ALBERTA COUNCIL OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ACDS)

2010 PULSE CHECK SURVEY

RESULTS PREPARED FOR

**ACDS PROVINCIAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL PLANNING RETREAT
MAY 27 & 28, 2010**

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Appendix:

1. **Introduction**

    1.1. All six regional workforce councils distributed a pulse check survey in the spring of 2010 to service providers 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 snap shot 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. Results have been compared to 2009 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 six regions represented are: (1) Calgary, (2) Central, (3) Edmonton, (4) Northeast, (5) Northwest and (6) South. Table 1 compares the response rate of the 2010 pulse check survey to last year's participation.

Table 1: Response Rate

	2010			2009		
	Number of Respondents	**%**	**Service Providers to receive survey**	**Number of Respondents**	**%**	**Service Providers to receive survey**
Surveys Completed	74	53%	139	66	51%	129

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 2010 and 2009 are identified in the following tables:

Table 2: Reported changes in turnover

Position	2010			2009		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Front-line direct service positions	11%	39%	**50%**	8%	**60%**	32%
Front-line Supervisors	14%	24%	**62%**	15%	17%	**68%**
Managers	11%	12%	**77%**	9%	11%	**80%**

Table 3: Reported changes in vacancies

Position	2010			2009		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Vacancies	19%	**45%**	36%	8%	**63%**	**29%**

Table 4: Reported changes in applicants applying for positions

Position	2010		Increase ↑ applicants	Decrease ↓ applicants	2009		Increase ↑ applicants	Decrease ↓ applicants
	Change				Change			
	Yes	No			Yes	No		
Number of applicants applying	90.9%	9.1%	72.7%	27.3%	**93.8%**	6.3%	84.6%	15.4%
Qualifications of applicants applying	63.6%	36.4%			81.3%	**18.7%**		

 - indicates a change in qualifications, most indicated anecdotally that they are seeing an increase in applicant's qualifications in 2010

5. Strategies effective in recruiting and retaining employees

5.1. Respondents were asked to identify strategies that were effective in recruiting and retaining employees. Tables 5 and 6 identify the most commonly used strategies and compare these results to 2009 information.

Table 5: Strategies effective in attracting employees

2010 Strategies in order of Frequency	New in 2010	2009 Strategies in order of Frequency
Employee referral programs, word of mouth, career fairs		Employee referral programs, word of mouth
Online recruitment, websites and job banks		Compensation - offering competitive wages and benefit packages
Compensation - offering competitive wages and benefit packages		Diversified recruitment - websites, online

Table 6: Strategies effective in retaining employees

2010 Strategies in order of Frequency	New in 2010	2009 Strategies in order of Frequency
Organizational change: recognizing accomplishments and allowing for employee empowerment, creating supportive and creative environments		Compensation- benefits packages, pay increases.
Compensation - benefits packages, pay increases, paid mileage		Focus on training and development
Focus on training and personal development		Empowering employees and creating supportive work environments

6. Challenges to recruit and retain employees

6.1. Current challenges to recruit and retain qualified employees were identified in the survey. These indicate no change from 2009 survey results. Refer to table 7 for a list of the challenges reported most often by organizations to attract and retain qualified employees in 2010 and 2009.

Table 7: Challenges to attract and retain qualified employees

2010 Challenges in order of frequency	New in 2010	2009 challenges in order of Frequency
Compensation		Compensation
Finding and hiring qualified applicants		Finding and hiring qualified applicants
Inflexibility of funding structure	✔	Recruiting and staffing irregular shifts
Lack of opportunity for career advancement	✔	Proper orientation and training for new staff
Job stress and difficult shifts		Job stress

✔ - indicates this is new for the 2010 survey results!

7. **Top three priorities for organizations to address challenges in 2010**

7.1. The areas identified most often as a priority for the organizations were underline consistent underline to the results in 2009. Table 8 provides the top three priorities identified by Service Providers to address challenges to attract and retain qualified employees in 2010 and compares these results with the information gathered in 2009.

Table 8: Top 3 priorities to address challenges

2010 priorities in order of frequency	New in 2010	2009 priorities in order of frequency
Review Compensation - advocating for wages		Review Compensation - advocating for wages
Training & development - streamlined orientation, education opportunities, promote training		Training & development – mentorship program, orientation, internal staff training
Continue to focus on staff satisfaction, employee input, staff recognition and healthy workplace practices		Retention strategies – addressing burnout, supervisory skills and providing engaging work environment

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. These priorities were consistent to the themes identified in 2009. Table 9 outlines the top three emerging themes reported across all six regions compared to the results gathered in 2009.

Table 9: Emerging priorities

2010 emerging priorities in order of frequency	New in 2010	2009 emerging priorities in order of frequency
Compensation - competitive wages and benefits, lobbying for increases		Compensation – address wages and benefits to coincide with demands of the work, wage equity and incentives
Educational opportunities and training support		Skill development & training – address need for qualified workers through training and formal credentialing processes
Awareness - promotion/public education of the community disability services sector, awareness of the workforce council		Market the value of the work to attract quality workers

Appendix A – Sample Pulse Check 2010 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

o Increased
o Decreased
o Remained the same

2. Has the turnover rate for front-line supervisors

o Increased
o Decreased
o Remained the same

3. Has the turnover rate for managers

o Increased
o Decreased
o Remained the same

4. Has the number of vacancies

o Increased
o Decreased
o Remained the same

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

o Yes
o No

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

o Increased
o Decreased

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

o   Yes
o   No
If "yes" please comment on the change

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

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

10. What are your top 3 priorities for addressing these challenges in 2010?

1

2

3

11. Identify the top 3 emerging priorities for the Workforce Council to focus on for 2010/11 and beyond.

1
2

3

12. Comments?