

Arizona Health Workforce Profile: Direct Care Workers (DCWs)

The purpose of this brief is to understand the distribution of the direct care workforce in Arizona.

BACKGROUND

- The U.S. Department of Labor defines direct care workers (DCWs) as “workers who provide home care services, such as certified nursing assistants, home health aides, personal care aides, caregivers, and companions.”¹
- Most DCWs are employed in “private homes, group homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, continuing care retirement communities, nursing homes, and hospitals.”²
- In the U.S. there are an estimated 3.4 million home health and personal care aides, 1.4 million nursing assistants, and 688,000 licensed practical or vocational nurses.³



Home Health Aides:

“Assist people in their homes or in community settings under the supervision of a nurse or therapist.” They assist with daily activities and may take on “light housekeeping” activities.

Nursing Assistants or Nursing Aides:

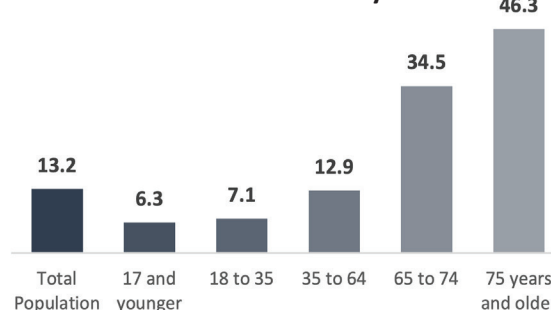
“Generally work in nursing homes, although some work in assisted living facilities, other community-based settings or hospitals.” They assist with daily activities and some clinical services.

Personal Care Aides: “Work in either private or group homes...in addition to providing assistance with ADLs, these aids often help with housekeeping chores, meal preparation, and medication management.”⁶

NEED

- The U.S. has a growing aging population and there is an increased focus on supporting adults as they age.
- The direct care workforce also provides critical support to people with disabilities or chronic illness or those who need short-term home-based care to recover from acute conditions like stroke.⁴
- 18.5% of Arizona’s population is older than age 65, 12th highest amongst all states.⁵

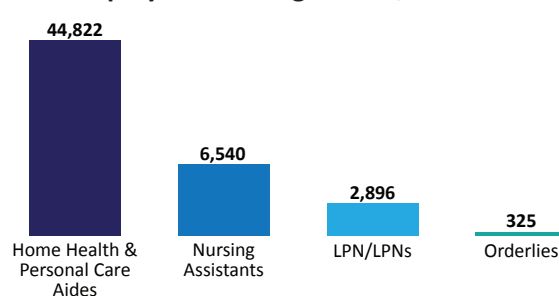
In Arizona 46.3% of adults 75 or Older are Living with a Disability



OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

- The occupation outlook for home health and personal care aides between 2020 and 2030 is estimated at 33% growth, compared to 8% average growth rate for all occupations.
- The occupation outlook for nursing assistants and orderlies between 2020 and 2030 is estimated at 8% growth, the same as the average for all occupations.

In Arizona the 2020 to 2030 Direct Care Employment Change is +54,583 Jobs



LICENSING IN ARIZONA

- Home health and personal care aides do not need to be licensed. Using population data from the U.S. Census DCWs working for Medicaid/Medicare certified agencies “must pass a competency test.” Arizona uses the federal requirement of 75 hours of training.⁷
- Nursing Assistants and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) must meet licensure requirements via the Arizona State Board of Nursing.⁸
- The Arizona Medicaid program (AHCCCS) has testing, training and certification requirements for DCWs who provide Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to AHCCCS members enrolled in the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS).⁹ AHCCCS received full approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to expand HCBS and training.⁹

Arizona Expands Funding

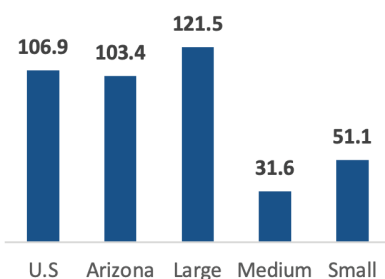
The 2022 Arizona State Legislature passed and the Governor signed HB 2157 that confers to AHCCCS expedited expenditure authority to use an estimated \$1.5 billion to be spent between 4/1/22 and 3/31/24 to expand HCBS for ALTCS enrollees. Family members who are certified as DCWs can be paid for example to care at home for an elderly parent or a child with a disability enrolled in ALTCS.¹⁰

FINDINGS

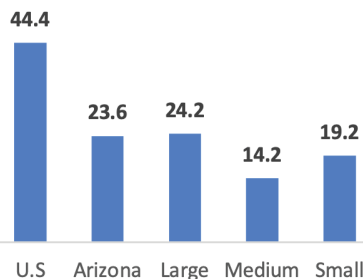
- Compared to the U.S. DCW per 10,000 population, Arizona is similar in the ratio of home health and personal care aides but has a lower ratio of nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses (Arizona does not have a license for vocational nurses).
- Using population data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2019 we find that the distribution of three types of DCWs mirrors the population distribution in Arizona, with the majority of the direct care workforce located in large counties, Maricopa and Pima.
- The ratio per 10,000 for each workforce group shows that the DCW ratio per 10,000 population is lower in medium and small counties compared to large counties.

	U.S.	Arizona	Large Counties	Medium Counties	Small Counties
Population (%)	324,697,795	7,052,789	5,365,455 (76.1)	1,336,501 (18.9)	350,833 (5.0)

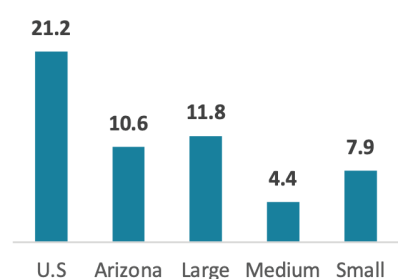
Home Health & Personal Care Aides



Nursing Assistants



LPN/LVNs



	U.S.	Arizona	Large Counties	Medium Counties	Small Counties ^{NOTE}
Home Health and Personal Care Aides					
Total Number (%)	3,470,700	72,920	65,185 (89.4)	4,218 (5.8)	1,198 (1.6)
Ratio per 10,000	106.9	103.4	121.5	31.6	51.1
Nursing Assistants					
Total Number (%)	1,440,700	16,676	12,958 (77.7)	1,894 (11.4)	450 (2.7)
Ratio per 10,000	44.4	23.6	24.2	14.2	19.2
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses					
Total Number (%)	688,100	7,480	6,342 (84.8)	591 (7.9)	186 (2.5)
Ratio per 10,000	21.2	10.6	11.8	4.4	7.9



METHODS & DATA

This brief uses data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook and the state and county employment projections from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity. The county categorization is based on the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) urban-rural classification for counties. We make two changes and that is to group Pima County with large counties, and Pinal County with the medium size counties. Large indicates the large central metro and medium metro counties (NHSC = 1, 3); Medium indicates the small metro counties (NHSC=4) and small indicates the large and small rural counties (NHSC 5,6).

Large counties (Metropolitan): Maricopa, Pima

Medium counties (Small metropolitan): Cochise, Coconino, Mohave, Pinal, Yavapai, Yuma

Small Counties (Large and small rural): Apache, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Navajo, Santa Cruz

NOTE: Occupation data for small counties only available for Apache, Gila and Navajo counties. No data is available at the county level for Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, and Santa Cruz. Population ratios are adjusted accordingly. The total population of just the small counties included in analysis is 234,561, 3.3% of state population.

References

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