



# ALBERTA COUNCIL OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ACDS)

## 2012 PULSE CHECK SURVEY



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. All six regional workforce councils distributed a pulse check survey in the fall of 2012 to service providers to request their participation in the quick online survey (Appendix A).

## 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; and
  - 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 2010 information gathered using the same survey questions.

## 3. Sample size

- 3.1. The survey was distributed, typically through established service provider councils, by the workforce councils to organizations that provide services to adults with developmental disabilities. The six regions represented are: (1) Calgary, (2) Central, (3) Edmonton, (4) Northeast, (5) Northwest and (6) South. The survey was also distributed through the ACDS membership list. Table 1 compares the response rate of the 2012 pulse check survey to 2010's participation.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

	2012			2010		
	Number responding	%	Number receiving survey	Number responding	%	Number receiving survey
Surveys Completed	81	49%	166	74	53%	139

#### 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 2012 and 2010 are identified in the following tables:

**Table 2: Reported changes in turnover**

Position	2012			2010		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Front-line direct service positions	39.5%	19.8%	40.7%	11%	39%	50%
Front-line Supervisors	31.3%	13.8%	55.0%	14%	24%	62%
Managers	14.8%	16.0%	69.1%	11%	12%	77%

**Table 3: Reported changes in vacancies**

Position	2012			2010		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Vacancies	42.0%	21.0%	37.0%	19%	45%	36%

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

Position	2012				2010			
	Change		Increase ↑ applicants	Decrease ↓ applicants	Change		Increase ↑ applicants	Decrease ↓ applicants
	Yes	No			Yes	No		
Number of applicants applying	64.2%	35.8%	40.4%	59.6%	90.9%	9.1%	72.7%	27.3%
Qualifications of applicants applying	53.1%	46.9%			63.6%	36.4%		

 indicates a change in qualifications, 59% indicated anecdotally that they are seeing a decrease in applicant qualifications in 2012

## 5. Strategies effective in recruiting and retaining employees

5.1. Respondents were asked to identify strategies that were effective in recruiting and retaining employees. Table 5 identifies the most commonly used strategies and compares these results to 2010 information.

**Table 5: Strategies effective in attracting and retaining employees**

2012 Strategies in order of Frequency	New in 2012	2010 Strategies in order of Frequency
Online recruitment, websites and job banks		Employee referral programs, word of mouth, career fairs
Employee referral programs, word of mouth		Online recruitment, websites and job banks
Positive work environment, employee recognition		Compensation - offering competitive wages and benefit packages

## 6. Challenges to recruit and retain employees

6.1. Current challenges to recruit and retain qualified employees were identified in the survey. These indicate little changes from 2010 survey results. Refer to table 6 for a list of the challenges reported most often by organizations to attract and retain qualified employees in 2012 and 2010.

**Table 6: Challenges to attract and retain qualified employees**

2012 Challenges in order of frequency	New in 2012	2010 challenges in order of Frequency
Compensation		Compensation
Unqualified applicants		Finding and hiring qualified applicants
Competition from other sectors		Inflexibility of funding structure
Lack of training resources		Lack of opportunity for career advancement
		Job stress and difficult shifts

 indicates this is new for the 2012 survey results

## 7. Top three priorities for organizations to address challenges in 2013

7.1. The areas identified most often as a priority for the organizations were consistent to the results in 2010. Table 7 provides the top three priorities identified by Service Providers to address challenges to attract and retain qualified employees in 2013 and compares these results with the information gathered in 2010.

**Table 7: Top 3 priorities to address challenges**

2013 priorities in order of frequency	New in 2012	2010 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 - streamlined orientation, education opportunities, promote training
Recruitment strategies to attract qualified staff		Continue to focus on staff satisfaction, employee input, staff recognition and healthy workplace practices

 indicates this is new for the 2012 survey results

## 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 2010. Table 8 outlines the top three emerging themes reported across all six regions compared to the results gathered in 2010.

**Table 8: Emerging priorities**

2012 emerging priorities in order of frequency	New in 2012	2010 emerging priorities in order of frequency
Compensation - competitive wages and benefits, lobbying for increases		Compensation - competitive wages and benefits, lobbying for increases
Educational opportunities and training support		Educational opportunities and training support
Awareness - promotion/public education of the community disability services sector, awareness of the workforce council		Awareness - promotion/public education of the community disability services sector, awareness of the workforce council

## Appendix

### A. Sample Pulse Check 2012 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” please comment on the change

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

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

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10. What are your top 3 priorities for addressing these challenges in 2013?

1.	
2.	
3.	

11. Identify the top 3 emerging priorities for the Workforce Council to focus on for 2012/13 and beyond.

1.	
2.	
3.	

12. Comments?

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