## **Cascading Challenges**



#### What Issues are Affecting the CDS Sector?

Interrelated issues have led to cascading effects for Community Disability Services (CDS) organizations. As in 2023, the top challenges mentioned were funding amounts, rising costs and inflation, recruitment and retention, and employee mental health. These are deeply linked to other frequently reported issues such as access to housing, wages, and navigating red tape due to inflexible contracts. In addition, the most independently-reported issue was the "critical and urgent" criterion which has been in place since 2019 for individuals seeking PDD services. It has influenced staff training requirements, impacted recruitment and retention, and created wasteful vacancies.

Increasing housing and food costs have meant that the CDS sector continues to struggle with

> Rising Costs and Inflation

Funding Amounts

Many of these issues have contributed to a chronic issue with

Recruitment and Retention

High housing costs have affected individuals, workers, and organization seeking

Affordable and Accessible Housing

Supporting individuals with complex needs and having limited training funds have impacted

Workforce Training Employee Mental Health and Burnout

Low wages, insufficient training, and increased complex service needs have exacerbated

As wage funding stagnates and the cost of living increases, the CDS workforce is strained by

**Low Wages** 

Intake into PDD services is currently restricted, changing and limiting incoming services due to the

"Critical and Urgent" Referral Criterion

Organizations spend a large amount of time and energy navigating

Contract Flexibility and Red Tape

Difficulty with recruitment and retention of long-standing, well-trained, and willing workers has led to difficulties with

Leadership Succession Planning

Red tape, limited contract flexibility, and turnover within PDD affect organizations'

> Relationships with PDD

Inflationary pressures force organizations to struggle with

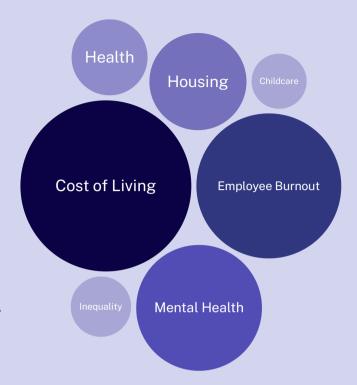
Administrative and Operational Expenses Organizations that are unable to support new individuals accessing PDD services are struggling to appropriately fill

**Vacancies** 

# What Issues are Affecting the Workforce?

Affordability and cost of living were the most-reported issues affecting the CDS workforce. Coupled with other costs such as housing and childcare, workers are having trouble affording the costs of daily life on the CDS sector's low wages.

With increasingly complex needs of individuals in service coupled with low and stagnant wages, employees continue to leave the CDS sector to find better-paying and lower-stress work in other sectors. For those who remain in the sector, high turnover and demands have created a culture of burnout.



### **Outlook for the Future?**

### Over the next 12 months, what is your outlook for your organization? (n=66)

Very Pessimistic 2%

Somewhat Pessimistic 23%

Somewhat Optimistic 68%

Very Optimistic 8%

While a significant majority of organizational leaders expressed a positive outlook for the next twelve months, several challenges remain that organizations are attempting to address. The most frequently cited concerns included funding, cost of living, wages, employee retention, referrals, and organizational relationships with PDD.

Several organizations noted that they have either begun or are planning to explore diversifying their revenue sources due to ongoing financial pressures.

Many organizations noted that their outlook was dependent on PDD funding levels going forward.

