



King County

**Disability Services Section
Annual Report
2019**



Disability Awareness Month Recognition Event at
King County Council, October 2019

Who We Are

The Disability Services Section is an interdisciplinary team of six professionals dedicated to providing internal services to King County employees. The team has robust backgrounds and expertise in the areas of Rehabilitation Counseling, Human Resources, Human Services, and Supported Employment. The team is 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 multiple program services for the most vulnerable and marginalized County employees.

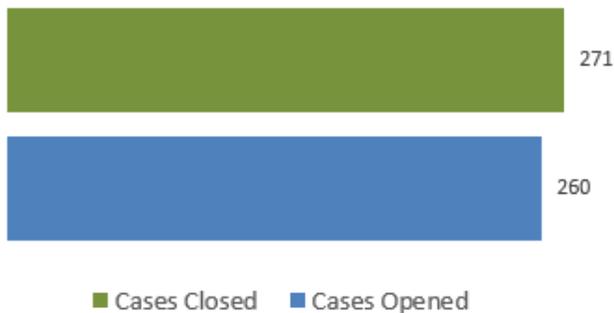
- Whether experiencing a temporary disability due to recent surgery or long-term disability following a medical diagnosis, employees receiving services may be experiencing the most difficult time of their professional careers and lives. Disability Services staff work with HR professionals, employees and supervisors/managers directly to provide workplace accommodations that enable employees to return to work and keep working.
- We support Human Resource managers, representatives, and supervisors with guidance when dealing with complex employment situations and workforce challenges regarding leaves and disability related matters.
- We provide temporary transitional duty assignments to help employees with temporary medical restrictions return-to-work and stay connected to their employer as they continue their treatment and recovery, and administer King County's Reassignment Program to assist employees who can no longer perform the essential functions of their job, but are able to work in a different capacity.
- 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.
- We provide advice and guidance on the administration of all King County leave programs to ensure consistent application of King County leave policies and procedures, which incorporate local, state and federal laws, including training to leave administrators throughout the County and consultation for customers on complex leave administration issues.
- We lead the efforts each October to recognize, organize and celebrate Disability Awareness Month in King County.
- We support and assist employees with long-term disabilities to navigate and apply for various disability benefits and services outside of King County.

Disability Services and Reasonable Accommodation

Jeff Casem, Jamie Christensen, Carol Gordon, 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 260 cases and resolved (closed) 271, resulting in a 104% case closure rate. Some closed cases were opened in years prior, which accounts for the high closure rate.
- Only 3% of open cases resulted in a failure to accommodate and/or disability discrimination claim filed.
- We provided Mental Health Accommodations training as a part of May Mental Health Awareness Month.
- We provided reasonable accommodations training to Public Health and Parks Leadership.
- We facilitated the 2019 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
- 2019 Customer Service Survey Results: My Disability Services Support rep treated me with respect = 4.68 (1-Never, 5-Always)



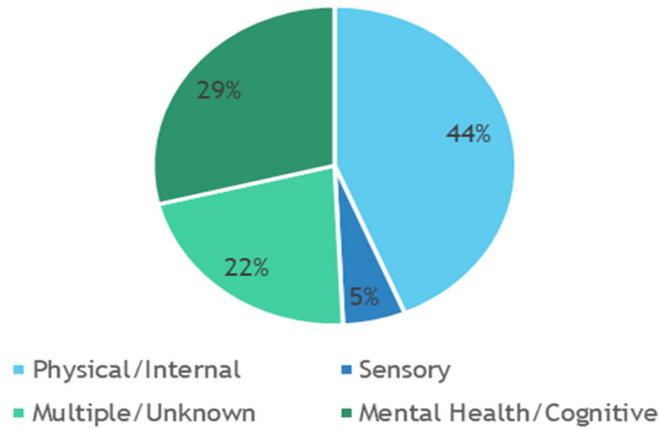
Number of Cases by Department

Assessor's Office	6
KCC-County Council	1
Executive's Office	1
DAJD - Adult & Juvenile Det.	24
DCHS - Comm & Human Serv	12
DES - Executive Services	36
DHR-Human Resources	4
KCDC-District Court	2
DLS-Local Services	12
DMT-Metro Transit	8
DNRP - Natural Resources & Parks	27
DPD - Public Defense	31
KCE-Elections	1
DJA - Judicial Administration	7
KCIT - Information Technology	6
KCSO-Sheriff's Office	6
PAO - Prosecuting Attorney	5
DPH - Public Health	67
KCSC-Superior Court	4
Totals:	260

Disability Services Reasonable Accommodation Outcomes

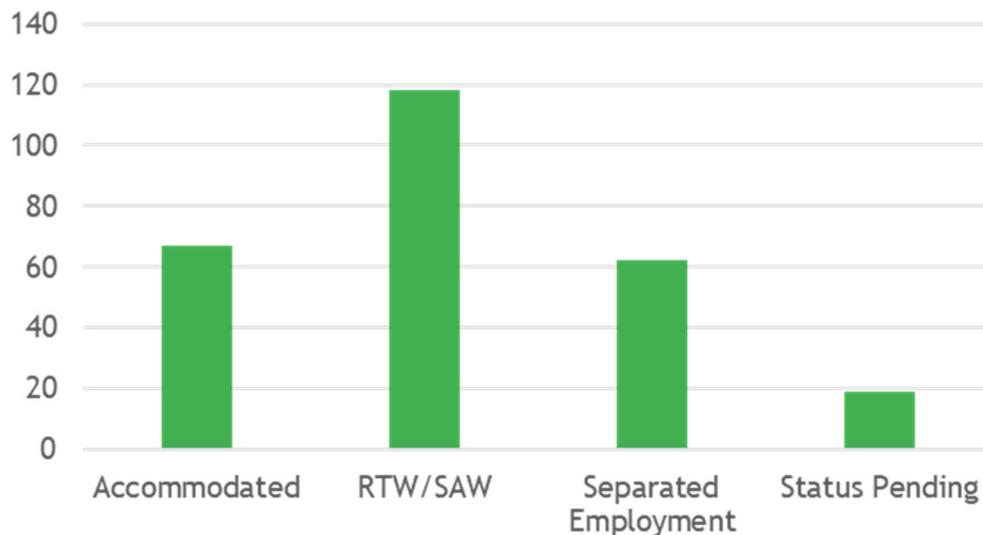
Of all cases closed in 2019, most cases related to a physical injury. Mental health/cognitive cases were next prevalent at nearly 30%. Many cases related to multiple health conditions or injuries.

2019 Disability Types (Cases Closed)



Where cases were closed in 2019, most employees were able to return-to-work and stay-at-work (RTW/SAW). Some cases closed in 2019 were opened in earlier years; similarly pending cases in 2019 will carry over to 2020.

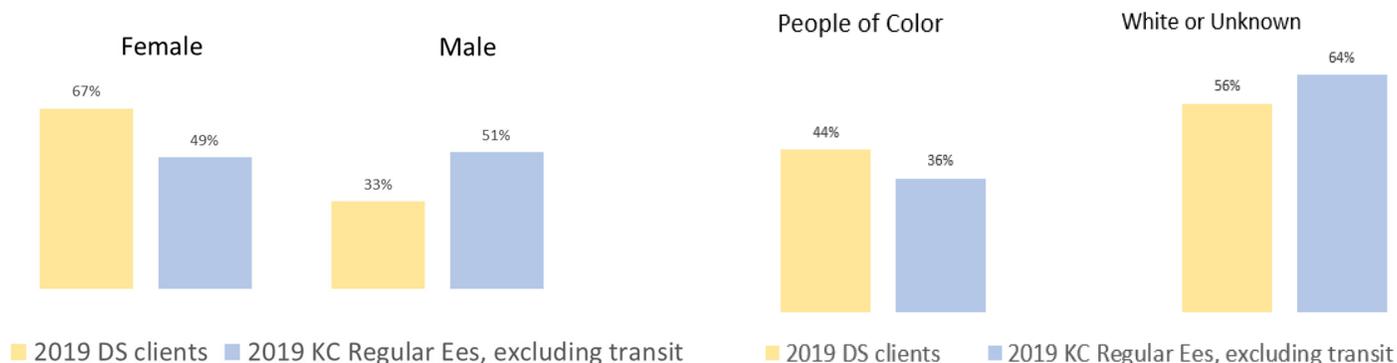
2019 Closure Outcomes



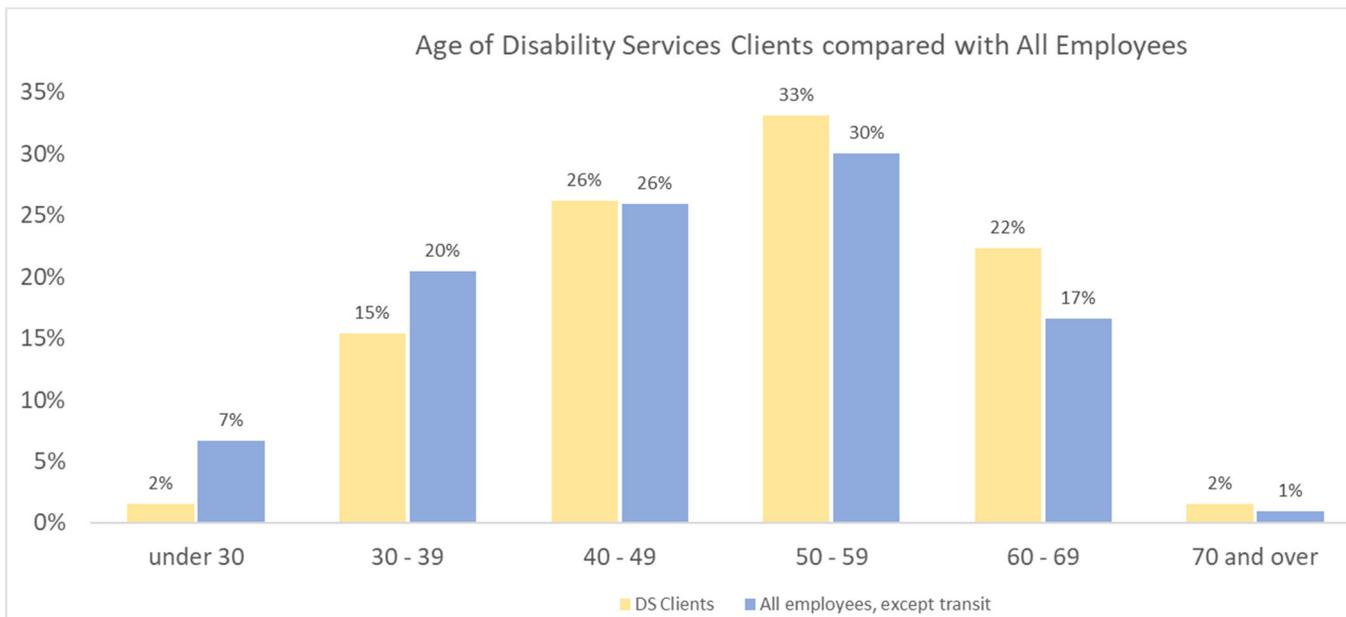
Disability Services Clients compared to King County Population

Disability Services is committed to equity and social justice in their services. We want to ensure visibility and accessibility for all employees. We compared clients who opened cases in 2019 with the general regular employee populations. Metro Transit has their own Disability Services unit and are not included in the data below.

Disabilities Services clients are more diverse than the general employee population. Understanding this, staff remain aware of the complexities of working with a diverse workforce 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 to experience more injuries and disabilities with age.



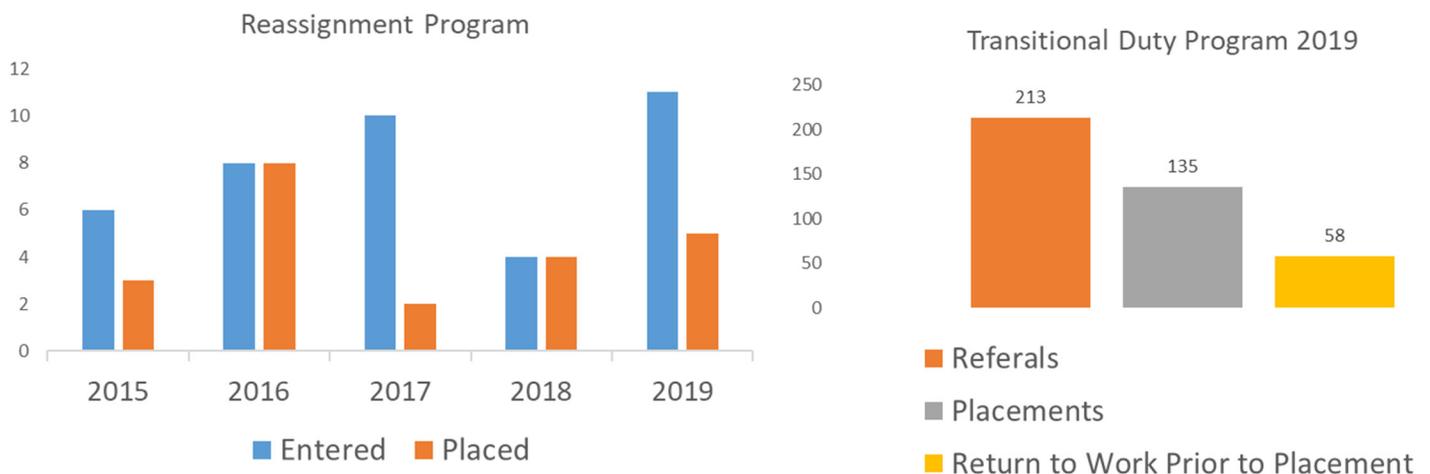
This data suggests visibility and accessibility are consistent for these demographic groups.

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 promptly 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 45% 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 but are able to work in another capacity.
- The Transitional Duty Program placed a total of 135 employees into a light duty assignment. Additionally, 58 employees were returned to work prior to placement.



Leaves and Absence Management

Judy Hullett

It is a challenge for employees and human resources representatives to navigate multiple Federal and State leave laws, King County policies and collective bargaining agreements related to leaves. We provide guidance, 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 related to leaves administration. 2019 included:

- Repurposing the Leaves Working Group to the Leaves Administration Team to deliver new resources, tools and trainings to standardize leave administration
- Assisting in the implementation of the new Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Providing monthly subject matter training for leave administrators to accomplish standard work
- Improving multiple County leave processes and communication tools to implement changes/updates to leaves policies and procedures
- Providing leaves law and basics training to newly hired human resources professionals
- Total Trainings Delivered in 2019: 28

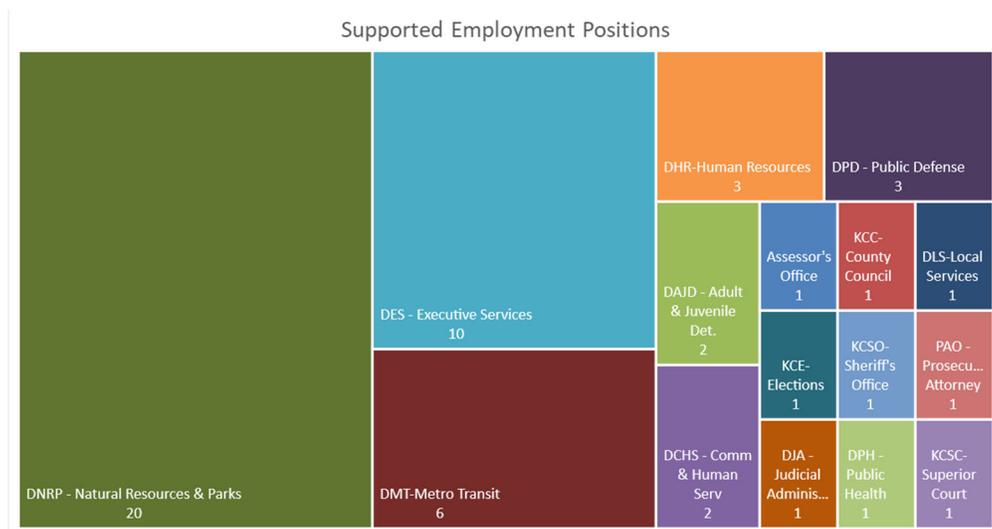
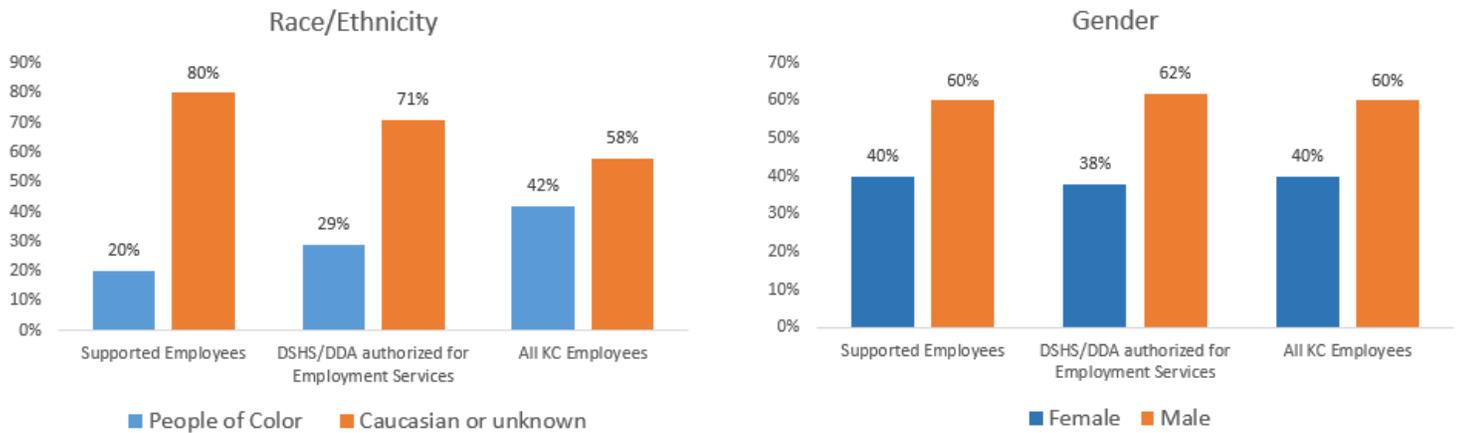
Supported Employment Program

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 2019, the program had 55 supported employees in 16 Departments/offices. Major accomplishments this year include the following:

- Delivered 41 Supported Employment Program presentations to various King County and external agencies and companies throughout the year
- Represented King County’s Supported Employment Program at the School-To-Work transition fairs at Highline Community College and Microsoft
- Presented on King County’s Supported Employment Program to the National Association of State Directors for Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDS) Director’s Form and Mid Year Conference
- Our supported employee count grew to 55, including new positions in Elections and Assessor’s Office
- Produced multiple communications related to Supported Employment in the KC Employee News

Program Demographics



DISABILITY SERVICES

Helping Employees Succeed in the Workplace

OUR TEAM

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DISABILITY SERVICES AND RETURN TO WORK PROGRAMS

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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Christina Davidson
(206) 477-3372

LEAVES AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Judy Hullett, PHR, SHRM-CP
(206) 477-3364

“Carol was kind and helpful. Carol is always very positive and creative.”

“Christina has been an incredible resource for troubleshooting concerns and in providing support to managers and coaches.”

“Jamie is excellent in her role she is a very good communicator. Jamie is responsive and receptive.”

“Judy has been extremely helpful. Kudos to Judy for the exceptional service she has provided.”

“Nathan is great. Very attentive and thorough in his explanations. Clearly vested in interest of both employee and employer.”