

SUMMARY

ACDS Survey 2025

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION, TURNOVER, AND WAGES

APRIL 2026

The ACDS Annual Survey has informed evidence-based advocacy, human resource policies, and strategic policy development for Alberta's Community Disability Services (CDS) sector since its launch in 2009.

With a 48% response rate, the 2025 survey updates essential statistics on workforce distribution, wages, and turnover, while also capturing information on new leaders in the sector and top workforce concerns.

92%

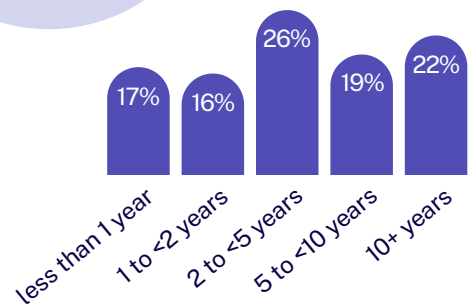
of the CDS workforce are
frontline workers

82% of workers are

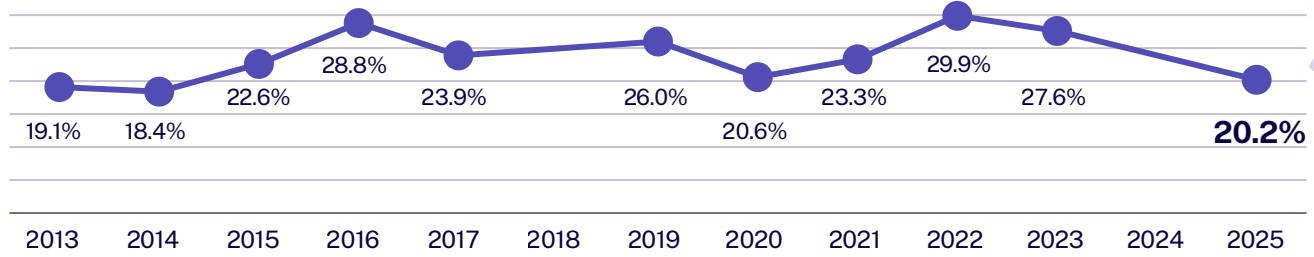
Community Disability
Services Workers (CDSW),
Community Disability Services
Practitioners (CDSW), or
Complex Support Needs Tiers 1 and 2
(CSN-1 and CSN-2)

33%

of workers
have been with their
employer for
less than two
years



Turnover in 2025 was notably lower at **20%**

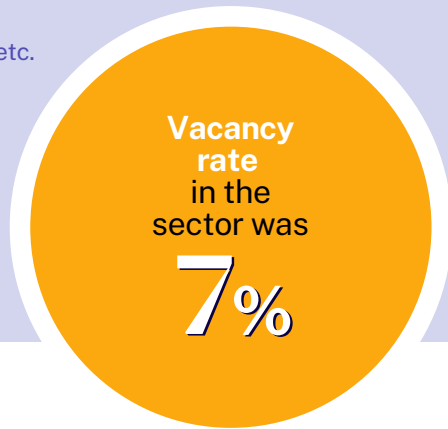
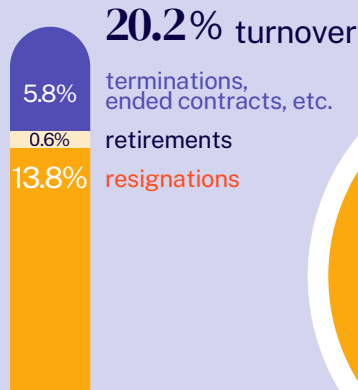


Note: Turnover data was not collected in 2018 or 2024. 2020 turnover is a conservative estimate since it excluded employees who were temporarily laid off due to COVID-19.

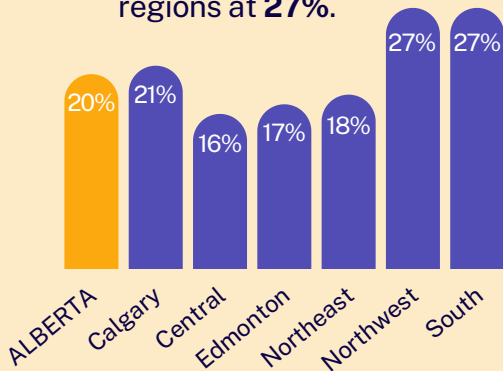
Involuntary turnover in the sector (terminations, layoffs, end of contracts, etc.) was **5.8%**.

Voluntary turnover (retirements and resignations) in Alberta's CDS sector was **14.4%**, compared to 10.2% across all industries in Canada.

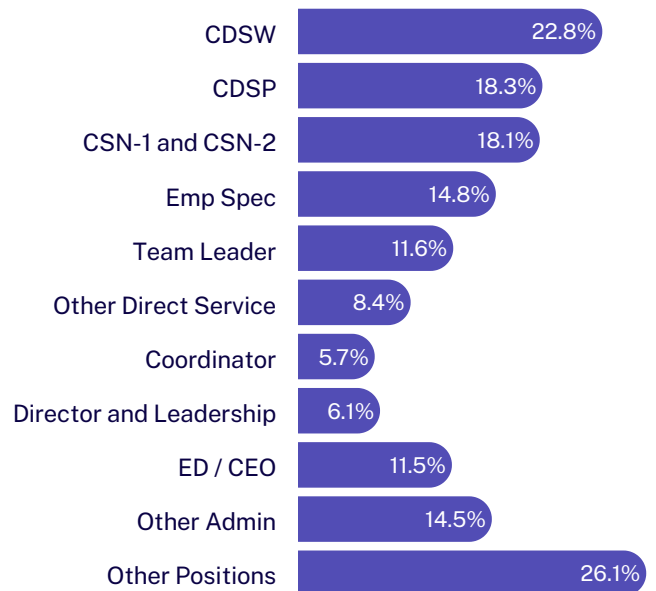
[Mercer, September 12, 2025. "Results of the 2025 Canada Turnover Survey."]



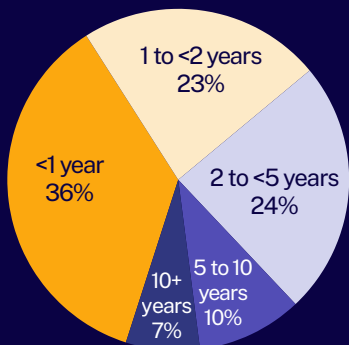
Turnover was highest in the Northwest and South regions at **27%**.



Excluding 'Other Positions', turnover was highest for CDSW at **23%**, followed by CDSP and CSN-1 / CSN-2 at **18%**.



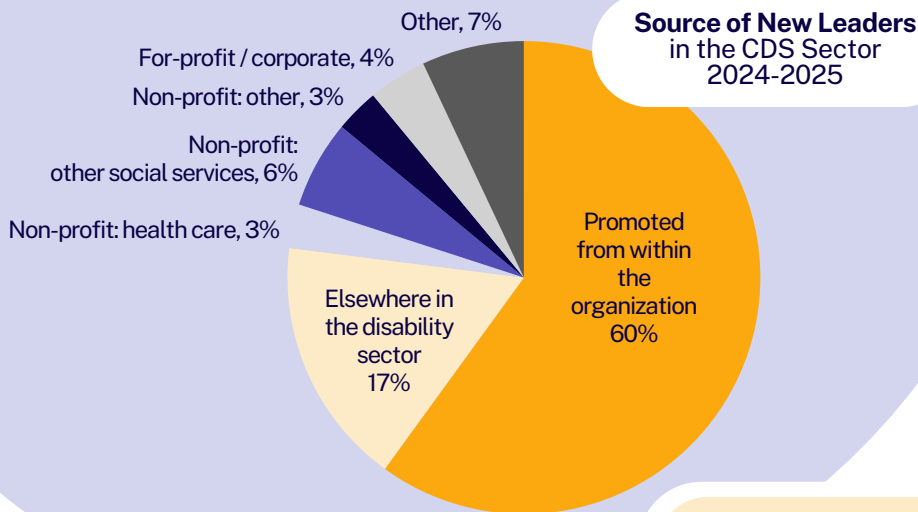
Note: Turnover for 'Other Positions' should be read with caution due to a small sample size of only 46.



59% of employees who left their organization in 2025 had been with their agency for under two years.

77%

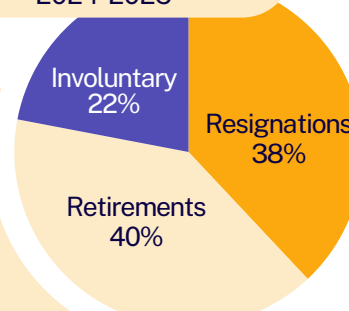
of **new senior leaders** over the past two years (managers / directors / ED or CEO) have come from **within the CDS sector**.



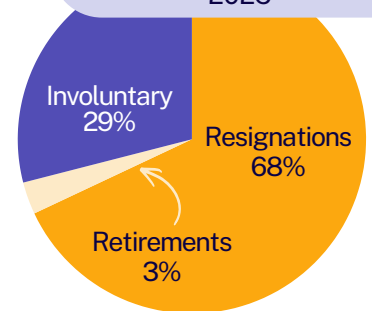
As leaders have been retiring or leaving the CDS sector, ACDS has heard from member organizations that the process of succession planning and hiring for **senior leadership roles** has been evolving.

40% of turnover in senior leaders was due to **retirement**, compared to only **3%** across all positions.

% Turnover by Reason Among Senior Leaders 2024-2025



% Turnover by Reason Among Entire CDS Sector 2025



Some employees stepping into leadership roles in the sector face industry-specific knowledge gaps as well as broader leadership skill needs.

The most-reported **knowledge gaps** among new leaders included:

- PDD contracts and reporting requirements
- complex needs supports
- general leadership and people management
- mentorship and employee development
- sector history and philosophy
- succession planning

“Our leadership is challenged with balancing all the demands of providing service with all the support needs to manage their employees.”

The average hourly wage across
the entire CDS sector
was

\$23.29
in 2025

↑1.1%

compared to

\$23.03
in 2023

The average hourly wage for
all frontline CDS workers
was

\$22.18
in 2025

↑1.9%

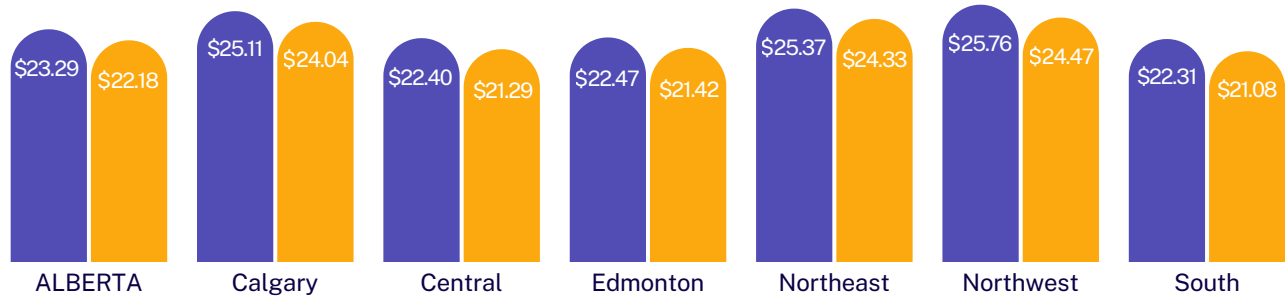
compared to

\$21.77
in 2023

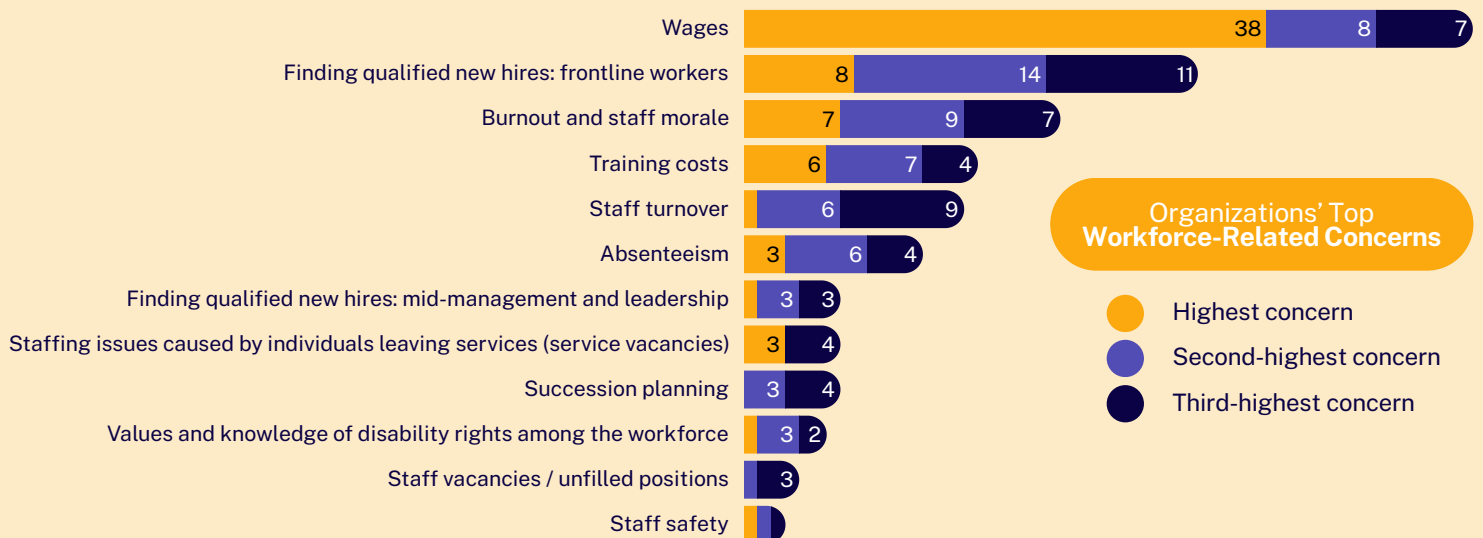
82% of all *frontline workers*
have an hourly wage

under **\$25.00**

- Overall hourly wage across the entire CDS sector
- Frontline hourly wage

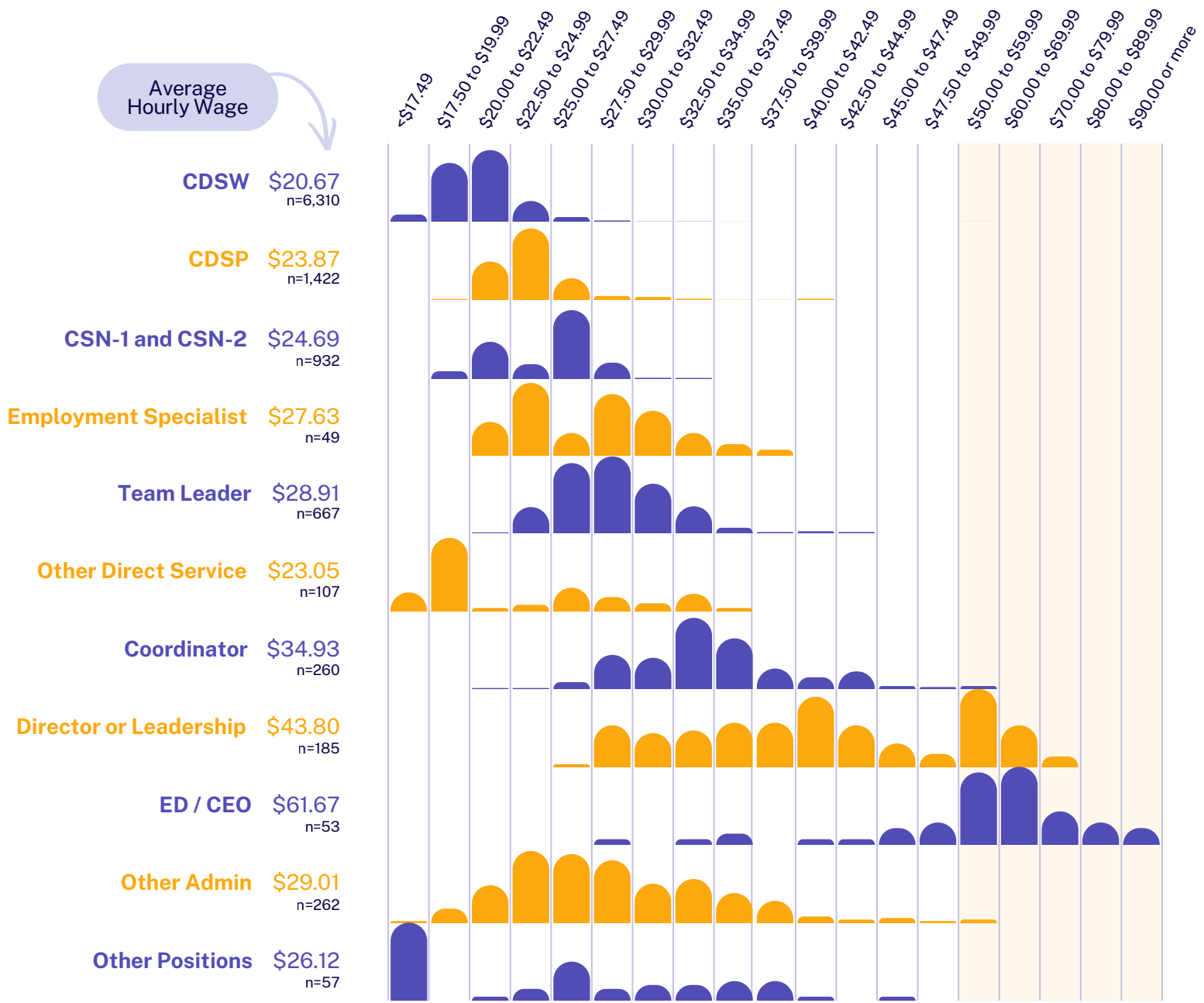


Wages remain the greatest workforce-related concern in the CDS sector, reported by 60% of organizations as their top issue.



Organizations' Top Workforce-Related Concerns

- Highest concern
- Second-highest concern
- Third-highest concern



Note: Wages were recorded in \$2.50 increments up to \$50.00 per hour, and in \$10.00 increments from \$50.00 to \$90.00 per hour. These columns are highlighted in yellow to prevent misleading comparisons across differing interval sizes.

“Many workforce challenges in the disability services sector are closely linked with wages. Low compensation limits the ability to attract and retain qualified and experienced workers, as many leave for better-paying opportunities in other sectors. This ongoing turnover results in chronic short-staffing, increased workloads for remaining staff, excessive absenteeism, and higher levels of burnout/medical leaves, which further affects retention and service stability. Addressing wages is essential to breaking this cycle, supporting retention, and ensuring consistent, high-quality care for the people who rely on disability services.”