

The Frontline Workforce Crisis: Old Challenges, New Opportunities

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We believe that caring, committed relationships between direct care workers and their clients are at the heart of quality care. Those relationships work best when direct care workers receive high-quality training, living wages, and respect for the central role they play.



Session Agenda

- ❖ Old challenges, **new data**
- ❖ Old challenges, **new policies**
- ❖ Old challenges, **new practices**



Old Challenges, New Data

Who Are Kansas's Direct Care Workers? (2019)

- 47,000 workers who support older adults and people with disabilities across care settings (incl. DSPs)
- A predominantly female (88%) and diverse workforce (30% people of color)
- Median age is 34; 22% are ≤24 years old and 22% are aged 55 and above

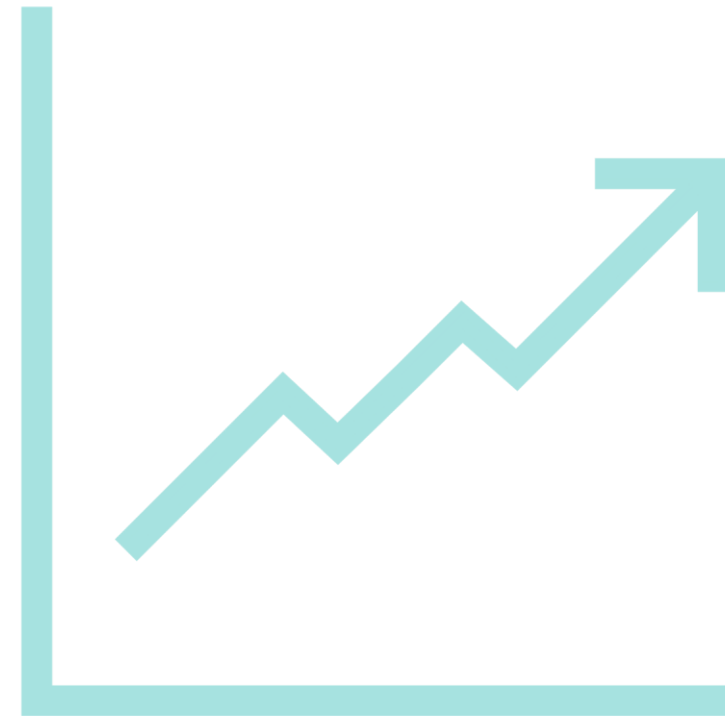
PHI. "Workforce Data Center." Accessed 9/9/21.

<https://phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.



A Growing Workforce

- Demand for long-term services and supports keeps increasing



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A Growing Workforce

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- **Nearly 8,500 new direct care jobs** are projected from 2018 to 2028



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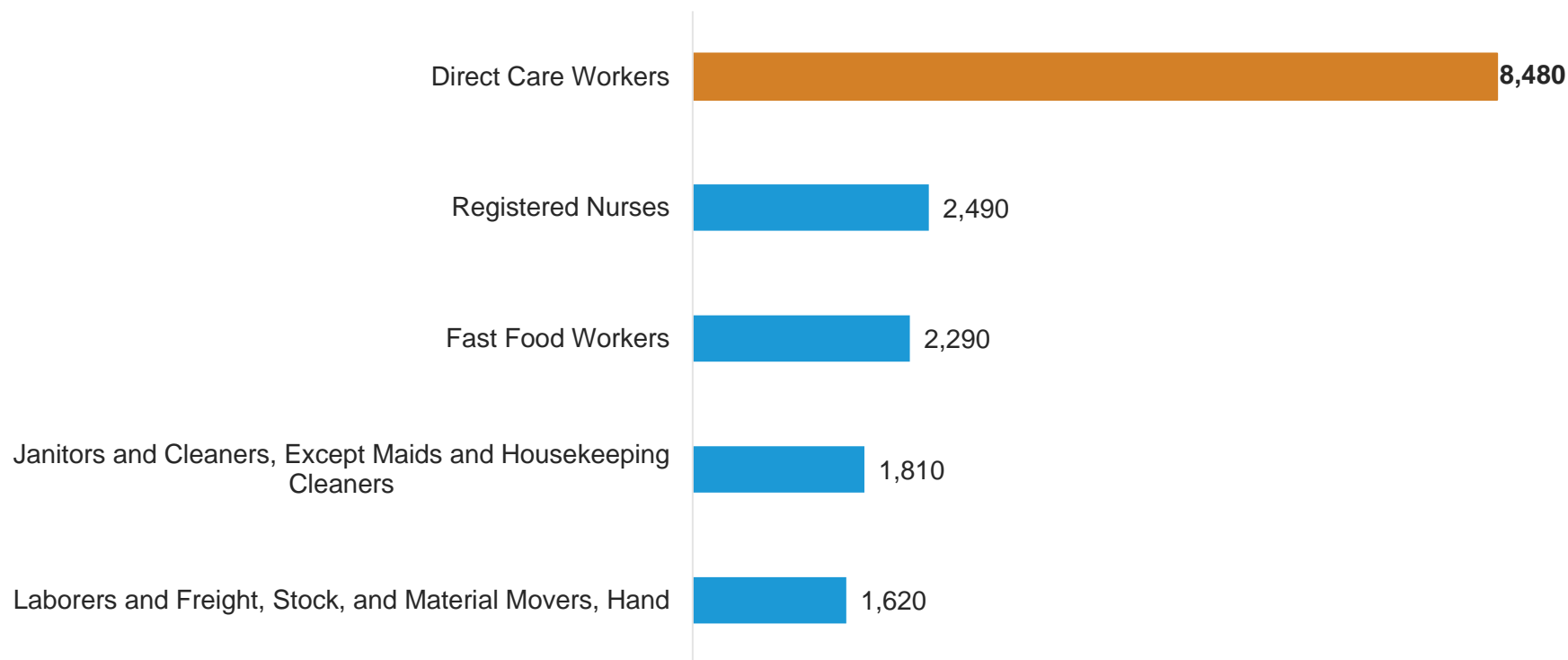
A Growing Workforce

- Demand for long-term services and supports keeps increasing
- **Nearly 8,500 new direct care jobs** are projected from 2018 to 2028
- Including “separations,” nearly **75,000 job openings** expected in the next decade

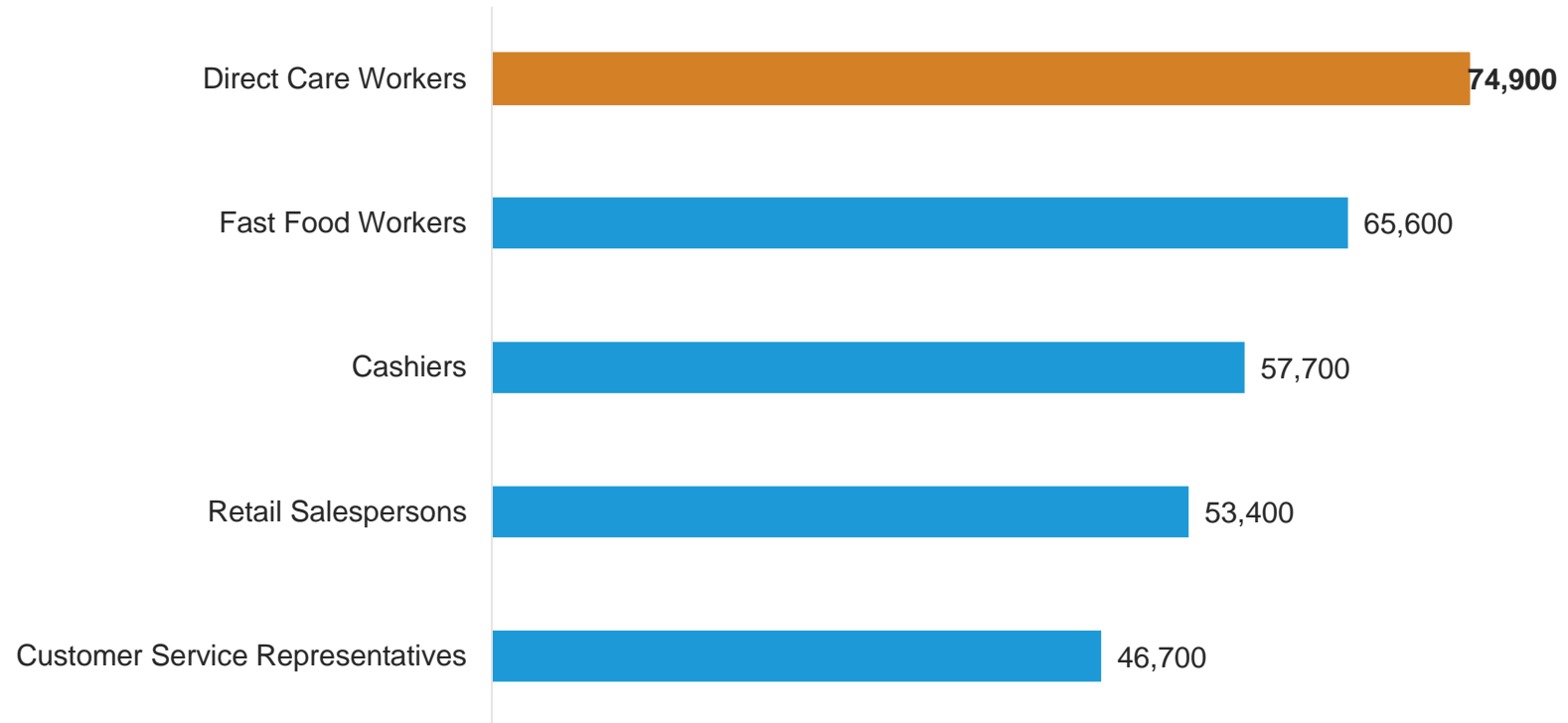


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Direct care will add more new jobs than any other occupation in Kansas in the next decade.



Direct care will have more total job openings than any other occupation in Kansas in the next decade.



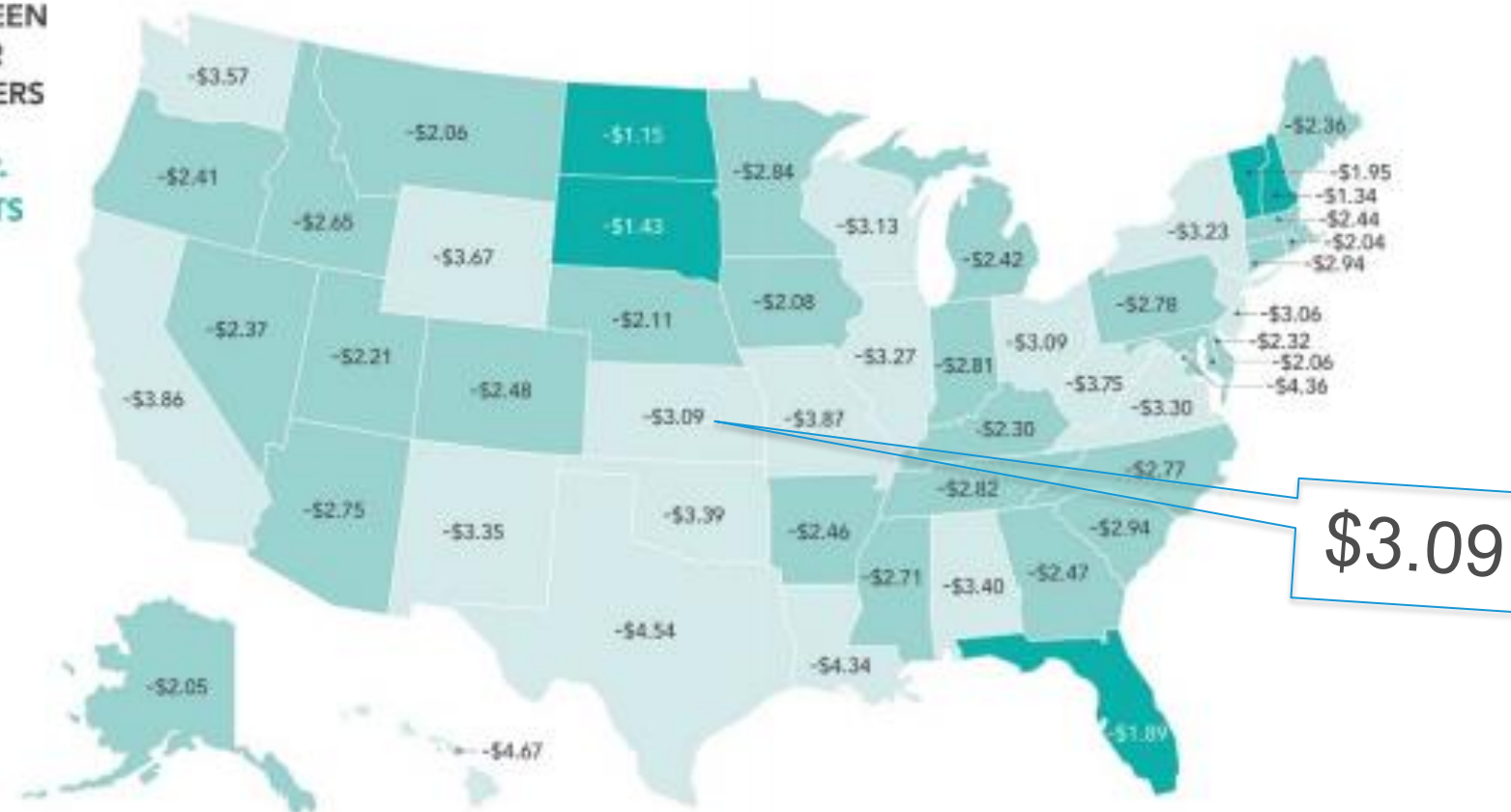
An Essential But Undervalued Workforce

- Median hourly wage = \$12.26 (\$10.97 for HHAs and PCAs)
- Median annual earnings = \$18,600
- Nearly half live in or near poverty (49%); 34% rely on public assistance
- Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) has no health insurance; 23% rely on public coverage
- Limited training and career development

The Competition is Real

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
MEDIAN WAGES FOR
DIRECT CARE WORKERS
AND OCCUPATIONS
WITH **SIMILAR ENTRY-
LEVEL REQUIREMENTS**
BY STATE, 2019

- -\$1.00 to -\$1.99
- -\$2.00 to -\$2.99
- -\$3.00 or Less



Old Challenges, New Policies

A Window of Opportunity is Open

- **The Better Care Better Jobs Plan** – permanent enhanced FMAP
 - Proposed legislation includes funding for states to develop infrastructure improvement plans, an ongoing 10-percentage point FMAP increase, and an additional increase for self-directed programs; also promotes innovation in HCBS design and delivery
- **The American Rescue Plan Act** – temporary enhanced FMAP for HCBS
 - Kansas's proposed spending plan includes \$57m investment in workforce initiatives, including a retention bonus, training grants, and career ladder development effort
- **Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act** – revise the BLS classification system to include DSPs
- **The Direct CARE Opportunity Act** – \$1 billion investment in direct care workforce innovations
- **The U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021** – new citizenship pathways for specific categories of immigrants, including “essential workers”

Old Challenges, New (and True) Practices

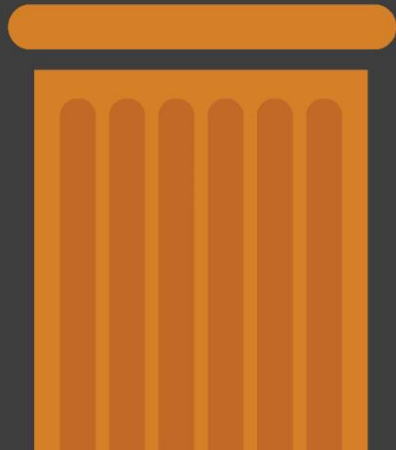
THE 5 PILLARS OF DIRECT CARE JOB QUALITY



QUALITY
TRAINING



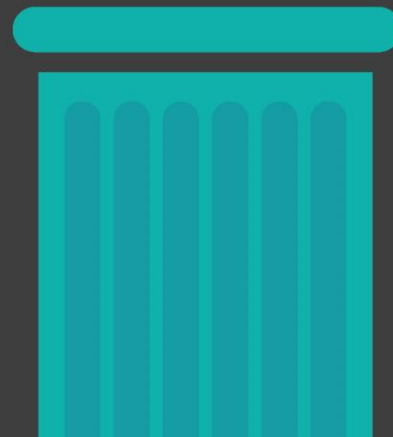
FAIR
COMPENSATION



QUALITY
SUPERVISION
& SUPPORT



RESPECT &
RECOGNITION



REAL
OPPORTUNITY





FAIR COMPENSATION

- Living wage as a base wage
- Access to full-time hours
- Consistent scheduling and notice of scheduling changes
- Employer- or union-sponsored benefit plans
- Grief support and bereavement leave
- Financial support and asset development programs
- Access to merit, longevity, and other base pay increases

New (and True) Practices – Compensation



Offer grief support and bereavement leave



Support financial literacy and asset development



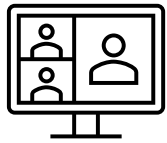
Tackle transportation or childcare



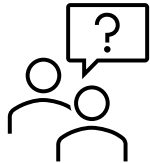
QUALITY TRAINING

- Training is accessible, affordable, and relevant to the job
- Content covers a range of relational and technical skills associated with quality care
- Competency-based, adult learner-centered instruction with opportunities for hands-on learning
- Programs account for cultural, linguistic, and learning differences
- Documentation and verification of program completion and/or certification, with connections to employment

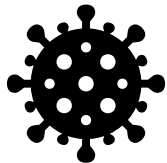
New (and True) Practices – Training



Leverage existing learning and credentialing options



Ask workers about their training needs



Create timely, targeted training modules



QUALITY SUPERVISION & SUPPORT

- Clear presentation of job requirements, responsibilities, workflows, and reporting structures
- Consistent, accessible, and supportive supervision
- Access to personal protective equipment and other supplies to ensure worker and client safety
- Connection to peer mentors and peer support networks
- Connection to community-based organizations to address employment-related barriers

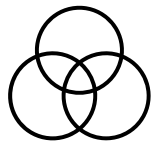
New (and True) Practices – Supervision & Support



Partner with community-based organizations



Establish a peer mentoring program



Create tailored supports for different segments of your workforce



RESPECT & RECOGNITION

- Direct care workers reflected in organizational mission, values, and business plans
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion formalized in organizational practices
- Consistent feedback is given on work performance and retention is celebrated
- Opportunities for direct care workers to influence organizational decisions
- Clear communication about changes affecting workers, with opportunities for feedback
- Direct care workers empowered to participate in care planning and coordination
- Other staff trained to value direct care workers' input and skills

“I was extremely stressed about COVID-19 at first, and I was so worried about putting myself at risk at my job and about protecting my kids. I would think, ‘What if something happens to my children? Or what if I get it, how will I quarantine from them?’ I found myself worrying all day, and then I decided that I really couldn’t allow this to consume me because I had to keep going to work and keep providing for my [clients]. Instead of worrying myself sick, I just try to keep doing everything I can to protect myself and keep reminding my kids and my [clients] about the importance of taking care of themselves, too.”

CRYSTAL PROFFITT

Certified Nursing Assistant and Certified Hospice Palliative Nursing Assistant
Raleigh, NC





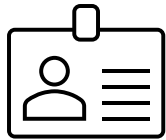
REAL OPPORTUNITY

- Employer-sponsored continuous learning available to build core and specialized direct care skills
- Opportunities for promotion into advanced direct care roles with wage and title increases
- Organizational commitment to cross-training workers and promoting from within
- Connections to external training and job development programs for other health care and social service careers

New (and True) Practices – Opportunity



Promote from within



Create advanced roles

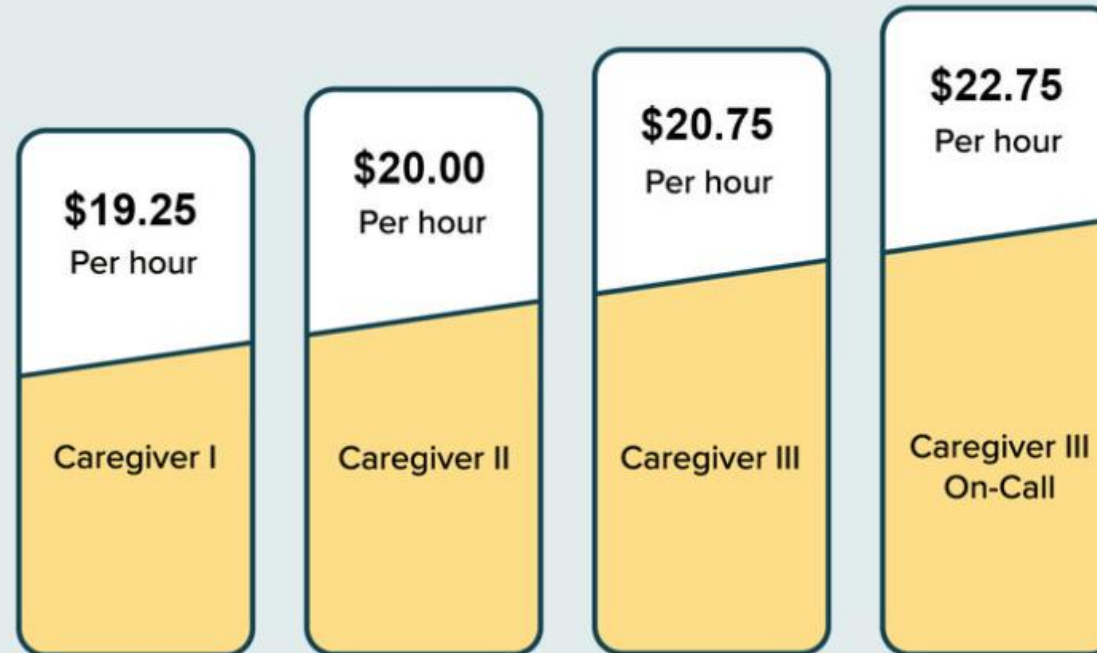


Learn from each other



STEPS Program

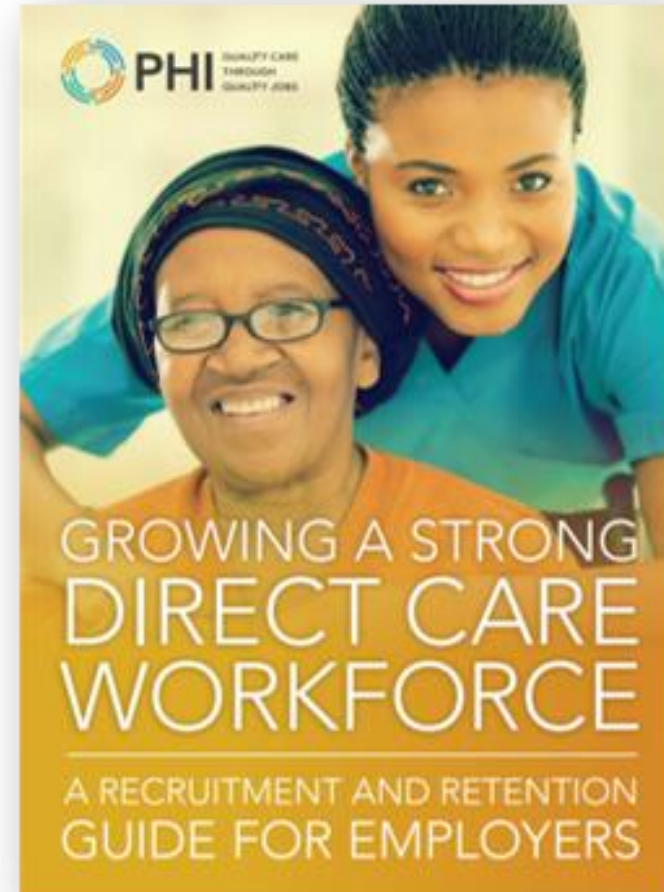
For over three years, Homebridge has been advocating to implement a workforce transformation that consists of a multi-tier ladder for our caregivers based on skills development and training.



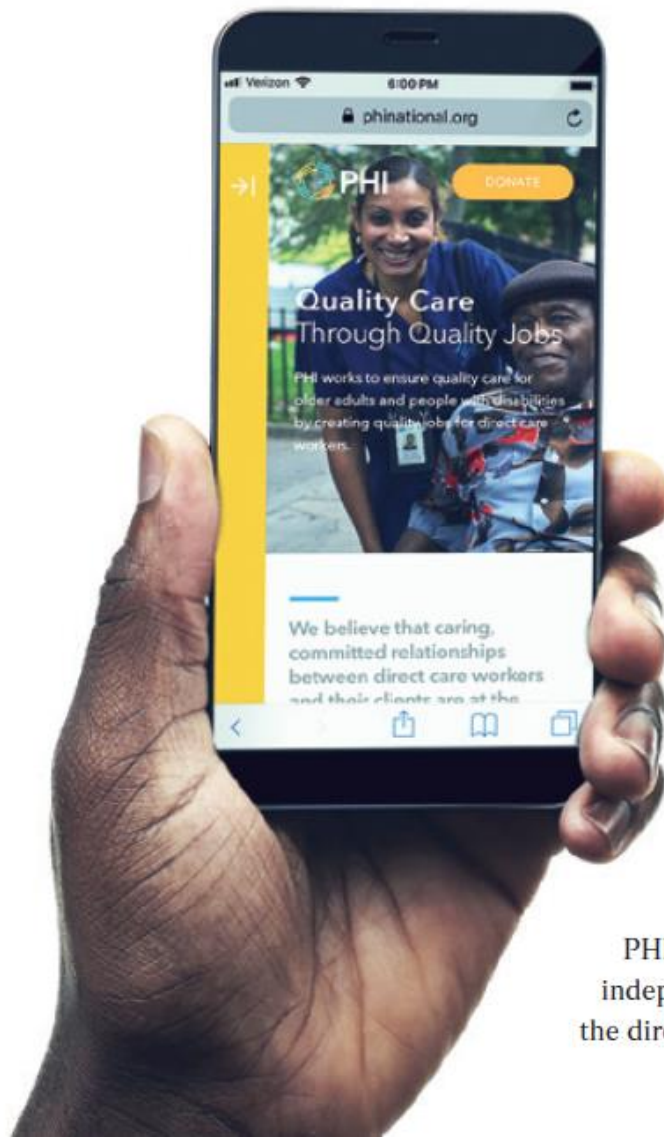
The workforce program – entitled “STEPS to Success” (Skills-Training & Employment Pathways) – now offers skilled tiers, Caregiver I through III, with base wages at permanent differentials above minimum wage.

Tried and True Steps to Recruit the Right Staff

- Develop a recruitment plan
- Create mission-driven materials
- Identify a range of potential applicants
- Use targeted outreach strategies
- In the interview:
 - Include realistic job previews
 - Ask values-based questions
 - Discuss strategies for success
- Ensure a person-centered welcome



PHI. 2018. *Growing a Strong Direct Care Workforce: A Recruitment and Retention Guide for Employers*. Bronx, NY: PHI.
<https://phinational.org/resource/growing-strong-direct-care-workforce-recruitment-retention-guide-employers/>



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PHI works to transform eldercare and disability services. We foster dignity, respect, and independence for all who receive care, and all who provide it. As the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce, PHI promotes quality direct care jobs as the foundation for quality care.



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The Crisis is Now

- Average **turnover** among DSPs: 43% (75% voluntary)
- **Job tenure** among DSPs: <6 months: 18%, 36+ months: 37%
- **Vacancy rates** among DSPs: 9% full-time, 11% part-time
- **Cost** of turnover = at least \$2,600/worker

