



Join the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative

The goal of the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative (RISWI) is to make it easier for employers to find and keep great Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who provide quality support for Rhode Islanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We are looking for passionate people interested in building a stronger direct support workforce in Rhode Island.

Why it matters

DSPs play a vital role in helping people with disabilities live their lives. There are DSP shortages throughout the country, and DSPs do not always have the training they need to do their jobs well. RISWI was created to help address this problem so that support for Rhode Islanders with IDD can improve.

What RISWI has done

People interested in attracting, training, and keeping great DSPs have been meeting and creating a plan to address the shortage of DSPs in Rhode Island. In 2022 and 2023, stakeholders met to discuss how to address the problem. After the meetings, leaders created a plan with goals and objectives to address the shortage of DSPs and make it easier to attract, train, and keep DSPs. Accomplishments include the development of the RI DSP Core Competencies Guide and implementation of SupportWise Data (a tool for organizations to track, analyze, and improve workforce recruitment and retention). To meet additional goals and objectives, five workgroups, a Coordinating Council, and an Advisory Committee were formed.

How it works

The Coordinating Council includes employers of DSPs, people with disabilities, and other professionals and helps the five workgroups work together and make decisions to meet goals and objectives.

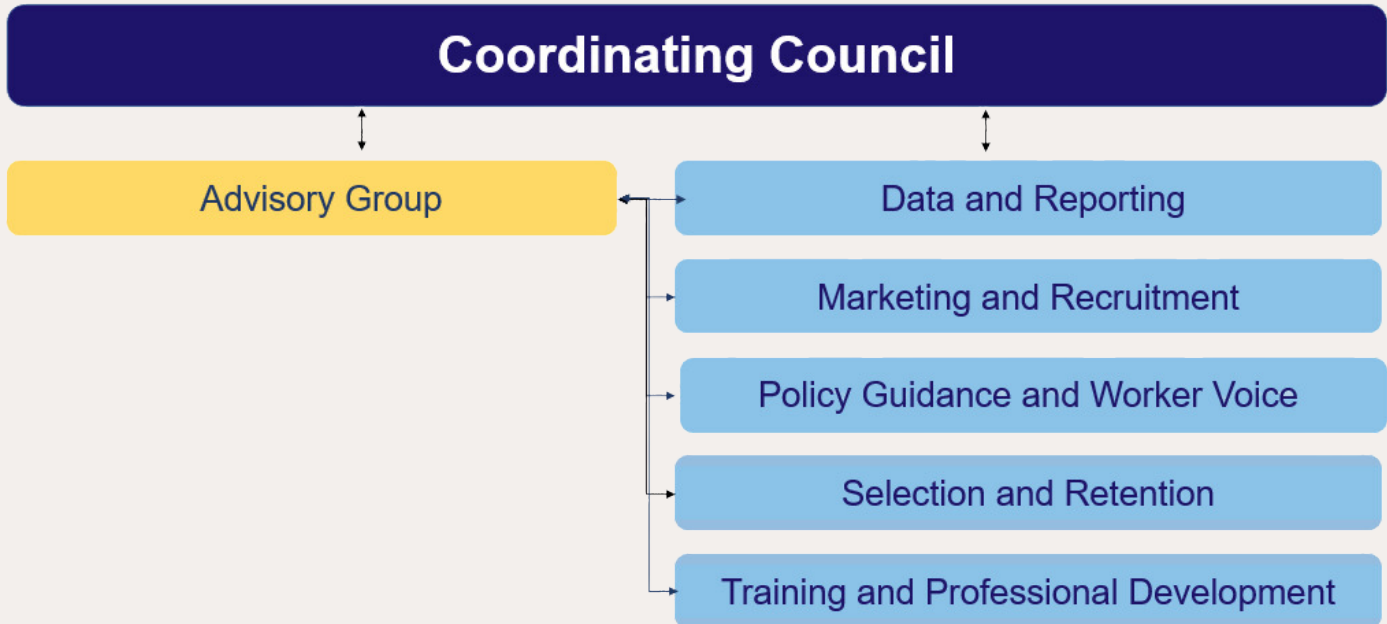
The Advisory Committee is made up of DSPs, frontline supervisors, people with disabilities, and family members and provides advice and guidance to the Coordinating Council and workgroups.

Workgroups are made up of people with different points of view. Members include DSPs, frontline supervisors, people with disabilities, family members, and other professionals. The workgroups and their goals are listed below.

- **Data and Reporting:** Using and collecting data about DSPs to understand what challenges they face.
- **Marketing and Recruitment:** Making

people aware of the career and attracting individuals into the DSP role.

- **Policy Guidance and Worker Voice:** Works to recognize DSPs as professionals and make the public aware of their role. Trains DSPs and other professionals to advocate for better wages and benefits and find ways to understand the problems current DSPs in Rhode Island are facing.
- **Selection and Retention:** Focusing on hiring and keeping great DSPs by making sure they are well-paid, have opportunities to advance, and feel supported and recognized in their jobs.
- **Training and Professional Development:** Making sure that DSPs and their supervisors receive the training they need to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide great support.



Want to get involved? We are looking for more passionate people to join RISWI workgroups!
Contact us at riswi@umn.edu or visit <https://bit.ly/RISWI> for more information.

Direct Support
Workforce Solutions

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