



**King County**

**Disability Services  
Annual Report  
2018**



**Disability Awareness Month Recognition Event At  
King County Council, October 2018**

## Who We Are

The Disability Services Section is an interdisciplinary team of professionals dedicated to providing internal services to King County employees. The Section had 9 staff members in 2018 with backgrounds and expertise in the areas of Rehabilitation Counseling, Human Resources, Human Services, and Mental Health Counseling. Some have had many years of experience working with injured employees and people with disabilities, including work within King County’s HR policies and systems. All are passionate about serving King County’s employees to ensure they are successful at work, productive and engaged. We are committed to the employee’s experience as part of the *Investing in You* Initiative.

## What We Do

The Disability Services Section provides program services for the most vulnerable and marginalized County employees.

- Whether experiencing a temporary disability due to recent surgery or long term disability following a medical diagnosis, employees receiving services may be experiencing the most difficult time of their lives. Disability Services staff work with HR professionals, employees and supervisors/managers directly to provide reasonable accommodation and enable employees to keep working, while accommodating their illness or injury.
- We support Human Resource managers, representatives, and supervisors with guidance when dealing with workforce challenges regarding leaves and disability related matters.
- Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities may have never imagined they’d find meaningful, secure work where they would be valued. We coordinate with agencies to develop positions, and currently have more than 50 supported employees in the County workforce.
- Some employees are fighting drug or alcohol use and either self-refer or were referred by their supervisor for EAP services. This can be an uncertain and scary time for employees undergoing treatment for drug or alcohol use. We facilitate care and treatment.
- Some employees are struggling to find a new normal after a traumatic experience at work such as the loss of a co-worker or family member. We support their resilience through workplace and personal counseling.
- Some employees are struggling with stress and conflict in the workplace. We help them navigate during these difficult times.

## Staffing Changes

- Carol Gordon returned to our team after a Special Duty Assignment with Metro Transit in June.
- Aliza Hauser left County employment after more than 5 years of service to our County workforce.
- Nathan Kinker was hired as the Career Service Disability Services Consultant in October after serving in a Special Duty Assignment.
- Dan Hughes retired in December after a Special Duty Assignment with us and 28 years with the County.

## Disability Services and Reasonable Accommodation

Jeff Casem, Jamie Christensen, Carol Gordon, Aliza Hauser, Dan Hughes, and Nathan Kinker

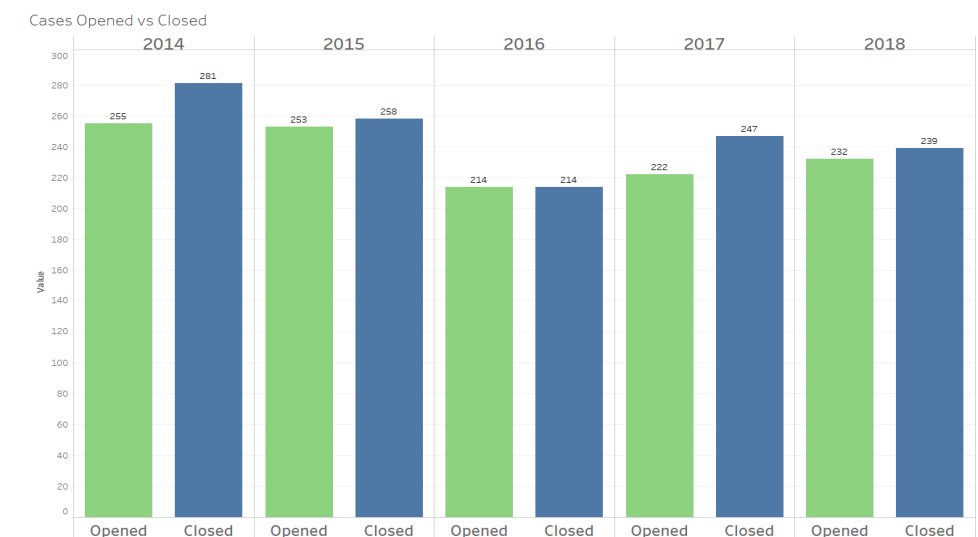
King County is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities. We consult, collaborate and facilitate with County agencies to provide reasonable accommodations to employees who are temporarily or permanently disabled.

- Staff opened 232 cases and resolved (closed) 239, resulting in a 103% case closure rate.
- Only 1 % of open cases resulted in a failure to accommodate and/or disability discrimination claim filed.
- We conducted Leaves and Reasonable Accommodation Training in October for the HR Community Forum with about 40 people in attendance.
- We facilitated Disability Awareness Month events and Proclamation in October including
  - Poster displays in the Courthouse tunnel
  - News articles highlighting contributions of people with disabilities
  - Partnerships with organizations who serve people with disabilities, and
  - Workshops on working with people with disabilities
- We partnered with Kitsap County to provide ADA training to public sector HR staff



Number of Cases by Department

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Assessments	7	6	6	5	7
Council	2	2	1	2	1
DAJD	32	20	21	17	18
DCHS	9	8	10	9	8
DES	27	30	26	27	23
DJA	1	4	4	2	7
DNRP	49	63	34	36	30
DOT	21	15	14	14	19
DPD	9	13	15	16	22
DPER	1	2	3	2	3
DPH	45	29	41	55	52
District Court	7	16	3	5	6
Elections	0	2	1	1	0
Executive Office	0	0	1	0	0
KCIT	4	4	4	2	7
PAO	3	7	0	5	9
Sheriff's Office	29	30	27	22	16
Superior Court	9	2	3	2	4

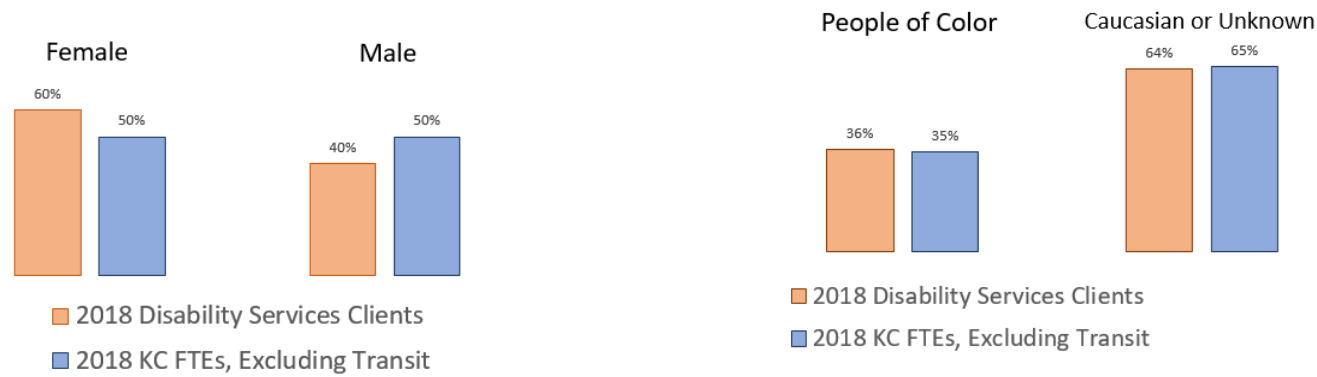


## Disability Services Clients compared to King County Population

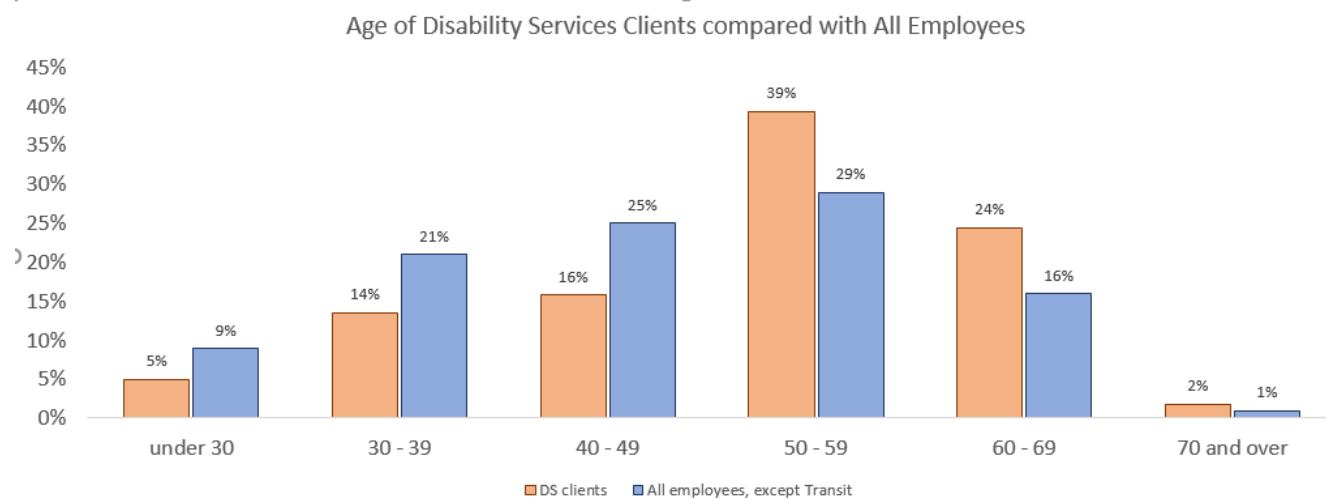
Disability Services is committed to equity and social justice. We want to ensure we are visible and accessible to all employees.

We compared clients who opened cases in 2018 with the general FTE employee population, removing Transit employees. Transit has their own Disability Services unit to serve their Department.

Disabilities Services clients are more diverse than the general employee population. Understanding this, staff remain aware of the complexities of working with diversity on a daily basis.



Employees who engage with Disability Services tend to be older than the general employee population. This isn't surprising as we tend experience more injuries and disabilities with age.



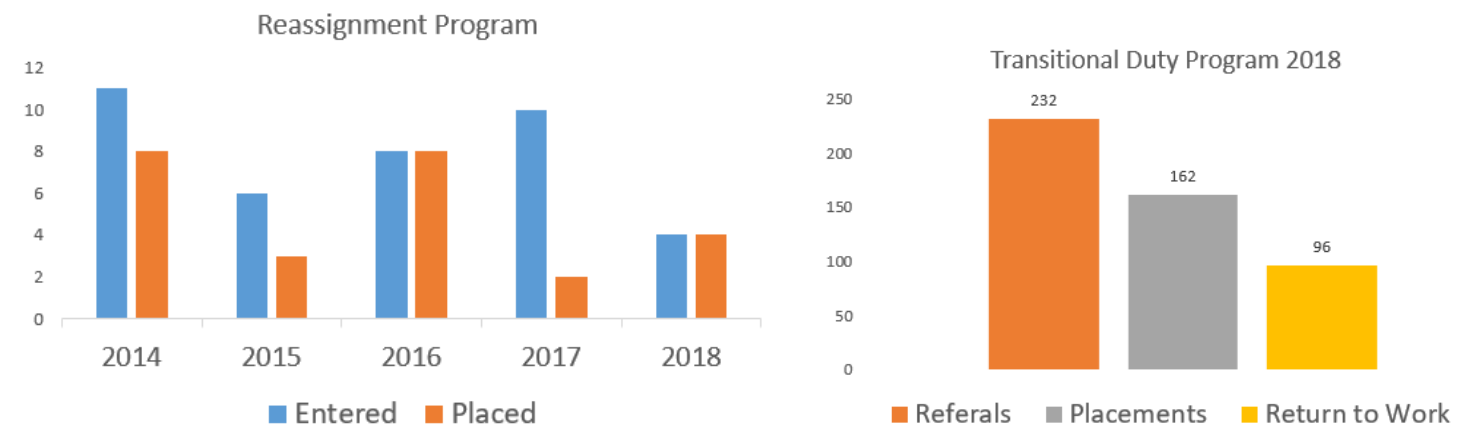
This data suggests visibility and accessibility are consistent for these demographic groups.

## Return to Work

Jamie Christensen and Nathan Kinker

When employees and former employees are injured or disabled, the Return to Work programs help bring them back to the workforce. Research indicates that employees who return to work soon after an illness or injury recover quickly. Return to work programs invest in employees, creating workforce security and stability. Employees who are permanently disabled have an opportunity to continue gainful employment by returning to the County workforce in positions appropriate for their skills and medical abilities.

- The Reassignment Program had a placement rate of 100% into new County positions. This program serves employees who have been or are in the process of being medically separated because they are no longer able to perform their current jobs due to their disability.
- The Transitional Duty Program placed a total of 162 employees into a light duty assignment. 130 of those placed employees (84%) returned to working full duty after working light duty.



## Leaves and Absence Management

Judy Hullett

It is a challenge for employees to navigate multiple Federal and State leave laws, King County policies and collective bargaining agreements related to leaves. We also provide leadership, consultation and technical assistance to King County HR staff, managers and supervisors in the area of leaves management. We also serve as a single point of contact for complex employee leaves and absence management cases, while helping departments develop and standardize best practices. 2018 included:

- Repurposing the Leaves Working Group to the Leaves Administration Team
- Developing monthly training for leave administrators to accomplish standard work
- Developing a new communication tool to implement changes/updates to leaves policies and procedures
- Rolling out and training staff on the Leaves Dashboard, developed by Systems and Analytics
- Providing leaves law and basics training to Public Health

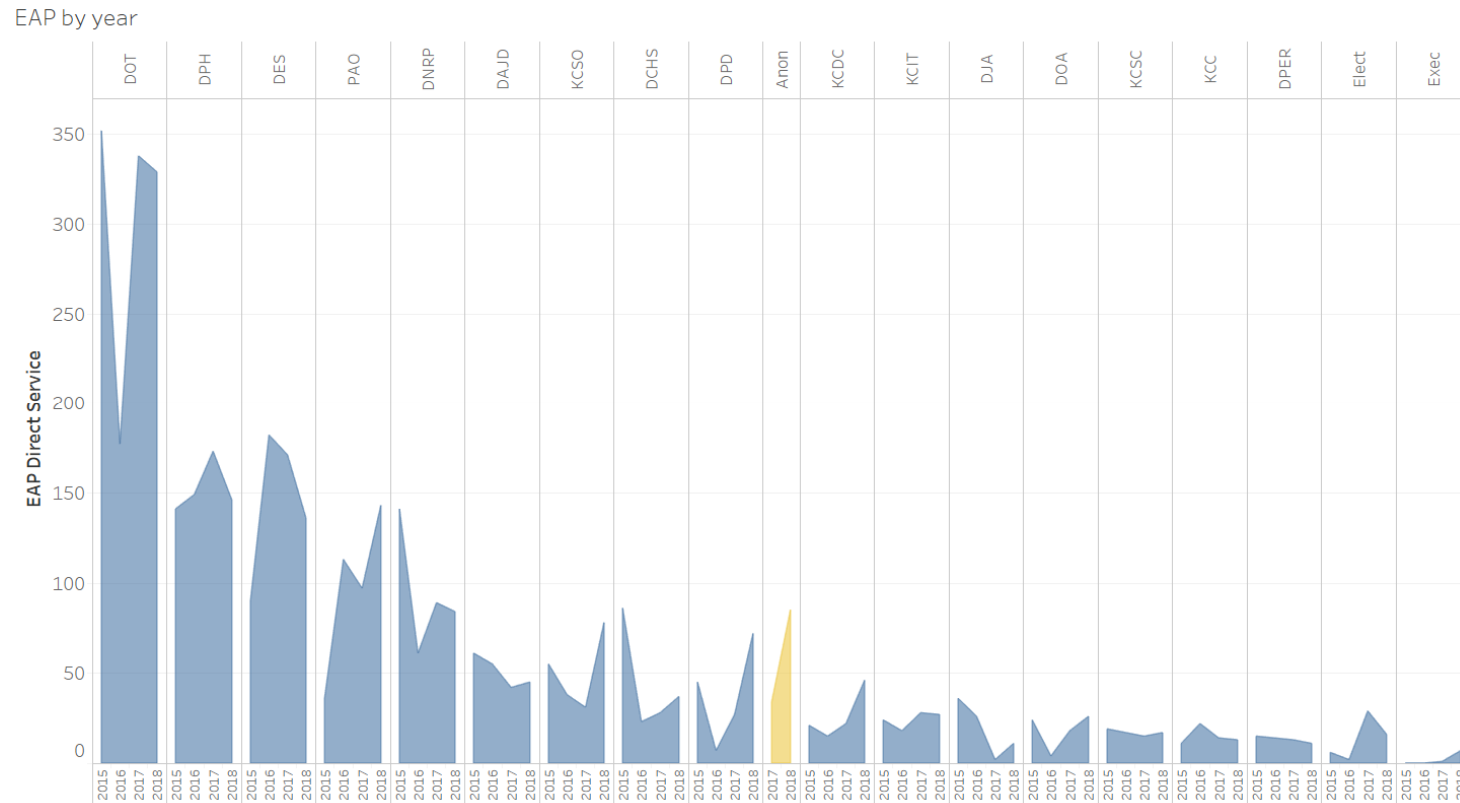
## Employee Assistance Program

Tony Hansen and Heather Steffensen

The **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** provides counseling for issues employees may be facing at work including stress, conflict, alcohol or drug use. The program also provides training for managers and support for employees after traumatic events. EAP is an important component of employee well-being and productivity on the job.

- 1329 direct client service contacts were provided to County employees, an increase of 13% over the prior year and 44% over the last 2 years.
- Staff provided critical incident debriefing services throughout the year.
- Staff conducted 7 trainings serving 209 employees on topics including reasonable suspicion, grief and loss, compassion fatigue, engagement at work and program orientation.

EAP services by Department  
(peaks represent 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively)



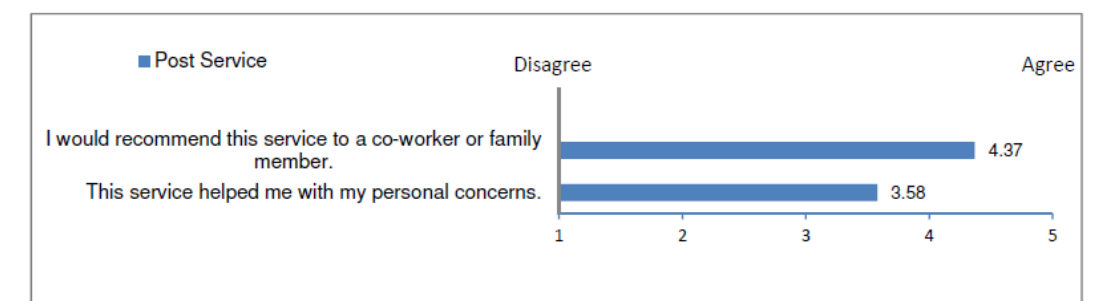
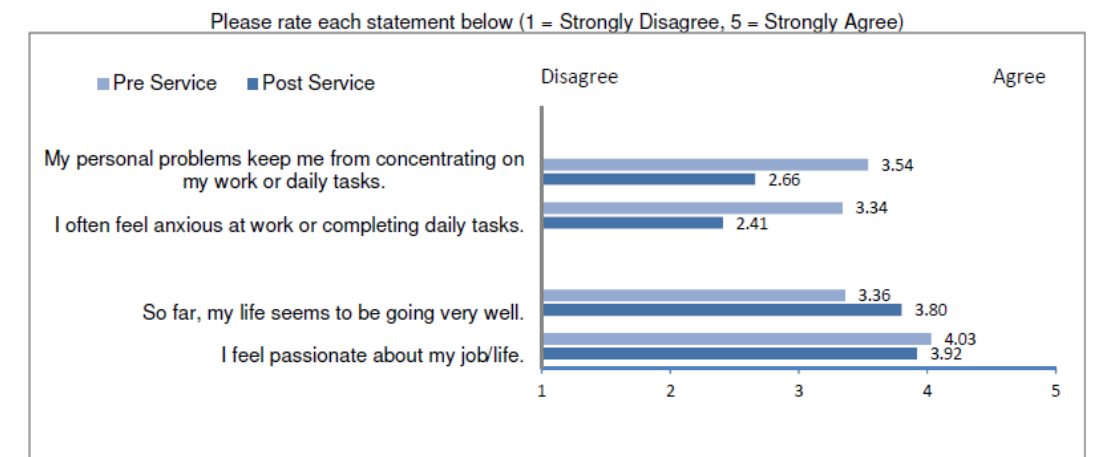
## Making Life Easier

Vendor WellSpring, supported by Tony Hansen and Heather Steffensen

The **Making Life Easier (MLE)** program is provided by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor to support employees with counseling resources, referral to legal and financial assistance, and help managing day to day challenges such as finding elder care or child care help. Making Life Easier also provides critical incident support to county work teams when EAP resources are not available. Making Life Easier provides emotional wellness resources for employees and anyone living in their household at no cost to the user.

- 1,800 contacts with employees including information calls (243), requests for in-person counseling (897), referrals to My Secure Advantage (89) and requests related to the work-life concierge service (571).
- King County’s utilization rate for 2018 (13%) was slightly higher than 2017, and much higher than the national average for similar size agencies (5%).
- Where employees requested in-person counseling services, the top reasons were
  - Acute emotional issues including depression, anxiety and grief (47%).
  - Relationship issues including conflict, personal relationships (31%)
  - Work stress (12%)
  - Parenting issues (7%)
- Of requests for work-life concierge benefits, the top categories were
  - Legal referral (46%)
  - Daily living (19%)
  - Elder care resources (14%)
  - Child care resources (10%)

Wellspring’s  
King County  
Client Survey



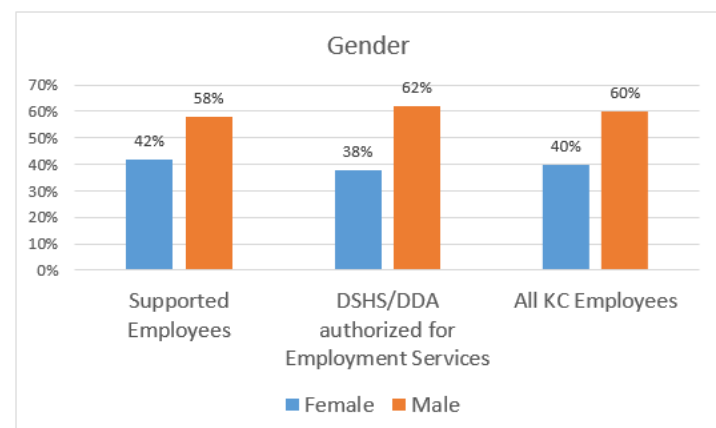
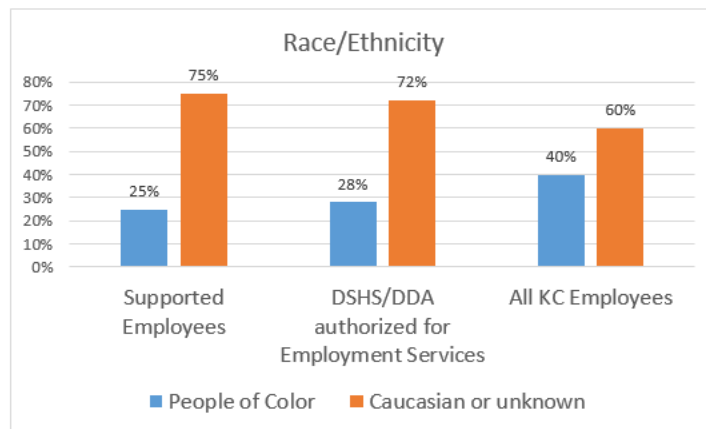
## Supported Employment Program

Christina Davidson

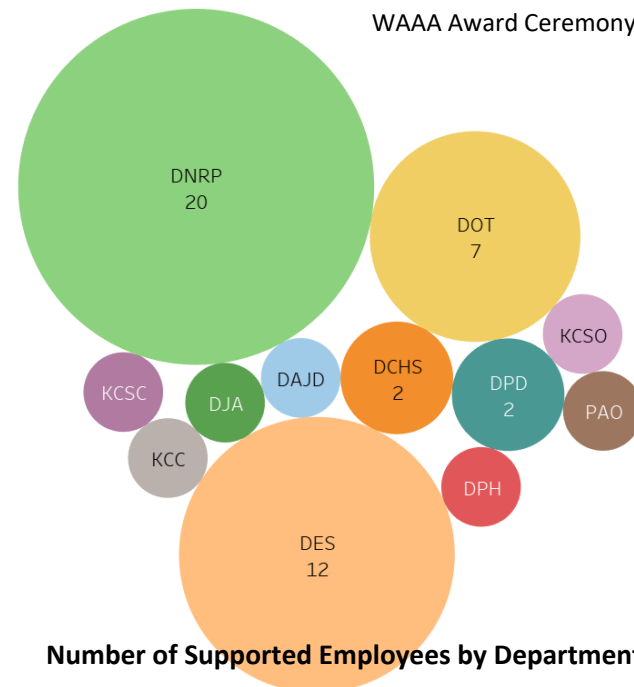
The Supported Employment Program connects candidates with developmental disabilities to King County jobs. Individuals with disabilities are traditionally the most underemployed and marginalized in the workforce compared to individuals without disabilities (2018 BLS 19% vs 66%). The Supported Employment Program reflects King County's commitment to ESJ and helps meet the goal of hiring a workforce that represents the community we serve. In 2018, the program had 50 participants in 12 Departments/offices. Major accomplishments this year include the following:

- Supported Employment was added to the Master Labor Agreement which helped expand the scope of the program and solidify union partnership
- The program received an award from Washington Autism Alliance & Advocacy (WAAA) and was nominated for the Governor's Award for Public Sector Employer
- We participated in the first Special Olympics Job Fair as an employer, and recruited members from Transit and Parks to participate with us
- We partnered with KC Communications to highlight 3 King County employees who participated in the 2018 Special Olympics
- Our supported employee count grew to 50, including new positions in Transit

### Program Demographics



WAAA Award Ceremony



Number of Supported Employees by Department

## DISABILITY SERVICES

Helping Employees Succeed in the Workplace

### OUR TEAM

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### DISABILITY SERVICES AND RETURN TO WORK

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**Nathan Kinker**  
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### SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/MAKING LIFE EASIER

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### LEAVES AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

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[kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/safety-claims/disability-services](http://kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/safety-claims/disability-services)