



King County

Disability and Leaves Services Section Central Employee Services Division Department of Human Resources Annual Report 2020



Who We Are

The Disability and Leaves Services Section is an interdisciplinary team dedicated to providing services to King County employees. The team has expertise in the areas of Rehabilitation Counseling, Disability and Absence Management, Human Resources, Human Services, and Supported Employment. We 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. Our work is guided by King County's True North and values, ensuring that we do our part to make *King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive*.

What We Do

The Disability and Leaves Services Section provides multiple program services for some of the most vulnerable and marginalized county employees.

- Whether experiencing a temporary or long term disability, employees receiving services may be experiencing the most difficult time of their professional careers and lives. Disability and Leaves Services staff work with employees, HR professionals, and supervisors/managers directly to provide workplace accommodations that enable employees to stay in the workforce.
- We support HR representatives and supervisors with guidance when dealing with complex employment situations regarding leaves and disability related matters.
- We provide transitional duty assignments that help employees with temporary medical restrictions stay in the force as they continue treatment and recovery. We also manage the Reassignment Program to assist employees who can no longer perform their jobs on a long-term or permanent basis due to a disability, 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 50 supported employees in the county workforce.
- We lead the efforts each October to recognize, organize and celebrate Disability Awareness Month in King County. This year, we led the county's efforts to recognize the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- We help employees navigate various federal and state disability benefits and services.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and requirement to work from home affected the delivery of services to county employees. Team members were able to adapt their work and continued to deliver services from a remote work environment effectively and efficiently. Those efforts included:
 - Modifying reasonable accommodation procedures regarding medical information and the interactive process
 - Assisting in the implementation and training of the Governor's High-Risk Proclamation requiring accommodations for high-risk employees
 - Deploying changes to the Supported Employment Program consistent with Public Health and Leadership guidance
 - Transitioning from in-person recognition and celebration of the ADA 30th Anniversary and Disability Awareness Month to online, accessible programming viewable to a much larger audience

Disability and Leave 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 248 cases and resolved (closed) 202, resulting in a 81% case closure rate. Some closed cases were opened in years prior, which accounts for the high closure rate.
- Only 8 claims were filed with Risk Management for failure to accommodate and/or disability discrimination. Of those, 4 cases were Transit and 3 had no open Disability Claim on file.
- We facilitated the June 2020 ADA 30th Anniversary Celebration and October Disability Awareness Month events with:
 - Employee News articles and highlights
 - Executive Proclamations
 - Video programming including Executive message and
 - Webinars, panel conversations and workshops for employees
- 2020 Customer Service Survey Results: My Disability and Leaves Services Support rep treated me with respect = 4.84 (1-Never, 5-Always)

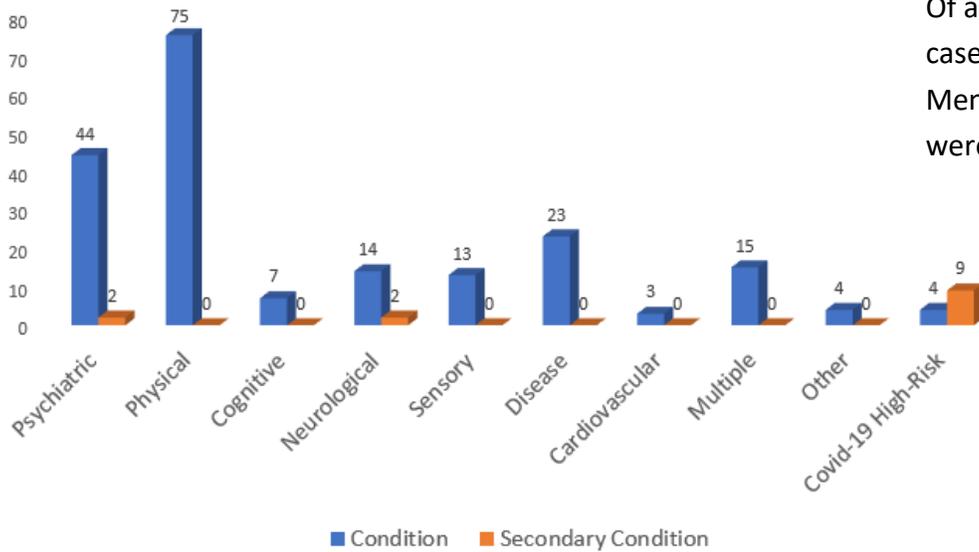


Number of Cases Opened by Department

Assessor's Office	10
KCC-County Council	2
Executive's Office	0
DAJD - Adult & Juvenile Det.	57
DCHS - Comm & Human Serv	10
DES - Executive Services	39
DHR-Human Resources	3
KCDC-District Court	2
DLS-Local Services	18
DMT-Metro Transit	4
DNRP - Natural Resources & Parks	21
DPD - Public Defense	17
KCE-Elections	1
DJA - Judicial Administration	9
KCIT - Information Technology	4
KCSO-Sheriff's Office	4
PAO - Prosecuting Attorney	5
DPH - Public Health	39
KCSC-Superior Court	3
Totals:	248

Disability and Leave Services Reasonable Accommodation Outcomes

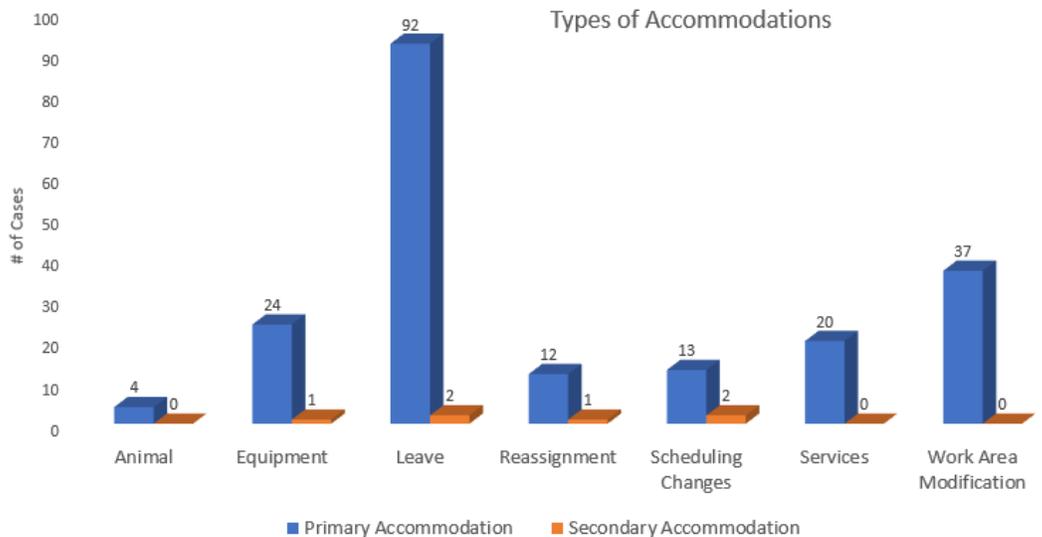
Type of Disability



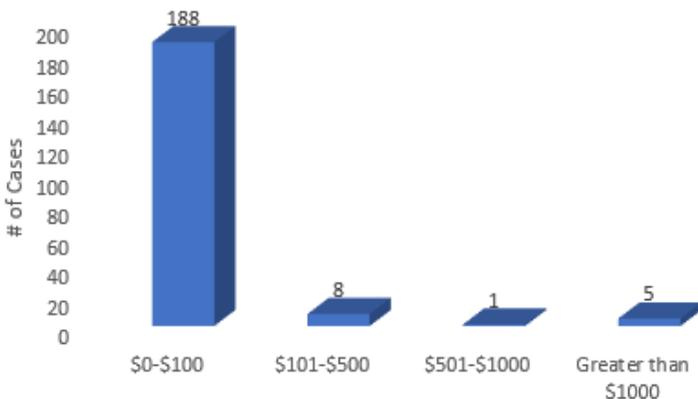
Of all cases closed in 2020, most cases related to a physical injury. Mental health/cognitive cases were next prevalent at 21%.

Unpaid leave is the most prevalent accommodation, and offers employees additional time beyond county leave entitlements to recover from injury or illness.

Types of Accommodations



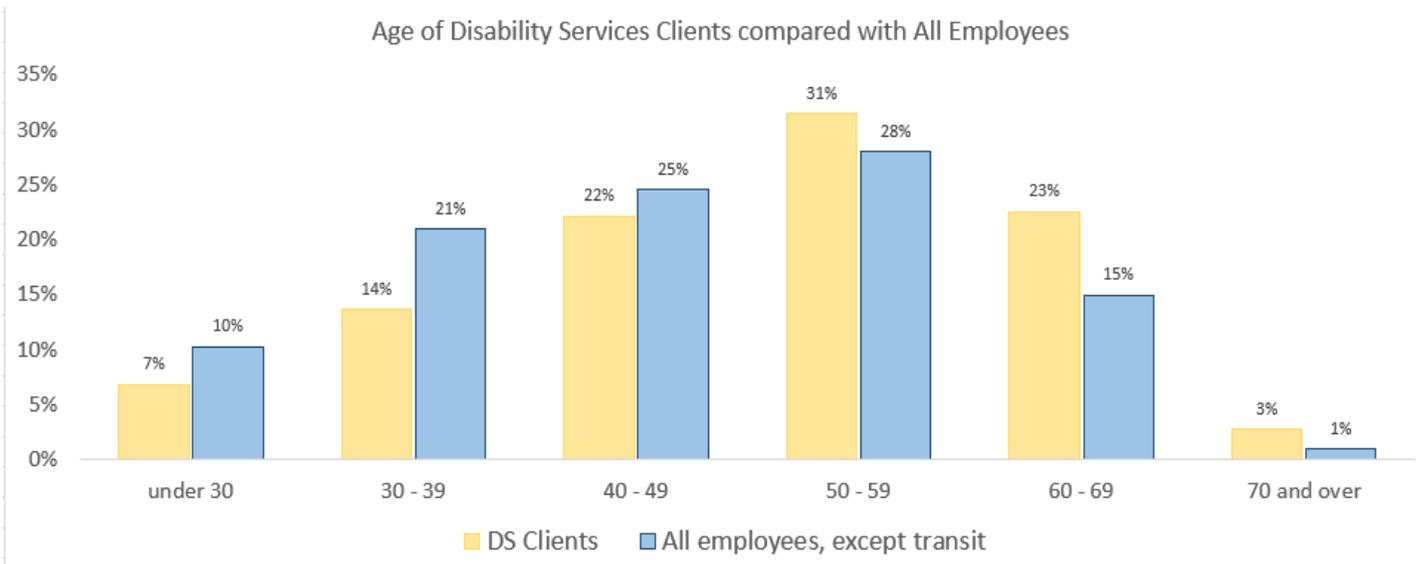
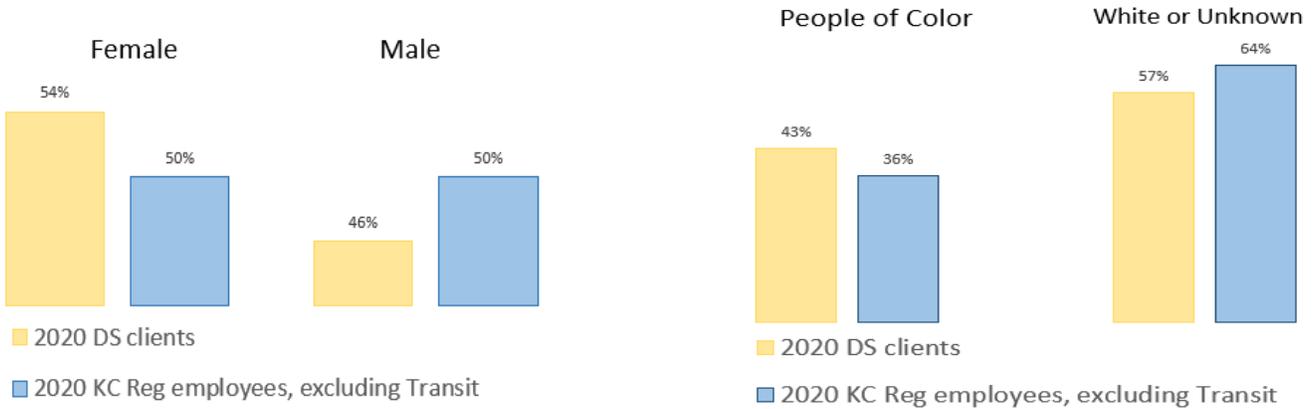
Cost of Accommodation



Most accommodations cost less than \$100

Disability and Leave Services Clients compared to King County Population

Disability and Leave 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 2020 with the general regular employee populations. Metro Transit has their own Disability Services unit and are not included in the data below. Disabilities and Leave Services clients are more diverse, older and tend to earn less per hour than general employee population. Understanding this, staff remain aware of the complexities of working with a diverse workforce on a daily basis.



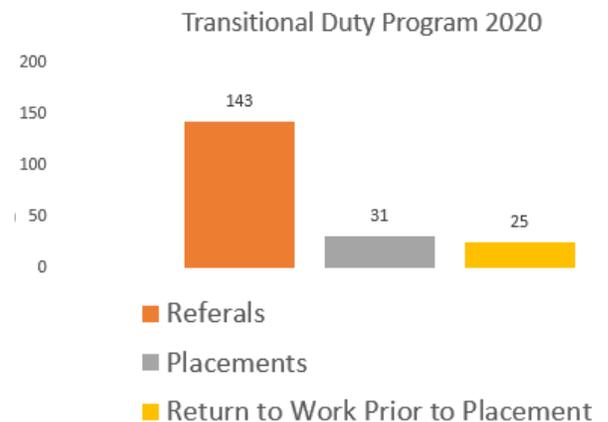
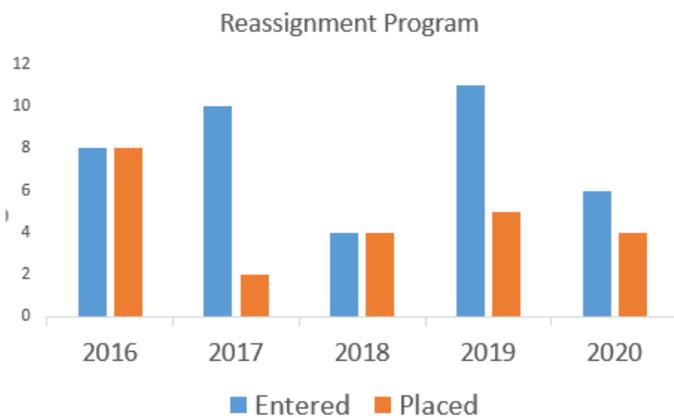
More than 56% of closed cases make less than \$40 an hour.

Return to Work

Jamie Christensen, Carol Gordon and Nathan Kinker

When employees are injured or have a disability, Return to Work programs help keep them in the workforce. Research indicates that employees who return to work promptly after an illness or injury recover more quickly. Return to work programs invest in employees, creating workforce security and stability. Employees who have permanent disabilities 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 67% into new county positions. This program serves employees who are 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 was put on temporary hold in March 2020 due to the mandatory telecommute order. The program was reinstated in June, but there were limited assignments available to employees.



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 agencies. Last year, this need was more complex with the addition of several COVID related leaves. 2020 included:

- Assisting with the implementation of Emergency Donated Leave Program (COVID)
- Assisted with implementation of new COVID related federal leave programs (FFCRA, EPSLA, EFMLEA)
- Provided monthly subject matter training for leave administrators to accomplish standard work
- Improved multiple county leave processes and communication tools to implement changes/updates to leaves policies and procedures
- Provided leaves law and basics training to newly hired human resources professionals

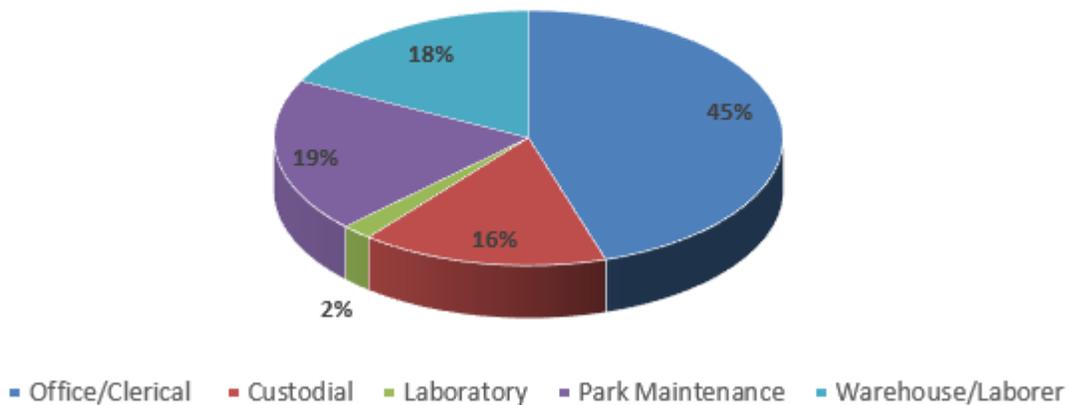
Supported Employment Program

Christina Davidson

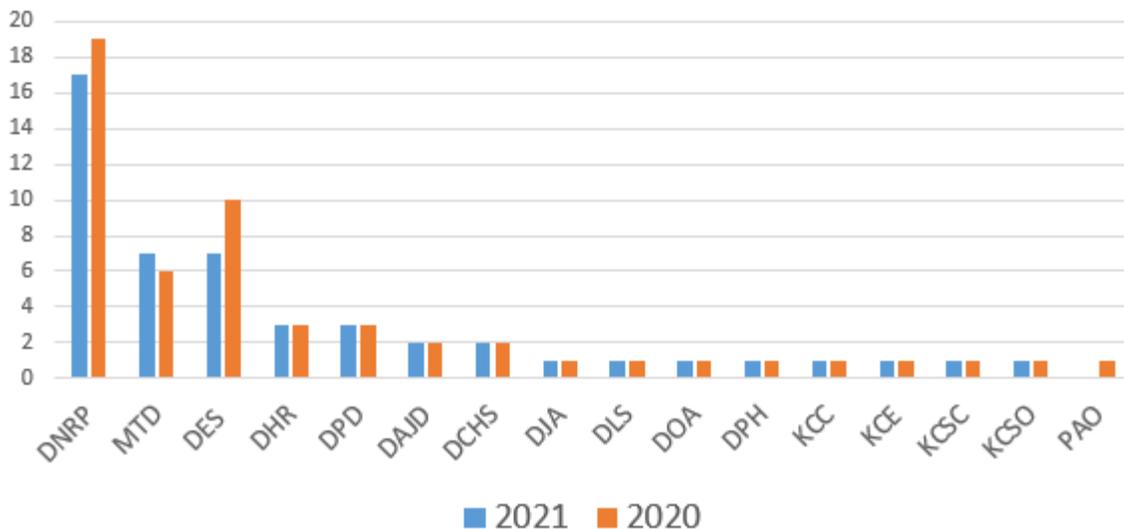
The Supported Employment Program connects candidates with developmental disabilities to King County jobs. Individuals with disabilities are traditionally the most underemployed and marginalized in the workforce compared to individuals without disabilities. The Supported Employment Program reflects King County’s commitment to ESJ and helps meet the goal of hiring a workforce that represents the community we serve. In 2020, the program had 54 supported employees in 15 Departments/offices.

COVID-19 made for challenges to the program in 2020 including identifying new bodies of work and safe ways to work in the field or telework when possible. One new position was added, starting 2021, and 6 employees retired or separated from employment.

Type of Work



Supported Employees by Department



DISABILITY and LEAVE SERVICES

Helping Employees Succeed in the Workplace

OUR TEAM

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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/safety-claims/disability-services