



**ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

**WASHINGTON VOCATIONAL SERVICES**



# **WVS MISSION**

We are dedicated to providing outstanding quality services that result in successful community involvement and employment.

# **WVS VISION**

All people will be recognized for their abilities and contributions in the workplace and community.



**O**ur employees and Board Members worked together in incredibly challenging circumstances to manage the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the consistent challenges, our community has responded with resilience, and our work has continued to result in impactful changes and outcomes that increase inclusion for individuals living with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities have historically been underrepresented in the workforce even during strong economic times, but the pandemic exacerbated this. Two years later, many individuals with disabilities still struggle with figuring out when and how to return to the workplace. Factors may include limited opportunities to transition out of residential settings to community-based environments to reduce the risk of contracting the virus, and/or staffing or transportation shortages. Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind individuals face a deep communication gulf when masks became common, making lipreading impossible and communication harder. In addition to employees, students with disabilities were cut off from necessary in-person education services for a significant period of time. All of these factors and more have made this another turbulent year for WVS and supported employment.

In July, we made a difficult decision to terminate our employment contract in San Juan County. This decision was based on long-term staffing changes, a decrease in individuals living on the islands needing services, and other financial factors. We worked with San Juan County, state DDA, families, and other community providers to make the transition as smooth as possible. In September, a new provider began serving the county. It was an honor to serve our San Juan customers over the past 13 years, and we wish them the best of luck in the future.

We met the challenges faced in 2021 with a commitment to adapt our services and inspiration to innovate. We will continue to rise to meet our challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead and will remain a strong voice in helping businesses recognize the positive workplace culture and access to a larger talent pool when they hire and retain individuals with disabilities.

Please join us in celebrating our many achievements in 2021!

*Janet*

## Overview



\$14.27 Average

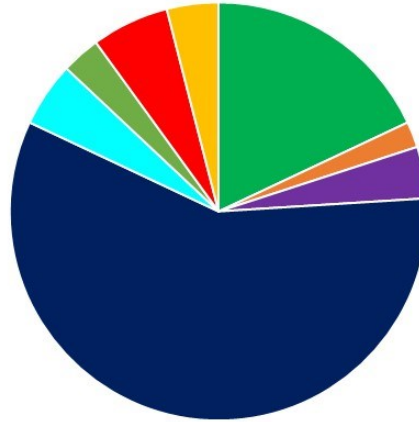


806 Served



73 Paid Placements

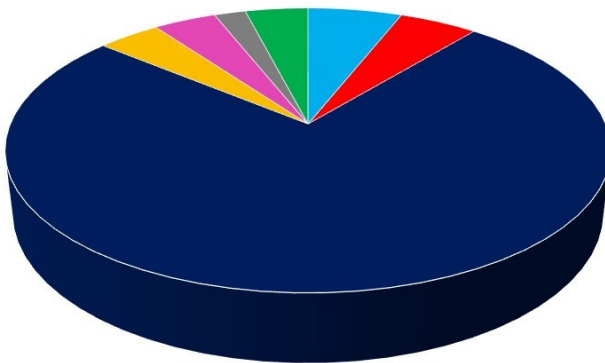
## Disability Type



- Autism 18%
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing 4%
- Learning Disability 5%
- Neurological 6%

- Blind/Low Vision 2%
- Intellectual Disability 58%
- Mental Health 3%
- Physical 4%

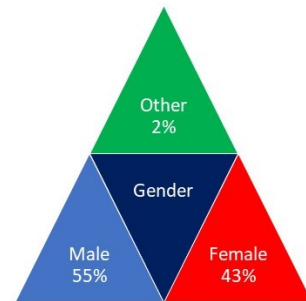
## Race/Ethnicity



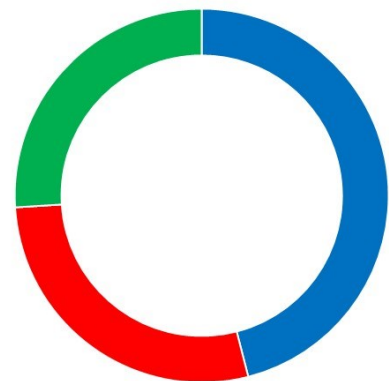
- African American/Black 6%
- Caucasian 75%
- Multiracial 4%
- Other 4%

- Asian 5%
- Hispanic/Latino 4%
- Native American 2%

## Gender



## Age Groups



- 18-30 46%
- 31-50 28%
- 50+ 26%

# OUR BOARD

**Board President** Kenn Sandell

**Board Vice-President** Ken Ericksen

**Board Treasurer** Mike Warden

**Director** Brett Peterson

**Director** Brooke Bloomquist

**Director** Marci Miller

**Director** Mark Reed

## MAIN OFFICE

111 SE Everett Mall Way Bldg. C  
Everett, WA 98208  
(425) 774-3338

## COUNTIES SERVED

Island, King, San Juan, Skagit,  
Snohomish, & Whatcom

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Janet Bruckshen

## DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Peggy Frisk

## CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Sue Lesh

WVS.ORG

# 2021 GOVERNOR'S AWARD WINNERS

## 2021 WVS EMPLOYERS AWARD WINNERS

During the 2021 Governor's Employer Awards program, two WVS employers were the recipients of awards. The theme this year was "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion." Profiled below are the Governor's Award winners, while the opposite page features the WVS Employers Award winners.



Tomlinson Linen Services was recognized by Governor Jay Inslee with the Medium Private Employer Award of the year. Tomlinson Linen has long partnered with WVS and impacted lives through their efforts. Paula Bouwer, Lead Deaf Services Employment Consultant, nominated Tomlinson Linen Services for this recognition as a result of the partnership she has maintained with the management. Several Deaf or hard of hearing customers have obtained positions with the company, where they have had the opportunity to advance in their positions and feel like valued members of the team.



King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) was the proud recipient of the Governor's Youth Employer Award. WTD partnered with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust to lead the Clean Water Ambassador teen intern program. Dan Misch and Kristin Geary of WVS nominated them for their participation in the YES II program. The support they have provided to our youth who are blind/low vision has equipped them with the necessary work skills to increase their independence and build their resumes. Dan and Kristin shared their happiness to partner with such a great organization who truly cares about helping youth transition into adulthood.

WVS applauds the efforts of both these businesses and thanks them for leading the way to inclusion!

*WVS employers are vital to our agency success, and we are so fortunate to have developed strong partnerships with many inclusive employers. Each year, our team has an opportunity to nominate an employer who really stood out during the year for their use of best practices in recruiting and retaining talent with disabilities. In 2021, we recognized 3 of the many nominated, and they were recognized during our annual holiday staff party on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Please show your appreciation by supporting these establishments and share with others too!*

Mike and Bill with Maple Leaf Cemetery didn't see any obstacles when they met Levi. They recognized Levi's motivation to work and his work ethic, not spending time worrying how an individual with complete vision loss would be an asset to their team. When Levi voiced interest in mowing the grounds with his personal push lawn mower they were willing to observe him in action and quickly saw that with some verbal cues, he was off and mowing! They have continually added new responsibilities to Levi's job description to ensure full opportunity for him, and no idea has been met with resistance. Mark Forbes, who nominated Maple Leaf Cemetery for the WVS award, notes that they have "gone above and beyond supporting Levi, always open to new ideas and supportive in all areas."



Amanda Smith, Lead Employment Consultant, nominated Lowe's because the "work culture of Lowes is kind, friendly, and employee oriented. Employee wellbeing is held high and the focus is put on ensuring employees are safe, supported, and provided with ample opportunities for growth." Best practices used by this employer includes the use of designated mentors for each new employee. This process simplified the training process for our customer Adam and his support staff. Training incentives and friendly competitions between stores help each employee develop new skills while having fun at work. Management at Lowes does not expect their employees to do tasks that they are not willing to do themselves and lead by example by working alongside their team. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to partner with an incredible employer.

Sometimes you find a great employer that you wish everyone could experience working with! This is why WVS approaches Kristi at the Evergreen Way McDonald's with quality candidates when we believe it is the best match for the individual. McDonald's currently has four WVS customers in a variety of positions within the restaurant. WVS Employment Consultant Dan Witter nominated Kristi and McDonald's, and expressed that "Time and again, Kristi has demonstrated to me remarkable understanding and compassion for individuals she employs. Since the pandemic began, Kristi and her team have supported our customers with their needs. They assured those who couldn't work that their jobs would be waiting for them when they were ready, and provided extra hours to those who were ready and eager for more."



# KING COUNTY

## *Jennifer*

**W**hen Jennifer Mossano began working at Ross, one of the largest off-price retail stores in Woodinville, she already had a long history of working for a major supermarket chain as a grocery clerk. Deciding to make a change in her career path, she wanted a job that involved her preference for home goods and clothing.

In 2018, Jennifer became employed in retail at Ross in the position of fitting room attendant. Within a short time, she mastered the requirements of her position, which included assisting customers with their clothing items, ensuring fitting rooms were kept neat, checking that merchandise was properly ticketed, and efficiently arranging clothing on racks for their return to the sales floor.

Because of Jennifer's ability to learn fast, follow instructions, her strong knowledge of the store's merchandise location, and services offered by the company, she was cross-trained to be a sales floor associate. In this position, she learned to ensure accurate pricing, apply security tags, run clothing hummers, restock shelves, and dispense merchandise in each department with her own system to efficiently maximize speed. Throughout the years, Jennifer has overcome some obstacles, approaching them with a quick wit,

and a can-do attitude. A broken wrist in a cast, injured foot in a boot, temporary essential-business pandemic shutdown, uncomfortable facial masks, and fluctuating truck deliveries affecting her schedule did not seem to diminish her productivity.

Last year, she was promoted to stock room associate where she unpacks delivered items, inspects them for damage, tags them, and prepares them

for entry into inventory. Her growing confidence, achievements in meeting her daily distribution goals, and continuous contributions to the team have been recognized by her manager and supervisors. In January, she was awarded Associate of the Month.





# DEAF AWARENESS WEEK



The Deaf Services Team spent the week spreading awareness and education to others. Throughout the week they shared daily tidbits through social media. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, they hosted a virtual Zoom presentation featuring Ms. Ravenna Fuerst Dexter, a former DSHS employee who worked as a Rehab Counselor for the Deaf for 15 years and served as a training program manager. The presentation was well received and attended by employees, employers, and WVS stakeholders.



## YES II

The 2021 YES II Program was a remarkable success despite facing unprecedented circumstances due to the coronavirus. For the safety of the students, WVS decided to facilitate a 100 percent virtual internship program. 15 blind students from across the state of Washington participated in the program from the comfort and safety of their own home. Students were provided with laptops and specific accommodations with support from DSB to allow for remote participation in their paid internships.

WVS successfully found virtual internship opportunities for all 15 students participating in the program. Students were strategically placed into opportunities based on their interests and specific skillsets. WVS staff worked with each student throughout the duration of their internship to ensure successful outcomes for all participants. Additionally, one of the students interned for the WVS King County team, assisting with a variety of administrative tasks and learning valuable Excel functions.

In addition to the paid internships, the 2021 YES II Program also saw the addition of Job Class. This was a 12-week course facilitated by WVS. Job Class met weekly for 90 minutes, with each class focusing on specific work-related topics. The topics became more advanced throughout the classes and ended with each student receiving individualized mock interviews from WVS management. This not only helped prepare students for their internships, but also gave them valuable knowledge for their future employment.

# SNOHOMISH COUNTY

*Jessica*



Jessica was referred to WVS over 15 years ago. When we first met Jessica, she was very shy, finding it difficult to respond to questions asked of her. Wanting to build experience, she began volunteering with PAWS in Lynnwood. Jessica's first competitive paid job was at the Dairy Queen in Lynnwood, which she loved. One of her tasks was to clean the rails around the perimeter of the lobby. This task she performed so thoroughly she rubbed the drywall off. This demonstrated to her supervisor the incredible effort she put into her job. Jessica gained valuable work experience for several years until moving on to a position at Fred Meyer.

For five years Jessica worked diligently at Fred Meyer, and unfortunately, when there was a change in management, she was laid off. Management at Fred Meyer soon realized Jessica was an integral part of the maintenance team and was called back to work.

Next up for Jessica was a position at Diamond Knot Brewing, where she folded boxes and emptied expired

products. She was a tremendous asset to the canners as she allowed them to keep up with the huge demand. She was laid off in March of 2020, due to COVID-19.

When Jessica felt ready to resume job development in August of 2021, WVS supported her in finding a position at PCC Market in Edmonds. Today she is a crew member of the store and loves working with her coworkers as well as getting to know their customers. After four months of full time job coaching, we began fading and today Jessica works independently with occasional support from her Employment Consultant. PCC has long been a champion of supported employment, providing natural supports for their employees. When Jessica needs support such as tying her apron or ordering new supplies, she knows who to go to. Jessica has formed many friendships, especially those who shows an appreciation for the Seattle Mariners.

It's been a pleasure to support Jessica on her employment journey over the years and we wish her many more years of successful employment at Edmonds PCC.

# WVS TURNS 45!

In 1976:

- ◆ Average monthly rent was \$220.00
- ◆ Average income per year was \$16,000.00
- ◆ NASA unveiled the first space shuttle, The Enterprise.
- ◆ Rocky was released in theatres
- ◆ Apple Computer Company was formed by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak
- ◆ Seattle Seahawks took to the field for the first time

## AND

WVS started their journey toward our vision that “All people will be recognized for their abilities and contributions in the workplace and community.”

We stand on the shoulders of many staff and board members who have moved our vision forward over the past 45 years, and we thank YOU for the contributions you are making now!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workplace are important to promote a strong company culture and critical to every measure of success. For this and other reasons, WVS invests heavily in our DEI efforts and strives to continually use our voice on the issues that matter to us.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee worked diligently on their cultural plan during the year.

Accomplishments of their combined efforts included:

- ◆ Added Juneteenth to our list of paid holidays
- ◆ Updated agency-wide cultural diversity binders
- ◆ Executive Director Janet Bruckshen graduated from the Leadership of Snohomish County Racial Equity Cohort
- ◆ Three staff members participated in the *Step Up* conference
- ◆ Updated our Cultural Competency Plan
- ◆ Published quarterly articles in our internal publication *The Connector*, to highlight a variety of important dates and build awareness
- ◆ Added a segment on DEI to our onboarding process for new hires

## RACIAL EQUITY

“

We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.

MAYA ANGELOU

SPACIOUSHOTEL.COM

# ATTIC

The 2020/2021 academic year was different than any other in ATTIC's history due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and staff and students rose to the challenge. ATTIC already had some experience with virtual learning from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in March of 2020, when they quickly pivoted to creating online curriculum for students for the last three months of the school year. After regrouping during the summer months, ATTIC began the year with virtual learning and no in-person option.

After much deliberation, the decision was made in conjunction with local school districts to begin a hybrid program of virtual and onsite learning. Because the pandemic had a disproportionate effect on students with disabilities, it was vital that WVS figure out a way to engage students in person, even if only part time. With intensive space planning, Julie Handy, Director of Transition Services, created a plan for students to be onsite one day a week and participate virtually the other two days. Students and families embraced this new schedule, and ATTIC transitioned to hybrid status in October.

ATTIC worked hard to make sure social distancing was in place for all students and staff, up to and including using closets for Zoom meetings! Families also contributed to ATTIC by helping their students with virtual technology and completing the take-home curriculum kits prepared by ATTIC staff to help our students learn in a more hands-on way. Like the rest of the country, ATTIC saw its share of humorous events. Yes, staff and students do need to wear pants every day, even remotely!

Programs like Google Classroom, Nearpod, Kahoot, and Peardeck became the new standard for students to interact in a virtual environment, from playing games to learning life skills and vocational skills based on real-world situations. Staff and students alike had to learn a new set of skills, and everyone embraced these new programs with excitement and determination.

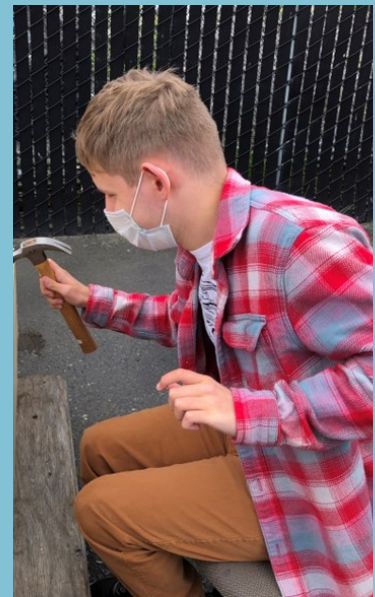
By the final quarter of the school year, it was clear that the pandemic was continuing, but ATTIC still needed to find a way for graduating students to put their vocational skills to use in the community. Community Based Learning Experiences (CBLEs) form the cornerstone of ATTIC's program.



Each school year, students go out on six-week rotations at different business and community partner locations, trying their hand at different jobs and tasks to see what they like and want to pursue as a career. Typically, ATTIC partners with more than 50 different business, non-profit, and community locations. CBLEs weren't even considered for most of the year, as safety became the number one concern for vulnerable students.

By the Spring of 2021, ATTIC was committed to finding employers willing to work with our graduating students so they could experience at least one rotation in the community. Thankfully, ATTIC has strong relationships with





ATTIC for an unprecedented fourth year of instruction to help mitigate any negative outcomes from virtual learning. ATTIC embraced the news, and instead of planning for graduation services, started planning for a new school year, in person, with a record number of students. But that's a story for next year's annual report!



many of our partners, and Safeway, Gleaners, and Walgreens all agreed to allow ATTIC students onsite for in-person training. At Walgreens, Baily sharpened his customer service skills and learned how to organize and face products on shelves. At Gleaners, Ginger worked with Kim Hildahl, Program Support Coordinator, to sort clothing items, assemble new client packets, and perform other tasks as needed. At Safeway, Juan collected carts, stocked shelves, and faced products.

At the end of the school year, ATTIC received the remarkable news that the Education Recovery Services Act would allow third year students to return to

# SKAGIT COUNTY

*Josh*



Josh Carvalho has worked at Lang's Horse and Pony Farm for almost eight years. Josh came to Lang's as a Community Based Assessment site, which then turned into paid employment. Josh was first hired for one day a week, which then increased to two days a week, and in the summer of 2021 his schedule increased to three days a week. During his three hour shifts, Josh cleans up to 20 or more stalls. He also does other farm chores such as cleaning the rabbit cages and raking up hay to make the farm look tidy and attractive for visitors. Josh's Job Coaches help him with safety around the horses, and Josh has progressed from not even noticing that a horse was in the stall with him to actually moving a horse out of his way. He even stops to pet the horses now.

Josh's employer values his contributions to Lang's and recognizes that he is a very hard worker. Lang's has even requested copies of his customized daily task lists so they can use them for training other new hires.

Josh's parents are thrilled that he works at a job he loves and is around his favorite animals several times a week. Not only does Josh enjoy the horses he works with, he also rides on a horse-themed float every summer during the Cascade Days Parade in Concrete, WA. Josh and his family and friends make the float themselves each year to celebrate. Although Cascade Days happen only during the summer, Josh has achieved his dream of working with these magnificent animals year round!

# SUMMER CAMPS

Summer Camps came back in person in 2021 with a lineup of four exciting, unique camps. WVS staff and campers carefully adhered to COVID-19 local and state regulations, and enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities. Campers participated in adaptive physical activities, crafts, community service projects, and learning projects on a variety of topics like the environment, food production, sea life, animals, and recycling. All activities were designed to help campers build on critical social skills during the summer, maintain/manage relationships, increase fine and gross motor skills where possible, be physically active, and remain engaged in their community.

The 2021 camp lineup consisted of four one-week camps: *Outdoor Fun and Games*, *In Search of the Salish Sea*, *Upcycle for Life*, and *Farm to Table*. During *Outdoor Fun and Games*, campers built backyard games, learned how to use basic tools for kit assembly, and painted and decorated their creations. During *In Search of the Salish Sea*, WVS and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve collaborated again to teach campers about sea life, the sea shore, environmental issues, learning through art projects, and cleaning up invasive plant species. During *Upcycle for Life*,

WVS paired with Christianson's Nursery to make planters, create toys for animals in the shelter/foster system, collect gently used donations for a homeless shelter, and give used materials a second life. During *Farm to Table*, campers visited the Bow Hill Blueberry Farm where they learned about growing food, harvesting and preserving methods, and then completed a service project at Edison Elementary School.

For the first time, WVS was able to hold an end-of-camp celebration, where campers from every week came together to celebrate their creations, enjoy food and games, and strengthen social bonds between attendees. The day was warm and sunny, and water games prevailed with squirt gun and other water wars. The camp celebration was extremely popular and was attended by over half the participating campers and families. Families were able to meet one another and strengthen their own support network.



*“Luka enjoyed the hands-on activities for creative crafts. He would share and show the whole family. It’s a very big deal for the family when he can share and bring things out to show independently. He enjoys sharing the creations he is proud of.”*  
-Jennifer Kuzman, parent

# ISLAND COUNTY

*Josh*

Charles, the manager of Oak Harbor Burger King, hired Josh Lanham part time as a lobby attendant at Burger King in July of 2016. Charles has known Josh for several years and lives in the same neighborhood as Josh and his family. Long before Charles hired Josh at Burger King, he had taken him under his wing to mentor him. Charles helped Josh with taking on more responsibilities. At an early age, Charles helped instill work ethics and responsibilities in him by showing Josh the importance of hard work. This helped Josh gain respect for Charles as a friend long before Josh became an employee of Burger King. Charles helped Josh understand the importance of taking on more responsibilities around the house. With Charles' encouragement, Josh added cooking, cleaning, and mowing the lawn to his list of household chores

While Josh was working at Alf's Pizza restaurant through the Oak Harbor Transition School Program, Charles recognized that Josh would be a valuable employee. Thinking of his potential and having an opportunity at his restaurant, Charles offered Josh the role of lobby attendant shortly before high school graduation. Josh quickly felt valued and appreciated because of the time Charles took to teach him new skills. Charles takes time to sit with Josh and



provides Josh one-on-one trainings to help him gain Burger King certifications, thereby opening greater responsibilities and opportunities at Burger King.

Although Burger King closed the dining area due to COVID-19, once the dining room re-opened, Charles not only brought back Josh to do his old job, but increased his hours and gave him greater responsibility to clean and sanitize the dining area. Josh is now working more hours keeping the dining area clean and sanitized following CDC guidelines which is all due to Charles taking an interest in helping Josh succeed. This is a great example of how the right job match can be a win-win for a business and an employee.



# WHATCOM COUNTY

*Evan*

In April 2021, Evan Hudek celebrated his six-year anniversary at Silfab Solar in Bellingham, Washington, a company that builds solar panels. Over the six years that Evan has worked at Silfab, he has developed a wide variety of new skills as well as great working relationships with his coworkers. Evan keeps the property looking clean and fresh by sweeping up the debris that gathers around the loading docks and picking up loose trash around the massive 48,000 square foot building. He has also seen a lot of change over the last six years and is very resourceful when his tasks need to shift with the needs of the business. His positive attitude and sense of humor have made Evan stand out as an exemplary employee, and as such he continually receives great feedback from his superiors on his yearly performance reviews. Evan works with Case Resource Manager Cheryl Dunkel from DDA, and he receives Individualized Employment services. Washington Vocational Services first began working with Evan in July 2019. Evan has been a reliable, hardworking employee of Silfab for the last six years – rain or shine. Evan is happy to do his part to make Silfab a great place to work, and they are lucky to have him in their midst.



# 2021 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

## Washington Vocational Services

<b>Total Assets</b>	\$	<b>3,011,453</b>	
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	\$	<b>587,851</b>	
<b>Total Equity</b>	\$	<b>2,423,453</b>	
<i>*unaudited 2021 Financials</i>			
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>2021 Year End</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Transition Services Revenue	\$	790,386	20.6%
Employment Services Revenue	\$	2,993,891	77.9%
Fundraising, Grants, Donations and Sponsorships**	\$	7,565	0.2%
Management Fee for Social Enterprise	\$	50,004	1.3%
<b>Total Income</b>	\$	<b>3,841,846</b>	
<b>Investment Income Net of Expenses</b>	\$	<b>11,982</b>	
<b>Other Income - PPP</b>	\$	<b>598,082</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		<b>2021 Year End</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Compensation and Benefits	\$	3,282,608	82.4%
Staff & Client Expense	\$	94,578	2.4%
Facility and Equipment	\$	390,072	9.8%
Insurance & Financial	\$	33,902	0.9%
Legal & Professional	\$	169,888	4.3%
Advertising & Marketing	\$	12,404	0.3%
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	\$	<b>3,983,452</b>	
<b>Other Expenses - Depreciation &amp; Interest</b>	\$	<b>72,514</b>	

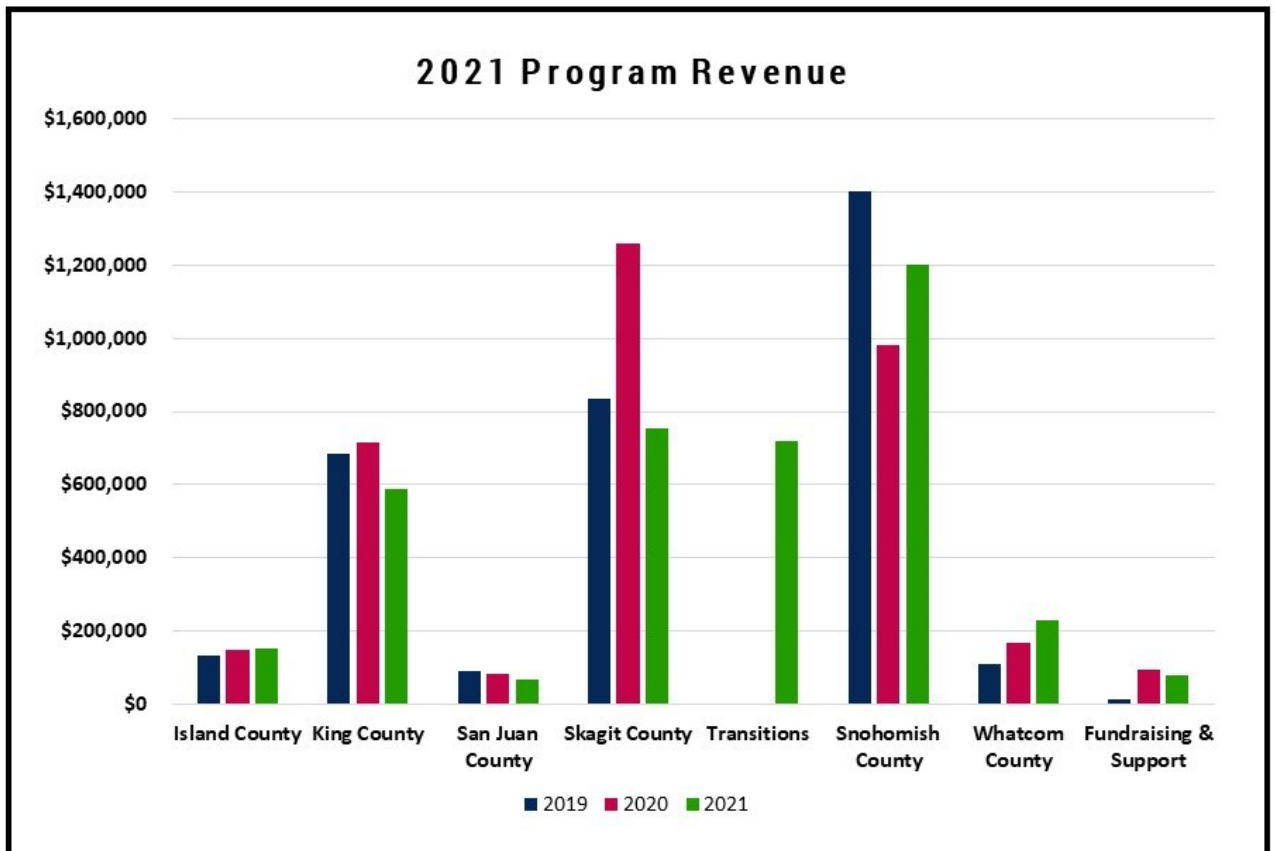
\* PPP Loan for 2020 \$701,500

\*\* Includes Grants and Fundraising- Program Specific to the Transition Program

## WVS Social Enterprise Operations Auntie Anne's Soft Pretzel Stores

*\*unaudited 2021 Financials*

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 209,362</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 75,132</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 595,244</b>
<b>Income</b>	
	<b>2021 Year End</b>
Sales Revenue	\$ 1,135,414
Other Income	\$ 15
Other Income - PPP	\$ 74,347
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,209,776</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
	<b>2021 Year End</b>
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 177,627
Staff Salaries, Taxes and Benefits	\$ 392,324
Lease and CAM Costs	\$ 178,746
Operating Costs	\$ 204,243
Management Fee to WVS	\$ 50,004
Other Expenses	\$ 7,888
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 1,010,832</b>
<b>Other Expenses - Depreciation</b>	<b>\$ 28,640</b>



\* Transitions separated from Skagit County in 2021. Transition is combined with Skagit County revenue in prior years.



**WVS.ORG**