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Workplace shortage Impact on Vermont Developmental Service Organizations

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Impact of Staffing Levels of Developmental Services on Community Health

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Background

Champlain Community Services (CCS) is a non-profit providing support to Vermonters with **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)** through employment, career development, home, and school supports. Our study addresses the impact of understaffing of VT developmental services organizations, like CCS, on the health of individuals with IDD and the surrounding community.

- People with (IDD) experience health disparities and multiple barriers to care, such as maintaining direct support professionals (DSPs).^{1,2}
- Average turnover for organizations supporting those with IDD is 30-70% a year, putting a large financial burden on the organization and contributes to negative impact on the consumer quality of life.³
- In Vermont (VT), 70% of people with IDD are living with a home provider.
- Provider changes or transitions can be stressful, which can negatively impact home providers who need to provide additional care.⁴

Methods

- Interviews with CCS consumers/families and CCS DSPs/staff focused on five questions to assess impacts of understaffing on developmental and mental health services.

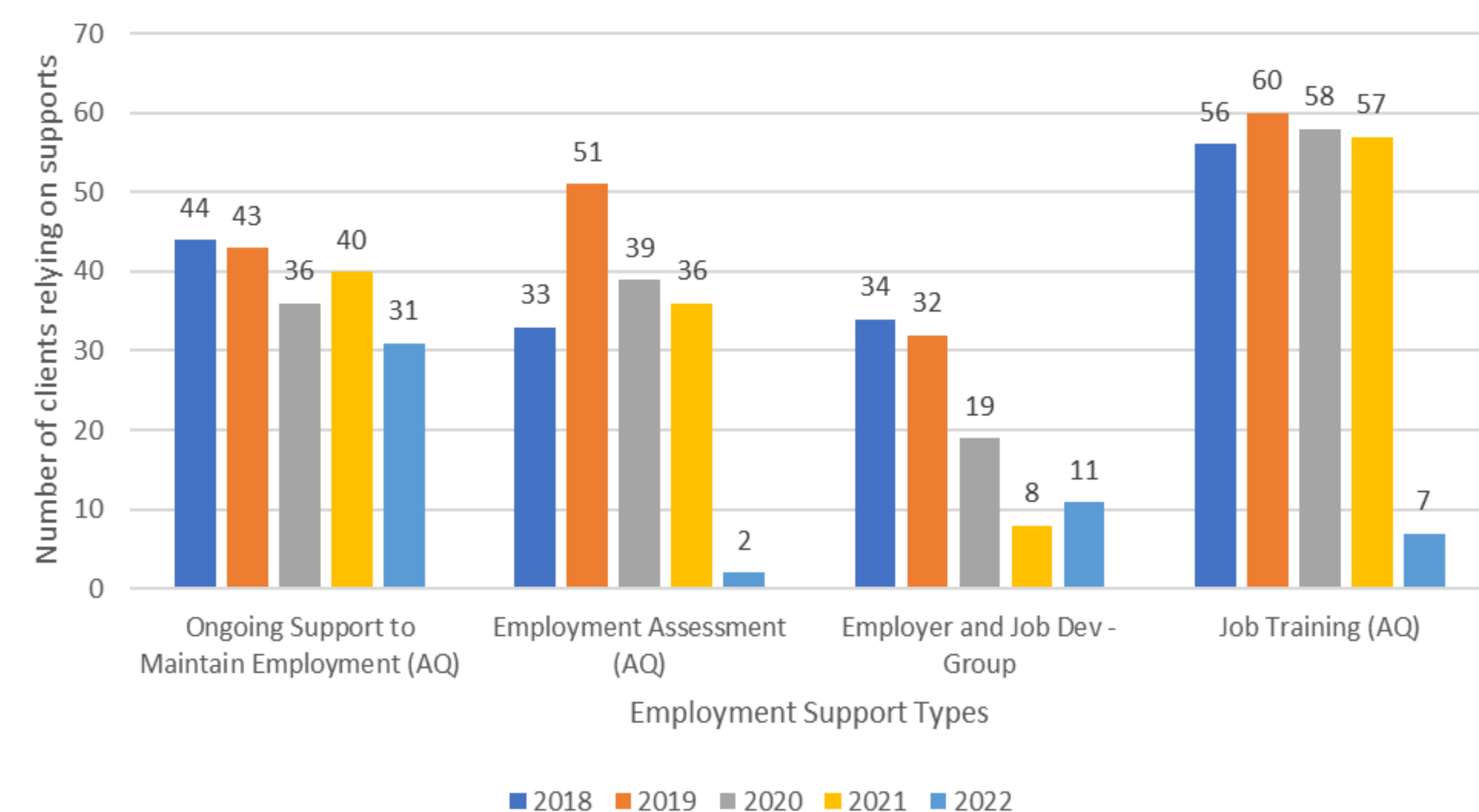


Figure 1: Data from CCS indicating consumer consumption of the four service categories identified

		2019	2020	2021	2022
Pay / Benefits	I believe my compensation is fair/My pay is fair for the work I perform	49%	45%	54%	58%
	Overall, I'm satisfied with this organization's benefits package	89%	90%	94%	100%
Work-Life Balance	Staffing levels are adequate to provide quality products/services	52%	64%	75%	*
	I am able to maintain a reasonable balance between work and my personal life	83%	79%	81%	69%

Table 1: CCS employee satisfaction rates over time and split into different categories. Percentages are for respondents that answered "Agree Somewhat" or "Agree Strongly".
 *Information not collected

Results

- CCS data from 2016-2022 showed highest turnover rates for employees with less tenure.
- Satisfaction surveys report concerns with fair compensation and adequate staffing levels.
- Employment Support services—measured in population of Vermont residents receiving disability services—show downward trend in all services delivered from 2018-2022.

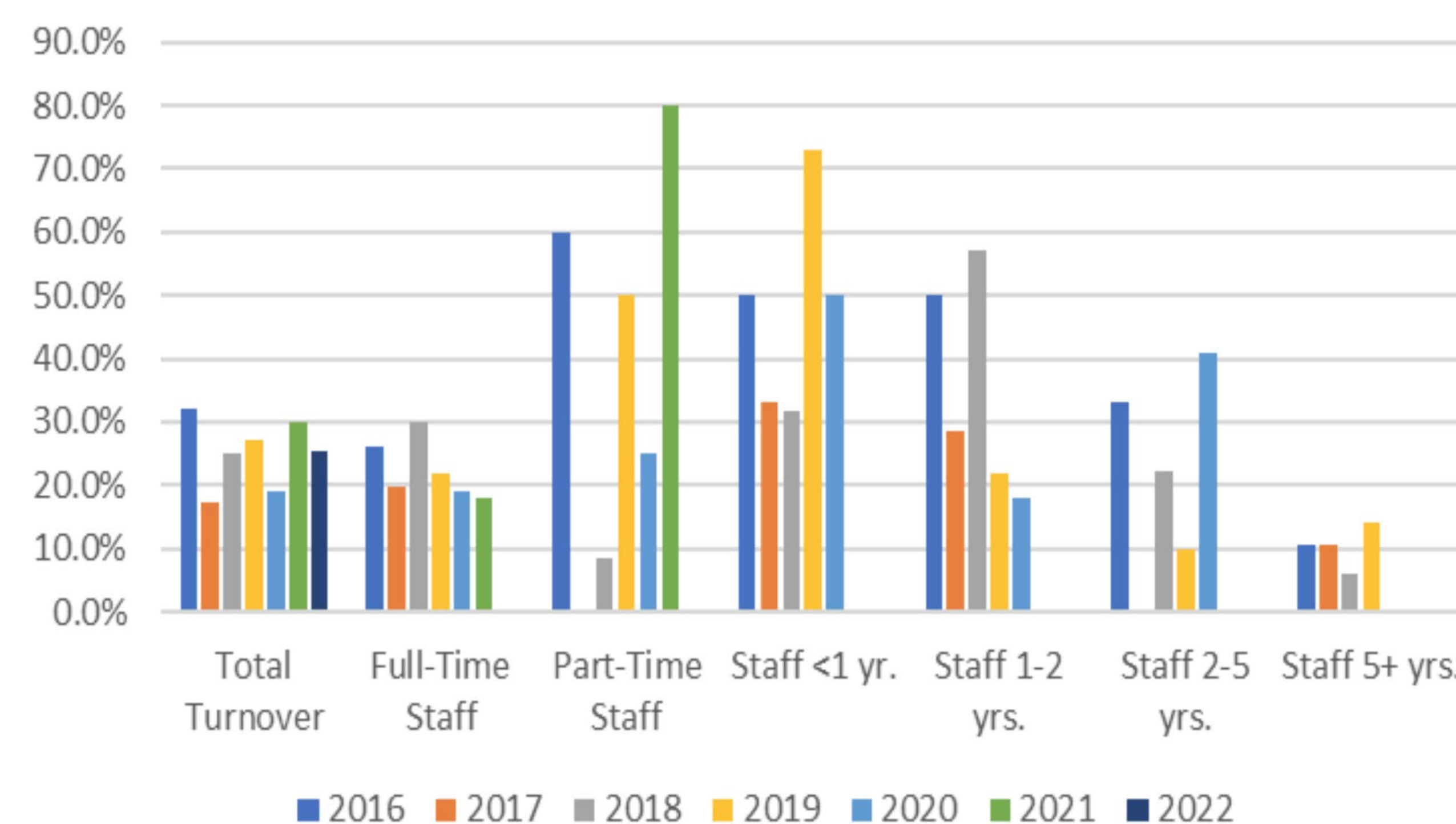


Figure 2: CCS staff turnover from 2016 to 2022. Data points from 2022 were only collected for total employee turnover. Data points from 2021 were only collected for total staff turnover, full-time staff, and part-time staff turnover. Data points from 2017 for Part-Time staff and Staff 2-5 years were missing.



Discussion/Conclusion

- The World Health Organization includes "Work and Employment" as a relevant health domain for disabled individuals.⁵
- Staffing rates for organizations who provide IDD and mental health services reportedly declined across the state, possibly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If employment support services are an indicator of consumer health, the downward trend observed (**Figure 1**) may indicate decline in IDD population's wellbeing.
- CCS data from 2016-2022 showed highest turnover rates for employees with less tenure (**Figure 2**), new employees may struggle with adjusting to the job.
- Provides framework for local care partners to improve staffing which will improve the health of Vermonters with IDD.
- Most CCS staff report they enjoy their work, dissatisfaction with salaries and work/life balance may be main contributing factors to high turnover rates.
- **Limitations:** survey results were provided by CCS and detailed statistical analysis to determine significance could not be conducted.
- **Future steps:** conducting standardized surveys on why employees are leaving CCS/how it relates to consumer health, with categories allowing for statistical analysis.

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