

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Case for Inclusion 2022* tells the story of community IDD services in two parts: one focused on the cracks and faults in the current system, and one focused on policy objectives for rebuilding a foundation of inclusion. Part 1 is intended as a data-driven review of the extent to which state programs are supporting people with IDD to be included in the community, while Part 2 builds on the challenges outlined in Part 1 to deliver specific action plans tailored to a range of actors. We offer a brief interlude between these two main sections to reflect on the need for more intersectional data to truly understand how key challenges play out differently for people representing diverse communities.

## The Challenges

Part 1 of this report leverages the best available data over four of the *Case for Inclusion's* issue areas: Addressing a Workforce in Crisis, Promoting Independence, Promoting Productivity and Tracking Health, Safety & Quality of Life. Among its many findings, the *Case for Inclusion 2022* finds that:

- Nationally, the average DSP turnover rate in 2020 increased by about one percentage point to 43.6%. Meanwhile, vacancy rates for full-time direct support positions increased from 8.5% in 2019 to 12.3% in 2020—a roughly 45% increase.
- As of 2018, 16 states and the District of Columbia had closed their last remaining large, state-run institutions. Joining the ranks of states to have fully deinstitutionalized since last time the *Case for Inclusion* reported these data are Montana and Tennessee.

- 1 in 5 (21.1%) people with IDD who received employment or day supports were participating in an integrated employment service. Within the 33 states that report that they collect data on the number of people working, 19.3% of individuals participating in integrated employment services were working for pay.
- There were 589,940 people on states' waiting lists for home- and community-based services nationally. Nearly 4 in 5 (78%) of those waiting were concentrated in just five states.

Because this key findings report cannot cover every data point across all 80 measures contained in the *Case for Inclusion's* seven main issue areas, we invite you to learn more and explore the data at [caseforinclusion.org](http://caseforinclusion.org).

## The Solutions

Part 2 of this report pivots to recommend solutions and opportunities for the federal and state legislative and executive branches, along with providers and other advocates, to strengthen the ability of people with IDD to live a fully inclusive life in the community. The following is a brief overview of the recommendations that are detailed in Part 2 of this report.

### **The *Case for Inclusion 2022* maintains that the Biden Administration should:**

- Incentivize states to use federal funding to address each component of the workforce crisis.
- Require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to include HCBS under the equal access rule.
- Require the U.S. Department of Labor to establish a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for DSPs through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



**The Case for Inclusion 2022 maintains that the 117th Congress should:**

- Appropriate funding to rebuild the DSP workforce, as well as the broader HCBS infrastructure.
- Prioritize funding to incentivize the development of DSP pipeline programs.
- Predicate state funding opportunities on commitments to review and adjust payment rates at least once every three years.
- Compel the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to establish a SOC for DSPs.

**The Case for Inclusion 2022 maintains that states should:**

- Apply for each federal funding opportunity targeting supports and services for individuals with IDD and focus spending plans on stabilizing the direct support workforce crisis.
- Adjust reimbursement rates in the immediate term; then enact legislation or regulations to guarantee regularly recurring reimbursement rate reviews to ensure DSP wages are competitive against other industries.
- Prioritize people with IDD and the community providers that support them in the distribution of tools for mitigating the risk of COVID-19, including vaccines, testing and PPE.

**The Case for Inclusion 2022 maintains that providers and other advocates should:**

- Advocate with state and federal leaders to ensure community providers and people with IDD can access life-saving tools to provide support and adapt through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Stay current with and apply for state and federal funding opportunities created to offset the impact of COVID-19.
- Urge state leaders to leverage federal funding opportunities to stabilize the direct support workforce crisis by increasing reimbursement rates and creating systems of review to ensure rates keep pace with inflation, rising minimum wages and other drivers of increased labor costs.
- Encourage states to develop and contribute to as deep an understanding of the workforce crisis as possible by participating in the NCI Staff Stability Survey.

Not every policy objective impacting the lives of individuals with disabilities is discussed in this report. There are always opportunities to do more, and an understanding of the situation in your state is often the most meaningful source of policy innovation. For these reasons, we encourage you to visit [caseforinclusion.org](https://caseforinclusion.org) to access full datasets, policy and advocacy checklists, and other resources to strengthen your advocacy.