
2025

WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

WSCADV

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WELLNESS AND COMPENSATION REPORT

For domestic violence programs that
operate a 24/7 hotline and sheltering



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from a 2025 wage and wellness survey conducted among Washington State victim service programs that operate 24-hour hotlines and provide shelter for domestic violence survivors. The goal is to illuminate current trends in compensation, benefits, scheduling, housing burden, and staff well-being across the field.

Key Findings:

- Median wages for the workforce have fallen short of inflation rates since our 2020 report. Advocate pay has improved, but pay for managers and especially for directors has fallen behind.
- Over 1/3 of survey respondents have to rely on other income or subsidies to make ends meet, and 18% have second jobs.
- The majority of the workforce struggle to stay stably housed: 72% of urban respondents and 52% in rural areas reported spending more than half their income on housing.
- 50% of staff were their family's sole income provider, but a high percentage said they couldn't afford dependent health insurance from their employer or their employer doesn't offer it.
- 9 out of 10 directors and 75% of program staff are survivors of domestic violence, and significant percentages of the workforce are LGBTQ+, people of color, and/or Indigenous. The sense of belonging among staff is generally high, reflecting strong organizational cultures and mission alignment.
- On-call responsibilities are taking a toll: 32% of advocates, 55% of managers, and 33% of directors report being on call 100+ hours per month in addition to their regular work hours.
- When a substantial percentage of the workforce is required to be on call for victim response for the equivalent of 2+ weeks each month - in addition to their regular full-time duties - this raises questions about sustainability, funding levels, service mandates, and traditional service models.

OVERVIEW

A survey was sent to 36 of WSCADV's member programs that provide a 24/7 hotline and shelter services via email. Staff from 30 programs responded for a participation rate of 83%. A program staff/advocate survey was sent to all program staff members. The advocate survey was comprised of questions regarding salaries, benefits, demographic information, job requirements, and the impact of work on staff wellness. A separate director's survey was sent to program executive directors, which focused on organizational structures, policies, procedures, demographics and wellness impacts.

The purpose of this report is to gain an overall picture of domestic violence service providers' compensation, benefits and program structure. These surveys also incorporated a new aspect that was not highlighted in WSCADV's previous Wages and Benefits Surveys, which were conducted in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2019. This 2025 Wellness and Compensation Survey brings in the aspect of employee wellness, with the hopes of gaining a deeper understanding of how victim services work and how compensation impacts the lives of the people working in domestic violence victim advocacy.

PARTICIPATION

160 total participants

137 program staff

23 directors

20 counties

15 rural

5 urban

LIMITATIONS

Question response: Each question in the survey was optional. There were no questions that required a mandatory response. Due to this, questions vary in response rate, influencing question response outcomes. Participants were free to skip questions as desired.

Social desirability bias: Regardless of participants being assured that all responses would remain anonymous and that limited WSCADV staff would have access to raw data, there is consideration for staff answering questions in a “socially desirable” way as opposed to providing their true opinion.

Response bias: Some responses may be influenced by a participant’s interpretation of the question. This interpretation may differ from the intent of the question.

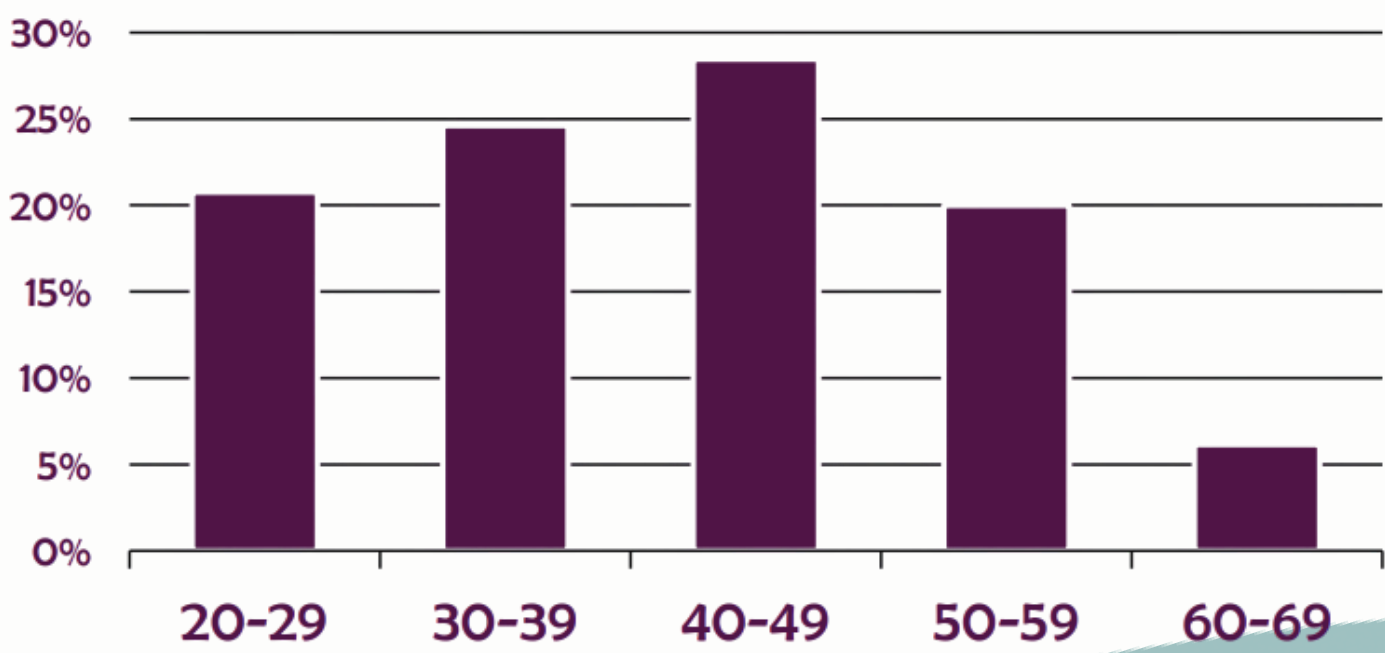
Sample size: The sample size for this survey was limited to member programs that have a 24/7 hotline and provide shelter services in an attempt to have the least amount of variables influencing data. This sample is not intended to represent the broader population of domestic violence service providers’ experiences across the state of Washington.

CONTENT

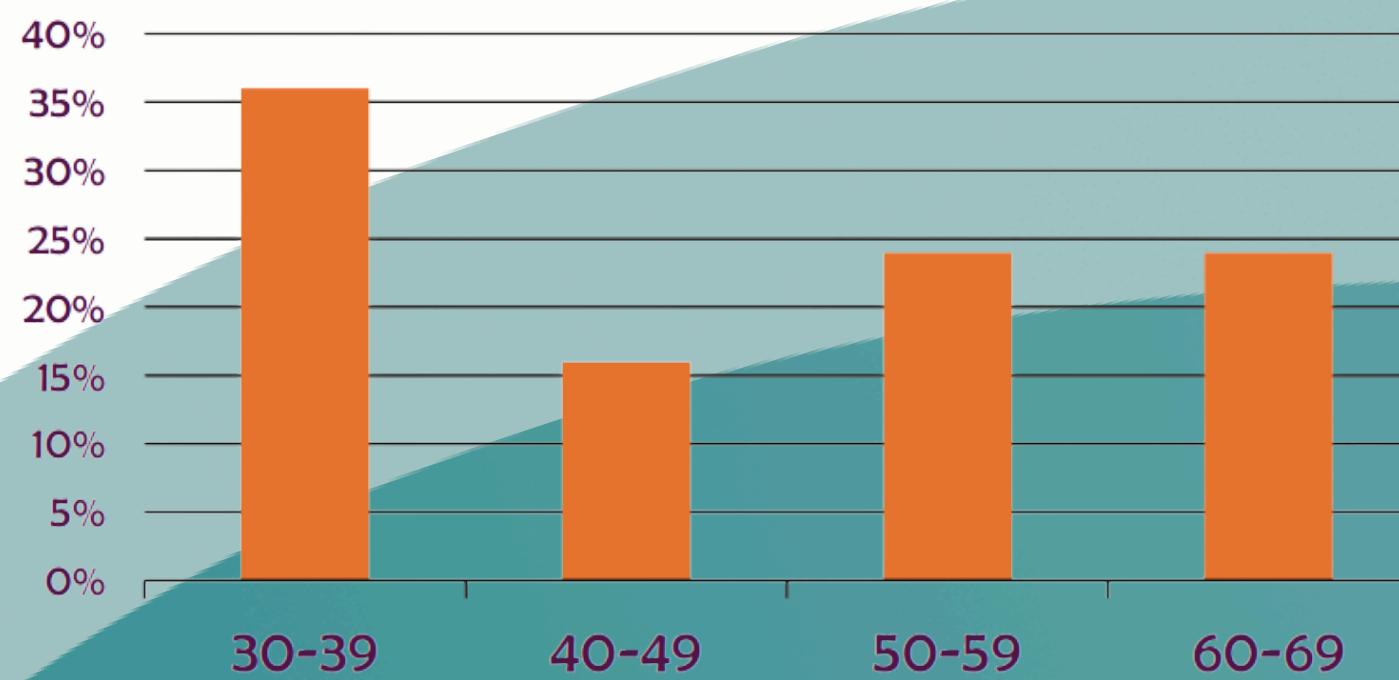
- Demographics
- Wages, Hours, & Scheduling
- On Call
- PTO, Health Insurance & Benefits
- Household Income, Expenses & Housing Costs
- Retirement & Tenure
- Wellness, Value & Belonging
- Messages from the Field

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



**PROGRAM
STAFF**



DIRECTORS

Based on this data, we can assume that 24% of Directors are expected to retire in the next 5 years.

GENDER

DIRECTORS:

96% Female
4% Male

PROGRAM STAFF:

90% Female
5% Male
3% Gender-Queer
2% Non-Binary

DEMOGRAPHICS

SEXUALITY

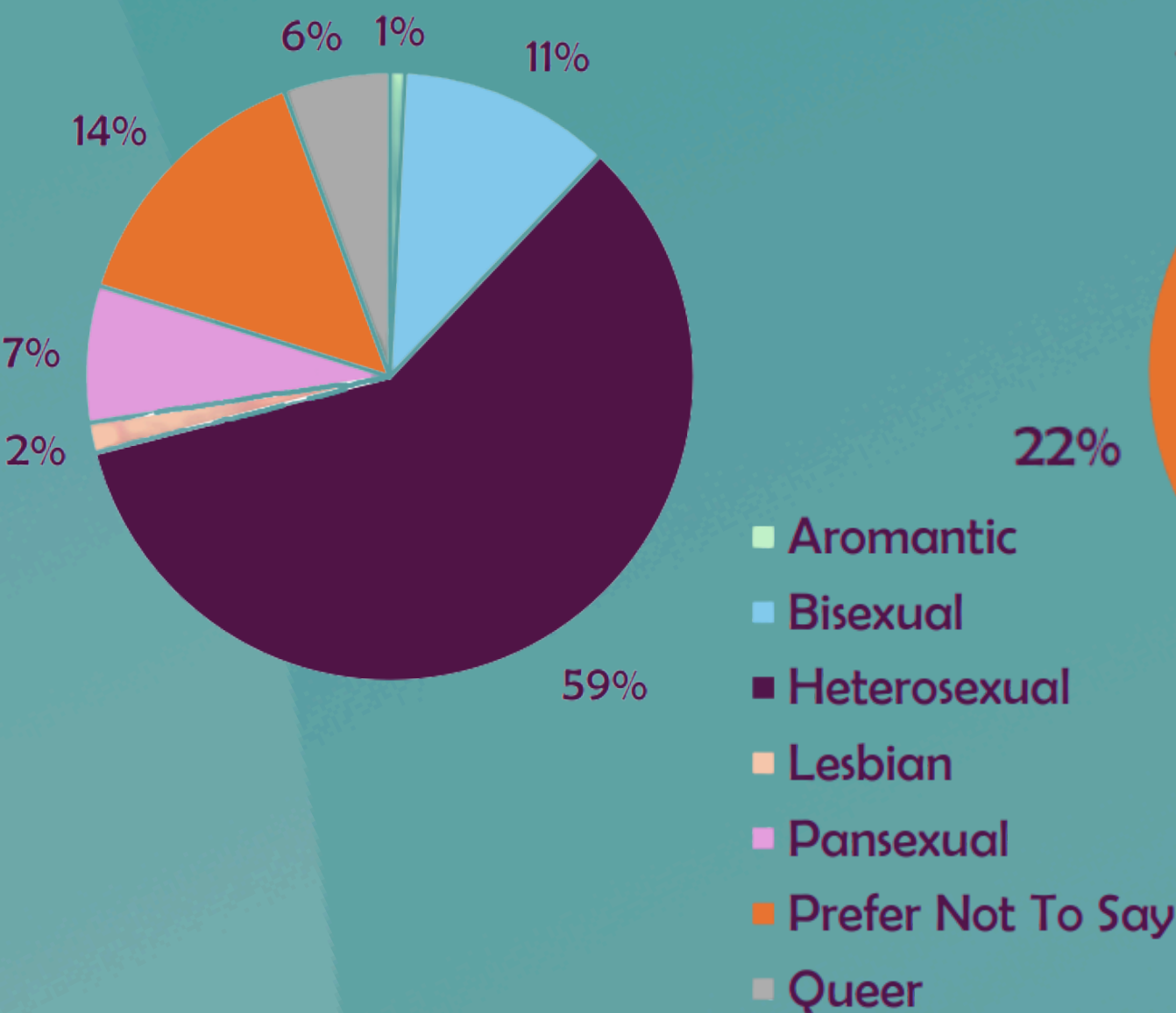
Significant percentages of respondents are LGBTQ+. Program staff sexuality has been reported to be more diverse than director sexual identities. Program staff represent a vast array of LGBTQ+ identities.

27% of Program Staff and 17% of Directors identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

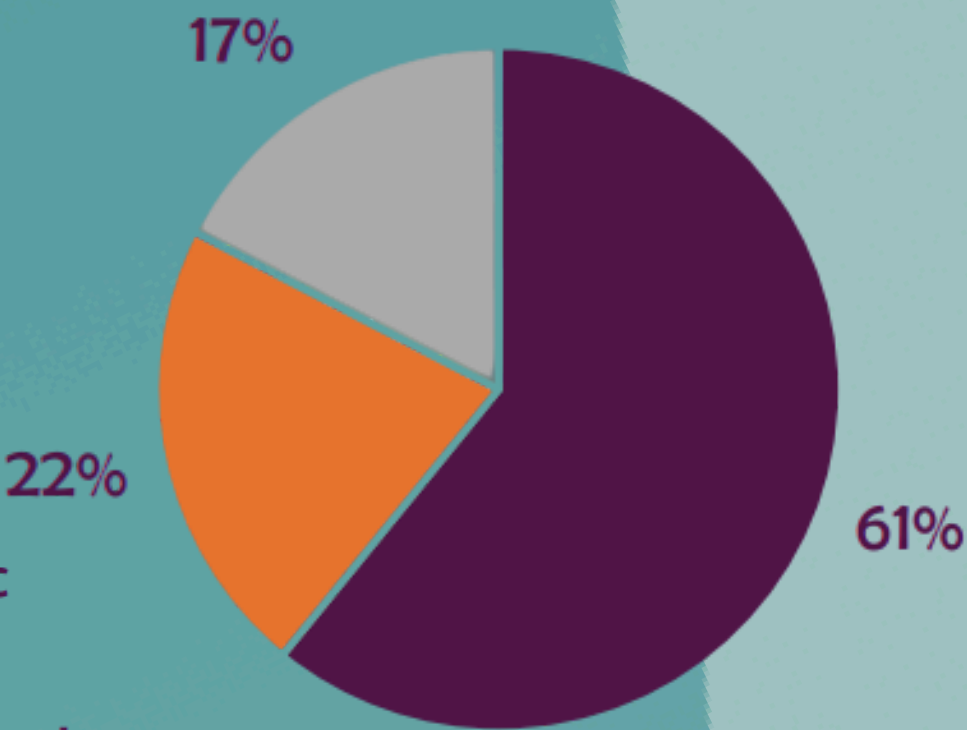
93% of LGBTQ+ staff report that they feel a sense of belonging in the workplace.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:
Organizational policies and practices that prevent discrimination and exclusion, and create a sense of belonging, can help employers to better attract and retain both advocates and directors in a time when staff vacancies and turnover are a major concern for domestic violence programs.

PROGRAM STAFF



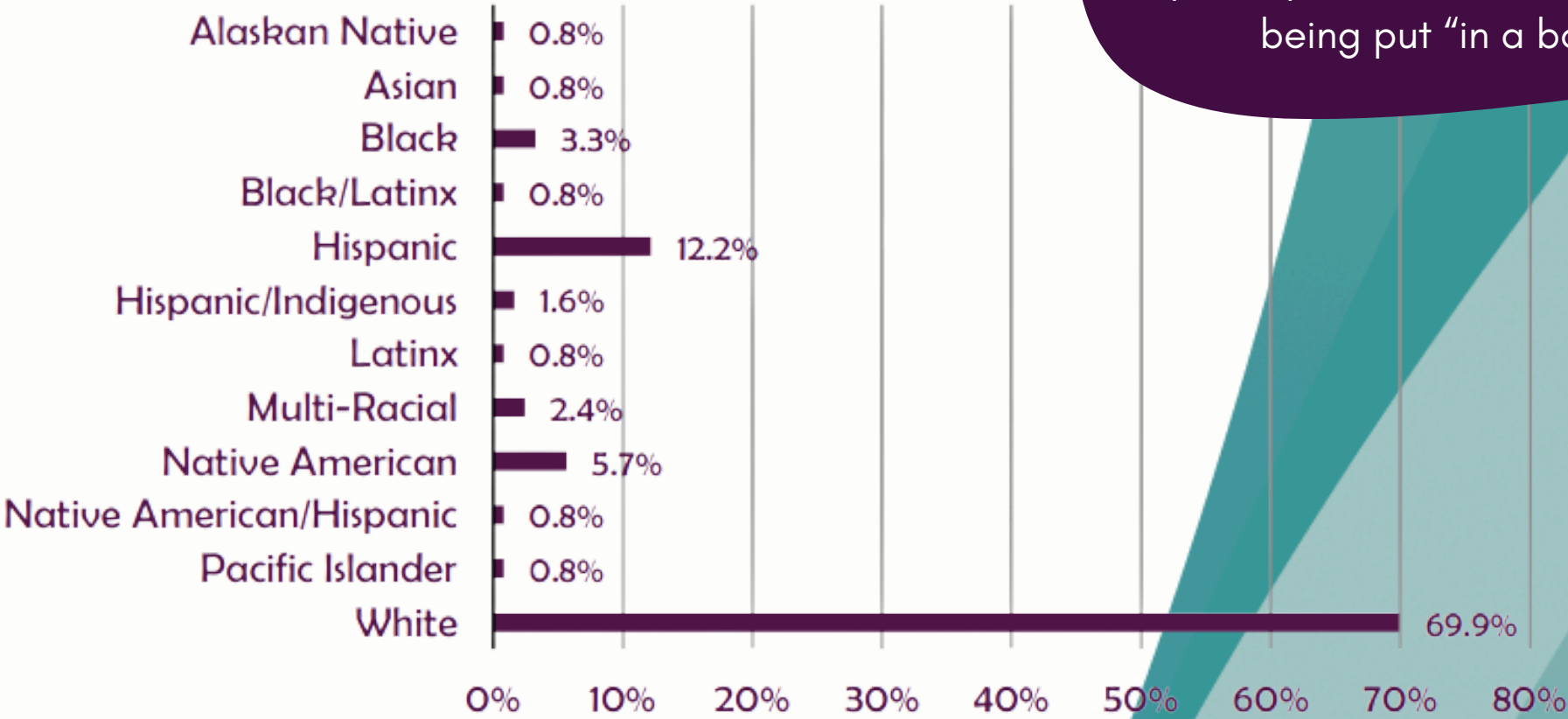
DIRECTORS



DEMOGRAPHICS

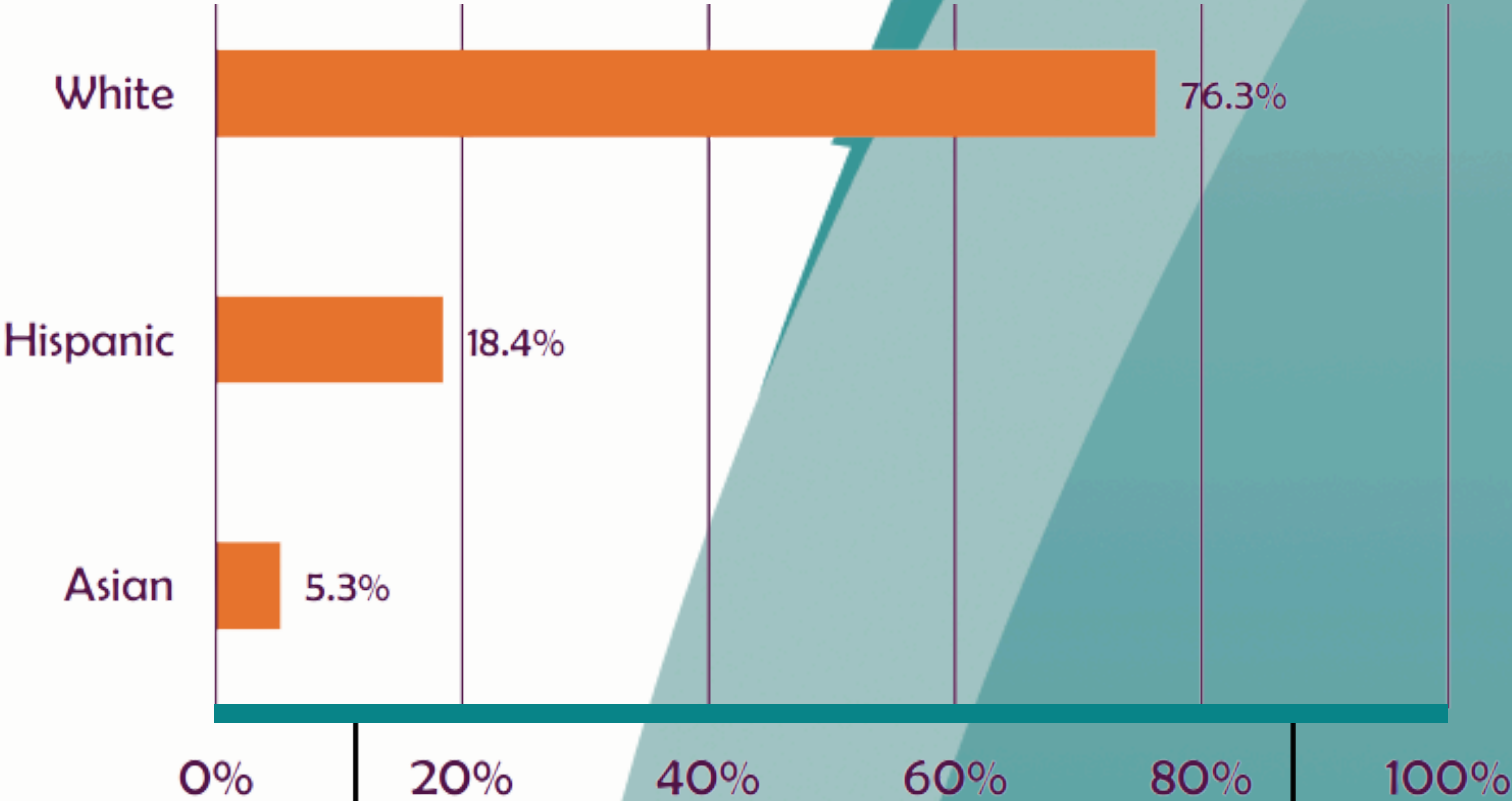
RACE

PROGRAM STAFF



Participants were asked to self-identify their race. A fill-in-the-blank option was provided for this question with the intention of allowing participants to answer without being put “in a box”.

DIRECTORS





THINGS TO CONSIDER:
How does field leadership align with advocate, community, and staff demographics? How does the allowance of self-reporting impact fullness of identification for respondents?



DEMOGRAPHICS

LANGUAGES

23% of staff are fluent in two or more languages. Spanish is the most commonly spoken language amongst bilingual staff at 78%. Other languages utilized by staff include: Hindi, Urdu, Japanese, American Sign Language, Navajo, Russian, Mixteco, Nahuatl, and Tagalog.

"The most common thing [where I use my language skills] is with my clients, but also with the community because in addition to being advocates, we are interpreters in many places with our clients."

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

THINGS TO CONSIDER:
42% of program staff and 17% of directors did not have a bachelor's degree. Hiring practices that require a college degree or more may miss out on qualified, dedicated candidates.

	Program Staff	Directors
Some High School/Not Completed	1%	-
High School/GED	10%	-
Some College	31%	4%
Associates Degree	19%	13%
Bachelors Degree	31%	35%
Some Graduate Level	2%	17%
Masters Degree or Higher	6%	30%

DEMOGRAPHICS

SURVIVORS

Participants were asked if they identify as a survivor of domestic violence. Participants had the option to submit “Prefer not to say”. The following data is representative of those that responded to the question “Yes” or “No”. The vast majority of respondents are survivors: 90% of directors and 75% of advocates.

Directors:

Yes - 91%
No - 9%

Program Staff:

Yes- 75%
No- 25%

VICARIOUS TRAUMA IMPACTS

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

How do agencies ensure that employment practices, policies, and procedures are in place to support a trauma-informed workplace?

“HOW DOES YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A SURVIVOR CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR WORK?”

“It’s an untrainable contribution.”

“Compassion, understanding, and share resources.”

“I don't have to imagine how they are feeling, because I have been them.”

“It helps me know how important it is to be survivor centered.”

“Both empowering/healing as well as remarkably re-traumatizing or just exhausting at times.”

WAGES & SALARIES

ROLE	AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY	AVERAGE HOURLY PAY	MEDIAN ANNUAL SALARY	MEDIAN HOURLY PAY
ADVOCATE	-	\$24.23	-	\$23
PREVENTIONIST	-	\$23.20	-	\$23
MANAGER	\$71,167	\$29.67	\$69,500	\$28
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$70,500	\$27.38	\$74,500	\$28
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	\$82,600	\$28	\$89,500	\$28
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	\$90,211	-	\$89,500	-

*Note: Annual salary is applied to L&I exempt positions and hourly rate is applied to nonexempt positions.

MEDIAN COMPARISON FROM 2020

	2020	2025	% CHANGE
ADVOCATE	\$18/HR	\$23/HR	+28%
MANAGER	\$55,820/YR	\$69,500/YR	+25%
DIRECTOR	\$77,000/YR	\$89,500/YR	+16%

Washington State rate of inflation from 2020 to 2025 = 29.6%

WAGE & SALARY BREAKDOWN

Executive Directors

16% - \$70k-\$79k
47% - \$90k-\$99k
37% - \$100k+

Program Directors

20% - \$60k-\$69k
20% - \$70k-\$79k
40% - 90k-99k
20% - \$100k+

Managers

17% - \$50k-\$59k
33% - \$60k-\$69k
17% - \$70k-\$79k
33% - \$80k-\$89k

Advocates

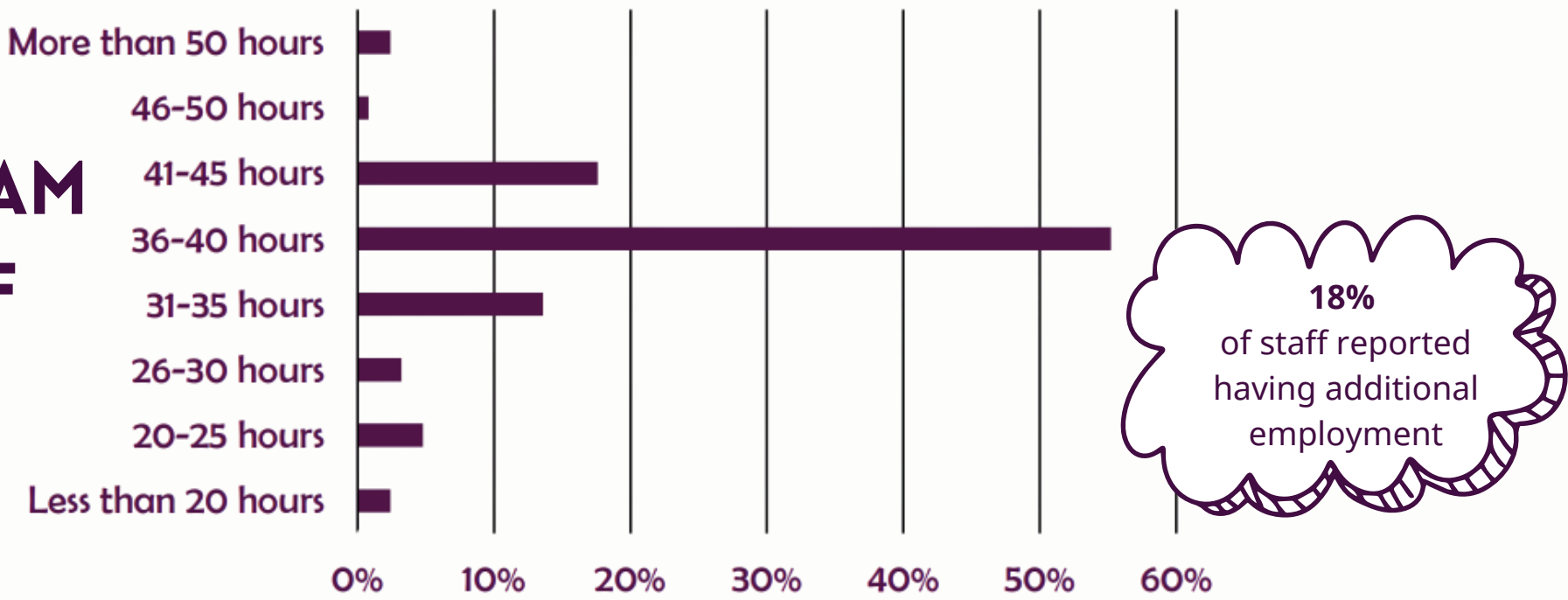
2% - < than \$20k*
9% - \$20k-\$29k*
19% - \$30k-\$39k
36% - \$40k-\$49k
22% - \$50k-\$59k
9% - \$60k-\$69k
3% - \$70k-\$79k

*This may include part-time staff

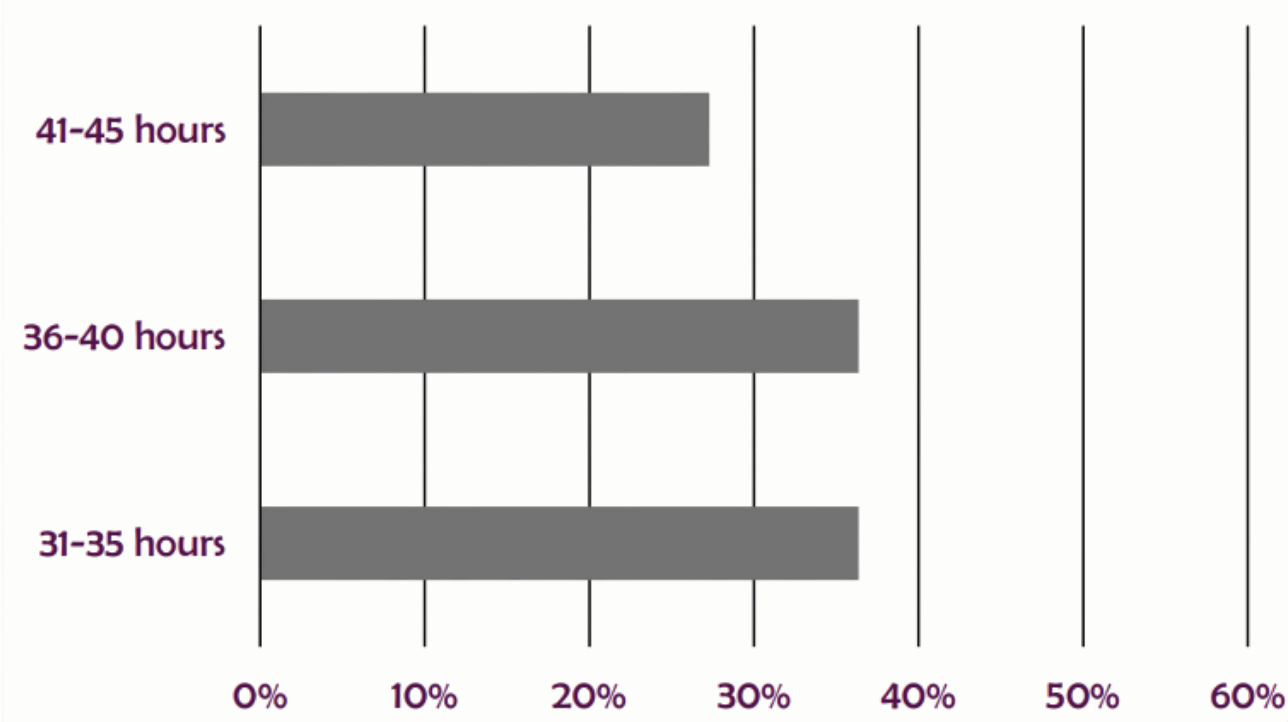
HOURS & SCHEDULING

REPORTED HOURS WORKED PER WEEK

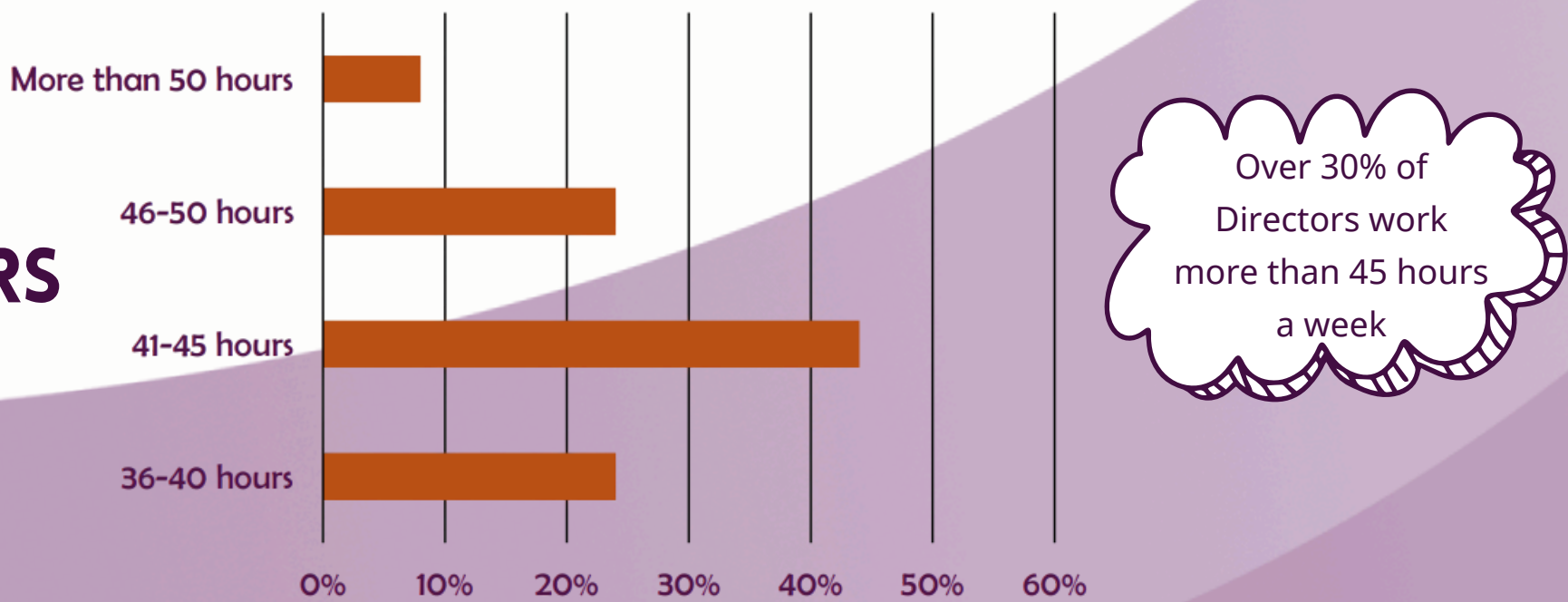
PROGRAM STAFF



MANAGERS



DIRECTORS



Full time Equivalent

30-35 hours/week - 28%

36-40 hours - 62%

40-45 hours - 10%

Workweek Schedule

4 days/week - 29%

5 days/week - 71%

Worksite Location

In-person - 52%

Hybrid - 48%

ON-CALL CRISIS WORK

A main focus in the 2025 Wellness & Compensation survey is what on-call requirements and engagement for victim service providers looks like and how on-call affects the wellness of the workforce, particularly when on-call hours are *in addition to* regular work hours. While the majority of employees reported being required to be on call, 32% of advocates, 55% of managers, and 33% of directors reported being on call for crisis and emergency response over 100 hours per month.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

How are the costs of unfunded service mandates for 24/7 hotline and response impacting the well-being, turnover, and sustainability of the victim services workforce?

Required to be On Call:

Advocates - 63%

Managers - 73%

Directors - 70%

Advocate On Call Hours/Month:

1-50 hours - 43%

51-100 hours - 25%

101-250 hours - 23%

Over 250 hours - 9%

Manager On Call Hours/Month:

1-50 hours - 22%

51-100 hours - 22%

101-250 hours - 22%

Over 250 hours - 33%

Director On Call Hours/Month:

1-50 hours - 54%

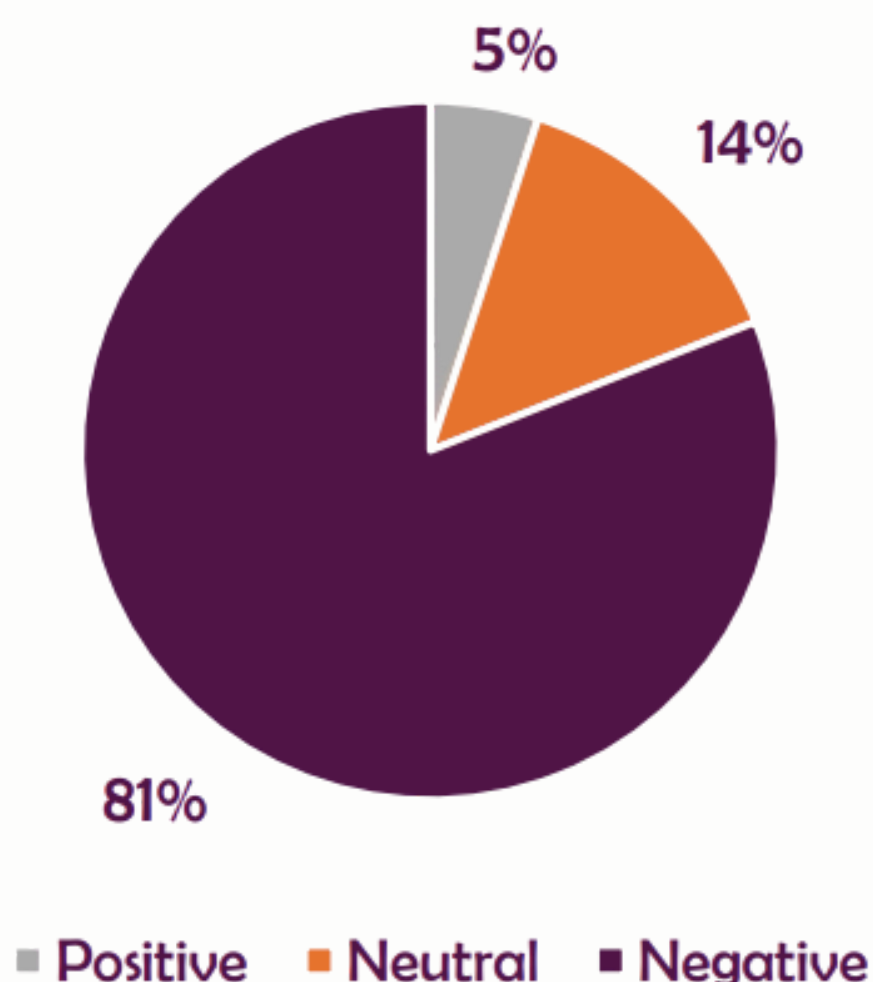
51-100 hours - 13%

101-250 hours - 13%

Over 250 hours - 20%

57% of participants report that they are not satisfied with their on-call compensation

Impact of On Call on Wellness



PAID TIME OFF

The following categories of PTO were reported by participants:

- Sick
- Vacation
- Holiday
- Floating Holiday
- Personal
- Wellness
- Bereavement
- Annual
- Cultural
- International Women’s Day
- Emergency
- Mental Health
- Jury Duty
- Civil Service

“ARE YOU ENCOURAGED BY LEADERSHIP TO TAKE YOUR TIME OFF?”

Yes - 79%
Sometimes - 4%
No - 17%

“DO YOU USE ALL OF YOUR PTO/YEAR?”

Yes - 32%
Sometimes - 9%
No - 59%

“Yes and when I do, I come back to more work that has piled up - there isn't support for my duties while I am out.”

“Yes but often feel like I can't (ongoing turnover makes it difficult to leave workload to folks while on vacation).”

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

How does working in victim services influence our (in)ability to utilize PTO? How can we center the importance of time off for staff wellness without sacrificing others’ wellness?

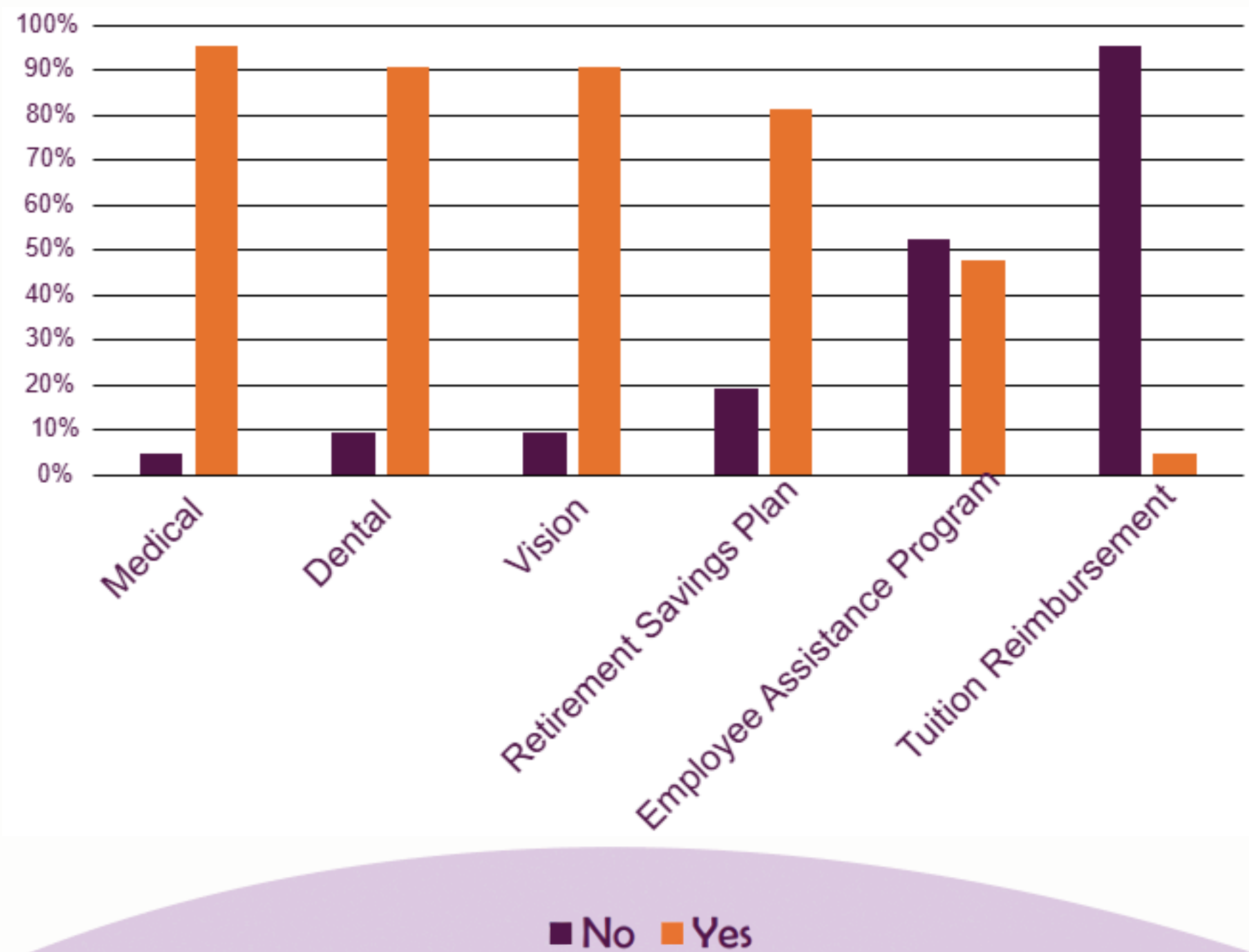
PTO HOURS ACCRUED EACH YEAR

Less than 100 hours	30%
100-150 hours	17%
160-220 hours	30%
225-288 hours	11%
Over 300 hours	12%

*Not including Holidays

BENEFITS

The following shows benefits provided and not provided by employers:



Other benefits Reported:

- Health Reimbursement Account
- 35 hour/4 day work week
- 8 hours per week of employer sponsored time off = 32 hour work week
- Gym membership
- 14 paid holidays

HEALTH INSURANCE

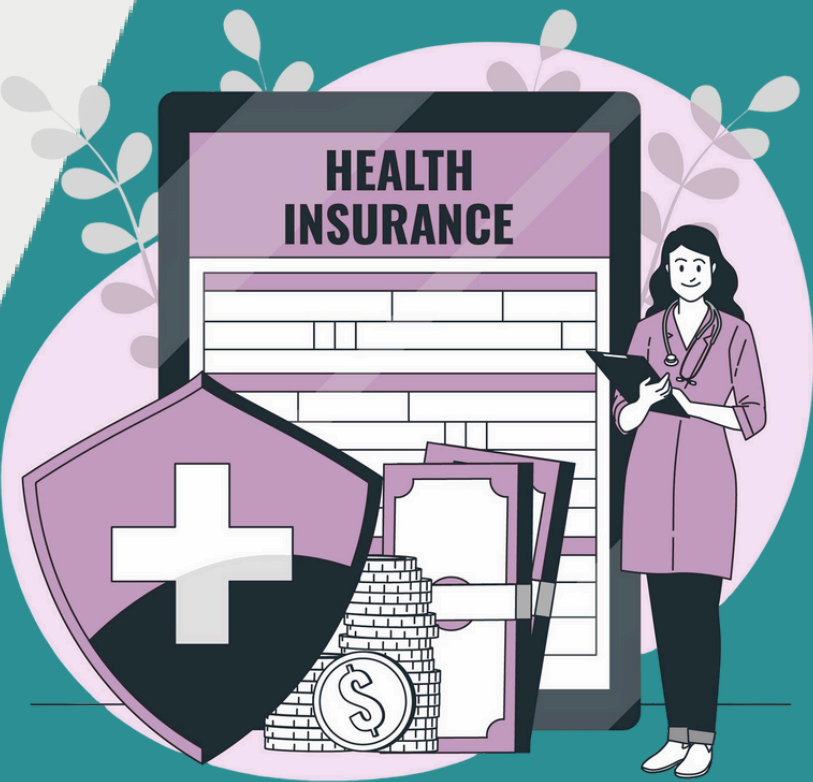
The following data shows where staff receive their health insurance:

Program Staff:

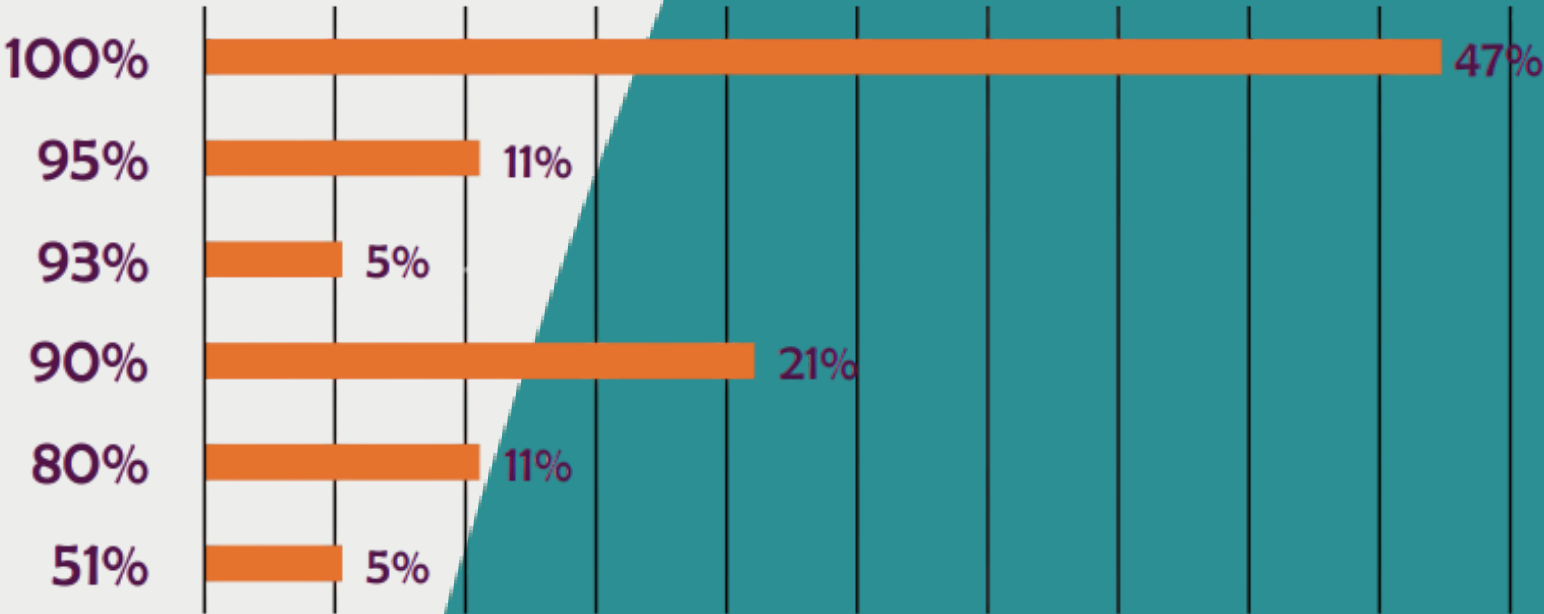
- Employer- 78%
- Apple Health- 12%
- Spouse’s insurance- 6%
- Social Security Disability Insurance- 2%
- Children’s Health Insurance Program- 1%
- No health insurance -1%

Directors:

- Employer- 75%
- Spouse’s Insurance- 22%



% Medical Premium Covered by Employer



Does the organization offer medical coverage for dependents?

- Yes- 24%**
- No- 42%**
- Yes, but too expensive- 33%**

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

While half of respondents who are parents are their family's sole provider, employer health insurance for dependents isn't offered or is unaffordable at the vast majority of their workplaces.

PARENT/GUARDIAN

71% of survey participants are a parent or guardian. 50% of parents/guardians are the sole provider for their household.

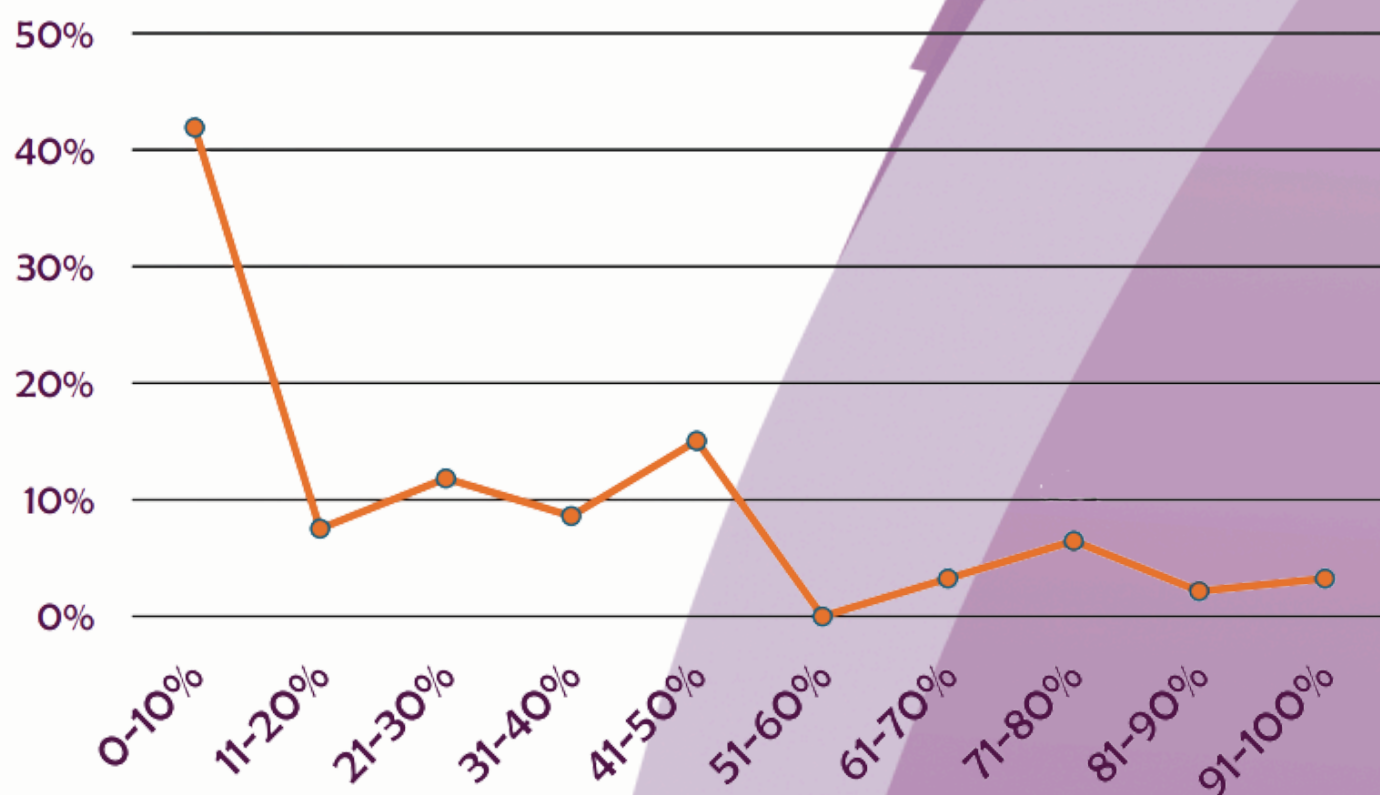
% of parents/caregivers that report working more than 40 hours/week:

41-45 hours - 82%
45-50 hours - 100%
50+ hours - 80%

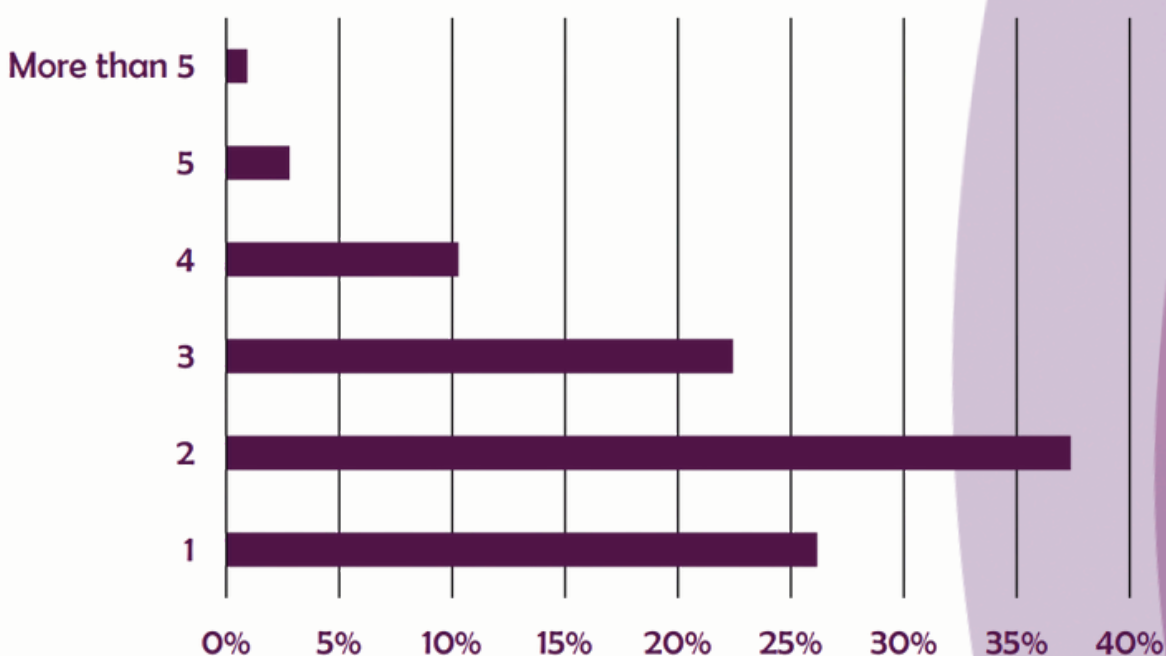
Caregiver dependent details:

42% - minors
33% - adults
25% - both minor and adult

% INCOME TOWARDS DEPENDENT CARE



NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS



THINGS TO CONSIDER:

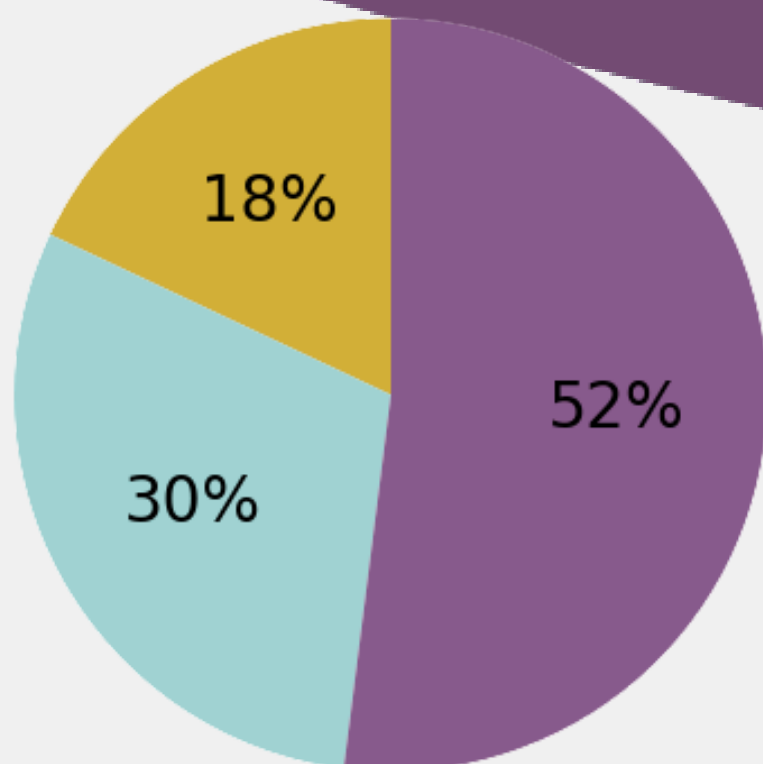
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HOUSING

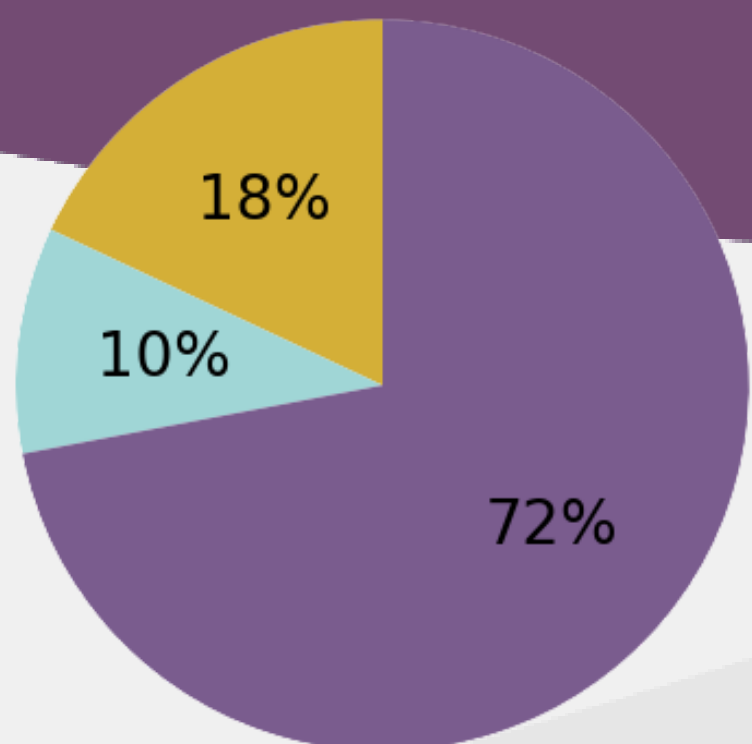
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) categorizes housing cost burdens into three categories: “not burdened”, “cost burdened”, and “severely cost burdened”. People who are not cost burdened spend less than 30% of their gross income on housing; those “cost burdened” spend 30%-49% of their gross income on housing; and those “severely cost burdened” spend 50% or more of their gross income on housing.¹ In our survey, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the DV workforce in urban areas, and over $\frac{1}{2}$ in rural areas, spend over half their gross income just on housing.



Rural



Urban



■ Not Burdened ■ Cost Burdened ■ Severely Cost Burdened

¹U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "CHAS: Background," HUD USER, accessed May 28, 2025,

²T. Lundy and J. Crawford, "Health and Wellness Outcomes of Intimate Partner Violence Support Workers: A Narrative Review," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 25, no. 4 (2024): 2942–2956, Body..

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

36% of staff rely on at least one subsidy other than their spouse/partner's income or family support, turning to resources such as:

- Working Connections
- SNAP
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Subsidized or public housing
- Food Bank
- Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- WIC
- Extended Family Support
- Child Support
- Cash Assistance
- Other mutual aid
- Retirement
- Child Support
- Biolife - Selling Plasma
- Personal Loans
- Credit Cards
- Public School Free Meals
- VA Benefits for Children
- Survivor SSI Benefits

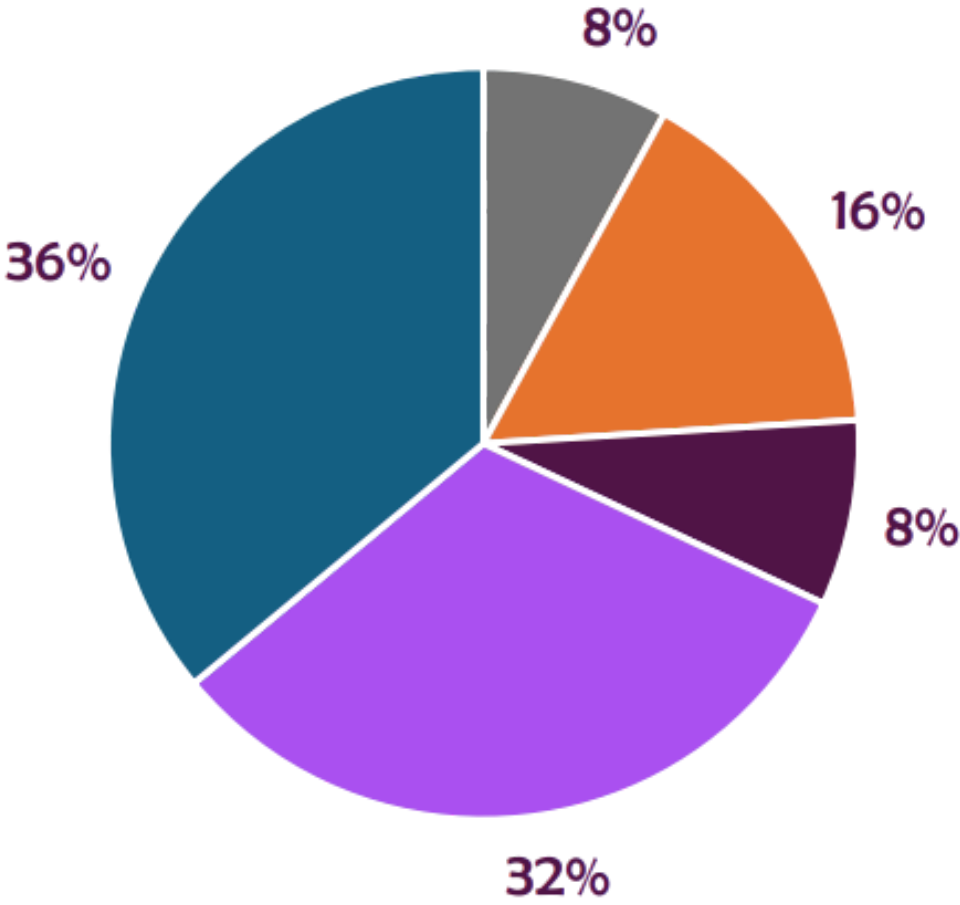
THINGS TO CONSIDER:

18% of program staff report having at least one additional source of employment to meet their financial needs.

TENURE

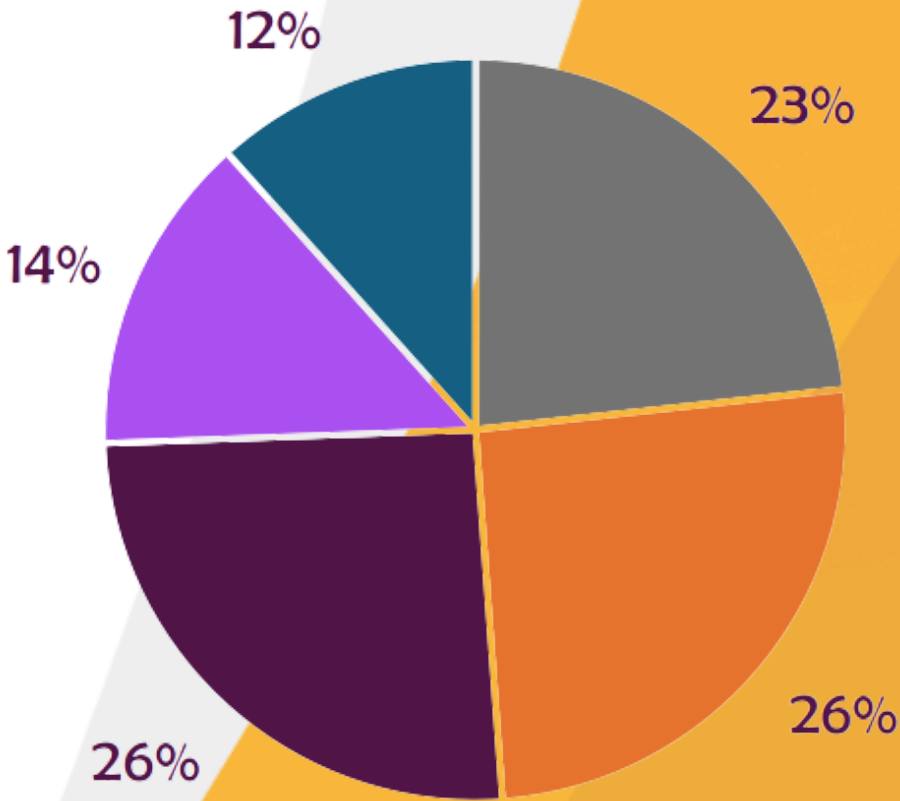
TIME AT CURRENT ORGANIZATION

PROGRAM STAFF



■ <1 ■ 1-2 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ 10+

DIRECTORS



TIME IN VICTIM SERVICES FIELD

Program Staff:

<1 year - 13%
1-2 years - 24%
3-5 years - 26%
6-10 years - 14%
10-14 years - 12%
15-20 years - 8%
20+ years - 3%

Directors:

1-2 years - 5%
3-5 years - 9%
6-10 years - 29%
10-14 years - 24%
15-20 years - 19%
20+ years - 14%

91% of staff reported that the work they do is valuable.

69% of staff reported that they feel valued by their coworkers.

62% of staff reported that they feel valued by their employer.

73% of directors reported feeling valued by their Board of Directors.

RETENTION OUTLOOK

Survey respondents were asked to share how long they planned to continue working with their current employer. Responses were sorted based on tenure. Notably, the vast majority of advocates said they intended to stay an additional 3-10+ years. However, 50% of new directors indicated that they plan to leave within one year.

TIME IN CURRENT ORGANIZATION

INTENDED STAY

	INTENDED STAY				
	<1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	10+ years
DIRECTORS					
1-2 years	50%	-	25%	25%	-
3-5 years	-	-	33%	33%	33%
6-10 years	14%	-	29%	14%	43%
10+ years	-	22%	33%	-	44%
PROGRAM STAFF					
<1 year	10%	17%	30%	13%	30%
1-2 years	3%	15%	33%	15%	33%
3-5 years	9%	9%	27%	27%	27%
6-10 years	6%	6%	22%	11%	56%
10+ years	13%	-	47%	13%	27%

RETIREMENT

“Are you saving for retirement?”

Directors:

No- 4%
No, but would like to- 22%
Yes- 74%

Program staff:

No- 12%
No, but would like to- 34%
Yes- 54%

Does your employer offer matching funds for a retirement plan?

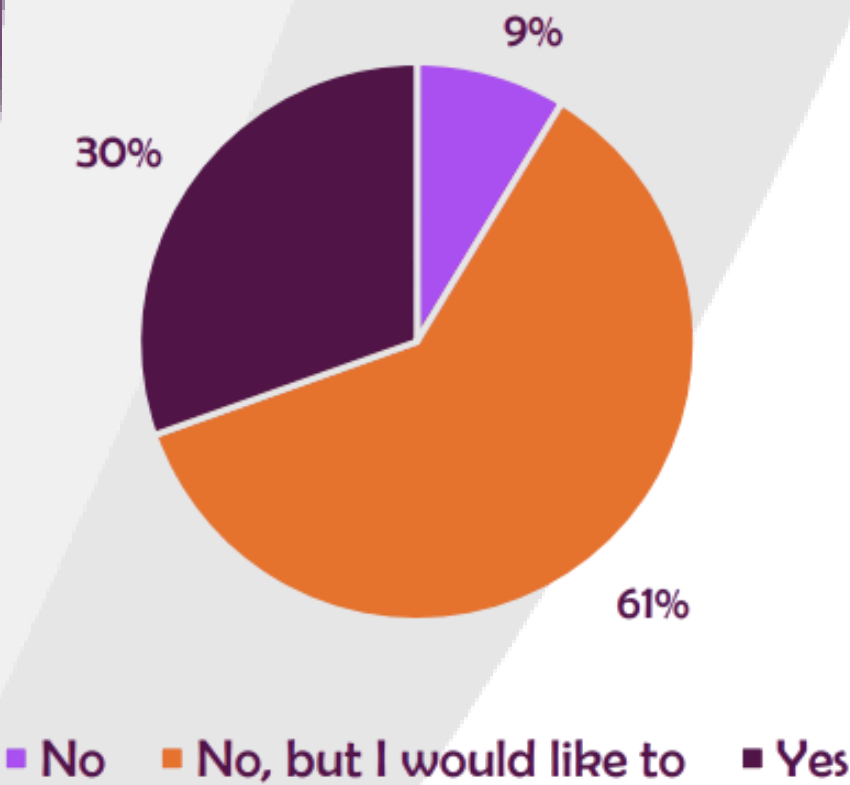
Yes- 76%
No- 24%

Employee Participation	Match offered	Match not offered
Yes	68%	17%
No	7%	28%
No, but would like to	25%	55%

THINGS TO CONSIDER

A high percentage of the workforce struggles to make ends meet. Even so, they are trying to save for retirement. Contributing to retirement savings is one way that employers can support their workforce, while also better attracting and retaining employees.

Program Staff Ages 20-29



WELLNESS, VALUE & BELONGING

61% of respondents
stated they feel
valued by their
employer

32% of respondents
report it is
challenging to take
daily breaks

69% of respondents
stated they feel
valued by the
people they serve

81% of people who
reported being on
call reported it had a
negative impact on
their well-being

Financial wellness is the ability to manage financial responsibilities with confidence while maintaining balance in other areas of life—such as health, relationships, and personal fulfillment—so that money becomes a tool for living well rather than a source of stress.

An individual's working life conditions are a key social determinant of health. Workers who support survivors of IPV play an essential role in preventing harm and promoting survivors' health, healing, and resilience. They face traumatic acts of violence in their everyday work life, which may subsequently impact their health and wellness.²

92% of respondents who
identified as BIPOC
reported feeling a sense
of belonging in the
workplace

93% of respondents who
identified as LGBTQ+
reported that they feel a
sense of belonging in the
workplace

91% of respondents
stated they believe
the work they do is
valuable

18% of respondents
stated they have to
rely on additional
employment to make
ends meet

Respondents who reported
being able to have lunch
with their coworkers were
3x as likely to report
feeling connected at work

²T. Lundy and J. Crawford, "Health and Wellness Outcomes of Intimate Partner Violence Support Workers: A Narrative Review," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 25, no. 4 (2024): 2942–2956, [Body](#).

WHY DO YOU DO THIS WORK?

Just one person can make a difference.

Because I am a survivor.

Life's too short to not help people who need to be safe and start a new life free of fear.

To help empower and support others through their situation. I wish I had an advocate back when I went through my abuse.

Healing is beautiful.

For all the frustrations I feel with my rural, conservative community and the lack of support for social services or survivors, I also have a tremendous love for the people of my community and I believe they all deserve health, safety, and happiness. I really believe in the movement to end gender-based violence and I believe prevention is possible.

FEEDS MY SOUL.

WHY DO YOU DO THIS WORK?

I find advocacy to be an act of resistance.

I feel that it matters what we do and we empower and support people that need it and deserve it.

We keep the light of hope for those that need to find a way out of the dark.

I have always been committed to doing what ever I can to uplift women and queer people and shift the systems that hold them down.

We can achieve better quality of life for our community and all survivors, improving equity in systems ,improving overall wellness and normalizing healthy relationships instead of repeated harm as the norm.

I feel privileged to be a part of a mission that promotes safety, healing, and hope.

To help people, to have meaning at the end of the day.

THE 2025 WAGE AND WELLNESS REPORT WAS CO-AUTHORED BY DEBRIELLA DEBRECKI AND SHERRIE TINOCO



Debriella Debrecki worked as an intern for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence from 2024-2025 to complete her Masters of Social Work degree at the University of Washington, with a concentration in Administration & Public Policy. Debriella took on the Wellness & Compensation Survey as their main graduate project with the intention of bringing comprehensive study to how systems and structures affect the lives of individuals and influence transformative action.



Sherrie Tinoco is the Policy Director with the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Sherrie has over 20 years of experience in leading and working in victim services organizations.

This report is centered through the lens of reflection, uplifting strengths, transparency and economic justice. The goal we have for this report is to uplift the realities and experiences of victim service providers and think critically about how work, wages, compensation, scheduling, and responsibilities impact the wellness of employees. Community care is crucial, and those that do the work to keep our communities healthy and safe deserve recognition and advocacy of their own. We hope that through engaging with this report, programs can identify areas where impact does not align with intentions and consider how that might be changed.

We extend a huge thank you to all who work in the victim services arena for the invaluable work that you do in our communities. We hope that this can be a tool used across the field to keep conversations going and kick-start those that have not yet started. It is our intention moving into the future to continue to focus on and enhance employee wellness, because victim services work is critical, and we invite you to join us.

**Questions about the report or additional data points
can be directed to Sherrie Tinoco at sherrie@wscadv.org**

2025

