



STATE OF WASHINGTON

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT

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# Orting Outreach Summary

## Introduction

The Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) held a Disability Resource Fair and two meetings in Orting in December 2019. The Disability Resource Fair and Public Forum were held in the Orting High School Performing Arts Center (PAC). A Leadership Breakfast was held the following morning in the Orting School Boardroom.



On behalf of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, we want to recognize and thank Principal Cliff Fries and Chris Willis, Director of Special Services and Intervention for assisting us with the outreach planning process. In addition to obtaining convenient and accessible meeting facilities, they connected us with key stakeholders in the community.

We also want to acknowledge the Pierce County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (PC-ACAC) for recommending Orting. Orting ultimately served as a spectacular location in which community stakeholders participated alongside the PC-ACAC members.

**Note:** In December 2019, a summary of the Leadership Breakfast was distributed to the meeting participants. The summary included a review of the action items, the name of the person responsible, personal commitment statements and a contact list of those who attended. All are included in this report.

The Outreach Summary reviews the issues discussed during the Public Forum, highlights local success stories and provides resource information and promising practices. A contact list of all meeting attendees is also included.

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## Pierce County Demographics

Pierce County includes Puget Sound, the Puget Sound lowlands and the surrounding region west of the Cascade Range and east of the Olympic Mountains. Pierce County is also home to Mount Rainier, with an elevation of 14,410 feet, the tallest mountain and volcano in the Cascade Range. In 2018, Pierce County population was estimated at 891,000 making it the second-most populous county behind King County. Tacoma is the largest city in Pierce County and is the county seat.

## Orting Demographics

Orting is in Pierce County and is one of Washington State's oldest cities. It has a 2019 population of 7,732 with an annual growth rate of 3.62%. Orting is bordered by two rivers: the Carbon River and the Puyallup River. It sits at the base of Mount Rainier, about thirty miles away. Orting has the unique designation as being the most at risk community for lahar (violent mud flows) if Mount Rainier should erupt.

Orting's median age is 38 years; 35.4 years for males and 38.7 years for females. The 2019 average household income is \$86,960. Six percent of Orting's population are below the poverty line, and nearly 16% of those are 65 years or older.

The largest ethnic groups in Orting are: White (Non-Hispanic) 82%, White (Hispanic) 7%, Two or More Races (Non-Hispanic) 6% and Black/African American 2%.

## Outreach/Scouting Process

Invitation letters and meeting flyers were sent to over 150 community contacts, including elected officials, service providers and other stakeholders in the disability community. Meeting information was circulated through "PeachJar," which is a digital messaging service connecting school personnel, community organizations and most importantly, parents! Service providers were asked to share the meeting information with their customers and to post meeting flyers in their offices. GCDE Members made follow-up phone calls to key people encouraging their participation in the outreach meetings.

## Local Success Stories

- Orting's Public Works Department hired their first supported employee.
- Beyond the Borders provides transportation services to eligible riders who live outside of the Pierce Transit service area.
- Trudee Barfield is starting a young adult family night, bringing social and recreational opportunities to Orting for those with disabilities in 2020.
- Morning and afternoon support groups are being offered in Orting for those caring for family members with disabilities.
- Orting's Special Olympics Soccer team earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place!
- PAVE (Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment) is willing to offer services in Orting, avoiding the need to travel outside of the area.

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- Relationships between the disability community and the Orting Police and Fire Department are very positive. One of the advantages of living in a smaller community is that police officers know community members and are better suited to offer needed accommodations.
- Through observation, living and working in Orting offers a unique sense of community. People in Orting take care of one another and that certainly applies to those with disabilities.

### Public Forum Meeting Summary

The Public Forum was held in the Orting High School Performing Arts Center (PAC). Over 45 people attended, assembling a diverse cross-section of the community, including people with disabilities, family members, advocates, service providers and elected officials.

Discussion topics were broad with an emphasis on transportation, access to community services and school to work transition.

During the meeting, participants were open to possibilities and excited about making new connections. Action items were identified, and commitments were made to continue the discussion to improve programs and services for individuals with disabilities.

### Education

#### Participant Comments

The Orting School District is small. Chris Willis partners with the Sumner and Puyallup School Districts for physical therapy services. There is a physical therapist in Orting, but he does not provide services for the Orting School District.

Jamie Jones noted that small school districts often find themselves serving their first blind student, their first student who uses a wheelchair or their first deaf student who uses sign language. Students with disabilities require additional staffing and funding.



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## Emergency Service and the Orting Police Department

### Participant Comments

Several participants commented on the excellent work of the Orting Police Department. One parent shared her experience with the Police Department and how they spent time with her son who is autistic. A police officer offered the young man an opportunity to talk with him and sit inside his patrol car. This casual meet and greet was used as a preventive measure in case the young man got lost or needed police support.

Another participant spoke about Officer Boone, the School Resource Officer. Officer Boone has made positive connections with Orting students. Connections between the school district and the Orting Police Department are tremendously helpful, especially when a student with a disability has an issue outside of school.

Carrie has a son with a disability. She is interested in having information coded on her son's driver's license indicating he is a person with a disability. It would help police officers understand his mannerisms and they may be able to work with him better. It would also provide important information to emergency and hospital personnel.

Employers often ask for a copy of your driver's license as a form of identification. A participant suggested any disability coding should be optional and not mandatory. She is concerned employers will use that information in their hiring decisions and create another level of discrimination.

A participant noted Orting has one or maybe two ambulances. They waited over an hour for an ambulance to come from Tacoma. When you are having a breathing problem, waiting an hour is not acceptable.

A participant explained Orting is in a lahar zone (violent mud flows) for Mount Rainier. If the mountain erupts during school hours, the school is prepared to move students to higher ground. What happens if school is not in session or it is a weekend or holiday? There are no viable solutions to evacuate the community. Orting officials continue to work on evacuation plans, but more work needs to be done for the community at large.

### Resources

Information on Orting's Evacuation Plans:

<https://cityoforting.org/services/emergency-management/emergency-preparedness/>

<https://www.uccs.edu/ges199/rainier/mit/orting/evac>

<https://www.cityofpuyallup.org/1595/2019-Evacuation-Exercise>

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## Employment

### Participant Comments

Heather is a family member, an advocate and a provider. She works with Morningside in Tacoma. The business community in Orting is small and employment opportunities are limited. If you look at Orting's population, how many people who live here work here? Heather is working towards replicating what most workers in the community do for those with disabilities, meaning she tries to find job opportunities in other communities.

Carson shared they moved to Orting and have had a less than welcoming experience. They describe themselves as autistic and an avid member of the Queer community. They currently work at Safeway and the jobs are heavily focused on customer service. They appreciated the service providers who participated in the Disability Resource Fair but were unsure they could offer the assistance they needed.



Chris recognized Morningside, Trillium Employment Services and Skills, Inc. for their willingness to partner with the school district. Students are getting services and access to jobs. Students are working in Bonney Lake and Puyallup. Students are transitioning to jobs

everywhere else because of the limited opportunity for jobs in Orting. The best outcome for Orting students is more employment opportunities in Orting.

Working with Chris Willis and Trillium Employment Services, Mayor Penner established a supported employment position in the Public Works Department.

Jamie Jones noted the school district is one of the largest employers in most small communities. Schools serve as a model of inclusion and acceptance. As we serve our students with disabilities, other students learn about acceptance and inclusion at a young age. Hopefully, they carry these lessons lifelong and become employers, supervisors and co-workers who see people for their abilities.

### Resources

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** is a statewide resource assisting people with disabilities to prepare for, secure, maintain, advance in, or regain employment. DVR partners with organizations and businesses to develop employment opportunities. DVR serves people who seek meaningful, secure employment but whose disabilities may result in one or more barriers to achieving an employment goal.

#### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

1402 E Maine Ave  
Puyallup, WA 98372  
253.256.0160

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/location/dshs-dvr-puyallup>

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**Morningside** provides employment services for individuals with disabilities. They are committed to assisting businesses to recruit and retain employees with disabilities, building an inclusive workplace.

### **Morningside**

3906 S 74<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 201

Tacoma, WA 98409

253.301.0502

<https://www.morningsideservices.com/service-area/service-area/pierce-county/>

**Skills Inc. Vocational Services Program** offers a wide range of services to individuals with disabilities, including paid community-based assessments, internships, job placement and job coaching – here at Skills Inc. and with other employers in the community. Washington State's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other agencies refer people to Skills Inc.'s vocational services, where the staff fosters a process of self-discovery and career exploration that identifies clients' strengths, skills and interests. They help individuals gain a deeper understanding of their abilities and how to market themselves to employers.

### **Skills Inc. Corporate Headquarters**

715 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE

Auburn, WA 98002

206.782.6000

<https://www.skillsinc.com/>

**Trillium Employment Services** is committed to developing employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Their professional staff work closely with businesses and job seekers to ensure a quality match and long-term success. Those eligible for this service through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and King, Clark, Kitsap, or Pierce Counties will receive job support services for the duration of employment. They focus on continued success and plan for career advancement.

### **Trillium Employment Services**

400 S Meridian #1B

Puyallup, WA 98371

253.446.7510

<https://trillium.org/>

## Housing Opportunities

### Participant Comments

A parent spoke about her experience of raising a son with severe autism. Her son is nonverbal; has behavioral needs and can be extremely aggressive. He lived at home until he was 17 and then was placed in a home in Spokane. He is doing well, and she talks with staff regularly for updates. Having her son so far away is very difficult. She participates in a parent support group



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and many families are facing the same issues with their loved ones being placed in Spokane. She believes the state chooses to operate housing programs in Spokane and Yakima because houses are less expensive, and wages are lower than on the westside of the state. She is hoping when her son turns 21, he will be able to move back home.

A participant added housing is a huge issue everywhere in the state. She often hears about housing concerns from parents in a statewide parent association. Washington State, in theory, is committed to all individuals living successfully in the community. Additional community resources and financial supports are needed, allowing families to have their loved ones live within reasonable commuting distances. It is unacceptable to place family members 300 miles away. If the State is really committed to a community-based model, more funding needs to follow. Not only elected officials have a responsibility, all of us need to take action to support community living.

Work needs to be done at the state level and at the federal level. When a person moves into a group/family home, all but \$60.00 of their monthly social security payment goes towards rent. If you need a bus pass, your spendable cash is gone. There isn't enough money for a movie or other social activities. The federal government needs to increase Supplemental Social Security payments, so people can survive.

## **School to Work Transition**

### **Participant Comments**

Jennifer is a mother of an 18-year-old with disabilities and a life skill teacher at the Orting High School. She develops volunteer job sites in Orting for her students. Establishing volunteer positions provides an opportunity for local employers to understand that students with disabilities are willing and able to work in their business.

While Jennifer found job opportunities outside of Orting, due to the lack of transportation, she was unable to fill them. Transportation is the key. Getting students to Graham, Bonney Lake or Puyallup is challenging. She continues to focus her efforts on finding jobs in Orting where transportation is less of an issue.

Christine is a school psychologist and a transition coordinator for the Sumner and Bonney Lake School Districts. Families and students often tell her they have no knowledge of the possibilities for an adult with disabilities. You rarely see people with disabilities working in Orting. Families and students don't see the opportunities; they don't aspire for jobs or career opportunities. Once the school bus stops coming, there is nothing on the horizon.

Christine hosts a parent information series on the third Thursday of the month. Each month a sector of transition services is highlighted. It is a more intimate conversation, with opportunities for questions and answers. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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A father shared his son's success story. His son attended and graduated from the Achieve program through Highline College. He recognized Mr. Willis for his encouragement and guidance. Without Mr. Willis, he would have never known about this program.

Chris Willis added Advance Physical Therapy in Orting offers work-based experiences for Orting High School students. Chris is continually impressed with Orting's community support; it is the backbone and strength of this amazing community.

### Resources

**Achieve at Highline College** is a comprehensive post-secondary transition program that includes credit and non-credit classes, intensive advising, involvement in campus life, community-based internships, and assistance with job placement. All Achieve students work with an intensive advisor and career specialist to draft and implement a comprehensive, individual plan for college and career. Specific courses, campus activities, and work-based learning experiences are determined based on skills and competencies needed for the student to achieve his or her identified goal(s).

#### **Achieve**

23835 Pacific Highway S  
Building 99, Room 180  
Kent, WA 98032  
206.592.3526  
<https://achieve.highline.edu/>

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation High School Transition Services** are a team effort that provides support and guidance to students with disabilities as they prepare to move from high school to the workplace. Each student's transition team includes the student, parents, school staff, and DVR Counselors. Transition teams assist students to identify career interests and learn what skills and training are needed to prepare for careers in those fields of interest.

#### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Orting High School Transition Counselor**

Elizabeth Oluwaleye  
1402 E Maine  
Puyallup, WA 98372  
360.870.4468  
[OluwaEE@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:OluwaEE@dshs.wa.gov)

**Center for Change in Transition Services** provides resources and support services to all Washington State stakeholders including agency staff, special education teachers, directors, students, and their families. For more information visit their website at <https://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/about/contact-us/>.



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### Center for Change in Transition Services

Elaine Marcinek, Director

901 12<sup>th</sup> Ave

PO Box 222000

Seattle, WA 98122

206.296.5761

[marcinee@seattleu.edu](mailto:marcinee@seattleu.edu)

**DO-IT** (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) is dedicated to empowering people with disabilities through technology and education. DO-IT Scholars are college-capable high school students with disabilities who have leadership potential. DO-IT Scholars learn to select and use adaptive technology, software, and online resources. They experience college life on a university campus in the summer, exploring academics and careers. To contact staff; request publications; ask questions about the program; or apply to be a DO-IT Scholar, Pal, Mentor, or volunteer, send an email to [doit@uw.edu](mailto:doit@uw.edu).

### DO-IT

University of Washington

Box 354842

Seattle, WA 98195-4842

206.685.DOIT (3648) (voice/TTY)

888.972.DOIT (3648) (toll free voice/TTY)

509.328.9331 (voice/TTY Spokane)

206.221.4171 (fax)

[www.uw.edu/doit/](http://www.uw.edu/doit/)

**Skills Inc.'s Aerospace Internship Program (AIP)** gives students from seven school districts in South King County and Pierce County the opportunity to gain practical work experience in aerospace manufacturing and finishing while earning credit toward their high school diplomas. This educational and vocational training program has helped hundreds of high school students with disabilities who are at risk of not graduating.

If interested in this program, please contact your student's Special/Inclusive Education Administrator. School districts currently served include Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, **Orting**, Tahoma, University Place, and White River.

### Skills Inc. Corporate Headquarters

715 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE

Auburn, WA 98002

206.782.6000

<https://www.skillsinc.com/>

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## Social Events and Recreational Activities

### Participant Comments

Mark stated Orting does not have many choices for social recreation for those with disabilities. It is long drive to Tacoma to play a sport or to be active and involved in social events.

Trudee announced she is organizing a game, dance, or fun night in Orting starting in March 2020. The Lions Club has offered their building, and the events will be scheduled from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. If successful, she hopes to offer these activities three (3) to four (4) times a year. These events are geared for individuals who are 16 years or older. Chaperones and food will be provided. Parents will need to provide transportation. Trudee encouraged people to contact her with their ideas for activities. Her phone number is 360.893.5419 and her email address is [trudeejane@yahoo.com](mailto:trudeejane@yahoo.com).

A participant announced the Orting Special Olympics Soccer Team won second place in 2019! Keeping Special Olympics active in Orting takes volunteer commitment to make it sustainable. We don't have any options for activities, but Special Olympics is important to continue. The YMCA struggles to keep participants involved. Without participants, we won't have a program.

A participant commented summer programs for kids with disabilities need to start with the local school district. Good examples are the programs supported by the White River School District in Buckley. When she was a new teacher at White River, the school district provided a stipend and every student eight and older with disabilities was enrolled in Special Olympics. She became a Special Olympics coach. Students participated in bowling (transportation was provided by the school to Puyallup once a week). Other activities included basketball, track and field and soccer. Schools can and should be more active in developing recreational programs for kids with disabilities.

A participant commented the city of Orting is working to improve accessibility in their parks. As a community, we support making these changes because we know the people in our community who benefit. It is a work of love by the local citizens because the government doesn't have the funds to make these changes.

Trudee mentioned summertime provides its own challenges. There are no daycare programs for kids with disabilities in Orting. Last year, Chris Willis encouraged Trudee to enroll her daughter in a two-week camp targeted for kids with disabilities. It was a fantastic experience. Trudee would like to see transportation services available for kids with disabilities to attend summer day camps nearby.

### Resources

**Note:** due to COVID-19 many camps are closed this summer. The Aspiring Youth Summer Camps appear to be open and have implemented safety protocols for COVID-19.

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**Aspiring Youth Summer Camps** provide incredible enrichment choices from theater to climbing, to art, fostering growth through once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Their master's level counselors help campers build confidence, develop skills and connect to new friends.

- Free enrollment meeting to identify social goals and ensure good group fit.
- An array of exciting activities and field trips.
- Pre and post camp care options.
- Parents receive detailed information on their camper's progress through check-ins and free phone consultations. For more information call 206.517.0241 or send an email to [info@aspiringyouth.net](mailto:info@aspiringyouth.net).

**Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for High School Students with Disabilities** is designed for students with disabilities who want to be or are leaders in their schools and communities. The forum is held on a college campus for 5 days and 6 nights. There is no cost to attend, transportation and accommodations are provided. Eligible youth include:

- Incoming high school juniors and seniors (as of July 1, 2021), high school graduates; or
- Students up to age 21 who are receiving transition services from their high schools.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 program was cancelled.

To apply for the 2021 program, go to the [GCDE website](#) and select "Youth Leadership Forum Application" under "Youth Leadership Forum" or contact Elaine Stefanowicz at 360.890.3774 or email [estefanowicz@esd.wa.gov](mailto:estefanowicz@esd.wa.gov).

**Camp Rapid Summer Day Program 2020** is a hands-on summer day camp and it is WILDLY Fun! Kids play hard, get messy and try new things. Kids collaborate and participate in team-building exercises, developing a "can do" attitude. Please register your child by the grade they will be in for the 2020-2021 school year. Space is limited. Camp is open from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM starting June 22 – August 21. Ages: Kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Rate: \$155 per week.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Camp Rapid will be running in respect to guidelines and recommendations of the Pierce County Department of Health. Activities happening at camp will be impacted by what phase our local area is in. Off-site field trips will be on hold until phase 4.

### **Camp Rapid Summer Day Program**

White River Early Learning Center  
27515 120<sup>th</sup> Ave E  
Buckley, WA 98321  
360.829.3366  
<https://www.whiteriver.wednet.edu/>.

Chris Willis added the Orting School District's theater program is an all-inclusive program. Students participate starting in middle school from sixth grade up to seniors.

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## Social Services

### Participant Comments

Chris Willis moved to Orting almost four years ago. The first thing he noticed was the lack of basic information on social services, followed by the fact that social services are not available in Orting. Unless you can drive yourself or have family or friends able to provide transportation, getting to services is a real barrier. In contrast, when Chris worked on the I-5 corridor, service providers would contact him and want access to his students. In Orting, he is constantly reaching out to providers and encouraging their involvement.

Beth Ann, the Executive Director for the Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities (PC2), is not only concerned about school services but the wrap-around services needed throughout life.

Michael Mackillop with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) serves individuals with visual disabilities. DSB is a very small state agency and is challenged to provide services throughout the state, especially in rural communities. DSB brings their services to you. Eligible individuals can be served in their home, apartment or at a community location. Michael hopes school personnel and community members remember DSB is ready to help and is just a phone call away. The Tacoma office phone number is 253.597.4417.

Colleen, who works with Chris Willis, often hears from parents about the lack of service providers for mental health. Orting has one medical doctor, two chiropractors and one physical therapist. Many families are impoverished and don't have their own transportation. If you are in crisis and need mental health services, you need to be able to get to those services. Colleen's other concern relates to the support services students receive in school and end at graduation. In school, families and students access services they need without cost. Once outside of the school system, students need to find providers and figure out how to pay for those same services.

A meeting participant who experiences mental health issues, anxiety and developmental disabilities explained they must travel to Kent (about an hour of drive time). They are employed and need to schedule their work hours around their appointment times. Having mental health services in Orting would be great; the only other concern would be whether the providers accept their insurance.

Mark and Trudee are the parents of Hope, a nine-year old daughter with developmental disabilities. They strive to bring families with children with developmental disabilities together to share experiences and resources. Learning from parents with experience is valuable. When Hope was born, Mark and Trudee had no experience with raising a child with a disability. They had no idea of where to go and what to ask. Trudee started a support group in Orting. It has expanded to two support groups; one group meets in the morning and the other group meets in the evening.

Liz is with PAVE (Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment) and she is the Coordinator for the Pierce County Parent 2 Parent organization. Liz explained PAVE pairs parents with

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similar challenges, with one parent having a little more experience to help navigate the journey ahead. PAVE's programs can be accessed through virtual meetings, others can be arranged in local communities.

### Resources

#### **Department of Services for the Blind (Tacoma)**

949 Market Street #508

Tacoma, WA 98402

253.597.4417

<https://dsb.wa.gov/contact-us/tacoma-office>

**PAVE** is located on the Tacoma Community College campus.

6316 S 12<sup>th</sup>

Tacoma, WA 98465

253.565.2266.

**Pierce County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (PC-ACAC)** mission is to advise and assist the County and other local governments in identifying and eliminating attitudinal, programmatic, communication, and physical barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities. The Committee is actively involved in the following activities:

- Developing local initiatives to promote awareness of disability issues
- Advising the Count on access to services, new construction or renovation projects, sidewalks and other pedestrian routes of travel
- Promoting acceptance, involvement and access for persons with disabilities in the community

PC-ACAC welcomes new members and your ideas. The ACAC meets on a bi-monthly basis at the Pierce County Human Services Soundview Building located at 3602 Pacific Ave. Ste. 200 in Tacoma. For more information call 253.798.4336.

### Transportation

#### Participant Comments

A participant recommended Orting use their off-duty school buses and the small buses associated with the Soldier's Home to provide transportation to local events and help people connect to services. Work would need to be done to organize and develop cooperative agreements, find drivers and perhaps legislation to make it all possible.

Jerri Kelly with Pierce County Human Services shared she is the special needs transportation coordinator. She manages the Beyond the Borders program, which provides limited transportation services in Orting. Jerri mentioned the Peninsula School District in Gig Harbor shares their buses for local transportation services. It is a good example of how off-duty school buses can provide transportation to the public. The program is called KP Bus Connects.

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Danielle with Trillium Employment Services works with a couple of individuals who use Uber and Lyft to get to work. They have had excellent service; they arrive on time and Uber/Lyft are on time for the ride home. Both programs charge for their services.

Another transportation option is Puget Sound ESD Road to Independence which is a no-cost transportation program for low income, special needs and veterans.

A meeting participant shared her family member uses Beyond the Borders for transportation to his job. They have a weekly schedule set up. She recommends talking to staff about your transportation needs before you rule them out. The Beyond the Borders staff works with you to find transportation solutions.

Jerri mentioned Pierce Transit previously provided bus service in Orting, but it stopped in 2012. Beyond the Borders has made exceptions and avoided dropping people off the bus if they passed a Pierce Transit bus stop. For example, if the rider is ADA shuttle eligible and they need to travel 5 to 7 miles beyond the 1<sup>st</sup> Pierce Transit bus stop, Beyond the Borders will continue to provide the service. This type of service is called Boundary Expansion Project, where riders don't have to transfer once they get to the transportation border.

### Promising Practice

KP Bus Connects transports riders to Key Centre, Lake Kathryn, Purdy Park and Ride, Peninsula High School and local stops along the way. It operates three (3) days a week on a fixed route schedule. KP Bus Connects program was developed through a partnership with Puget Sound Educational Service District, The Peninsula School District, Key Peninsula Community Council and Washington State Department of Transportation. To learn more about the program call 253.798.6654 or 253.884.2877. You can also visit their website by clicking the following link <https://www.kpcouncil.org/kp-bus-connects.html>.

### Resources

**Beyond the Borders** provides free transportation to riders in east and south Pierce County that are outside the Pierce Transit service area. Two connector bus routes travel from South Hill to Spanaway and Sumner to Bonney Lake every weekday. Eligible riders include seniors 65+, youth aged 12-17, people with disabilities, or those with low incomes. To learn more about Beyond the Borders visit <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/4856/Beyond-The-Borders>. Or you can reach them by phone at 253.476.4657 or 888.600.8043.

**Puget Sound ESD Road to Independence** is a no-cost, door to door, demand response transportation program for low income, special needs and veterans. The program serves the North & East Pierce County, as well as South King County areas, offering rides to people to and from work sites and medical appointments. **Note:** Currently this service is not able to accommodate wheelchairs. Reservations are required 48 hours in advance of pick up. Program enrollment takes about 30 days to complete before service is offered. For information about services and eligibility call 253.778.7958.



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## Leadership Breakfast Exercise

The following morning, 40 people attended the Leadership Breakfast including elected officials, school personnel, service providers and leaders in the disability community. Meeting participants were asked to brainstorm solutions for the issues discussed at the Public Forum. The outreach team reviewed and identified the top three (3) issues.

Three specific questions were developed addressing the most prevalent concerns aired during the Public Forum. They were:

1. What solutions might be available in Orting to improve transportation for persons with disabilities?
2. How might the Orting community design a centralized resource and service procurement network?
3. How might the Orting community partner with local businesses and organizations to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities?

Breakfast attendees were each assigned to a group and asked to brainstorm possible solutions for 10 minutes. Comments were noted on flipcharts and each group shared their brainstorm ideas. This process was repeated 3 times so everyone had an opportunity to comment on each question. Typed versions of the brainstorming flipcharts have been included with this report.

Attendees were given six stickers to place on the brainstorm ideas using the following guidelines:

1. Which idea(s) do you feel will be the best solution?
2. Which idea(s) would you be willing to work on?
3. Which idea(s) resonates with you?

Stickers could be placed on a single idea or on several ideas.

The highest ranked brainstorm idea for each question was formed into a question. Attendees were asked to select a question they would be willing to work on or had expertise to help problem solve. Three newly formed workgroups developed action steps and identified key individuals or organizations that need to be included in the process for change.

This summary provides a narrative description of the groups' discussions and possible solutions. Also included are the attendees' personal commitment statements made during the meeting.

## Questions, Action Steps and Group Reports

### Question 1: How would you develop grants for increased transportation?

Jerri Kelly with Beyond the Borders, is very familiar with grant funding and provided a brief overview of how transportation grants work. Her program, like many others, is funded with

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state and federal grants. These grants are administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation, through their Consolidated Grant Program. To be eligible for these grants, you must be part of a coordinated transportation coalition. The other avenue for grant funding is through community grants, such as Milgard, Easter Seals, Uber, MultiCare Community Partnership Fund and the Franciscan Foundation. Another source of funding might be the Pierce County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee.

Our action step is to build partnerships between the Orting School District and the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC). Colleen Flanagan will work with the school district and community organizations to organize a meeting with the PCCTC. The meeting will focus on exploring grant opportunities and other resources to improve transportation options in Orting.

### **Question 2: How would you develop a single point of contact, perhaps housed within city government, to provide resource information?**

Chris Willis, Executive Director of Special Services and Intervention, explained everything this group wants to do is attached to money. Local resources are siloed. We have teen and senior centers, school related services and several other resource avenues. The group decided more work needs to be done to make connections between the local programs. We need to develop a community network structure along with information on how to navigate the various systems.

Chris shared he meets with several of these groups monthly and is interested in making sure all stakeholders are participating. Pierce County Parent Coalition for Developmental Disabilities (PC2) is willing to assist with developing a monthly or quarterly schedule for service providers to bring their services to Orting. This schedule could include intake opportunities, counselor check-ins and/or educational classes. The group was also excited about the possibility of getting a designated meeting space in the city offices. **Note:** Mayor Penner offered meeting space in the round 1 brainstorming session. Having a specific place to meet with some added privacy would be very beneficial and could jump start the rotating service calendar.

### **Question 3: How would you develop inclusive pathways for education, employment and replication of the Skills model with Baxter?**

Kevin Wehman with Skills Inc. explained his group developed a two-pronged approach to address the needs for establishing inclusive pathways for education and employment opportunities. Their first recommendation is to join the Facebook page “Thinkcollegewashington.” The Washington State page can also be accessed with the following internet site: <https://thinkcollege.net/>. It is a great network for news and updates for college exploration. Think College is a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disabilities. With a commitment to equity and excellence, Think College supports evidence-

## Orting, Washington Outreach Summary

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based and student-centered research. The Achieve program at Highline is a great example and serves as a national model for Think College.

On the employer side, there is an immediate opportunity between Skills Inc. and Baxter, a local manufacturing employer and a leader in designing and manufacturing quality cooking and bakery equipment worldwide. Kevin offered to connect with staff at Baxter and invite them to tour the Skills Inc. Programs. Kevin's goal is to open a discussion about replicating a successful program Skills offers at Baxter. Kevin also plans to connect with the leader of the local Chamber of Commerce, as they are a prominent player at Baxter.

With the city announcing their new supported employment position in the Public Works Department, this group thought it would be a great time to get other local employers interested in following suit. Efforts need to be made to bring more emphasis on the business to business education process to improve employment opportunities for those with disabilities.

### **Commitment Statements**

Bill George with Skills Inc. will continue to reach out to employers in Orting, such as Baxter, opening the dialogue of employing persons with disabilities.

Kristine Nelson will join the Facebook group "Thinkcollegewashington." She agrees to work with Heather Evans of Morningside to establish employment opportunities following Skills Inc. example and using the Business to Business model.

Kevin Wehman, with Skills, will reach out to Steve Rodriguez at the Baxter company to invite him to tour Skills Inc. and to share ideas on supporting disability employment. He also plans to join "Thinkcollegewashington."

Julie Pollard, with Achieve, will create and share a new process for entry into an inclusive higher education. Julie also offered to provide workshops in Orting at the Community Resource Center or at other locations.

Colleen Flanagan will assist the Orting School District to gather community stakeholders to meet with the Pierce County Community Transit Committee to explore grants and other opportunities. She also plans to meet with Jerri Kelly, Mobility Manager with Pierce County Community Connections and the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition.

Chris Willis will increase capacity of the local resource network.