



WORK OPPORTUNITIES

addresses inequities for individuals with disabilities through inclusive employment and community participation.

Vocational and Community Support



Our belief in inclusion through jobs started here, in 1963.

Our Story

Our agency was founded by a group of parents from the Edmonds School District Special Education Parents Group who dreamt that their sons and daughters would have the opportunity to become participating and contributing members of the community.

This dream is now being extended to all adults with disabilities guided by the belief that through work, people with disabilities would experience increased self-esteem and have greater economic and social opportunities within the community.

Whatcom County Program - Overview

- ▶ We support individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment in a variety of positions and work settings
- ▶ Work Opportunities also supports individuals with engaging in community programs, groups, and services
- ▶ Our Whatcom County team employs 15 Employment Specialists and we're currently serving 154 clients with disabilities
- ▶ Work Opportunities helps our employers and communities to be more inclusive

Whatcom County Program - Successes

- ▶ In 2024
 - ▶ 166 job interviews
 - ▶ 32 new job starts in 2024(175 total job starts in Whatcom since 2020)
 - ▶ Of the 32 new job starts, 81% of those jobs are still active today
 - ▶ Job starts were in a variety of industries
 - ▶ Whatcom clients earned over \$545K and worked over 30,000 hours



Ben

Started with us as a first-time job seeker.



▶ [Ben's Story | Work Opportunities - YouTube](#)

Funding Challenges

- ▶ Insufficient government funding to meet demand for individualized services
- ▶ Administrative burdens tied to complex billing and documentation requirements
- ▶ Inadequate funding for provider staff wages, leading to high turnover
- ▶ Lack of braided/blended funding strategies across systems (e.g., VR, DD, schools)
- ▶ Misalignment of funding timelines with client needs and service delivery
- ▶ Waitlist in Bellingham



Thank You!