



# ALBERTA COUNCIL OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ACDS)

## 2014 PULSE CHECK SURVEY



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**1. Introduction**

1.1. In September 2014, a short survey was distributed to service providers in all seven service regions to request their participation in the quick online survey.

**2. Survey Intent**

2.1. The online survey was developed to gather input from senior leaders of organizations within the region to gain their perspective of what is currently happening within the region and to shape the future focus of the council’s strategic planning. The survey was to provide a snapshot in time of any changes, if noticeable, from their perspective. The information is likely largely anecdotal in nature and is not evidence-based.

2.2. The survey focused on the following key themes:

- Notable changes in workforce trends over the past six months
- Strategies used to attract and retain workers that appear to be effective
- Current challenges faced to attract and retain qualified employees
- Top three priorities for addressing these challenges

2.3. The survey was designed using Survey Monkey website tool.

2.4. As this survey is scheduled every two years, the results have been compared to 2012 information gathered using the same survey questions.

**3. Sample size**

3.1. The survey was distributed by the workforce councils to agencies that provide services to adults with developmental disabilities; typically through established service provider councils. The seven regions represented are: (1) Calgary, (2) Central, (3) Edmonton, (4) Northeast, (5) Northwest, (6) North Central and (7) South. The survey was also distributed through the ACDS membership list. Table 1 compares the response rate of the 2014 pulse check survey to 2012’s participation.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

	2014			2012		
	Number of Respondents	%	Service Providers to Receive Survey	Number of Respondents	%	Service Providers to Receive Survey
Surveys Completed	65	50%	131	81	49%	166

#### 4. Reported trends in the workforce for the past six (6) months

4.1. Organizations were asked to report any changes to retention rates, vacancies and applications received for these vacancies over the past six months. The respondents were not required to provide statistical information; therefore, this information is not supported by evidence-based data. The results for 2014 and 2012 are identified in the following tables:

**Table 2: Reported changes in turnover**

Position	2014			2012		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Front-line direct service positions	38.5%	15.4%	46.2%	11.0%	39.0%	50.0%
Front-line Supervisors	27.7%	7.7%	64.6%	14.0%	24.0%	62.0%
Managers	15.4%	10.8%	73.8%	11.0%	12.0%	77.0%

**Table 3: Reported changes in vacancies**

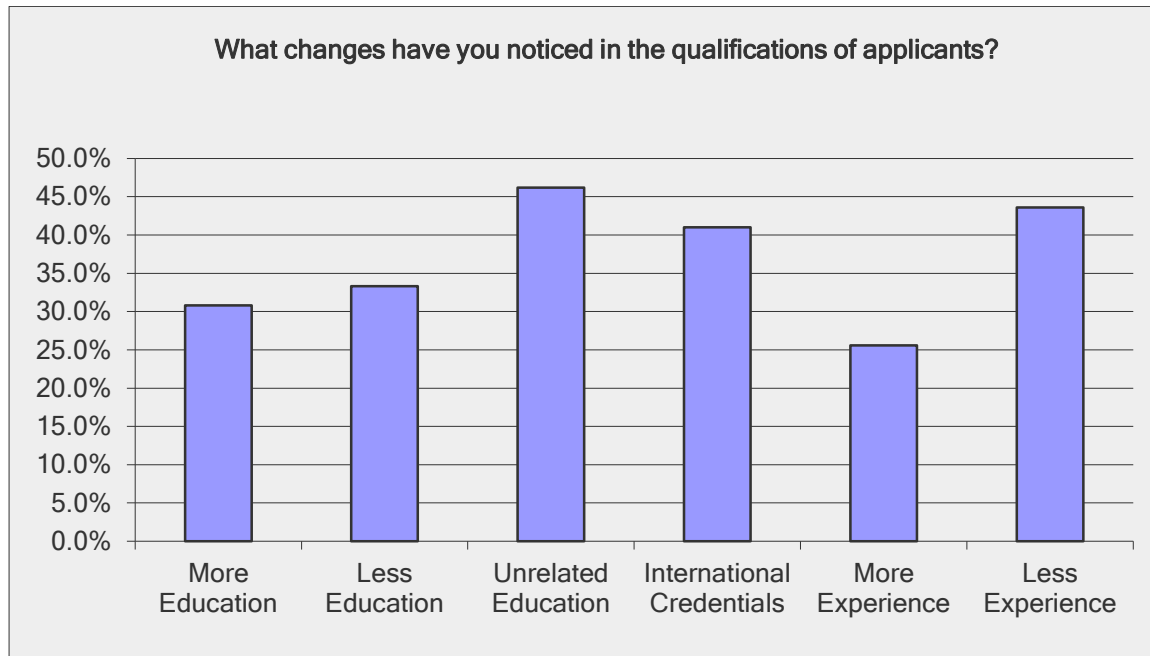
Position	2014			2012		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Vacancies	40.0%	13.8%	46.2%	42.0%	21.0%	37.0%

**Table 4: Reported changes in applicants applying for positions**

In 2012 59% of respondents anecdotally indicated that they had been seeing a decrease in applicant qualifications.

Position	2014				2012			
	Change		Increase	Decrease	Change		Increase	Decrease
	Yes	No			Yes	No		
Number of applicants	72.3%	27.7%	46.8%	53.2%	64.2%	35.8%	40.4%	59.6%
Qualifications of applicants	60.0%	40.0%			53.1%	46.9%		

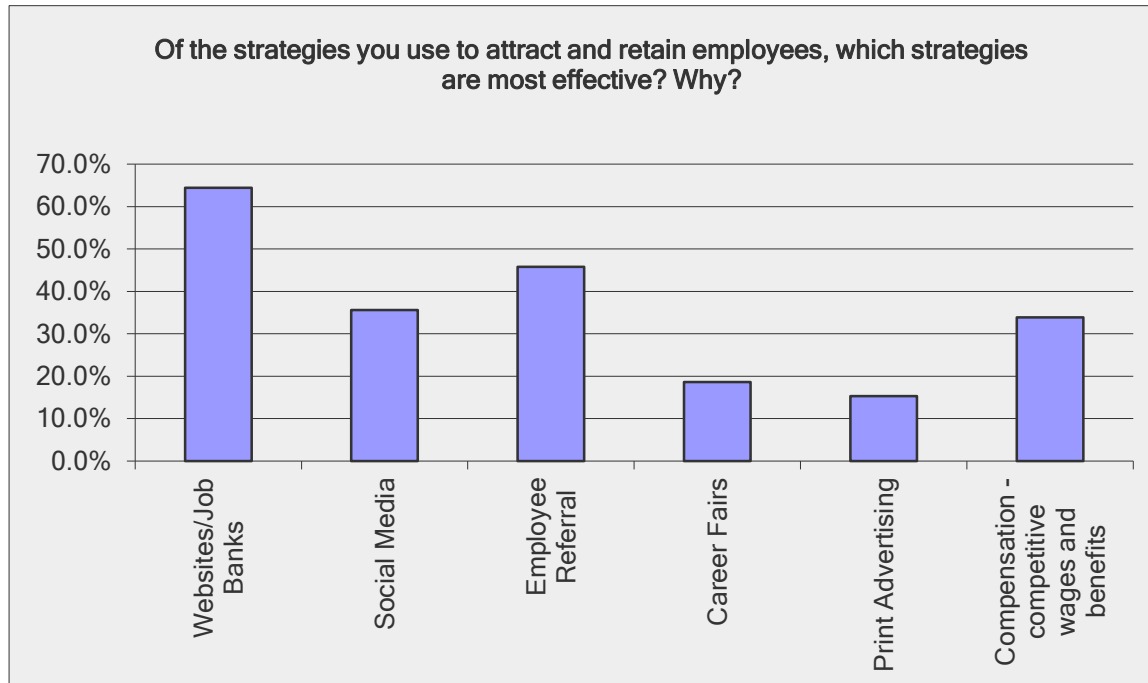
**Chart 1: Reported changes in qualifications of applicants in 2014**



## 5. Strategies effective in recruiting and retaining employees

- 5.1. Respondents were asked to identify strategies that were effective in recruiting and retaining employees. Chart 2 identifies the most commonly used strategies.
- 5.2. The top strategies in 2012, listed in order of frequency, were: (1) online recruitment, (2) employee referral programs and (3) positive work environments.

**Chart 2: Strategies effective in recruiting and retaining employees in 2015**



### **Other – Please Specify**

- On site time paid foundations and 1 year certificate in disability services; cost for certificate course s subsidized.
- Kijiji
- Internal promotion of new programs and transfers
- Reach for people seeking employment
- Higher exposure rate.
- Still losing people to AHS as aides. Wages and shift differential is the reason.
- This seems to provide a pre-selection for workers and they tend to have the right outlook for our sector.
- I believe most of my new employees arrive as a result of word of mouth or by accessing our address on the PDD website. I do not advertise
- Signage outside our building
- We find that people are generally unaware of what this job entails and so often a personal connection to another satisfied employee will bring good potential candidates to our door.

**6. Challenges to recruit and retain employees**

- 6.1. Current challenges to recruit and retain qualified employees were identified in the survey.
- 6.2. These indicate little changes from 2012 survey results. The top challenges in 2012, in order of frequency, were: (1) compensation, (2) unqualified applicants, (3) competition from other sectors and (4) lack of training resources.

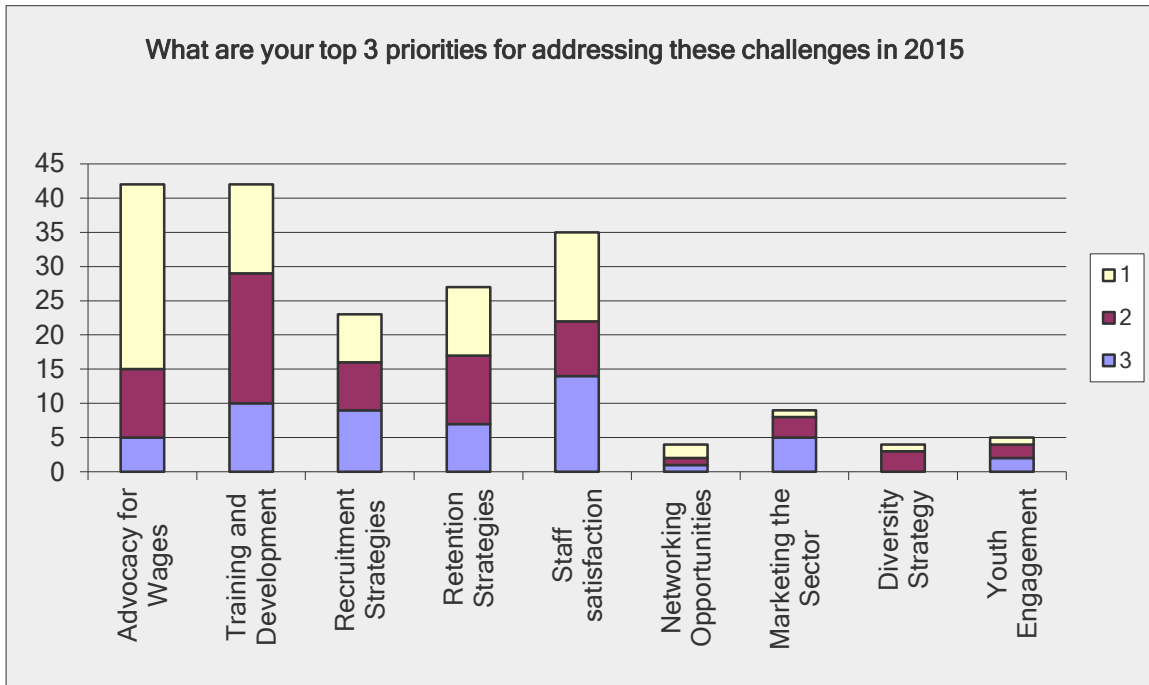
**Chart 3: Challenges to attract and retain qualified employees in 2014**



**7. Top three priorities for organizations to address challenges in 2015**

- 7.1. The areas identified most often as a priority for the organizations were similar to the results in 2012.
- 7.2. The top priorities identified in 2012, in order of frequency, were (1) advocacy for wages, (2) training and development and (3) recruitment strategies.

**Chart 4: Top 3 priorities to address challenges in 2015**

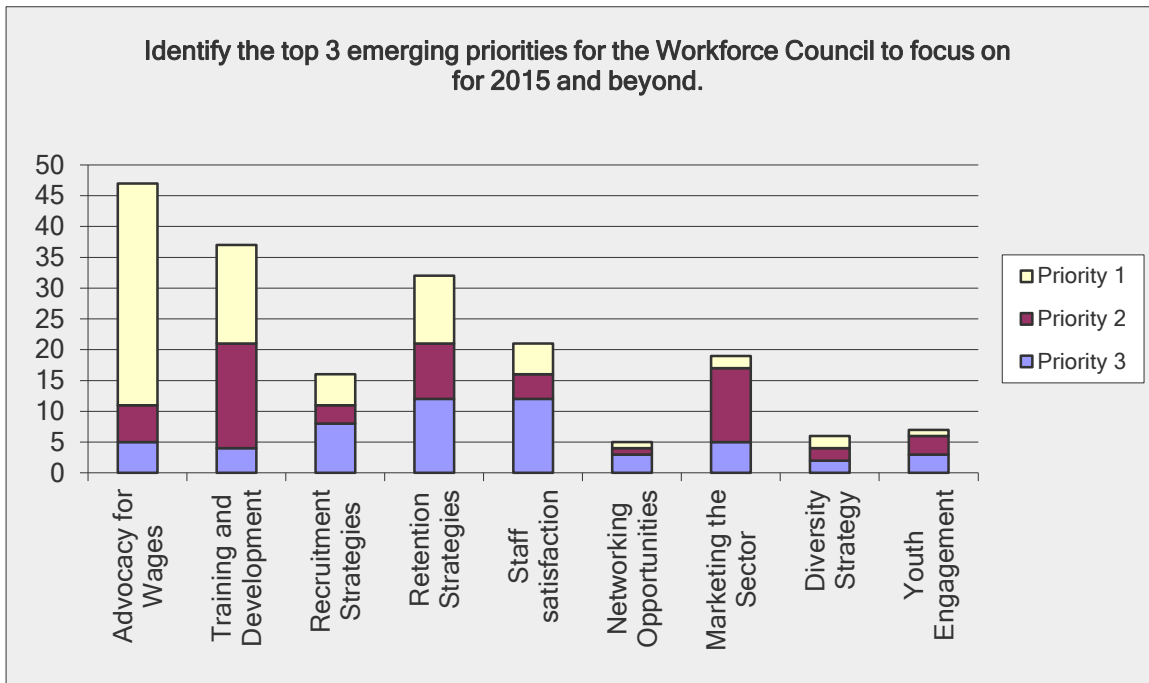




**8. Top three emerging priorities consistent across the regions**

- 8.1. Service providers were asked to identify emerging priorities for the Workforce Councils to focus on.
- 8.2. These priorities were similar to the themes identified in 2012. The top emerging priorities in 2012, in order of frequency, (1) were compensation, (2) training support and (3) sector awareness.

**Chart 5: Emerging priorities for the Workforce Councils to focus on for 2015**



## **Appendix A – Sample Pulse Check 2014 Survey**

We are asking for a few minutes of your time to complete a quick online survey. This survey will provide us with your impressions of the workforce trends over the past six months.

1. Has the turnover rate for front-line direct service positions

<input type="radio"/> Increased
<input type="radio"/> Decreased
<input type="radio"/> Remained the same

2. Has the turnover rate for front-line supervisors

<input type="radio"/> Increased
<input type="radio"/> Decreased
<input type="radio"/> Remained the same

3. Has the turnover rate for managers

<input type="radio"/> Increased
<input type="radio"/> Decreased
<input type="radio"/> Remained the same

4. Has the number of vacancies

<input type="radio"/> Increased
<input type="radio"/> Decreased
<input type="radio"/> Remained the same

5. Have you noticed a change in the number of applicants applying for positions

<input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No

6. If you answered “yes” to question five; has the number of applicants

<input type="radio"/> Increased
<input type="radio"/> Decreased

7. Have you noticed a change in the qualifications of applicants applying for positions?

<input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No
*If “yes” respondents taken to question 8
*If “no” respondents taken to question 9

8. What changes have you noticed in the qualifications of applicants?

<input type="radio"/> More Education
<input type="radio"/> Less Education
<input type="radio"/> Unrelated Education
<input type="radio"/> International Credentials
<input type="radio"/> More Experience
<input type="radio"/> Less Experience
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)

9. Of the strategies you use to attract and retain employees, which strategies are most effective?

<input type="radio"/> Websites/Job Banks
<input type="radio"/> Social Media
<input type="radio"/> Employee Referral
<input type="radio"/> Career Fairs
<input type="radio"/> Print Advertising
<input type="radio"/> Compensation – Competitive Wages and Benefits
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)

10. What are the challenges your organization faces in attracting and retaining qualified employees?

<input type="radio"/> Compensation
<input type="radio"/> Unqualified Applicants
<input type="radio"/> Competition from other Sectors
<input type="radio"/> Lack of Training Resources
<input type="radio"/> Inflexibility of Funding Structure
<input type="radio"/> Job Stress
<input type="radio"/> Undesirable Shifts
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)

11. What are your top 3 priorities for addressing these challenges in 2015?

	1	2	3
Advocacy for Wages			
Training and Development			
Recruitment Strategies			
Retention Strategies			
Staff Satisfaction			
Networking Opportunities			
Marketing the Sector			
Diversity Strategy			
Youth Engagement			
Other (please specify)			

12. Identify the top 3 emerging priorities for the (regional) Workforce Council to focus on for 2015 and beyond.

	1	2	3
Advocacy for Wages			
Training and Development			
Recruitment Strategies			
Retention Strategies			
Staff Satisfaction			
Networking Opportunities			
Marketing the Sector			
Diversity Strategy			
Youth Engagement			
Other (please specify)			

13. What kinds of updates or info sharing could the Calgary Workforce Council provide in order for the Service Provider Council and other external stakeholders to be well versed on initiatives, programs or events?

14. Comments