

Melissa DEL RIO, Employment Consultant, Northwest Center

Melissa DEL RIO, an Employment Consultant who works within one of the school-to-work transition teams in the Employment Services Department. She joined Northwest Center in January 2020. Melissa has more than six years of experience working with children and adults with disabilities and in disability advocacy. She loves watching her clients grow and make strides towards their goals and is also passionate about inclusion for minoritized groups and people with disabilities. She serves on the Equity Committee Team at Northwest Center.

Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, Melissa studied theology and sociology at Seattle Pacific University. She co-founded SPU's first ever disability awareness club and helped coordinate its first event, "What is Normal?" to help redefine the word "normal." Melissa has a tremendous passion for working in disability and inclusion advocacy due to her network connections, previous work experiences, and personal life experiences as someone with multiple disabilities. She is also a spoken word artist for intersectional systemic justice who has performed in person and virtually and at SPU events. She recently professionally published her first spoken-word piece, "Accessibility," which speaks on the intersections of race and disability.

Melissa enjoys photography, sign dancing, music, writing, and exploring parks in the Pacific Northwest. She plans to publish a poetry book somewhere down the road.