



Minnesota Department of Human Services

Strategic Areas for Direct Care/Support Workforce Summit Small Group Sessions

As of June 30, 2016

The Advisory Committee for the Direct Care/Support Workforce Summit has identified four issues areas to be debated, discussed, and explored by invited Summit participants in the Small Group Strategy Sessions during the event. The following provides additional detail about these four areas including a bit of background, name and brief description, and the identified the next steps.

Summit participants are to identify their top 2 strategic areas that they would most like to discuss during the small group sessions at the event.

Background

The identified issue areas are a combination of interrelated topics about how to improve the quality of the job of providing the direct care or direct support to all in need of this type of care and support. Discussion about any one issue area will likely lead to incorporating information and responses in one or more of the three issue areas. This is expected because there are no simple, discrete answers or strategies that when put into action will quickly solve the direct care/support worker shortage. Some issues are easier and some will take more effort than others. All issues deserve attention in any effort to identify strategies directed at growing (recruiting as well as retaining) the direct care/support workforce.

Strategic area 1 – Recruitment/Substitution/Technology Use

Sometimes recruitment is a numbers challenge but it can be more than just getting more people. It can be about getting people that will stay or about using people differently and supported with technology. How can that be better done? Do peoples' homes and congregate settings training people about the use of technology sufficiently? Are there substitutes like volunteers and family caregivers that need more consideration and support?

Strategic area 2 – Retention/Compensation/Job Redesign

What goes into retention of workers? How much and how to pay people? Compensation comprises several elements, many benefit sets are flexible, such as cafeteria benefits, time off, flex time. Livable wages are an issue along with health insurance for many. Work schedules and the demands of the job also play a role. Can these jobs be redesigned or supported in a better way.

Strategic area 3 – Quality/Support/ Training and Credentialing

There two aspects to job quality, that of the job to the job holder and of the work being done. Concentrate on how an employer can change a job to make it more meaningful to the job holder. Sometimes it about support and creating clear expectations, sometimes it's about the willingness of employer to participate in on-going quality improvement, and opportunity to strengthen the relationships between recipient and caregiver. Are there others? Also, training based on core competencies, apprentice programs, peers support and certificates that lead to new duties.

Strategic area 4 – Career Ladders/Work Culture/Welcoming Environment

Opportunities for advancement can provide meaning to a job. However, work culture and the work environment play a role. How can career ladders work and work better? How can a work culture be optimized? What are the steps and processes of a welcoming environment?

Next Steps

- Develop for each issue area brief 1-3 papers that explore the topics. Purpose of these papers is to provide background information about the importance of these topics as part of a solution to growing this workforce.
- Ask Advisory Committee members to review and comment on these papers
- Provide papers to Participants at Summit for use during Small Group Strategy Sessions