

Working With You




NorthwestCenter
People of all abilities

20 Annual 23 Report

Table of Contents

1.	Letter from the CEO	2
2.	2023 Overview	3
3.	Northwest Center Mission	5
4.	Timeline	6
5.	Early Supports	8
6.	IMPACT Program	11
7.	Early Learning	13
8.	Employment Services	15
9.	Employment Transformation Collective (ETC)	18
10.	Social Enterprise	19
11.	Partners in Inclusion	24
12.	Board of Directors and Leadership	25
13.	Financials	26
14.	Sustainability	28
15.	In Loving Memory: Janet Taggart	29
16.	Supporter Profile: Parul Houlahan	30
17.	Ways to Support	31
18.	Where We Work	32

On the cover: Children in Northwest Center Kids Early Learning, an Employment Services client, and employees of our Social Enterprises show that when people of all abilities work together, everyone benefits.

Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

So many people come to Northwest Center discouraged. They're families whose toddlers with disabilities were expelled by preschools not trained to include them. They're young adults whose well-meaning guidance counselors told them to keep their employment expectations low. They're people who, because they have disabilities, must always fight the status quo of ableist beliefs, practices, and structures that dominates communities, schools, and workplaces.

But here's the good news: Northwest Center was founded to defy the status quo.

Ableism is the root cause of the persistent disparities in disability education and employment. That's why we've made eliminating ableism the focus of Northwest Center's five-year Strategic Plan, which launched at the end of 2023.

It's a plan that will only work by working *with* you: the people with disabilities whose lead we follow, the businesses who partner with us, the families who make Northwest Center a supportive community, and the legislators, advocates, and donors who help us continue to evolve. Only by working with you can we raise a singular, exponentially louder voice that demands a more inclusive world.

Thank you for giving to Northwest Center, supporting our schools and children's services, hiring our businesses, signing up for IMPACT courses, working with our Employment Transformation Collective (ETC) to make your workplace more inclusive, and welcoming people with disabilities onto your workforce.

If you want to learn more about any of those opportunities, please revisit our newly refreshed website, NWCenter.org. Not only is the site designed to make it easier for you to find what you need, it is optimized to be accessible to the disability community we serve.

We've never been more excited to embark on a new chapter with you. Together, we can set the standard for disability inclusion. Together, we can create a new and welcome status quo.

Onward and upward,



Gene Boes

Gene Boes

President & CEO



Northwest Center Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Vision

Create an Inclusive Community by Eliminating Ableism

Action



Grow our Businesses while Modeling Disability Inclusion

Growth & Innovation



Develop Disability Inclusion Standards & Practices

Activation & Awareness



Reach **100,000** Children & **100** Fortune 500 Employers

Systemic Change



Convene Advocates to Drive Cradle-through-Career Change

This annual report is about you.

When Northwest Center was founded, it was revolutionary to educate children with disabilities. In nearly 60 years since, we've built on that moment of revolution with an even more powerful evolution – one that very much relies on working with you.

Our work goes far beyond Northwest Center's walls. Only by continuously increasing our connections with the disability community, employers, educators, supporters, and families can we continue to close the education and employment gap for kids and adults with disabilities.

The stakes are high: At least 10.7 million people with disabilities could be in the workforce, but aren't¹. Kids with disabilities make up just 13 percent of children in U.S. preschools, but are 75 percent of all kids who get rejected from those schools².

But with your partnership and support, our impact continues to grow.

Ableism

A systemic value and belief structure that devalues and discriminates against disability and disabled individuals, ableism impacts how we judge and value others, and impacts how we assess our own value.

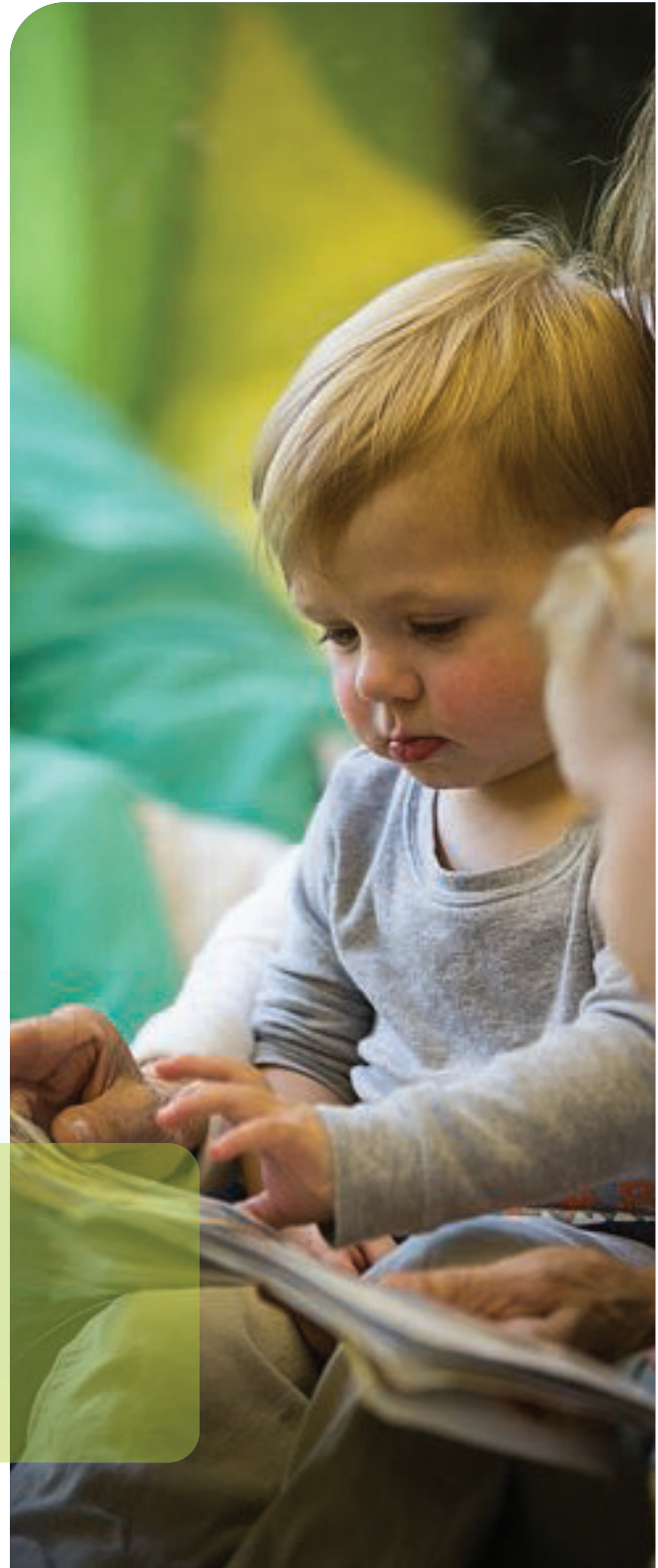
Anti-ableism

Strategies, theories, and practices that challenge and counter ableism. At Northwest Center, we practice anti-ableism because we believe all of us are responsible for ensuring inclusion – not solely the disabled individual.

¹Accenture, Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage

²Center for American Progress, Suspensions Are Not Support: The Disciplining of Preschoolers With Disabilities

Right: Waddlers at Northwest Center Kids Early Learning enjoy story time.





Across Northwest Center services and businesses, we supported and worked with **13,591** kids and adults with disabilities in 2023.



Our Employment Transformation Collective (ETC) is working with three **Fortune 500** companies to create anti-ableist workplaces.



IMPACT inclusion courses and training reached educators and advocates in **27** states and 5 countries.



Our Social Enterprises continue to demonstrate our mission in action: more than **30%** of our businesses' employees have a disability, and at two businesses, **75%+** of work is completed by people with disabilities.



76% of the clients we placed in employment in 2023 are working in fields that were their top choice.

We report on 2023 not as a wrap-up, but as a new beginning. We've made anti-ableism the focus of Northwest Center's new five-year Strategic Plan – learn more on page 2.

We're excited to get to work.



At OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions, one of Northwest Center's social enterprises, more than 75% of work is done by employees with a documented disability. Shown here is part of the Ballard Locks janitorial team.

Our Mission

To promote the growth, development, and independence of people with disabilities through programs of therapy, education, and work opportunity.

Gabby, a server assistant at Bayview Retirement Community who was hired through NWC Employment Services, shares a laugh with resident and friend Bob Woodruff.



An Inclusion Revolution

Since 1965, Northwest Center has led the charge for disability inclusion.

Disability Inclusion

People with disabilities are welcome, seen, valued, and appreciated for their individual contributions in the classroom, workplace, and community.



1965

Four Seattle moms founded Northwest Center (NWC) to disprove the notion that people with disabilities didn't belong in the classroom, workplace, or community.



1971

Our founders wrote and passed the first statewide law to guarantee education to children with disabilities: House Bill 90, "Education for All."



1980

Northwest Center launched an education and therapy model where children with and without disabilities learn together. The rest of the country didn't start to catch up for another 24 years.



2001

Two Seattle pioneers joined forces as we began staffing janitorial positions at Amazon. Today, Managed Staffing Services fills and manages hundreds of roles including reception, call center, and event support.

1967

Value Village offered to pay Northwest Center to collect used clothing and household goods. The partnership is still going strong today.



1975

Education for All went nationwide. Our founders helped create the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), first signed into law by President Ford.



1994

We pioneered workplace inclusion as we opened our next social enterprise business, Puget Sound Laundry Services.



2008

The employment gap for people with disabilities begins in high school. Employment Services joined the School-to-Work program to help close this gap.





2015

Northwest Center marked our 50th year by breaking new ground in disability inclusion:

- We built a full-size simulation of an Amazon sortation center where job seekers could have immersive interviews.
- Early Supports helped launch Hospital-to-Home, support for babies and their families following hospital stays.



2019

Responding to the changing needs of the market, we restructured our businesses: Electronics was acquired by a larger magnetics company and Assembly & Packaging was phased out.



2021

Employment Services expanded into Northern Idaho.

We celebrated 50 years of Education for All with a panel of disability advocates, founder Janet Taggart, and former WA governor Dan Evans.

Private sector assets of Puget Sound Laundry Services were sold to ImageFIRST. An ImageFIRST partnership positioned NWC to expand our mission of inclusion to other parts of the country. We continue to serve government customers.

2018

To address the child care crisis for families needing an inclusive preschool, Northwest Center Kids launched IMPACT, trainings and consultation services for child care providers throughout King County, WA.



2020

Northwest Center social enterprises entered the printing industry with the acquisition of Lithtex NW.

Accessibility Partners (AP) began services for blind and low-vision employees at some of the nation's largest companies.

2022

Our business with Amazon has grown to more than 300 employees staffing 11 programs including The Spheres, reception, Banana Stands, and call center.

The Employment Transformation Collective (ETC) was launched, offering end-to-end services to empower employers to create anti-ableist workplaces.

2023

Our managed staffing services continued to expand with locations in Virginia, Nashville, and New York.

A new social enterprise, OneNorth Logistics, was launched, providing short-haul trucking, sorting, cross dock logistics, and short-term warehouse storage, working with its first customer World of Books.



Early Supports

Comprehensive Therapy and Support for Children Birth-3 and Their Families

Northwest Center Kids Early Supports believes all ways of being, moving, and connecting are valuable and meaningful. We work with children from birth to age 3, when 80 percent of brain development occurs, providing therapy for communication, motor, social-emotional, adaptive, or cognitive delays while affirming their individuality, personality, culture, and family life.



EPIC (Expanding, Play, Interaction, and Communication)

Social connections are an essential foundation for vital learning experiences. Our EPIC program promotes meaningful social connections for children, families, and providers, especially when children have neurodiversity or have experienced limited social interaction or trauma.

Hospital-to-Home

The Hospital-to-Home™ program supports families and their babies ages birth to 6 months (adjusting for prematurity) in the critical time when babies transition home from a hospital stay. The program is designed to support positive social-emotional, developmental, and medical outcomes.

Early Supports 2023 Highlights



908 children received Early Supports services



A record **204** babies supported by Hospital-to-Home



192 early supports professionals trained in Hospital-to-Home services



190 essential infant care items delivered to families in need

Early Supports is recognized as a model for providing high quality early supports services, particularly its innovative Hospital-to-Home (H2H) program.

In 2023, H2H was awarded a sole-source contract with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to deliver three-day Hospital-to-Home Replication Site Training trainings to Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) professionals statewide. The Hospital-to-Home team trained 192 ESIT providers in two separate sessions. Participants represented a wide variety of disciplines including workforce development specialists, family resources coordinators, infant mental health providers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, registered dietitians, social workers, special educators, speech-language pathologists, and teachers of the visually impaired.

Following the first training, the Hospital-to-Home Systems Change team made a concerted effort to reach counties or geographic areas where an ESIT provider had not attended training and had at least one of the following indicators of need*:

- Incidence of low birth weight in the county above the state average.
- The county is considered to have low access to maternity care or is a maternity care desert.
- More than 7.9 percent of families with children under the age of 18 live in poverty.
- Median income is below the state average and there is a severe housing cost burden.



The H2H team provided a stipend to providers that qualified. As a result, eight ESIT providers were able to attend from providers and community groups from seven Washington counties.

The training team also met with ESIT providers to understand how to further support their Hospital-to-Home services. As a result, Northwest Center's team is considering additional training approaches such as shorter sessions, online learning, or a train-the-trainer model.

*Indicators are based on data from the March of Dimes and Washington Department of Health.

Early Supports Was There for Both Mother and Child

Juana and Terrance had a rough start, but Early Supports helped ensure a bright future.

That summer, Seattle was unusually hot – a challenge for Juana (pronounced JAAN-uh) who has asthma and was pregnant. Five months into her pregnancy, Juana went to a hospital with shortness of breath. Once there, she went into cardiac arrest and was put into a medically induced coma. While Juana was still in a coma, doctors delivered her son Terrance at just 26 weeks. He stayed in the hospital 12 weeks more.

A few months later, Juana and Terrance were referred to Early Supports when Terrance fell behind on his milestones.

“There was a speech therapist, a nutritionist, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist for him to learn how to sit up, then stand, and then walk,” Juana recalls.

She liked that the team individualized strategies for Terrance, “Instead of lumping him in a big group,” she says. “They said, ‘We’ll try a couple things and see where he’s moving forward.’”

Family resources coordinators supported mom, too. When COVID-19 hit, they dropped off supplies so that Juana, who had a compromised immune system, wouldn’t have to go out. During telehealth services for Terrance, they asked how Juana was feeling, too.



When Terrance was 2, he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Early Supports team stepped in again to offer the family support.

“They said, ‘Now we know [Terrance’s diagnosis] and now we can move forward,’” Juana says.

When Terrance was almost 3, Juana needed to prepare him for a pre-K program. Once again, Early Supports was there, helping fill out and print paperwork – crucial assistance at a time when libraries were shut down.

“I was so fortunate to have these services, especially during a pandemic,” Juana says. “Northwest Center gave me tools so I can take care of Terrance a lot better.”



I didn’t know anything about what occupational therapy was or what Terrance needed. Northwest Center came to our home to evaluate Terrance. They made it easy.

– Juana, Terrance’s mom

Northwest Center Kids IMPACT

Professional development courses and consultation supporting early childhood professionals to include children of all abilities



We believe that with the right training and support, all early learning educators can successfully include children with disabilities and challenging behaviors. Northwest Center Kids IMPACT™ (Inclusion Mentorship Program for increasing Access in Childcare Team) provides online courses, trainings, and live consultations to help early childhood educators, administrators, school districts, and private education programs adopt inclusive practices.

IMPACT 2023 Highlights



11,500 children reached



Courses taken in **27 States**



1,433 providers trained



Learners in **5 Countries**
(United States, Canada, India, Iran, Nigeria)

IMPACT was created to expand inclusive early learning outside Northwest Center's walls, and now it's expanded outside the country.

In 2023, IMPACT provided services in Virginia, where Northwest Center also provides staffing services to Amazon. And with the launch of the learning management system at NWCKidsImpact.org, the program's 11 courses reached learners in 27 states, plus outside the U.S. in Canada, Nigeria, Iran, and India. Learners came from a variety of backgrounds such as ESIT therapy, elementary and higher education, parents, and caregivers. IMPACT also hosted 23 live trainings.

Team members delivered presentations at conferences including International Inclusion Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Child Care Aware of America Symposium in Virginia; NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Professional Learning Institute in Portland, Oregon; Infant and Early Childhood Conference (IECC) in Washington; Washington Association for Education of Young Children (WAEYC) Conference; and the Infant and Early

Childhood Mental Health Consultation Conference at Georgetown University. They also participated in advocacy in Washington, DC, lobbying for increased funding for child care services.

IMPACT increased community partnerships in 2023, and now offers Reflective Case Consultation to grant recipients from King County's Best Starts for Kids Child Care Health Consultation. They also trained community members hosted by Snohomish Island County Libraries and gave professional development trainings to early learning staff at the Office of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Seattle.

The IMPACT program offers a diverse library of inclusive early learning training topics including:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder: Language and Communication Strategies
- Introduction to Inclusion in Early Learning
- Mastering Challenging Behaviors: The Essentials
- Visual Supports for Young Children

All courses are Washington State STARS- and OSPI-approved. To learn more, visit NWCKidsImpact.org.



The many suggestions of how to help children practice and learn skills for positive behavior were most helpful. This course included examples of responses I can practice and helped me understand what is behind a challenging behavior.

– Learner from the IMPACT course Mastering Challenging Behaviors: The Essentials

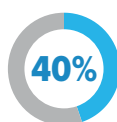
Early Learning

Inclusive education for children 6 weeks to 12 years

At Northwest Center Kids Early Learning, children with and without disabilities learn and play together in an inclusive, high-quality classroom environment. We actively welcome and celebrate children with disabilities or behavioral challenges, and we believe inclusive environments give all children the opportunity to reach their highest potential.



Early Learning 2023 Highlights



of children enrolled in Early Learning have a disability



184 children are enrolled in Early Learning

- 2 Infant Classrooms, ages 6 weeks–1 year
- 2 Waddler Classrooms, ages 1–2
- 2 Toddler Classrooms, ages 2–3
- 5 Preschool Classrooms, ages 3–5
- 1 School Age Room, up to age 12



Last year was one of revitalization and recommitment for our Early Learning school in downtown Seattle’s Chinook Building. Senior Early Learning director Katrina Caron was invited to speak at an event hosted by Seattle mayor Bruce Harrell to launch the Downtown Activation Plan to revitalize Seattle. Caron

shared how Northwest Center Kids has been part of downtown since 2010 and how many Seattle attractions are incorporated into Early Learning lessons. The Early Learning team also joined other Northwest Center leaders at the state capital in Olympia, meeting with legislators to educate them on our mission and advocate for more statewide support of disability inclusion.

To help retain quality staff, Early Learning received a King County grant paid directly to staff to recognize their work in early childhood education. Our Chinook school was able to upgrade its rooftop play space for children thanks to a facility improvement grant from Seattle’s Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) to replace fraying surfaces and add a shade sail.

“You’re not a bad kid”

Northwest Center mom Rebecca shares how Early Learning supported her son Ray.



Ray is strong, brave, and full of love. You’ll often find him climbing, running, and giving the most amazing hugs.

Ray had a rough start to life. His birth mom struggled with substance abuse, mental health, and homelessness, and Ray was born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. When Ray’s biological mom asked me to adopt him, I didn’t hesitate.

For the first two years, things were actually quite easy. Ray was this happy, easygoing kid.

But when Ray was about two-and-a-half, things got really hard, really fast. He suddenly began having big outbursts and hitting his friends unprovoked.

His daycare expressed significant concerns with his inability to transition between activities and his tendency to run around – occasionally right out of the classroom. As much as they loved him, they told us they just couldn’t do it anymore. They gave us less than a week to find new arrangements.

We started to feel like a failure. Ray started to feel that way, too.

Then a miracle happened. Northwest Center Kids Early Learning had a spot.

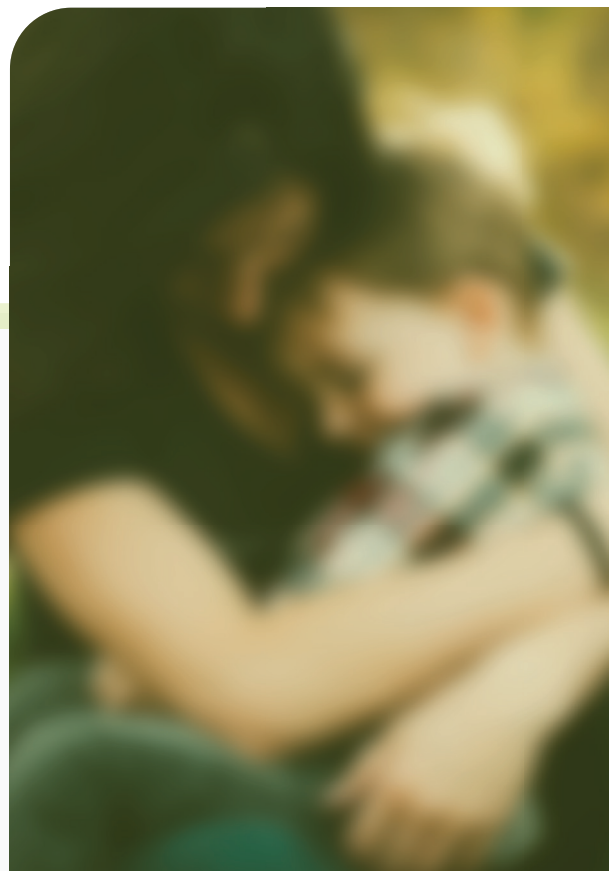
I was so impressed with their thoughtful questions and expert observations. They’ve been incredible partners, so tuned to Ray who is sensitive to sounds and needs additional sensory support.

After a week or two at Northwest Center, Ray was saying things like, “I got kicked out of my old school because I’m a bad kid.” The magical moment was when his teacher said, “You’re not a bad kid. You sometimes don’t make good decisions. But we all sometimes don’t make good decisions.”

Thanks to the staff, Ray no longer picks at his face to self-soothe and rarely runs out of the classroom. His confidence has been restored. We are part of a supportive community.

Today, I’m optimistic instead of afraid of what the future will hold. I’m incredibly grateful to everyone at Northwest Center Kids for all they’ve done for our family. I don’t even want to imagine where we would be without them.

– Rebecca, Ray’s mom



Employment Services

Building skills and uncovering goals to find successful employment

We believe everyone can find employment where their talents and passions are valued. Northwest Center Employment Services supports job seekers with disabilities to uncover talents, develop skills, and gain employment where they thrive, through services including:

Transition Services

Supporting students with disabilities ages 14–21 as they move from school to employment.

Evaluating Skills

Community-Based Assessments or Work Evaluations (CBA or CBWE) let clients try job tasks in real-life settings.

Job Readiness and Preparation

Building professional and social skills, developing a plan to achieve goals, becoming self-advocates, and identifying workplace obstacles and solutions.

On-the-Job Coaching and Retention

Long-term support tailored to the individual, including 1:1 job coaching or periodic check-ins, to help individuals grow in their careers.



Emilee has been a productive member of Northwest Center's OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions janitorial team for more than 25 years.

Employment Services 2023 Highlights



683 clients served



44 new companies employing our clients



103 new job placements



74 new employment sites



76% of clients employed in top choice of fields



\$2.3 million in gross wages earned by clients

In 2023, the team once again earned CARF® Accreditation, which recognizes that services meet national standards. CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human service organizations.

Employment Services at Northwest Center is always focused on advocating for clients with disabilities and providing high quality, innovative services. The past year was no exception.

The Washington Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) recognized the team's high standards, awarding them a grant to partner on research with the Equity in Education Coalition. The resulting publication is "Effectively Addressing the Intersections: Understanding and addressing the intersections of race, nationality, immigration status, tribal nationality, sexual orientation, and gender identity within the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) service delivery system." It will serve as a guide for the DDC to improve access to culturally relevant, family-centered supports that promote independence and inclusion for people with I/DD. You can read the guide at www.bit.ly/3YrhOJ5.

Team members also shared their expertise in person. Nora Genster, Senior Director of the Employment Transformation Collective (ETC), spoke at Microsoft's annual Ability Summit and Forum on Workplace Inclusion, and presented at annual conferences for ANCOR, an organization for providers of services to people with disabilities, and at the Forum on Workplace Inclusion. Her presentations covered identifying and eliminating anti-ableism in the workplace, with the ANCOR presentation focused on direct service. And at the APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First) Pacific Northwest Training Forum, Employment Services Regional Director Peter Yoou, Senior Employment Consultant Shannon Ramsey, and Employment Consultant Shannon Borba presented a training that they developed for families of adults with disabilities.

Shannon Ramsey also led advocacy efforts, visiting Washington's state capital with some of her clients and their families to advocate for increased funding for disability employment services and the hourly coaching fees for services provided through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).

Across the state, Employment Services clients, employees, and business partners were recognized with news coverage and awards.

- In Seattle, Tevin, employed by Big Blue Truck, was the subject of a King 5 news story about supported employment. (Read more about Tevin on page 21.)
- Clients working for OneNorth IFS at the Ballard Locks were featured in a Seattle Times section on the iconic location.
- Spokane employment consultant Theresa Ray received national recognition from APSE with the 2023 Outstanding Employment Professional Award. Seattle employment partner STG Presents won APSE's 2023 Community Employer Award. APSE is the only national membership organization focused exclusively on Employment First (a commitment to finding clients jobs in the general workforce for living wages).

But the best marker of Employment Services success is, of course, client success. Demand for great employees continues to grow, and Employment Services was expanded in Chelan and Douglas counties. Employers are also recognizing the talents of workers with disabilities: two Seattle clients had notable employment success as one took a full-time accounting job earning \$70,000 a year, and another a full-time therapist job including full benefits and paying \$90,000 per year.

Inclusive Employment at Cornerstone General Contractors is a Success for Employers and Employees



Cornerstone General Contractors had a vision:

To expand its definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion to also include people with disabilities. One year later, the company not only employed but fully embraced and championed people with disabilities.

Cornerstone, a company that builds school facilities, hired employees with disabilities to work in their office and on the job site. Stephen, pictured above, was hired through Northwest Center Employment Services. In his role as an office assistant, Stephen digitizes the company's thousands of project files and eventually added data entry to his role.

The company was clear from the beginning that Stephen would be treated like any other employee. That includes being part of team

and after-work events, competitive wages, and career growth. Stephen now works on multi-million-dollar projects, scanning, filing, and organizing key documents. It's detailed and important work, and he has proven more than equal to the task.

"People see what Stephen has learned on the job," says Cornerstone's DEI director Vicki Puckett. "Don't underestimate what someone with a disability can do."

Employment Transformation Collective (ETC)

Supporting businesses to remove workplace barriers to accessibility



ETC 2023 Highlights



10 Accessibility Partners providing services



3 Fortune 500 Business Clients

The Employment Transformation Collective (ETC) works with businesses and employees with disabilities to provide inclusive workplaces and an accommodating environment where everyone can do their best work. ETC services include:

- **Accessibility Partners (AP)**
Service: Customized support for blind and low-vision employees in the workplace to remove digital and physical barriers and make meetings, data, and documents more accessible.
- **Training & Consulting**
Services: Working with businesses to develop cultures of accommodation.
- **Customized Options:**
Collaborating with disabled employees and their employers so everyone has the tools they need to succeed in an inclusive workplace.

In 2023, ETC added to its roster of team members with a research and development lead, AP senior program manager, and four new AP positions. APs are a critical accommodation, empowering clients to focus their time and energy on the essential functions of their work instead of spending time navigating workplace barriers.

ETC APs increased their technical and accessibility skillset, and efforts have paid off: In recent satisfaction surveys, clients gave the service top marks of 5/5 across the board and noted significant improvement in their work satisfaction, engagement, and work-life balance. One client shared that AP support allows them to regularly engage in special work projects and employee resource groups, but most importantly to join their family for dinner instead of catching up on work.

ETC has placed nine APs with Microsoft, and in 2023 placed its first at software company Atlassian, serving two clients.

Social Enterprise

Helping us achieve more for disability inclusion

A social enterprise is a business whose primary purpose is to maximize benefits to society or the environment, with profits used to fund social programs. Northwest Center runs social enterprises that benefits customers, supporters, and our mission of disability inclusion:

- Customers receive the highest quality business services.
- We employ an inclusive workforce, demonstrating disability inclusion in action.
- Because profits defray administrative costs, donations from supporters go directly to services for people with disabilities.

Social Enterprise 2023 Highlights



6 social enterprise businesses offering integrated facility services (OneNorth IFS), commercial printing (Lithtex NW), managed office staffing, clothing donation services (Big Blue Truck), trucking logistics (OneNorth Logistics), and commercial laundry (NWC Laundry Services)



34% average number of employees with disabilities



75% of work at NWC Laundry Services is completed by employees with disabilities



75%+ of work at OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions is completed by employees with disabilities

In 2023, Northwest Center Social Enterprises were active in business and community events with organizations including BOMA (Building Owners and Management Association), International Economic Alliance Snohomish County, Tacoma Rising, Washington Community Associations Institute (WSCAI), NAIOP Washington, Clark Number, Puget Sound Business Journal, Thurston Economic Development Council, Umpqua Bank, Realty One, and the Washington APEX Accelerator.



Big Blue Truck

BigBlueTruck.org

Big Blue Truck™ hit the road in 1967, and has been a leader in sustainability, recycling, reuse, and disability inclusion ever since. Big Blue Truck (BBT) collects clothing, shoes, and other household goods, and Value Village buys those donations to sell in its stores. In 2023, BBT continued to provide services across the Puget Sound region, in Spokane, WA, and in Coeur d'Alene, ID, keeping a whopping 17 million pounds of recyclable goods out of landfills.

OneNorth Logistics

(800) 992-2060

Our newest social enterprise, OneNorth Logistics offers short-haul trucking for local pickup and delivery, sorting, cross dock logistics, and short-term warehouse storage. In 2023, working in tandem with Big Blue Truck, OneNorth Logistics partnered with World of Books, sorting and transporting thousands of the 300,000 books World of Books received and purchased last year. OneNorth Logistics also found homes for hundreds more books through The Book Project, donating books to community partners including Seattle's Books to Prisoners, the Everett Boys and Girls Club, Urban Rest Stop, an organization supporting the unhoused, and Friends of the Seattle Public Library.



Thanks to Tevin's hard work, he earned a President's Award from his colleagues at Northwest Center and BBT. Left to right: Travis Klishak, Pickup and Delivery Service Manager, Operations Manager Jacob Sao, Tevin, NWC President & CEO Gene Boes, Director of Customer Experience Melanie Clark, and Sr. VP of Operations Michael Scalzo.

Big Blue Truck Proves Inclusive Workplaces are Good Business

If you want to see the impact of an inclusive workplace, look inside a Big Blue Truck.

Before Employment Services client Tevin joined the BBT team, trailers were usually filled with 31,000 to 32,000 pounds of donated clothing and household goods. Now they hold up to 40,000 pounds.

"He helped change the standard," says Operations Manager Jacob Sao. "Tevin has an innate focus on doing things to the best of his ability, paired with a friendly competitive nature that rubbed off on his peers. He takes a lot of pride in putting as much weight as possible on a truck or cart."

Now the name "Tevin" is BBT shorthand for loading more items, Jacob says. "I regularly hear heavier items called a 'Tevin Cart' or 'Tevin Trailer.' It's a reminder of how things can be done to the max."

It's just part of Tevin's growth mindset, something he's lived every day since finding employment through Northwest Center. Tevin, who has dyslexia, initially joined the BBT graveyard shift, quickly moved to the day shift, and soon was driving those Big Blue Trucks.

"I want to take my opportunity and learning to another level," Tevin says.

Disability inclusion hasn't added expense or distractions at BBT, but instead has benefited

everyone. Sao began holding short check-ins, or "stretches," with Tevin each morning to discuss the day's work and his goals. Those conversations were so productive, stretches are now held staff-wide. As a result, the staff feel more connected to how the business is run, says Sao.

Tevin shows how inclusion can benefit business, but only 4 percent of businesses worldwide focus on disability as part of diversity, the World Economic Forum reported in 2023³.

But over the last five years, people with disabilities in the workforce increased from 29 percent to 37 percent, according to the 2023 Accenture report "The Disability Inclusion Imperative."

And leading CEOs are doing their part. The Valuable 500, for example, is "the largest global network of CEOs committed to disability inclusion," according to the World Economic Forum.

Meanwhile, Tevin keeps moving. Over the 2023 holiday season, he stepped up to help oversee BBT's Mukilteo Depot.

"Whatever is open, take that chance," he says. It's a lesson for businesses around the world.

³ World Economic Forum: Closing the disability inclusion gap with business leadership, 2023

Lithtex NW

LithtexNW.com

With physical locations in Bellingham and Mount Vernon, WA, Lithtex NW offers full-service commercial and digital printing to 1,000 unique customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. Each year, the company prints more than 1 million agendas that are distributed to nearly 3,000 U.S. schools. In 2023, the company added another level of accessibility and connection to NWC's mission of inclusion by adding Braille Signage Printing to its line of offerings.



Managed Staffing Services

NWCenter.org/Social-Enterprise

With an Amazon partnership going back 20 years, our expert managed staffing and contracted work teams offer services including reception, call center, light facilities support, project coordination and customer service for interoffice moves, and customer experience program management for offices in and around Seattle, Arlington and Herndon, VA, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Nashville, and New York City. The company regularly gets high marks from its customers. In 2024, additional staffing services will be offered under a new brand, Day8. Learn more at Day8Solutions.com.



OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions

OneNorthIFS.com

One North IFS has more than 35 years of experience providing janitorial and building services for leading commercial, retail, health care, government, manufacturing, and education organizations throughout Washington state and beyond. The company is a shining example of the benefits of workplace inclusion: more than 75 percent of the meticulous and dependable services we provide is completed by employees who have a documented disability. OneNorth IFS maintains 8 million square feet of facilities in Washington state every day.



Northwest Center Laundry Services

NWCenter.org/Social-Enterprise



NWC Laundry Services has provided hospital-grade laundry services for government agencies and facilities in the Puget Sound region since 1994, cleaning 1.3 million pounds of uniforms and textiles in 2023. Managers are Certified Laundry and Linen Manager-certified, and 75 percent of the laundry's work is completed by people with disabilities. In 2023, a Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) review from a U.S. Government customer concluded, "Northwest Center Laundry Services is a company that is a great benefit to the government and it is highly recommended to continue to utilize them."

Partners in inclusion

Thank you to the key customers and partners who help Northwest Center further our mission of disability inclusion.

Amazon

BECU

Cataldo Catholic School

CBRE Commercial Real Estate Services

City of Bellevue

City of Seattle

Collins Aerospace

Cowles Company

Cutter & Buck

Federal Building South

Helpful Hands

Hiram M. Chittenden Locks – Seattle District,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

JLL Commercial Real Estate

Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Kroger/QFC

Madigan Army Medical Center

Naval Hospital Bremerton and Bangor Clinic

Pacific Program Management

Port of Seattle

Ridwell

Seattle University

Spokane Public Schools

Spokane Teachers Credit Union

Spokane Transit Authority

Staples

U.S. General Services Administration

University of Washington

Value Village

WaFd Bank

Washington National Guard

Waste Management

West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

World of Books

Anonymous

Northwest Center Board of Directors

Stephanie Gebhardt, Board Chair
MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions, CFO

David Cuthill, Board Vice Chair
Clise Properties, Chief Executive Officer

Charlie Ogle, Board Treasurer
Lynden International, Regional Sales Manager,
Retired

Jay Amandus, Board Secretary
BECU, Vice President of Indirect Lending

Mary Barbosa
King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office,
Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Gene Boes
Northwest Center President & CEO

Mike Gano
The Partners Group, Managing Partner, Retired

Parul Houlahan
Community Advocate

Joyce Jackson
Northwest Kidney Centers, Former CEO,
Retired

Tom Mormino
Turner Construction Company, Retired

Lonnie Pacelli
Community Advocate

Dan Perlet
Amazon, Vice President, Corporate
Communications

Claire Verity
Regence BlueShield, Market President

Laethan Wene
Community Advocate

Northwest Center Executive Leadership

Gene Boes
President & CEO

Robyn Brown
Chief Development Officer

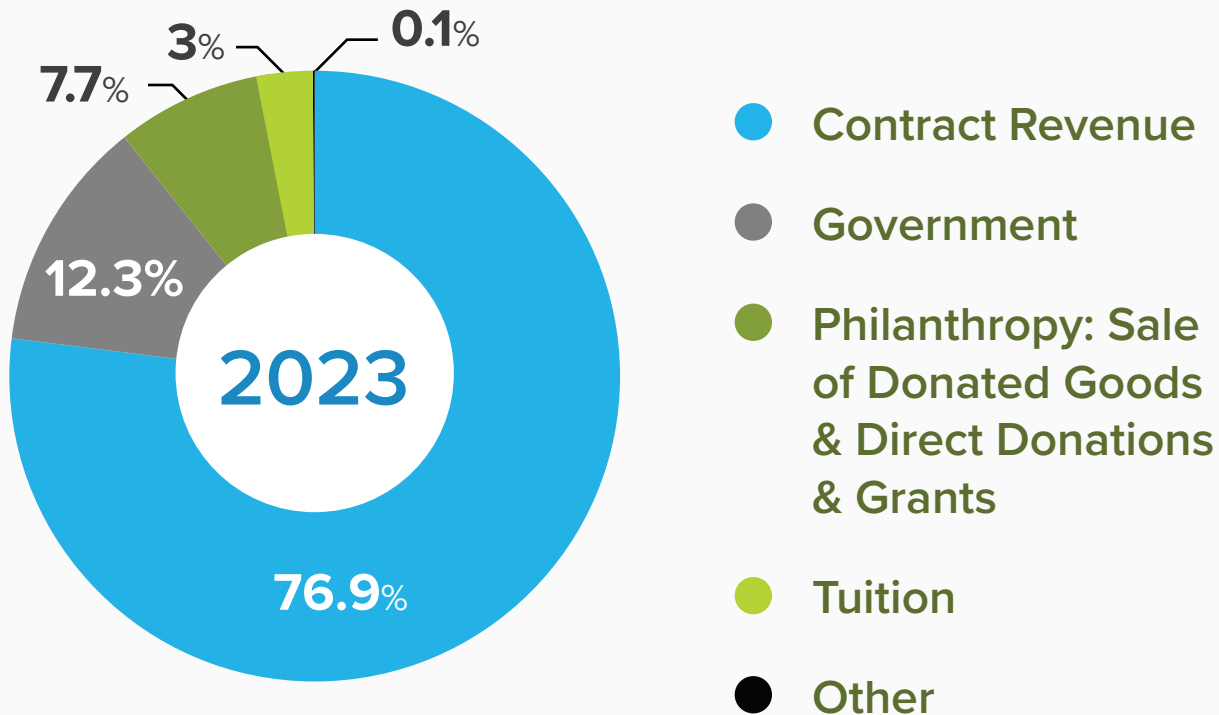
Del Clark
Chief Financial Officer

Tess Connor
Chief Growth & Operating Officer

Kelsey Fish
Chief Human Resources Officer

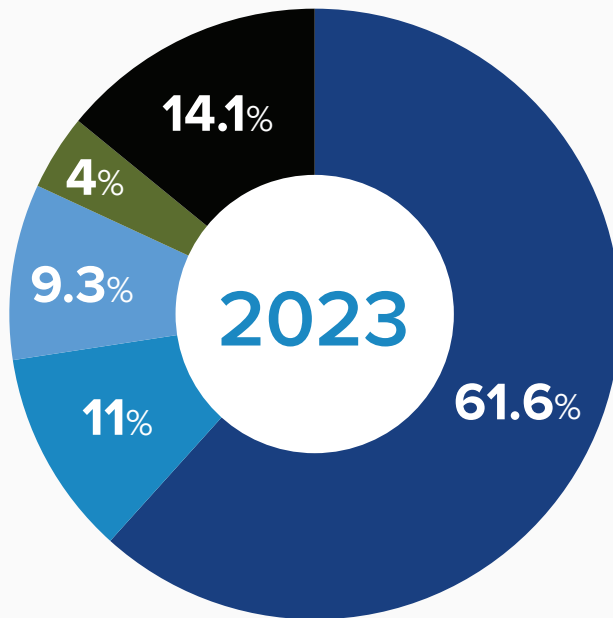
Laura Kneedler, M. Ed.
Chief Mission Officer

Financial Information: Revenue



 Contract Revenue	\$57,207,586
 Government	\$9,155,840
 Philanthropy: Sale of Donated Goods & Direct Donations & Grants	\$5,690,553
 Tuition	\$2,223,224
 Other	\$83,466
Total	\$74,360,669

Financial Information: Expenses



- Social Enterprise
- Child and Family Services
- Employment Services
- Donated Merchandise Program
- Supporting Services

● Social Enterprise	\$46,797,513
● Child and Family Services	\$8,337,210
● Employment Services	\$7,061,539
● Donated Merchandise Program	\$3,040,039
Total Program Services	\$65,236,301
● Supporting Services	\$10,691,813
Total Expenses	\$75,928,114

Committed to Sustainability



Northwest Center has integrated sustainability into the five pillars that now define our work: People, Partnerships, Operations, Governance, and impact in Communities. Our commitment is captured in our ten sustainability goals:

1. Create a more equitable world by working to eliminate ableism and create equity for people with disabilities.
2. Advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – learn more at SDGS.UN.org/Goals.
3. Advocate for our mission at all levels of government and in communities.
4. Evaluate environmental elements of our businesses and move toward sustainable consumption and production.
5. Maintain a culture of continuous improvement and growth.
6. Ensure Northwest Center complies with environmental policies and creates best practices that go beyond policies.
7. Work with suppliers to adopt Northwest Center's sustainability policy.
8. Educate staff about the sustainability policy and encourage adoption of its ideas and spirit.
9. Ensure sustainability goals are documented in strategic plans and implemented, reviewed, and improved.
10. Establish accountability through the Northwest Center Board of Directors, which provides oversight and governs the execution of Northwest Center, including our commitment to sustainability.

Sustainability Across Northwest Center

Big Blue Truck, our original Social Enterprise, collects used clothing, shoes, textiles, and small household items for partner Value Village. This partnership keeps 17 million pounds of recyclable goods out of landfills every year.

OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions analyzes every step of cleaning and maintenance processes to ensure environmental safety, energy efficiency, and maximum performance.

- Workflow is organized from the top down, so teams can turn off lights as they go to reduce power consumption.
- Floor-care programs limit excess water use and the number of chemicals released into the environment.
- We use Green Seal-Certified commercial cleaners and environmentally friendly chemicals.
- OneNorth IFS also works with customers to develop recycling programs.

Northwest Center Laundry Services saves 40 to 50 percent of the 75,000 gallons of water used annually, and its tunnel washer uses a third of the water of a conventional washer.

Lithtex NW, our commercial printing business, uses only vegetable-based and fully recyclable ink. The company also recycles all paper setup, trim, cardboard, plastic wrap, and pallets.

Throughout Northwest Center, we use refurbished and renewed computer and IT equipment when possible. We also offer recycling programs in the workplace that include Big Blue Truck clothing donation bins.

Working with employees, clients, communities, customers, policymakers, and suppliers, we are committed to achieving our ten commitments and the vision of an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world.

In Loving Memory of Northwest Center Founder Janet Taggart



Left, Janet Taggart joined the Northwest Center community in May 2021 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the passing of HB 90, “Education for All,” the groundbreaking disability rights bill she helped author. Right, Janet and Naida Taggart at home in the late 1950s.

Northwest Center mourns Janet Taggart, our last living “founding mother,” who passed away on April 5, 2024 at the age of 94.

Inspired by her daughter Naida, born in 1956 with a developmental disability and cerebral palsy, Janet lobbied for children with disabilities to receive an education – something unheard of at the time.

Janet and other Seattle parents started their own “basement schools” to teach their children with disabilities, and then joined forces to found Northwest Center in 1965.

She and other founders recruited two UW law students to write the nation’s first law granting public education to kids with disabilities in Washington state. House Bill 90, “Education for All,” was signed into law in 1971. Janet also helped write the national law that Education for All inspired: the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, passed in 1975, known today as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Janet’s formidable political knowledge, passion for civil rights, and outspokenness on the issues made her a favorite among Northwest Center staff. We will strive to honor her legacy. We will miss her greatly.

Supporter Profile: Parul Houlahan

A lifetime commitment to disability rights

As a friend, board member, and always a supporter, Parul Houlahan has been part of Northwest Center since 1980.



Parul, second from left, at Northwest Center for the 50th Anniversary of the landmark disability rights law “Education for All” that was written by our founders. With her from L to R is Patrick Dolan, son of founder Katie Dolan, founder Janet Taggart, former Washington governor Dan Evans, and NWC President & CEO Gene Boes.

In her native India, Parul earned a master’s degree and was running a residential school for adults when she was 25. She transformed the school from a place that neglected residents to a newly-staffed operation where residents had a say in day-to-day operations.

“It taught me a lot about how young people with disabilities learn,” she says. “It’s also why I don’t take B.S. from anyone.”

One of the first people she met in Seattle had a similar approach: Northwest Center founder Katie Dolan. The first time the women met, they talked for seven hours. What followed were decades as colleagues, close friends, and family. Parul was Katie’s “daughter by choice,” married one of Katie’s nephews, and served for many years as guardian of her son Patrick.

Parul worked with the Troubleshooters, an organization Katie and founder Janet Taggart formed to help families of children with disabilities apply for government benefits. Now known as Disability Rights Washington (DRW), Troubleshooters inspired nationwide disability protection and advocacy agencies. But it was founded “almost as an accident,” Parul says: Katie and Janet met with a state official to learn about benefits, but he asked them for help.

“He said, ‘We’ll give you a grant. Can you write a brochure?’ Janet and Katie said, ‘Sure.’ They had never written a brochure. But Katie said her theater background helped because you always say, ‘I can do that.’”

Troubleshooters eventually hosted “disability parties” to help parents fill out complicated forms. “Katie would say, ‘The answer to question number one is...’ and everybody would write it. That’s how they got enrolled.”

Katie and Parul trained advocates, legislators, and state employees to work with and support people with disabilities. In 1983, they trained 400 Seattle police officers after a friend was falsely arrested for “public drunkenness” because her gait was affected by cerebral palsy. “Katie and I raised absolute hell,” Parul remembers.

Continued on page 31.

Continued from page 30.

What they stressed most in their trainings was, “The person with disabilities you’re working with is most important. Not the agency, not yourself. Once you keep that focus, everything falls into place.”

Parul says Katie was proud of Northwest Center’s milestones over the years, like opening the nation’s first disability-inclusive early learning center and launching social enterprises in the 1990s. She says Janet was “thrilled beyond words” more recently, when Northwest Center Kids Early Supports launched the Hospital-to-Home program.

Northwest Center’s founding parents have all passed away, but their influence remains strong.

“They did not want scraps. They wanted equal rights,” Parul says. “Northwest Center has, with struggle and tenacity, maintained the spirit of the founding parents: inclusion and innovation and never taking no for an answer. That’s why I’m still involved.”

WAYS TO SUPPORT

It Only Works with You

Thank you for your support of Northwest Center – together, we’re working toward a more equitable world for people with disabilities.

Make a Gift: Every financial gift goes directly to programs and services for people with disabilities.

Plan A Gift: Designate a future gift to Northwest Center.

Join Our Events: Sponsor, volunteer for, or attend one of our events.

Partner With Us: We are honored to partner with companies committed to disability inclusion.

Donate a Gift Card: Donate unwanted or partially used gift cards from restaurants or stores.



Donate Clothing, Shoes, and Textiles: Visit BigBlueTruck.org.

Donate a Vehicle at NWCenterAutos.com.

Host a Fundraiser: Contact Giving@NWCenter.org.

Volunteer: Reach out to Marketing@NWCenter.org for volunteer opportunities.

To learn more about all the ways to give, visit NWCenter.org/Support-Northwest-Center.

Across the U.S.

WASHINGTON

- OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions
- 75% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

- Managed Staffing Services
- 20% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

- NWC Laundry Services
- 69% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

- Big Blue Truck
- 25% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

- Lithtex NW
- 15% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

- Employment Services
- 12% Declared Disability

WASHINGTON

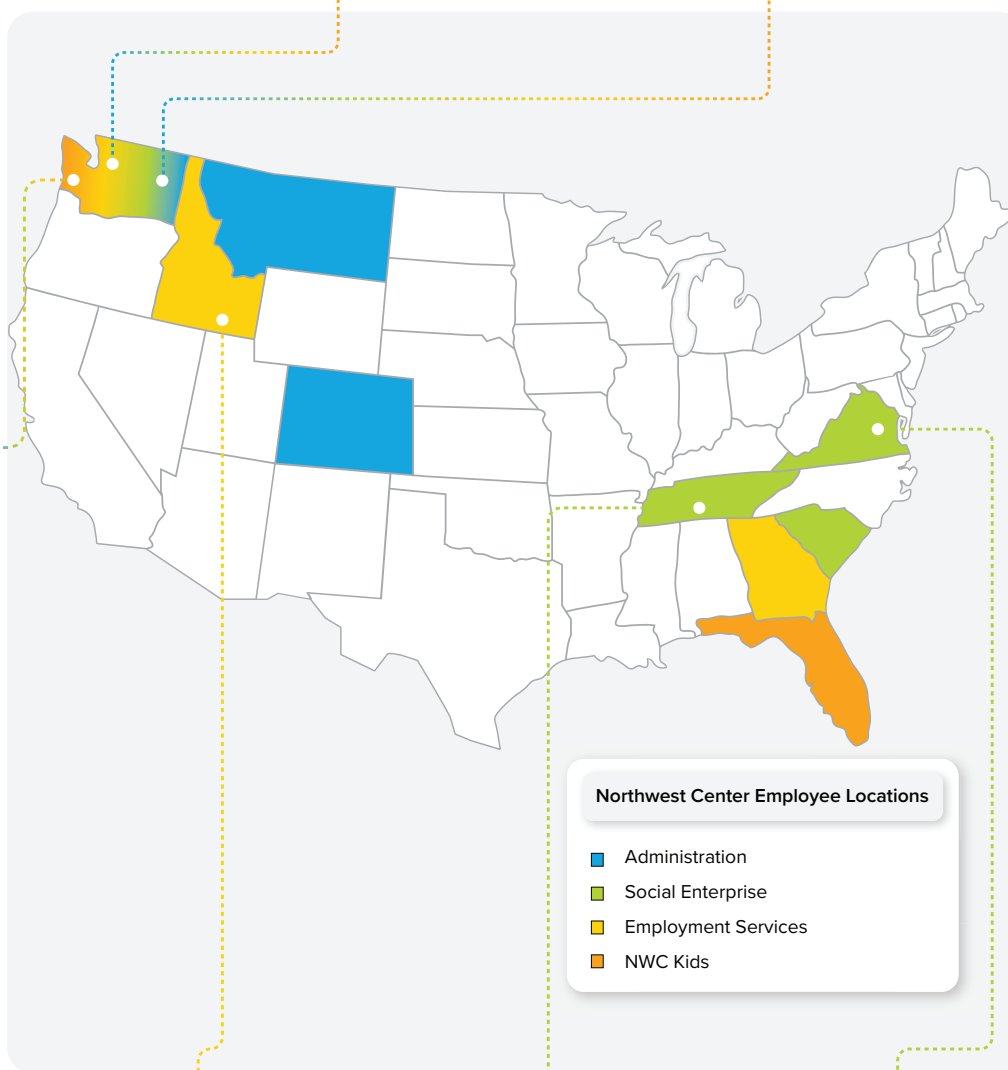
- NWC Kids
- 12.5% Declared Disability

RENTON, WA: NWC HQ

- Administration, NWC Kids, Employment Services, OneNorth Integrated Facility Solutions)
- 29% Declared Disability

SPOKANE, WA

- OneNorth IFS, Employment Services, Big Blue Truck
- 32% Declared Disability



IDAHO

- Employment Services
- 82% Declared Disability

TENNESSEE

- Managed Staffing Services
- 50% Declared Disability

VIRGINIA

- Managed Staffing Services
- 20% Declared Disability

*As of summer 2023



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**1119 SW 7th Street
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