

NC Department of Health and Human Services

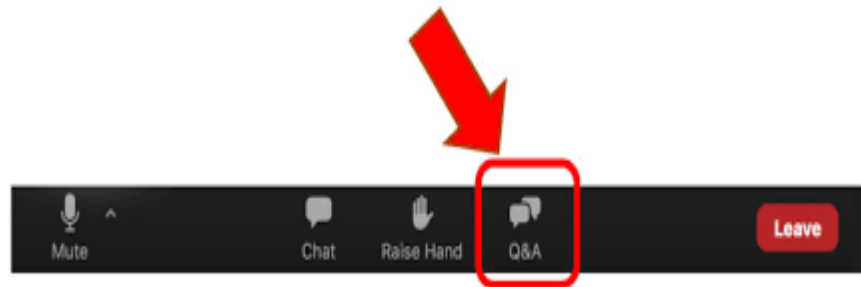
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services

Inclusion Connects Community Advisory Committee Meeting

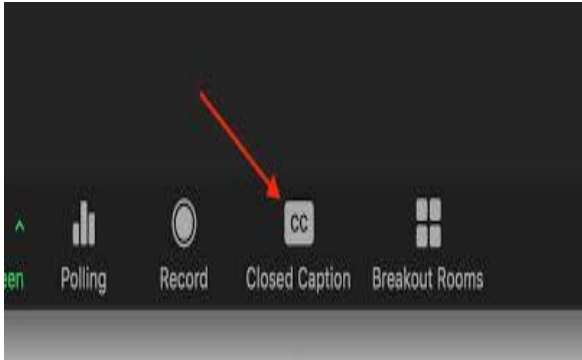
April 20, 2026

Housekeeping

- Reminders about the webinar technology:
 - Please make sure you are using a computer or smart phone connected to the internet, and the audio function is on, and the volume is turned up.
 - Please make sure your microphone is muted for the duration of the call unless you are speaking or asking questions.
 - Questions can be submitted any time during the presentation using the “Q&A” box located on your control panel, and we will answer as many questions as time allows after the presentation.

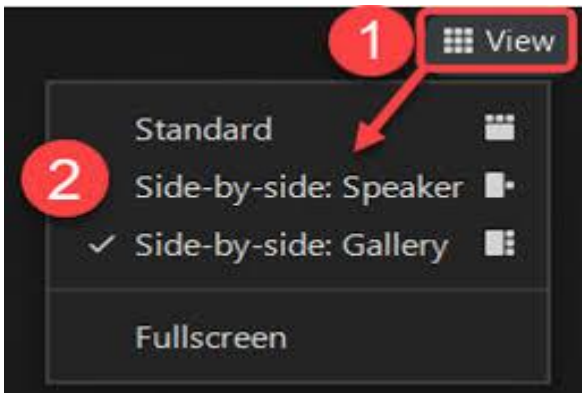


Housekeeping



- American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Closed-Captioning
 - ASL Interpreters and Closed-Captioning options will be available for today's event.
 - For closed-captioning options select the "Closed Caption" feature located on your control panel.

Intérpretes y subtítulos en lengua de signos americana (ASL). Habrá intérpretes de ASL y opciones de subtítulos disponibles para el evento de hoy. Para opciones de subtítulos, seleccione la función "Subtítulos" ubicada en su panel de control.



- Adjusting Video Layout and Screen View
 - Select the "View" feature located in the top-right hand corner of your screen.

Agenda

1. Inclusion Connects Background
2. Inclusion Connects Advisory Committee Overview
3. Updates from Inclusion Connects and Inclusion Works
4. Key Findings from the Inclusion Connects 4/15 Quarterly Report
5. NCI State of the Workforce Results
6. DSP Spring 2026 Advanced Training Courses
7. DSP Pilot Programs Updates
8. Q&A



Tina Barrett, MA, LPA, HSP-PA
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IDD, TBI & Olmstead Section,
DMH/DD/SUS



Claire Colligan, LCMHCS, LCAS, CCS
IDD Employment Lead
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I/DD Consultant
DMH/DD/SUS

Inclusion Connects Background

Inclusion Connects Background

Inclusion Connects is an NCDHHS program to connect people with I/DD to more choices and more access to services and supports. It is designed to help people with I/DD, regardless of age or ability level, and their families navigate the complex system of services from birth to the end of life.



Link to Inclusion Connects Website

Inclusion Connects Activities



Supporting the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Workforce:

Addresses workforce shortages and connects DSPs with providers and people with I/DD.



Promoting Access to Services: Focuses on providing access to necessary services, including those on the Innovations Waiver Waitlist.



Improving Housing Access: Enhances the housing options available for people with I/DD.



Strengthening Interpersonal Violence (IPV) Supports: Prevent IPV for people with I/DD and provide trauma-informed information and tools.



Inclusion Works: Expand support employment services and increase access to Competitive Integrated Employment



Inclusion Connects Work Plan

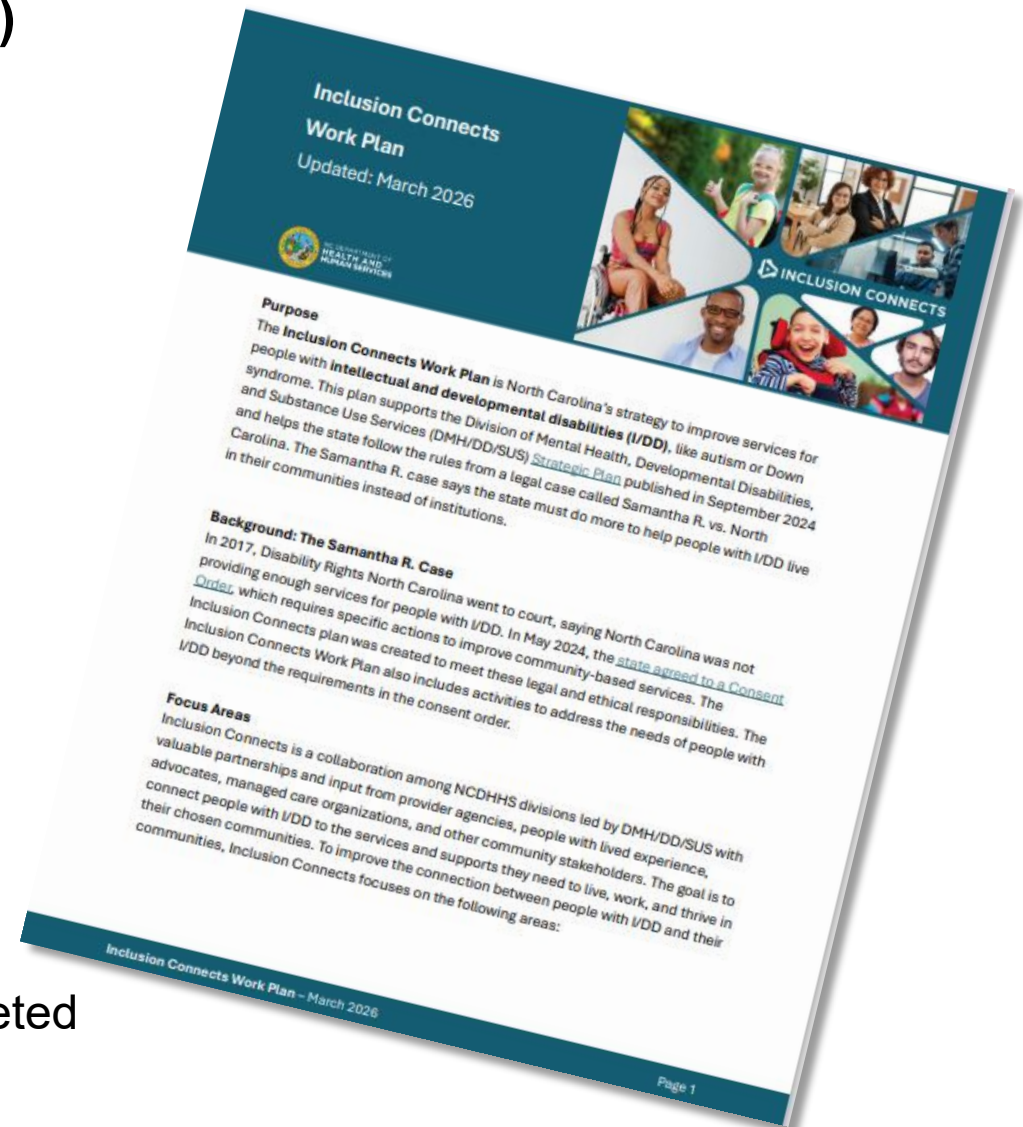
The Inclusion Connects Work Plan is North Carolina's strategy to improve services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)

- Detailed descriptions of activities to improve access to services, more housing choices, and strengthening the workforce.
- Includes metrics and targets

The original Work Plan was posted in March 2025.

The Work Plan was updated in March 2026.

Visit [Inclusion Connects Work Plan](#) to learn more about completed tasks and priorities for the coming year.



Inclusion Connects Advisory Committee Overview

ICAC Meeting Schedule

Quarterly Meetings at 11:00am – [Registration Link](#)

Upcoming Meetings:

April 20, 2026
July 20, 2026
October 19, 2026
January 18, 2027

Reminders:

- RSVP to Calendar Invitations
- Come prepared with questions and ideas about the Inclusion Connects program
- Reach out to tina.l.barrett@dhhs.nc.gov if you know other individuals who would like to participate in Advisory Committee

If there is a specific topic you would like NCDHHS to cover during the Advisory Committee, please reach out to Tina Barrett (tina.l.barrett@dhhs.nc.gov) and we will add it to the agenda for our next meeting.

Inclusion Connects Advisory Committee (ICAC)



Focuses on researching, recommending, and supporting the implementation of best practices to improve services and supports for individuals with I/DD

Monthly Workgroups



Community Living

Supporting community access and helping people to live and thrive in their chosen setting



Access to Services

Improving service models, training, and provider guidelines to ensure high-quality I/DD services



DSP Workforce

Recruiting, training, and retaining DSPs to support the growing needs of the I/DD community



Inclusion Works

Expanding supported employment services in North Carolina



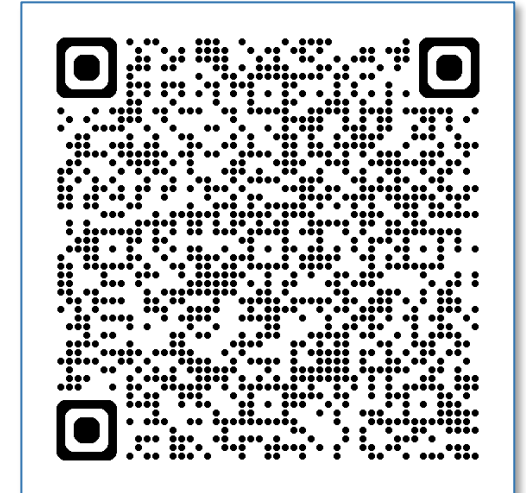
Interpersonal Violence

Creating collaboration between the providers, TPs, and IPV experts in response to state CFAC recommendations



Tailored Plans

Working group for TP members and DHHS to discuss any recommended updates needed



Scan the QR code to sign-up for a monthly workgroup!

Other Workgroups

Other workgroups will be formed as needed to make progress toward specific tasks or challenges.

Inclusion Connects and Inclusion Works Updates

Inclusion Connects Updates

What's New for Spring 2026:

- The 2026 State of the Workforce Survey has been sent to all eligible providers. Please reach out to NCISurvey@dhhs.nc.gov with any questions.
- Celebrate Autism Acceptance Month with us and attend our [upcoming webinar with the Autism Society of North Carolina](#) on April 23rd.
- Participate in the [INCLUDE NC planning tool survey](#) to help strengthen emergency preparedness for people with I/DD.
- [Read our quarterly report and report summary](#) to see how we are enhancing access and supports.



Inclusion Works Updates

What's New for Spring 2026:

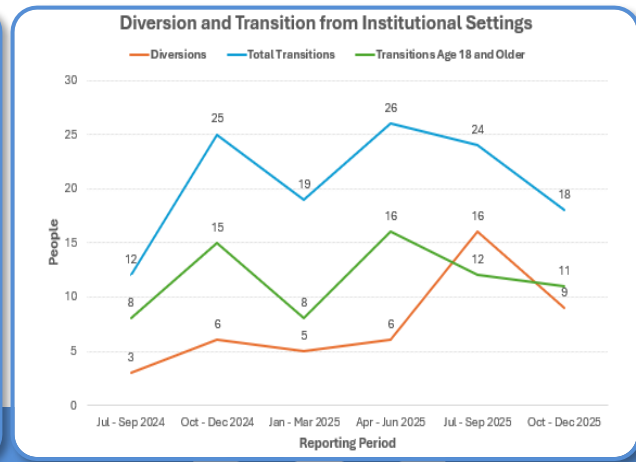
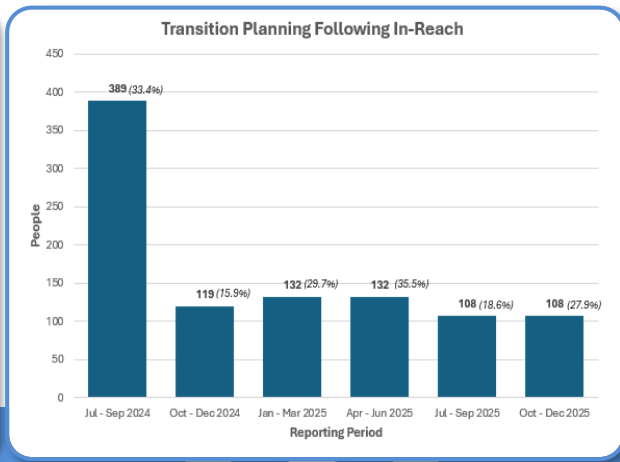
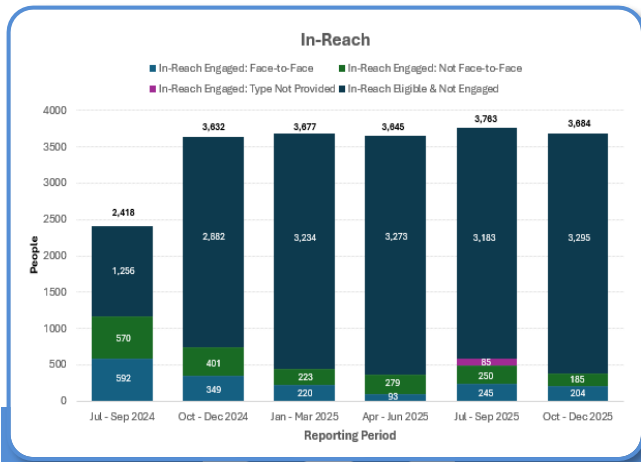
- The second round of the Provider Innovation Grant applications closed on April 15th. We are reviewing applications now. **Thank you to all who applied!**
- Our new [Informed Choice video](#) is now available on NCDHHS YouTube.
- Special Events held during April 2026 to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month, including our Lunch and Learn on April 15th led by Mike Chapman from UNC TEACCH. [Watch the recording here.](#)
- Social Media Campaign with WTNC beginning soon!



Key Findings from the April 15th Quarterly Report

Transition & Housing Overview

Please note metrics may fluctuate as data quality improves, reflecting more accurate populations and cleaner, more reliable data. Current data is sourced from LME/MCO reporting.



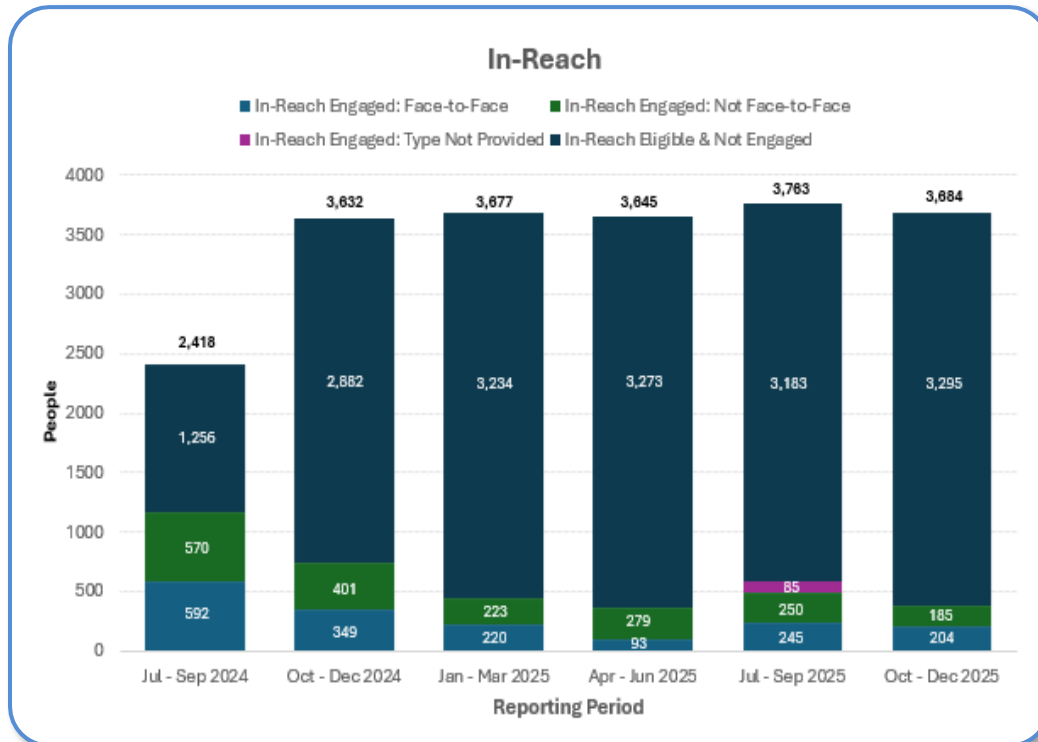
- The total number of members reported living in institutional settings remains stable across LME/MCOs.
- In-Reach efforts reflect internal policies of each LME/MCO.

1. LME/MCO: Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization
 2. TCL: Transitions to Community Living

- Percentages are calculated using the number of people engaged in In-Reach during the quarter who decide to move into the “transition planning” phase.

- NCDHHS continues to work with the LME/MCOs¹ to ensure people eligible for diversion are tracked correctly.
- Transition data from the Money Follows the Person program are included. TCL² program data is not included in the above chart.
- All 37 people who moved during Jul – Dec 2024 have remained successfully living in the community for at least 1 year.

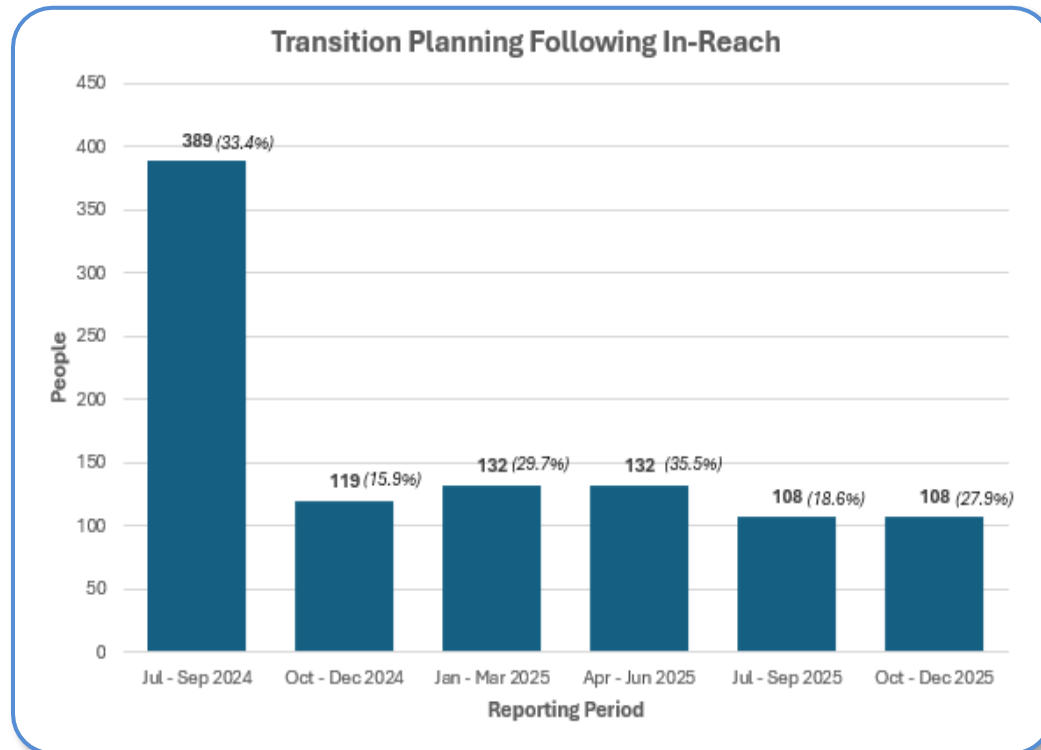
Transition & Housing



In-Reach

- In-Reach involves educating people with disabilities in institutional settings and their Legally Responsible Person (LRP) on the benefits and availability of community-based services.
- In-Reach staff also offers visits to community-based settings and opportunities to meet other people with disabilities who are living, working and receiving services in inclusive settings.
- In-Reach involves face-to-face and virtual discussions with each person, depending on their preference. The goal is to support people in making the best living decision for themselves.

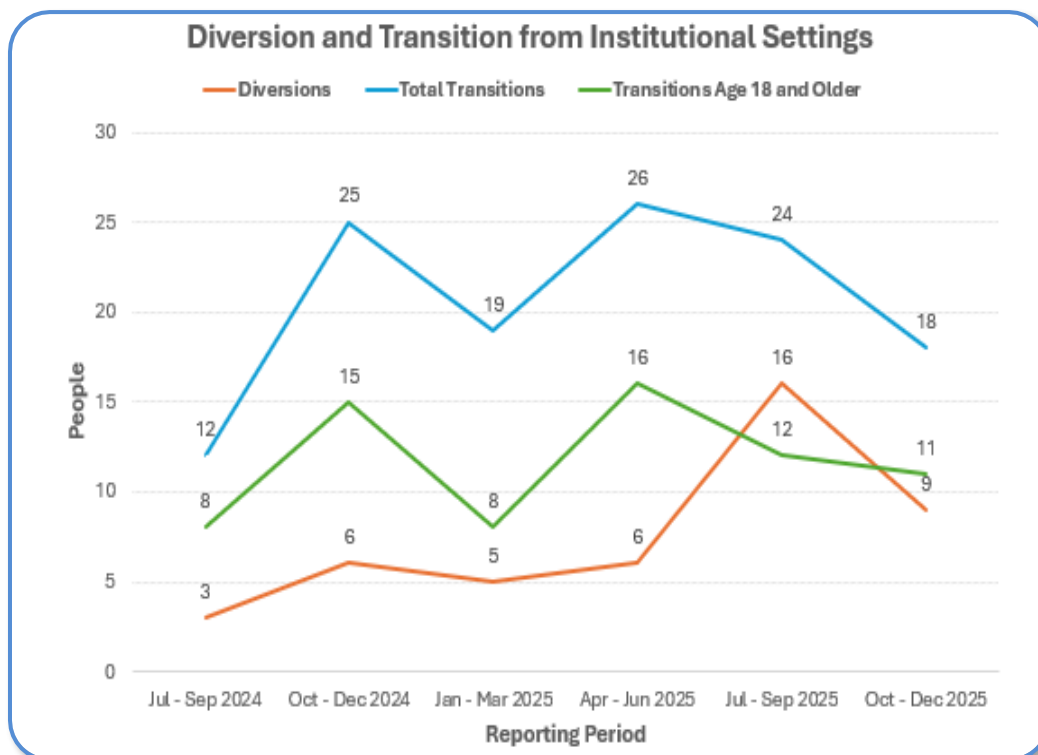
Transition & Housing



Transition Planning

- In-Reach education allows people with disabilities to make an informed choice about where they want to live and receive services.
- The goal of transition planning is to make sure the person has the supports they need to move into the community living option of their choice, if it is a good fit.

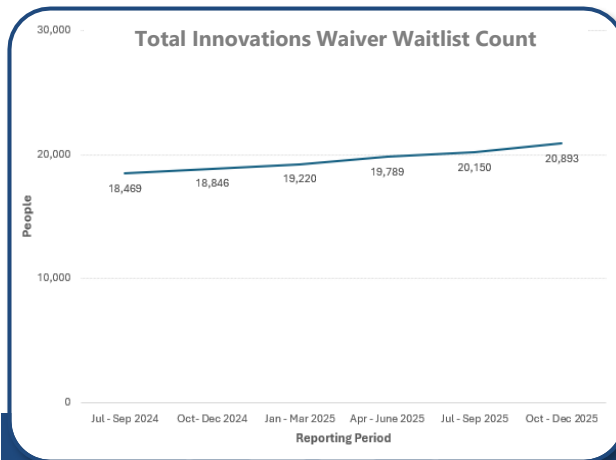
Transition & Housing



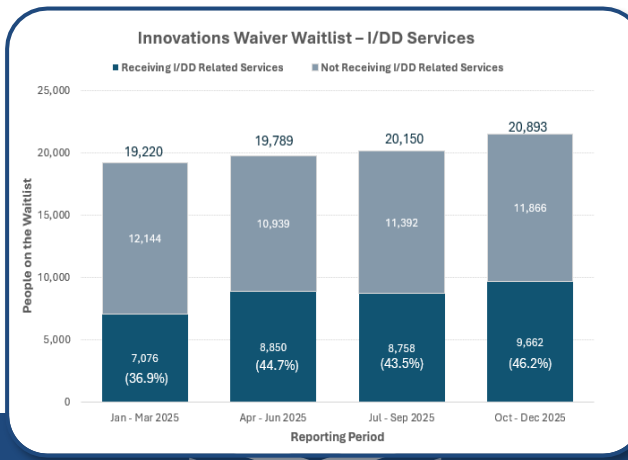
Transition & Diversion

- **Transition** involves moving from an institutional setting into a community-based setting, if a person chooses to do so.
- A “successful” transition is counted as living in the community for one year.
- Diversion involves identifying people with I/DD who may be at risk of moving into an institution and **providing them with extra supports and services** to help them stay in their own homes and neighborhoods.
- **Diversion** means making sure every person can get important services like Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), 1915(i) services, special waivers, or state programs to help them remain living in the community

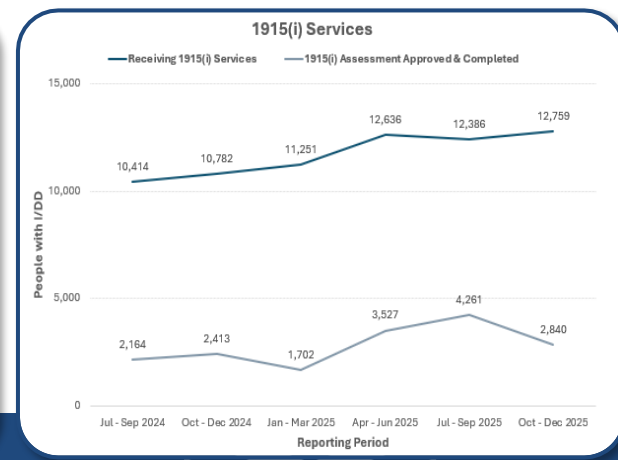
Services Overview



- The Innovations Waiver Waitlist continues to grow, reflecting **increasing awareness and need for services within the I/DD community.**

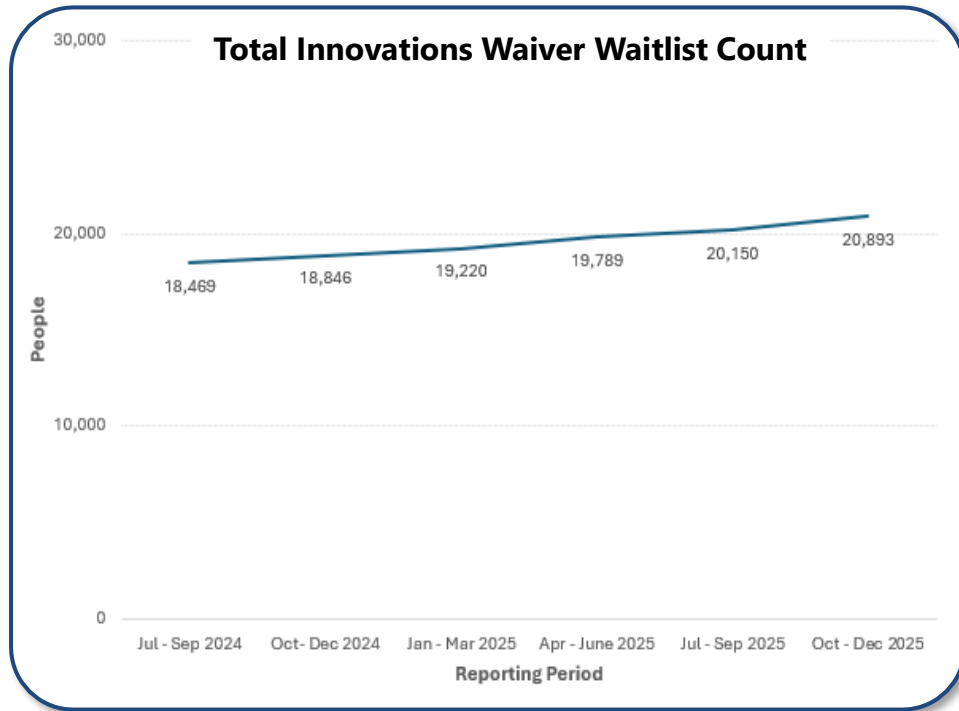


- The number of people receiving I/DD services continues to grow relative to growth of the Innovations Waiver - showing that while the **demand for services increases, access is also expanding.**



- People with approved 1915(i) assessments are new each reporting period, but those receiving 1915(i) services may overlap across periods.

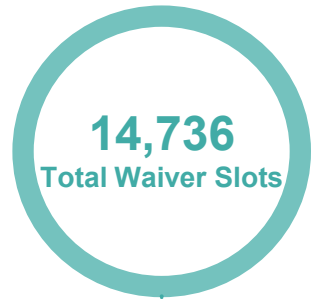
Services



Innovations Waiver

- The Innovations Waiver gives people with I/DD the most services and support at home, in the community, and at work. It helps them live and do well in community settings. The waiver offers person-centered plans made to fit each person's needs.
- There are not enough waiver slots to allow for everyone, which leads to a growing waitlist.

Innovations Waiver



Active Slots	14,161
Remaining Reserve Slots	89
Inactive Assigned Slots	486
Total Waiver Slots	14,736

Inactive Assigned Slots - Some Reasons Slots May be Assigned to Member but Inactive:



At Beginning of Slot Assignment Process
(Can last up to 90 days)



Disability Determination In Progress



Deceased
(Slot Not Yet Reassigned)

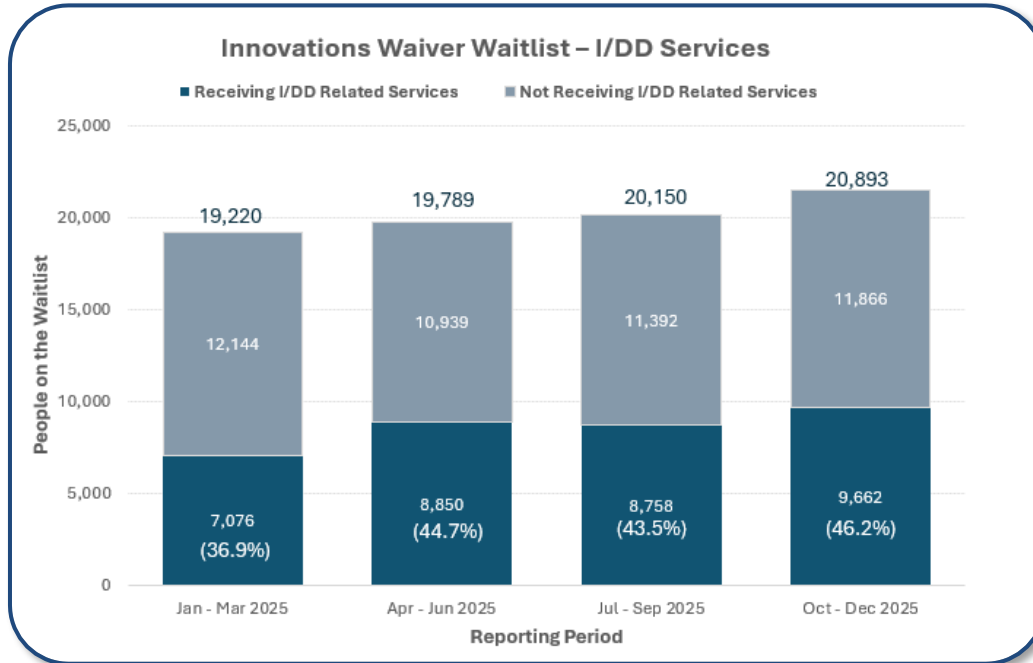


In Institutional Setting
(Assigned Slot Temporarily Held at Member's Request)



Inpatient and Transitioning

Services

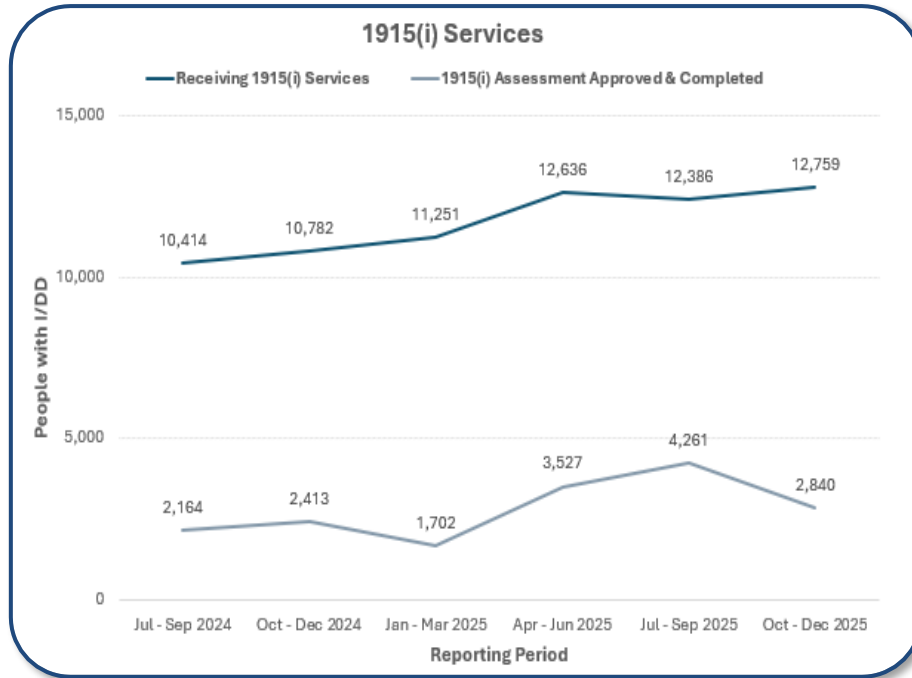


To reduce confusion and align with the data used in the [Innovations Waiver Waitlist Dashboard](#), this data was updated to use the same set of I/DD service codes as the Dashboard.

I/DD Services

- Like the Innovations Waiver, I/DD services in North Carolina provide for people with I/DD to help them live independently and fully in their communities. This can help improve quality of life and reduce reliance on institutional care.
- Over 40% of people on the waitlist are currently receiving I/DD services outside of the Innovations Waiver while they wait for a slot.

Services



1915(i) Services Include:*

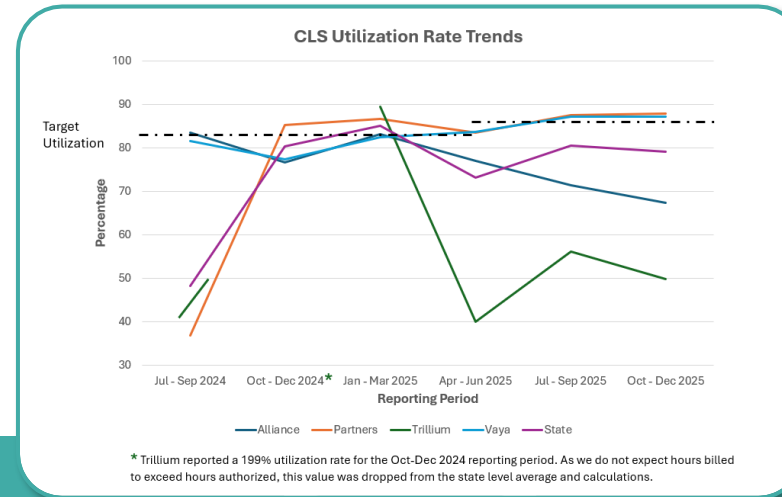
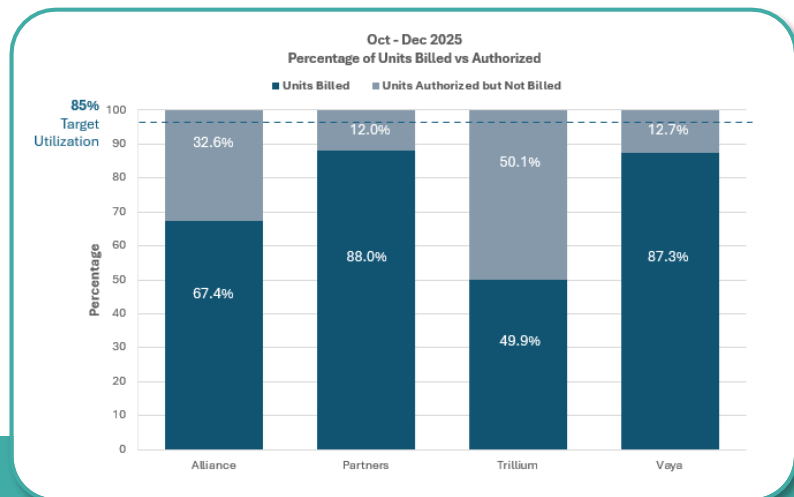
1. Community Living and Supports
2. Supported Employment
3. Respite
4. Community Transition

*1915(i) Services do **NOT** include Tailored Care Management (TCM).

1915(i) Services

- 1915(i) is a Medicaid program in North Carolina that helps people with I/DD, mental health needs, substance use disorders, or traumatic brain injuries get care at home or in their communities.
- To get started, a person contacts their LME/MCO to request an assessment, which is completed within 90 days. After this, a personalized support plan is created for each person.
- The program gives people important services that can help with all their needs. It also supports people while they are on the Innovations Waiver waitlist. 1915(i) services may even fully meet a person's needs, making the Innovations Waiver unnecessary.

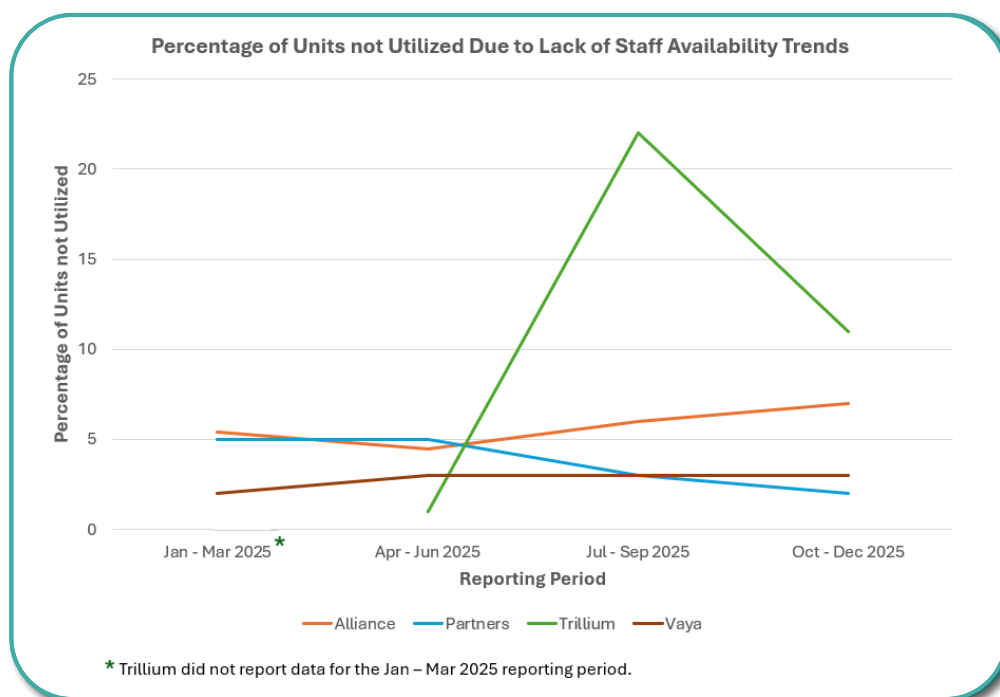
Direct Support Professional (DSP) Workforce Overview



- **Utilization rates** represent authorized Community Living and Support (CLS) services provided to people on the **Innovations Waiver**.
- The Department is looking into utilization rate data quality and taking necessary steps to ensure all LME/MCOs report this information in the same way.

- While improvements in data quality have been seen, the Department continues to engage with the LME/MCOs to understand discrepancies in reporting and ensure accurate data.
- Starting in the Jan – March 2025 period, the collection group was limited to members whose plans ended during the reporting period, resulting in different populations each quarter. Future year-over-year comparisons may support better trend analysis.

DSP Workforce



CLS Staffing

- North Carolina currently does not have enough **Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)**. This makes it harder for people with I/DD to get the help they need at home and in their communities.
- To give good care, **Community Living and Support (CLS)** services need DSPs who are well-trained, supported, and have clear paths to grow in their jobs. This helps make sure people with I/DD get steady and high-quality support.
- Utilization rates represent CLS services provided to individuals on the **Innovations Waiver**.

Innovations Waiver Waitlist Dashboard Updates

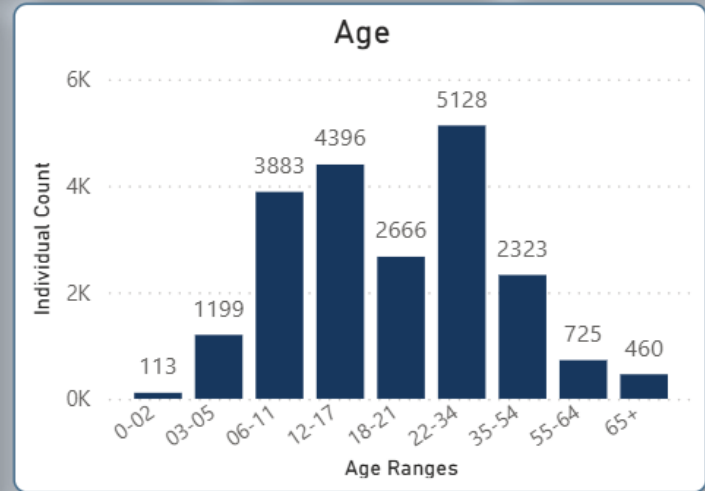
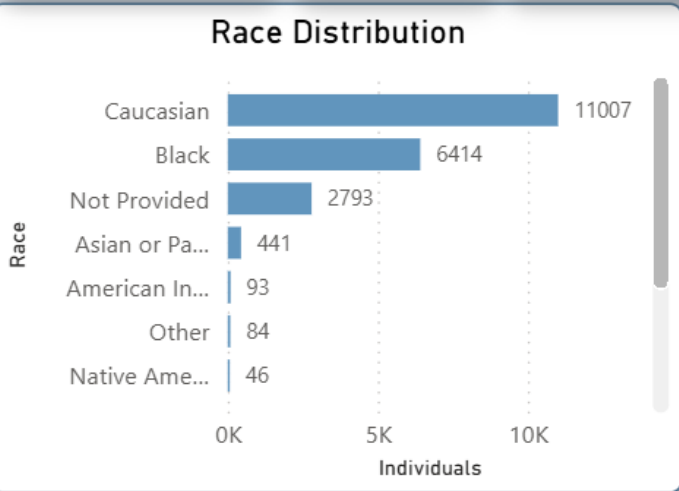
Innovations Waiver Waitlist Overview

Reporting Period
12/31/25

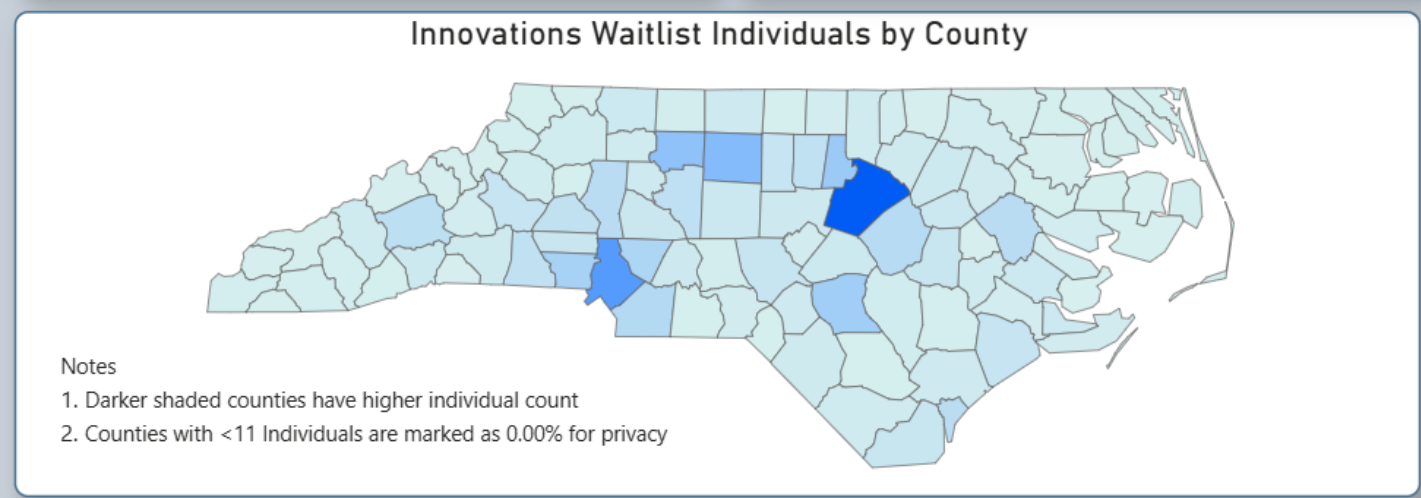
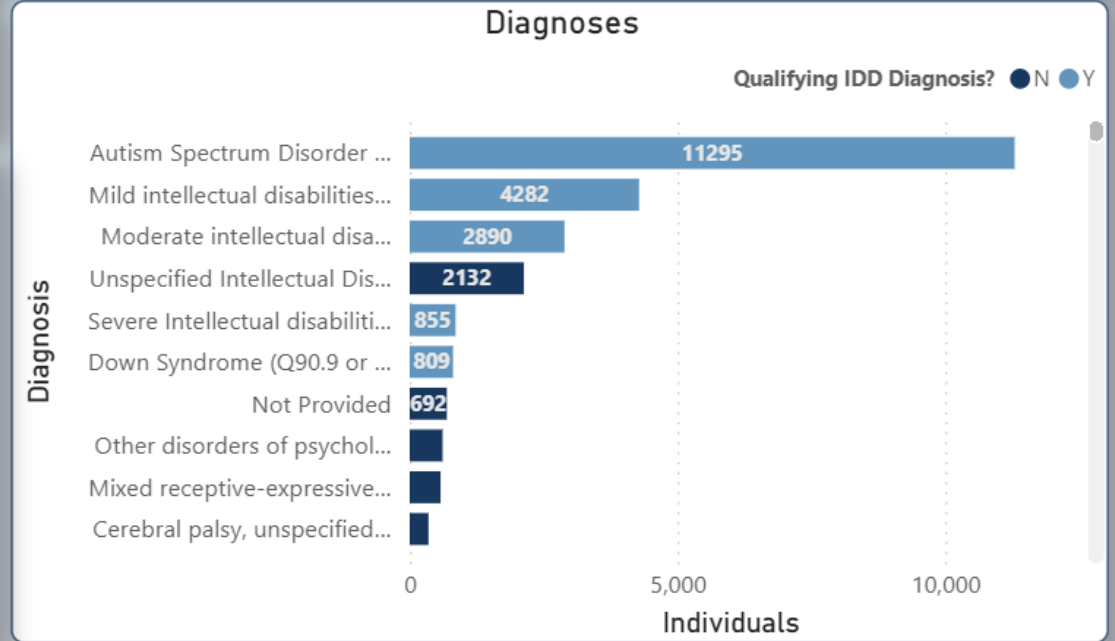
Tailored Plan
All

Demographics

20,893 Total Waitlist Count	6,774 Females	13,878 Males	<11 Gender - Other	241 Gender Not Provided	19 Average Age
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Diagnosis Information



Upcoming Enhancements

The rollout of this Innovations Waitlist Dashboard will be in waves. As we continue to source data for this dashboard, the following information is expected to be added as the dashboard is refined and expanded:

1. **Living Arrangements:** Visuals to track the current living arrangements of individuals

As this dashboard is rolled out, other dashboards with similar reporting may not be updated

[Go To Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Last Updated: 4/15/2026

Innovations Waiver Waitlist

Reporting Period

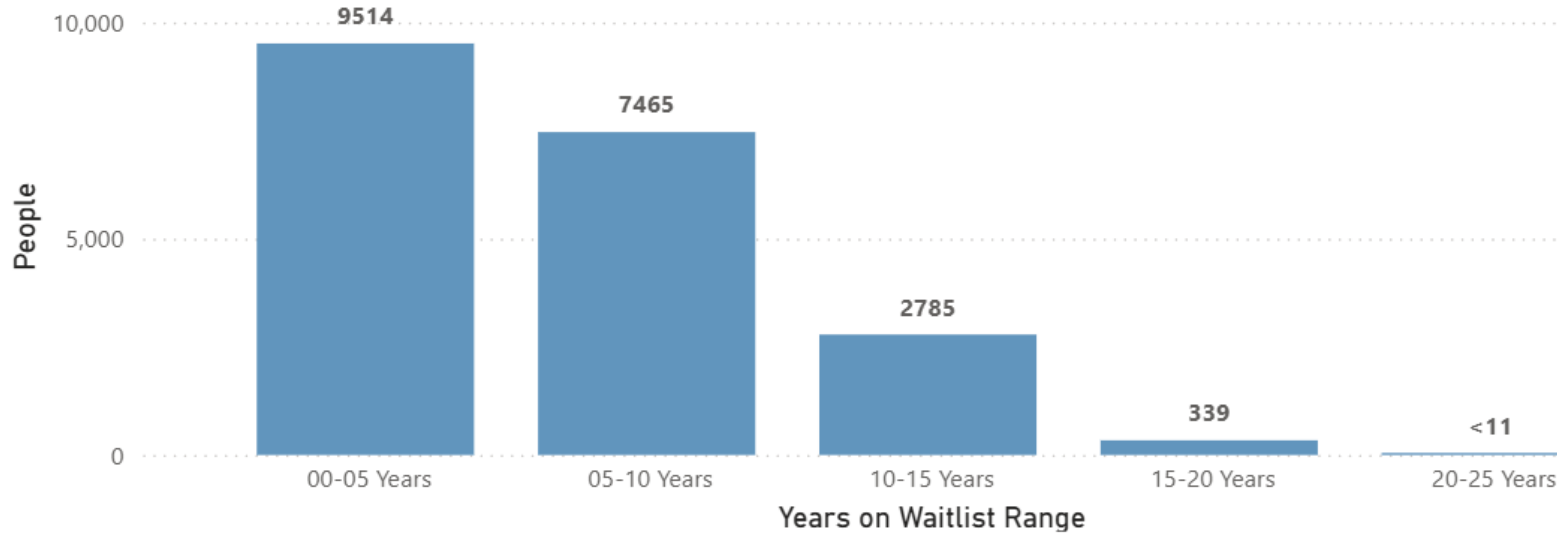
12/31/25

Tailored Plan

All

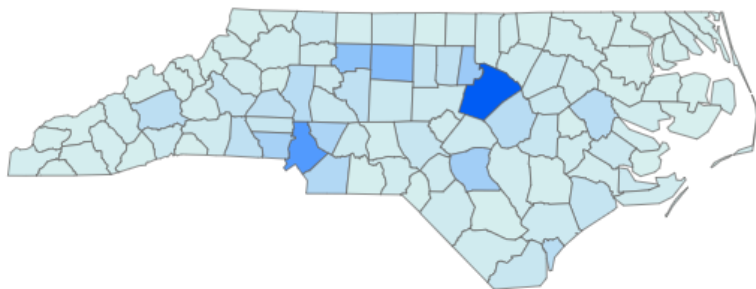
All Counties

Current Time Spent on Waitlist



County	Average Wait (Years)	Waitlist Count
Alamance	6.27	243
Alexander	6.66	28
Alleghany	5.29	14
Anson	5.12	29
Ashe	7.33	27
Avery	9.23	11
Beaufort	4.66	67
Bertie	2.01	16
Bladen	4.87	33
Total	5.79	20106

Innovations Waitlist Individuals by County



5.79

Average Time on Waitlist (Years)

Year Range	Average of Years on Waitlist
00-05 Years	2.32
05-10 Years	7.53
10-15 Years	11.70
15-20 Years	16.37
20-25 Years	21.11
Total	5.79

Disclaimers

The information presented here reflects the average amount of time that individuals currently on the Innovations Waiver Waitlist have already waited. It does not represent the length of time until individuals begin receiving Innovations Waiver services. This data should not be used to estimate how long someone may wait before accessing Innovations Waiver services.

The information shown on this page includes only people who are *currently* on the Innovations Waiver Waitlist and have **never been offered** a waiver slot.

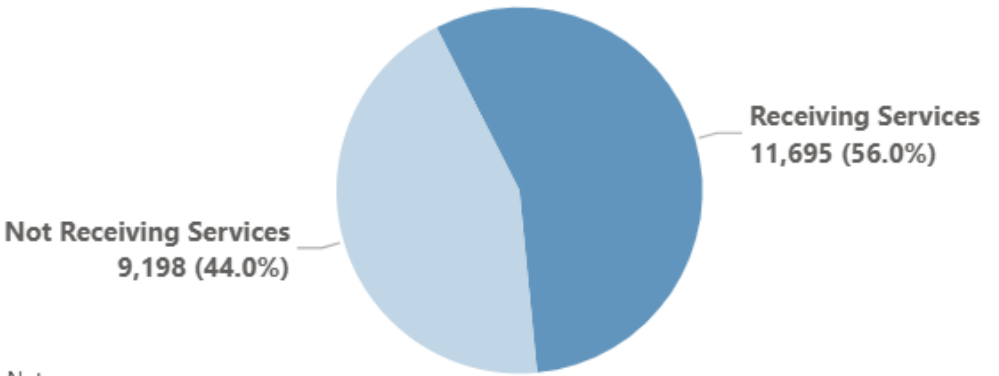
A total of 750+ people have previously been offered a slot but chose to remain on the waitlist for various reasons. These people are **not included** in the counts or averages shown on this page.



Innovations Waiver Waitlist - Services

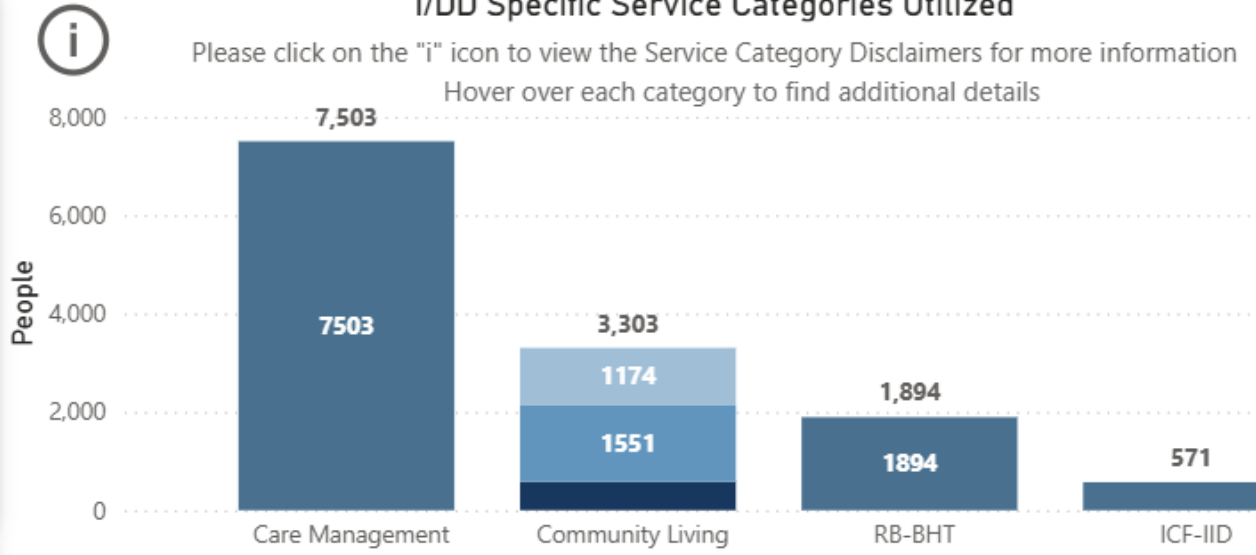


How Many People are Receiving Services?



Notes:
Percentages differ from published quarterly reports because this metric is inclusive of a wider list of services.

I/DD Specific Service Categories Utilized



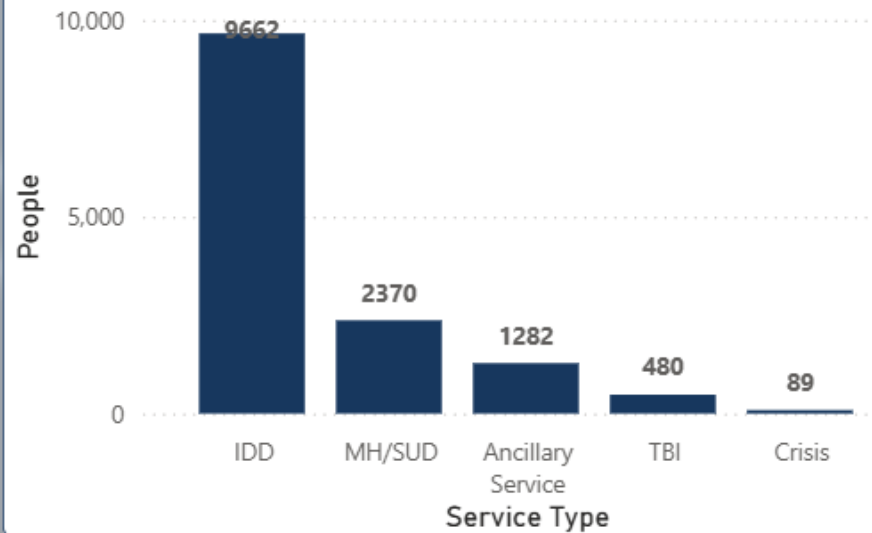
Average Number of Services Received
Per Person

2

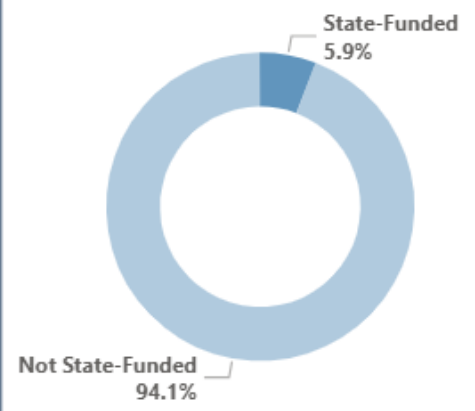
Percent of Individuals that have Medicaid

81%

Service Types Utilized



How Many Services are State-Funded?



Disclaimers

Data for service metrics are sourced from Claims & Encounter data. Some people on the Innovations Waiver Waitlist may not be present in Claims & Encounter data. For reporting visuals, these people were counted as 'Not Receiving Services' as they had not received services through DMHDDSUS or DHB during the given reporting period.

The average number of services received accounts for only people receiving services, and not those who aren't receiving services.

NCI State of the Workforce 2024 Results

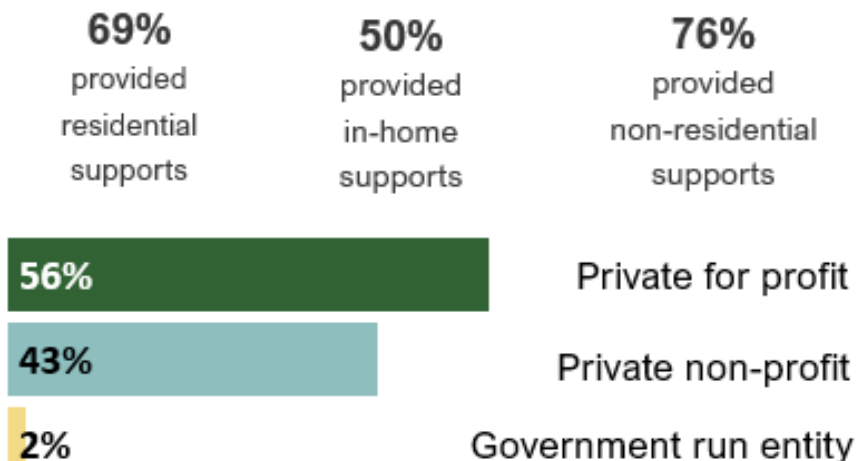
NCI State of the Workforce in IDD: 2024 Results for NC

ABOUT THE SURVEY

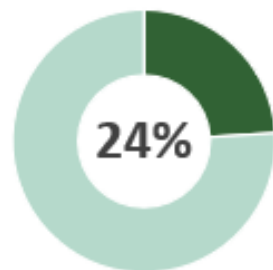
Each year National Core Indicators® Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI®-IDD) implements the NCI State of the Workforce Survey. The survey collects comprehensive data on the **Direct Support Professional (DSP)** workforce providing direct supports to adults (age 18 and over) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The goal of the survey is to help states describe their workforce, measure challenges, and monitor improvements. The full report can be accessed [here](#); the data presented in this summary represent the weighted NCI-IDD average survey results and refer to the period between **Jan. 1, 2024, and Dec. 31, 2024.**

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

More than **11,450** DSPs with **126** provider agencies responded



TURNOVER AND TENURE



Average turnover ratio

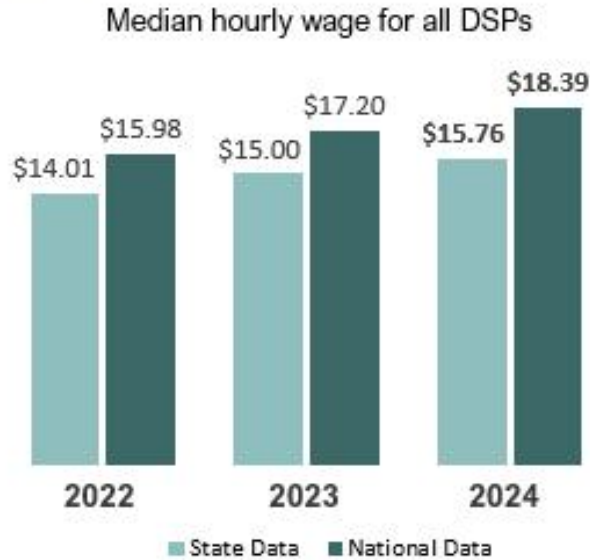
The average turnover ratio **decreased** compared to the 2023 average of 27%.



Two in five DSPs who stayed have been with their agency for more than 3 years. **Nearly three in five DSPs who left their agency were employed there for less than 1 year.**

NCI State of the Workforce in IDD: 2024 Results for NC

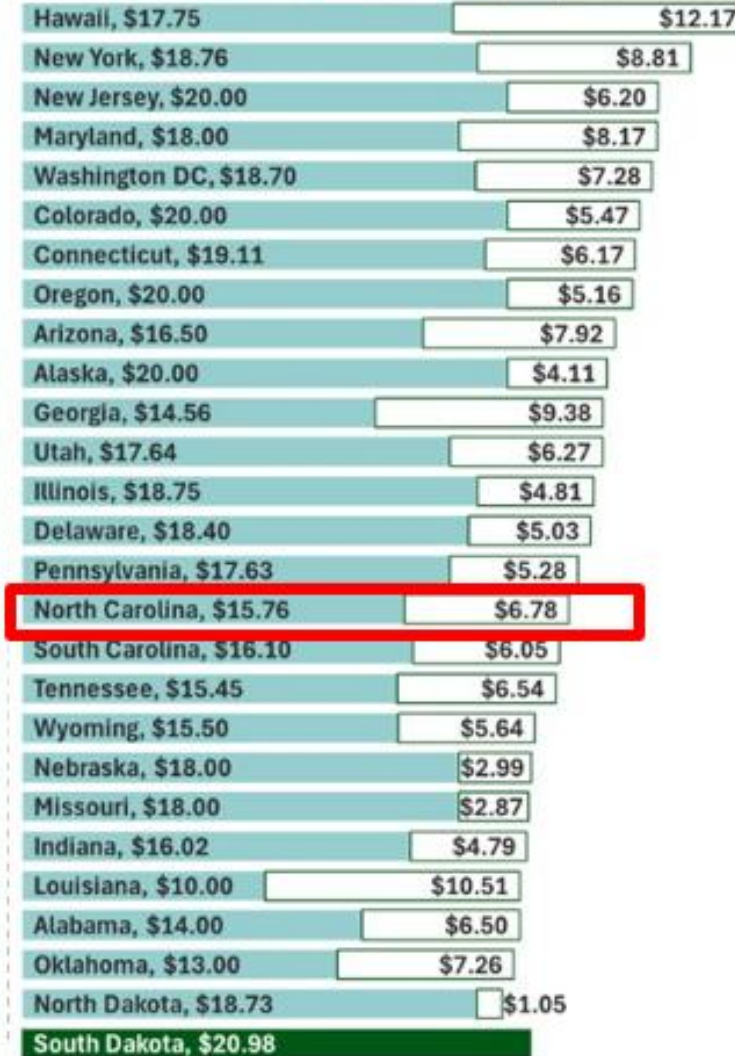
WAGES



NC has made significant efforts to increase wages for DSPs in recent years. The graph above shows that **median wages for DSPs continue to increase each year.**

Living wage is the hourly wage one full-time worker must earn to cover the cost of their family's minimum basic needs where they live while still being self-sufficient. The graph to the right shows the median wage for DSPs by state, along with the difference between median wages and **living wage for one adult without any children.**

Difference between hourly wage and living wage



NC would need to increase hourly wages for DSPs by \$6.78 to meet the living wage for one adult and no children.

NCI State of the Workforce in IDD: 2024 Results for NC

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



More than 4 out of every 5 agencies (**82%**) offer **realistic job previews** as part of *recruitment efforts*.



About 1 out of every 3 agencies (**36%**) offer **pay incentives or bonuses to new hires** as part of *recruitment efforts*.



About 2 out of every 5 agencies (**39%**) **engage high schools and colleges** as part of *recruitment efforts*.

63% Use DSP recognition programs to support retention efforts

73% Use DSP engagement surveys to support retention efforts

16% Use DSP ladders to retain workers in DSP roles

27% Support staff to get credentialed

20% Bonuses/raises tied to credentials

39% Include DSPs in agency governance



1 in 3 agencies (**33%**) **stopped accepting or turned away new referrals due to staffing issues**. This is down from 39% in 2023.

DSP Advanced Training Spring Courses

DSP Advanced Training Spring 2026 Courses

The DSP Advanced Training Certificate is a virtual program launched by NCDHHS, in partnership with the North Carolina Community College System, to support Direct Support Professionals.

Participants will complete two 8-week online courses that may count toward an associate degree. The initiative is part of a broader state effort to address DSP workforce shortages and improve wages, training, and career pathways.

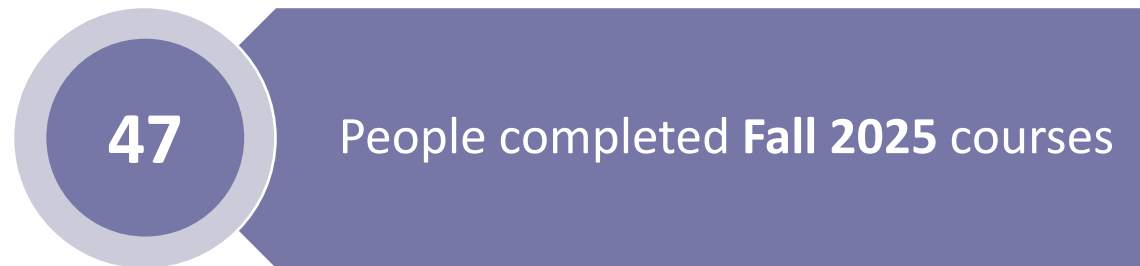
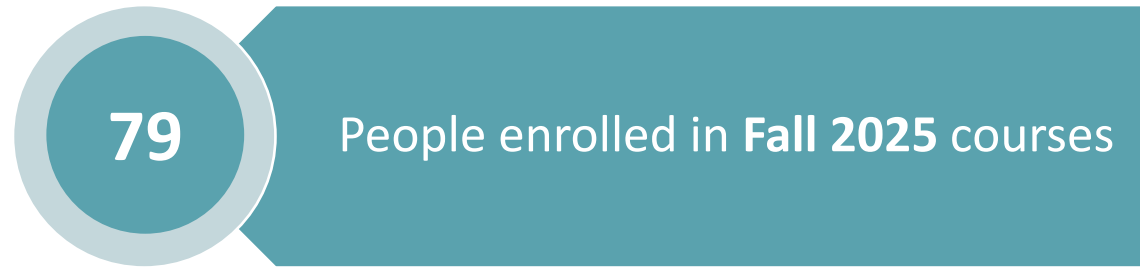
Spring Courses are Ongoing from March – July!

Register at one of our three Community College partners:

- **A-B Tech: Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College:** [Register to become a Direct Support Professional.](#)
- **Forsyth Technical Community College:** Call 336-734-7023, ask to register for class by course number:
 - Course 1, #178186 - DDT 3110: Core Skills for Supporting Individuals with IDD
 - Course 2, #178187 - DDT 3120: Advanced Skills for DSPs
- **Stanly Community College:** [Register to become a Direct Support Professional.](#)

DSP Advanced Training Impact

The DSP Advanced Training Program continues to be a success across all three Community College partner sites!



DSP Pilot Programs Updates

DSP Pilot Programs Updates

OE Enterprises: LMS Training Platform Pilot

- Implemented LMS Training platform in November
- Positive Survey Results:
 - DSPs rated orientation training 4.5 out of 5 or higher for preparedness, engagement, relevance, and overall experience
- Additional analysis is underway to assess DSP retention

Bayada: Hab Tech Induction Program Pilot

- Bayada provided paid orientation wages (\$10/hour) to all induction training participants
- Pre-implementation data showed strong retention (91%)
- Retention stayed consistent during implementation, with 91% retention in Q4 2025

Horizon: DSP Mentor-Mentee Pilot

- Q1 results: six DSPs hired and awarded a 90-day employment bonus
- Half of participating DSPs (50%) are still employed
- Findings are preliminary due to small sample size; Q2 data will provide more insight

Carolina Center for Autism: RBT Cancellation Pay Pilot

- Significantly Lower Turnover Rates:
 - Stable hours and guaranteed pay drive lower turnover for Full-Time RBTs.
- Rapid Growth of a Stable Workforce:
 - KBH transitioned to a primarily Full-Time RBT workforce (21% to 82% since January 2024)
 - Reduced reliance on part-time staff and improved workforce continuity
- RBTs report higher overall job satisfaction

Coming Up!

What's Next?

Webinars and Presentations

After the Autism Diagnosis: Effective Treatments and Teaching Methods

- [Register here to attend on April 23!](#)

Side by Side with DMH/DD/SUS

- April 27 – Side by Side on ASD and Autism Acceptance Month
- May 11, June 8, and July 13 – Topic TBD (*stay tuned for more details!*)
- [Register to attend Side by Side Webinars!](#)

Permanent Supportive Housing and Targeting Program for People with I/DD

- [Register here to attend on June 24!](#)

Continued Priority Focus Areas for Inclusion Connects

Providing **education on community housing options** to people living in institutional settings

Strengthening our **DSP and Crisis workforces** to support people with I/DD

Enhancing access to and spreading awareness of **available services** for people with I/DD

Contact Information

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LME/MCO Contacts

Alliance Health

Phone: 919-651-8401

Website: <https://www.alliancehealthplan.org/>

Partners Health Management

Phone: 888-235-4673

Website: <https://www.partnersbhm.org/>

Trillium Health Resources

Phone: 866-998-2597

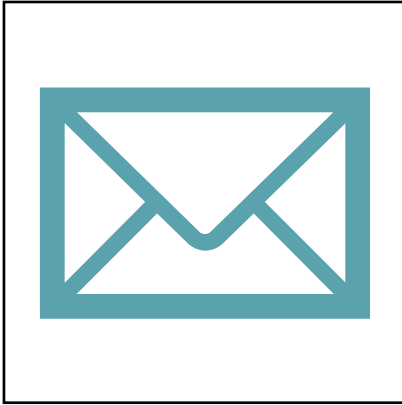
Website: <https://www.trilliumhealthresources.org/>

Vaya Health

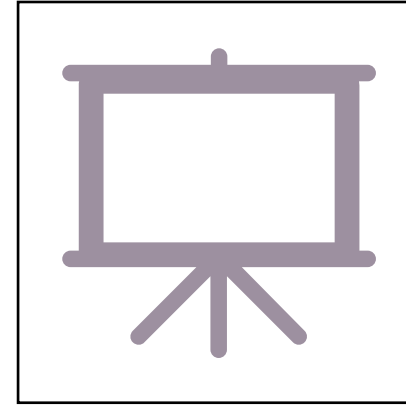
Phone: 828-225-2785

Website: <https://www.vayahealth.com/>

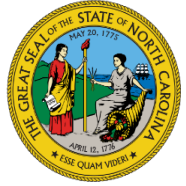
Q&A



Questions and feedback are welcome at DMHIDDCONTACT@dhhs.nc.gov



The recording and presentation slides for this webinar will be posted to the [Inclusion Connects](#) webpage.



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