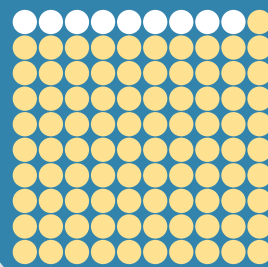


People with Disabilities



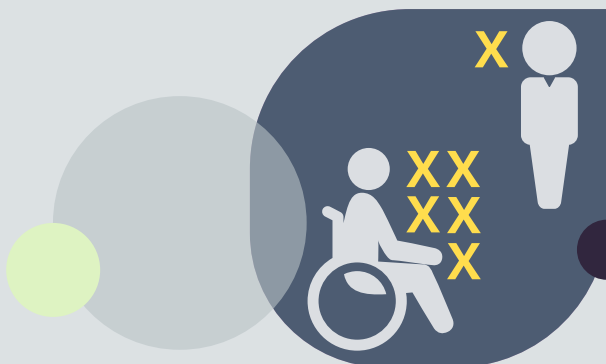
10% of adults in Bellevue have a disability.

9% of students enrolled at Bellevue School District are receiving Special Education Services.



People with a disability are **twice** as likely to live in poverty and earn a median income **one third** less than those who do not have a disability.

26% of nonfatal violent crimes in the US were against people with disabilities, even though they only account for **12%** of the population.



Adults with a disability report experiencing frequent mental distress almost **5 times** as often as adults without disabilities.

People with Disabilities

Key Findings

- Funding for services for people with all types of disabilities continues to lag behind the growth of this population. The result is that there are wait lists for many programs, including subsidized supportive housing program and family support programs. This trend is predicted to continue over the next several years due to higher life expectancy of the aging population with developmental disabilities and the increase of referrals of children with disabilities.
- Lack of affordable housing is a problem for people with disabilities as the need is growing faster than housing stock is produced. It is especially critical for people with disabilities to find housing in familiar neighborhood settings, near support systems and convenient amenities, in order to maintain their independence to whatever extent they are able.
- Early intervention services for children birth to three with disabilities reduce later costs; for children whose disabilities are identified when they are older, critical time is lost.

Brief Description

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), adopted in 1990, provides protection from discrimination for people with disabilities. The ADA defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities.” The City of Bellevue has consistently and diligently worked to make all its programs, services and facilities accessible to people with disabilities. For over 30 years the city has provided adaptive recreation programs, as well as other accommodations, and access to general recreation programs. It’s important to note that under Title II of the ADA, social services must be accessible for people with disabilities. Title III of the ADA covers public accommodations, which generally includes all places open to the public, such as offices for counseling services, legal services, translation services, doctors’ offices and shelters.¹

Ten percent of adults (18+) in Bellevue have a disability, compared to 11% in King County. Disability prevalence increases with age; in Bellevue 8% of children (under 18) reported having a disability compared to 49% for those 65 and older.² **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** Adults who identify as bisexual are significantly more likely to report disability than those who identify as heterosexual. The number of individuals with an identified disability is lowest among Asian and Hispanic residents, compared to most other racial/ethnic groups. Individuals with a disability is also disproportionately represented in those who are lower income.³

Number of Disabilities by Type, 2015-2019

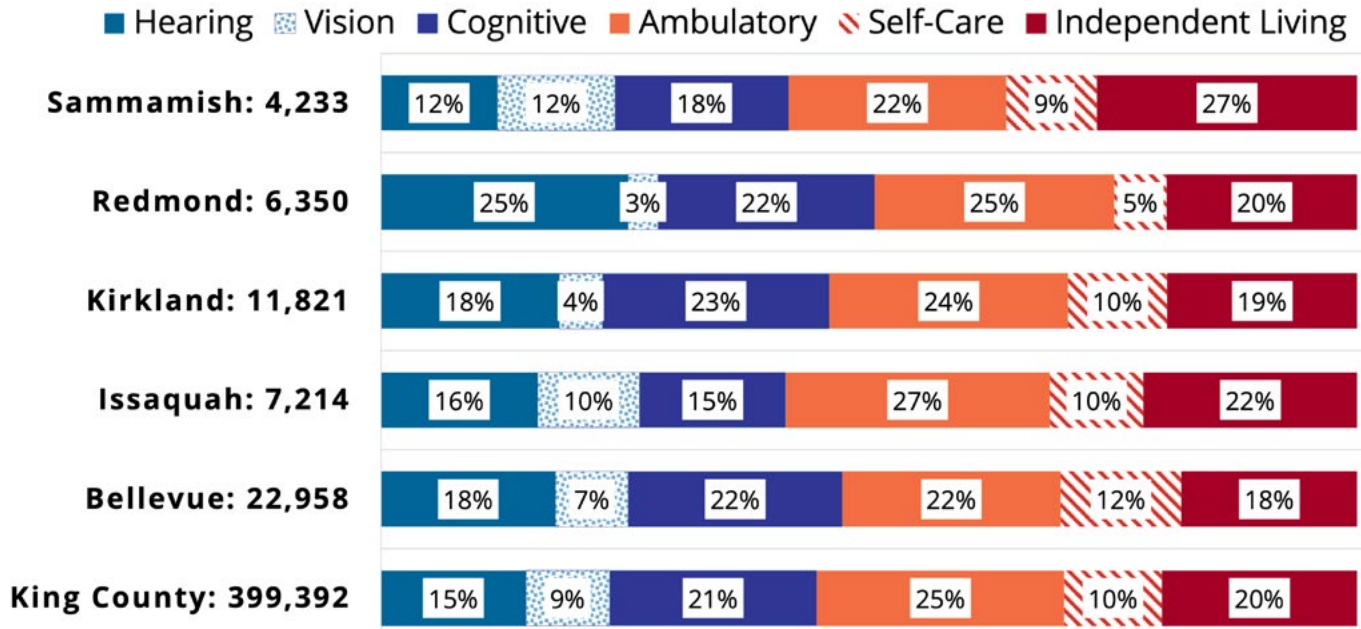


Figure 1 | Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2015-2019 American Community Survey (5-year estimates), Table S1810

As shown in Figure 1, Bellevue has 22,958 disabilities reported. Respondents can select more than one disability. Based on the Census definition, ‘Self-Care’ is defined as someone having difficulty bathing or dressing because of a disability and ‘Independent Living’ is defined as someone having difficulty doing errands alone, such as a doctor’s appointment or shopping because of a disability. This chapter only provides information about goals 1 through 5 as they relate specifically to People with Disabilities. For a broader discussion of these areas, please see their respective chapters.

- Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead
- Goal 2: Supportive Relationships
- Goal 3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence
- Goal 4: Health Care to be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible
- Goal 5: Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach their Full Potential
- Additional Topics for Consideration

Transportation

We recognize that disparate outcomes based on race exist regarding prevalence of and responses to the issues covered in this chapter. As part of the City’s ongoing efforts to continue growing as a culturally competent and racially equitable organization and city, we have, when possible, highlighted racial disparities throughout this report, denoted by the phrase **Racial (In)Equity Data Point**.

While gender is a spectrum that includes transgender people and those who identify as neither male nor female, the sources referenced in this chapter reported data by male and female and did not report data encompassing the entire gender spectrum.

Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

- An emerging theme from several community conversations was the need for very-low income and zero-income housing options for those with disabilities. Households on Social Security Income can only afford very-low income housing. Individuals waiting for SSI have very limited housing options with very long waiting lists, so individuals often end up either relying on their support system to provide housing or they become homeless.
- There is a lack of nutrition education and support for the population of people with disabilities.⁴
- People with disabilities who are not able to work are often on a fixed income, which makes it almost impossible for them to be able to afford housing unless it is subsidized or a low-income unit.⁵
- Finding affordable housing in the community is challenging for many people, especially those with disabilities who seek an independent living arrangement. With the maximum federal monthly payment of \$794/month for an eligible individual in 2021, an SSI recipient could only afford \$238/month rent (30% of income). There is not one county in the U.S. where even a modest efficiency apartment is affordable for someone receiving SSI.⁶ The Fair Market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the Seattle-Bellevue Metropolitan area is \$1,741/month, more than the entire SSI check.⁷ For individuals who rely solely on their SSI check for income, or even those working in supported employment, market rate housing is not an option.
- In King County, the number of persons with developmental disabilities living in residential habilitation centers (RHCs) and nursing homes, facilities that provide intensive nursing care and skill development for those with a disability that requires extensive support, has decreased dramatically. In 2017, there were about 943 individuals in one of these 4 facilities in the State, compared to 4,145 at their peak in 1967. The average annual cost per client living in RHCs is \$230,120 compared to \$24,322 per client annually to receive personal care services in the family's home or community residential facilities.⁸

Goal 2: Supportive Relationships

- In the 2021 phone/online survey, 26% of respondents indicated that lack of services for people with disabilities was a major or moderate problem in the community. 6% of respondents stated that not finding programs for someone with a disability was a major/moderate household problem and 6% stated that not being able to find affordable care for a person with a disability was a major/moderate problem⁹.
- Staff from Kinderling stated that during the pandemic they have seen parents struggle with getting specialized services for their children who have disabilities. When the services were offered in-person, the parents are faced with the challenge of accompanying their child to the services and finding childcare for their other children, as there are usually limits on how many people can be at an appointment.¹⁰
- Washington Division of Developmental Administration (WDDA) was serving 49,512 individuals in July 2021. In King County, they served 6,382 children and 6,621 adults. Since 2017, the DDA caseload has grown an annual average rate of 3%.¹¹ In King County, 74% of people with developmental disabilities are not served through the state Developmental Disabilities Administration. These services are reserved for those already in or near crisis

and who are at risk of institutionalization. Statewide, this leaves more than 85,000 people at increased risk of unemployment, homelessness and incarceration. It also puts their families at increased risk for financial or housing instability.¹²

- Families are still the primary caregivers for adults with developmental disabilities and are themselves aging. In the US, about 76% of individuals with developmental disabilities reside at home. In 25% of these homes, the family caregiver is over 60 years of age.¹³
- The City of Bellevue Department of Parks and Community Services provides adaptive recreation opportunities for those with disabilities as well as inclusion support to participate in general recreation. Most adaptive programs occur at the Highland Community Center and several programs are also offered at various other locations, including the Northwest Arts Center, Tennis Center, Aquatic Center and the Bellevue Youth Theater. Bellevue offers forty adaptive recreation programs. In 2019, the Highland Community Center had 250 active participants. The other recreation programs have another 86 active adaptive participants, with 45 at Bellevue Youth Theater, 25 at Northwest Arts Center, and 10 for adaptive tennis and 6 for wheelchair tennis at the Tennis Center. Due to Covid-19, the number of active participants in 2020 decreased because centers were not open for in person programs. However, Bellevue programs still had a total of 149 active adaptive participants, including 100 at Highland Center, 9 at Northwest Art Center, 37 at Bellevue Youth Theater, and 3 at the Tennis Center.¹⁴
- Bellevue's Parks and Community Services Choices Plan for People with Disabilities outlines the process for providing recreation/inclusion services for people with disabilities. There has been an increase of kids with disabilities participating in general recreation programs, primarily in summer day camps.¹⁵
- Bellevue Parks and Community Services has a Recreation Inclusion Coordinator and Inclusion Recreation Staff to assist with accommodations or modifications to reinforce successful experiences in general recreation programs. The recreation program only received small number of people requesting inclusion services, but this could be because the recreation division already serves kids with disabilities in the majority of camps offered. Staff report that children attending summer camps at Highland Center have higher needs than in previous years. As a result, a lower child to staff ratio is needed. Other adaptive recreation programs in Bellevue are offered by Special Olympics of Washington, Bridge of Promise and Outdoorsforall.¹⁶

Goal 3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence

- Disabled people are disproportionately victims of violent and other crimes in the United States and the frequency of these crimes are increasing. The data shows that from 2017-2019 disabled people accounted for 26% of nonfatal violent crimes, even though they make up only 12% of the population and are victims of violence at almost four times the rate of non-disabled people. From 2009 to 2019, the rate of violent victimization for people with a disability rose from 28.8 per 1,000 (2009) to 46.2 per 1,000 (2019). Persons with cognitive disabilities had the highest rate of violent victimization (83.3 per 1,000) among the disability types measured.
- Sexual assault is a huge concern for people with developmental disabilities. Bullying is also a growing issue for adults with developmental disabilities.¹⁷

- People with disabilities are more likely to experience victimization, be arrested, be charged with a crime, and serve longer prison sentences once convicted, than those without disabilities. Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities intersecting with other marginalized identities (i.e. individuals of color or LGBTQ individuals) are even more likely to get caught up in the system. Once entangled, they face unique challenges, bias, and inaccessible services, which only perpetuate the cycle of criminal justice involvement.¹⁸
- Children with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers.¹⁹ Students with disabilities are disproportionately affected by bullying at all ages and in all learning settings, with serious negative impacts on their education, health and well-being. Students with a disability from low socioeconomic backgrounds reported more bullying than students from other socioeconomic family backgrounds.²⁰
- Bullying Prevention & Social Skills curriculum is taught across all schools in the Bellevue School District. Younger students learn about empathy, making friends, problem solving and responding to bullying. Integrated lessons for older students include the impact of gossiping, taunting and bullying, as well as the dangers of cyber-bullying.²¹

Goal 4: Health Care to be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible

- Hero House uses a Clubhouse model to provide services for people living with mental illness and behavioral health disorders. They stated that they have seen an increase in number of community members are seeking services at the Clubhouse.²²
- Kinderling reported that in their Child Care and Preschool Consultation program, they are seeing increased stress, emotional and sensory regulation issues in young children.²³
- Bellevue's Disability Allyship Resource Team (DART) Employee Resources Group (ERG) stated that there is a need for affordable access to durable medical equipment for people with disability, because the options are limited, and it's not always covered under insurance.²⁴
- Bellevue's DART ERG members also discussed the lack of needed coverage for hearing aids. There is some coverage under Medicaid and Medicare, but they do not cover digital hearing aids which allow someone to be fully functioning. Many private insurance plans do not cover the cost, leaving the individual the burden to pay for all or most of this extremely expensive item needed to fully function in the community.²⁵
- Adults with disabilities report experiencing frequent mental distress almost 5 times as often as adults without disabilities. Frequent mental distress is associated with poor health behaviors, increased use of health services, mental disorders, chronic disease, and limitations in daily life. During the COVID-19 pandemic, isolation, disconnect, disrupted routines, and diminished health services have greatly impacted the lives and mental well-being of people with disabilities.²⁶
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reported that for many people living with disabilities, physical care is seen as the first priority. However, when a disability impacts a person's quality of life, it can affect all aspects of their well-being and daily experiences. Many people with disabilities experience traumatic stress due to the painful treatments received for their physical condition, as well as depression and anxiety from the isolation they experience. Physicians treat the physical issues, but often view any mental health

symptoms as a by-product of the physical experience. Those mental health issues can often be overlooked or dismissed in order to focus on providing physical comfort or pain relief.²⁷

- In the United States, over three million children (4.3% of the under 18 population) has a disability in 2019. Children living in poverty were more likely to have a disability (6.5%) than children living above the poverty threshold (3.8%). Yet, families in poverty tend to have fewer financial resources to care for a child with a disability.²⁸
- In 2019-2020, Kinderling provided services to 5,524 children and families. Of the early intervention graduates in 2019, 53% will not need special education at age 3 and 75% narrowed the development gap.²⁹
- Kinderling's Early Care and Education Consultation program focuses on early identification of developmental disabilities/delays and behavioral challenges by providing consultation and training to child care programs. In 2020, Kinderling provided services for 64 Bellevue residents with 645 hours of assistance.³⁰
- In 2021, 9% of students enrolled in the Bellevue School District were receiving Special Education services.³¹ However, Census data reports that only 8% of children ages 5 to 17 in Bellevue have a disability.³² It appears disabilities in children are slightly unreported in Census data.
- People with disabilities can receive medical insurance through three different programs based on eligibility. Medicaid provides free or low-cost medical benefits to people with disabilities. Medicare provides medical health insurance to people under 65 with certain disabilities and any age with end-stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant). Affordable Care Act Marketplace offers options to people who have a disability, who don't qualify for disability benefits, and need health coverage.³³

Goal 5: Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach their Full Potential

- During a community conversation, Bellevue's ADA Core Team discussed how remote learning severely impacted both children and adults with disabilities. It was a difficult transition to determine how to follow the IEP and ensure they were receiving the needed services.³⁴
- Many of the supportive employment programs have been put on hold during the pandemic. Supportive employment programs have been very successful in both supporting people with disabilities to gain employment as well as employers having valuable, talented people that fit their position.³⁵
- Many people living with a disability face employment discrimination and have difficulty accessing full-time employment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019, only 19.3% of people living with disabilities were employed. Those who are working are often only able to obtain part time and/or temporary work which does not usually include access to health care benefits. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty and earn a median income one-third less than those who do not have a disability. In Washington, the median annual earnings for people with disabilities are \$22,445, the equivalent of about \$10.75/hour for full-time employment. People with a disability earn 62% of the median earnings (\$36,217) of Washingtonians without disabilities.³⁶
- Many adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities experienced job loss at the

beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although some have begun to be rehired, it has been very slow for this population.³⁷

- The State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a service for people with disabilities to obtain and keep employment. In FY 2020, 1,571 people were successfully employed. The median income for clients at intake was \$0 and their median annual income at closure was \$17,004.³⁸ Although the wage increase is significant, it is still not a livable wage.
- Median annual earnings for people with disabilities over the age of 16 years old in Seattle is \$22,735, the equivalent of about \$10.93/hour for fulltime employment. Compared to the median earnings of \$44,827 for Seattle worker without disabilities.³⁹
- AtWork! provides supported employment and works with businesses to identify job opportunities that take advantage of an individual with disabilities' unique talents while meeting a critical business need.⁴⁰ In 2020, AtWork! provided 89 Bellevue residents with one-on-one employment sessions to support them in gaining and maintaining employment.⁴¹

“Many of our clients have disabilities that limit or prevent their ability to work.”

~ The Sophia Way, Provider's Survey

Additional Topics for Consideration

Transportation Gap

People with disabilities must have access to both public and private transportation to lead full, self-directed lives. People with disabilities lack sufficient access to reliable, accessible, and safe modes of public and private transportation. Every mode of transportation presents barriers for individuals with disabilities. These barriers prevent people with disabilities from meaningful participation in everyday activities that promote high quality community living experiences.⁴²

- During the first year of Covid-19, many of the bus and transit services were decreased, which effected people with disabilities that rely on public transportation to meet their basic needs.⁴³
- In the U.S., millions of individuals with disabilities use public transit to maintain their autonomy and participate fully in society. For many, it is their only transit option. However, even where accessible public transportation exists, adults with disabilities consider transportation options inadequate. Inadequate transportation inhibits community involvement, including successful employment. Where there is available transportation, there is often little to no training available to support individuals with disabilities to make full use of it.⁴⁴
- The demand for transportation for special needs populations, defined as older adults, people with disabilities, youth and people with low-incomes, is growing steadily. The King County Mobility Coalition (KCMC) is a collaborative group of diverse partners who have a stake in mobility management for special needs populations. The Coalition works with transit authorities, service providers, end-users, and various stakeholders to identify and address transportation equity in King County. Through its 2015-2020 action plan and beyond, the KCMC has launched a number of initiatives through specialized committees – like Access to Healthcare and Access to Work and School – to evaluate and fill gaps in transportation barriers. A project from the committee is the Inclusive Planning grant, which seeks to improve transportation for all King County community members using an inclusive

planning lens and a focus on older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. Various grants have allowed the KCMC to pursue and test solutions that further the Coalition’s goal to connect more people to transportation.⁴⁵

- King County metro provides three Accessible Service programs, Access Paratransit Program, Community Access Transit (CAT) and taxi scrip program. Metro’s Access Paratransit program serves people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route buses, helping them lead more independent lives. In 2020, Access provided 455,391 one-way trips. CAT is a partnership between Metro and human services agencies where Metro provides funds and free loaner vans to agencies to assist in providing van services for their clients that would otherwise use Access. In 2020, CAT provided 258,818 one-way trips. Metro’s taxi scrip program provides half-price taxi service for eligible riders. In 2020, the taxi scrip program provided 86,460 one-way trips.⁴⁶

“The transportation system is not great, and it requires many of our elderly and disabled clients walk a good distance to get to public transportation.”

~ Provider’s Survey

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