King County Supported Employment Program

Jeff Casem, Disability Services Manager

Christina Davidson, Supported Employment Program Manager
History of Program

- In 1990, the KC Council created a supported employment program in response to the issue of employment inequality for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- KCC 3.12.335 provides paid, competitive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in integrated work settings.

- In 2015, King County hired a Program Manager to support in developing the structure and new positions as well as assist HR and management to support current employees.
Current Snapshot

- KC employs 55 supported employees
  - Typical wage range: $16.86 - $25.83; Avg. wage: $22.61
  - Avg. years of service: 16 yrs
  - Typical hour range per week: 20-40; Avg. hrs/wk: 34
  - Avg. age: 46 yrs old
  - Labor representation: 86%
Types of Work

- Office/Clerical: 19%
- Custodial: 18%
- Laboratory: 16%
- Park Maintenance: 2%
- Warehouse/Laborer: 45%
Key Elements to Building a Strong Program

- Leadership buy-in to implement a program to hire individuals with developmental disabilities
- Equity & Social Justice Initiatives to market the program
- Communication/Publication showing individuals working through internal newsletters/videos
- Hire or identify an internal champion of the Program (ideally in HR)
- Education & building partnerships
- Build a Structure
Challenges

- Lack of benefits planning for new employees to help address complexities with earning high wages with social security, section 8 housing, and other state/federal programs.
- Repurposing of FTEs
- Technology/changes in work tasks (current workforce/future workforce)
- Transportation
King County’s Supported Employment Program - Video