turnover** was calculated by taking the sum of each organization's turnover and dividing by the number of summed organizations.

*Average organizational turnover (%)*

$$= \frac{\sum \frac{(\# \text{employees in organization who left between Jan 1 and Oct 31 2021}) * 1.2}{(\# \text{employees on Jan 1 2021} + \# \text{employees on Oct 31 2021})}}{2}$$
$$= \frac{\# \text{of organizations}}{\# \text{of organizations}}$$

## **Vacancy Calculations**

The percent of positions vacant was calculated by dividing the sum of vacancies, by the sum of vacancies and the total number of employees within the responding organizations as at October 31, 2021.

## Appendix B: Respondent Profile Regional Breakdowns

### Populations Supported: Age Groups

Provincial and Regional Data 2021

Age Group	Provincial Average	Calgary	Central	Edmonton	Northeast	Northwest	South
	n = 63	n = 15	n = 13	n = 14	n = 4	n = 8	n = 9
Children (under 16 years)	30%	27%	38%	43%	25%	13%	22%
Youth (16 to 18 years)	40%	40%	38%	43%	25%	25%	56%
Adults (18 to 64 years)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Seniors (65 years and older)	68%	67%	85%	71%	75%	38%	67%

### Populations Supported: Disability Type

Provincial and Regional Data 2021

Age Group	Provincial Average	Calgary	Central	Edmonton	Northeast	Northwest	South
	n = 63	n = 15	n = 13	n = 14	n = 4	n = 8	n = 9
Developmental Disability	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Autism Spectrum Disorders	90%	100%	92%	86%	100%	88%	78%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders	87%	93%	100%	93%	100%	75%	56%
Dual Diagnosis	78%	73%	92%	79%	75%	75%	67%
Brain Injury	73%	80%	69%	79%	75%	63%	67%
Medically Fragile	71%	67%	69%	86%	75%	75%	56%
Complex Behaviours	65%	67%	62%	79%	75%	63%	44%
Other	14%	20%	8%	14%	25%	13%	11%

### Programs Offered

Provincial and Regional Data 2021/22

Programs	Provincial Average	Calgary	Central	Edmonton	Northeast	Northwest	South
	n = 63	n = 15	n = 13	n = 14	n = 4	n = 8	n = 9
Community access and recreation	84%	87%	100%	64%	100%	75%	89%
Overnight staffed residences	70%	40%	77%	79%	100%	88%	67%
Supported independent living	63%	47%	69%	57%	100%	75%	67%
Employment supports	54%	33%	77%	36%	100%	50%	67%
Out-of-home respite	48%	47%	62%	50%	25%	25%	56%
Support homes / supportive roommates	46%	40%	54%	64%	25%	25%	44%
In-home respite	35%	33%	54%	36%	50%	0%	33%
Other direct supports	21%	13%	31%	14%	50%	0%	33%
Other supports for children / youth	21%	13%	31%	29%	0%	0%	33%

## Projected Operating Revenue Sources

Provincial and Regional Data 2021/22

Operating Revenue Sources	Provincial Average	Calgary	Central	Edmonton	Northeast	Northwest	South
	n = 63	n = 15	n = 13	n = 14	n = 4	n = 8	n = 9
PDD	85.2%	82.4%	81.2%	86.6%	91.4%	86.4%	89.9%
FSCD	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	1.0%	1.8%
Alberta Health	0.5%	1.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%
Other Alberta Government	4.3%	6.3%	3.0%	5.7%	2.5%	4.0%	1.5%
Municipal Government	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Federal Government	0.9%	0.9%	2.9%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fundraising (inc. gifts, donations)	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%
Social Enterprise (inc. sales, fees)	3.1%	2.1%	3.8%	1.2%	3.2%	6.8%	3.2%
Other	3.9%	4.6%	5.7%	4.3%	2.1%	1.5%	2.4%
Average Total Revenue	\$8,674,000	\$9,165,000	\$12,503,000	\$4,780,000	\$4,354,000	\$4,973,000	\$8,674,000