

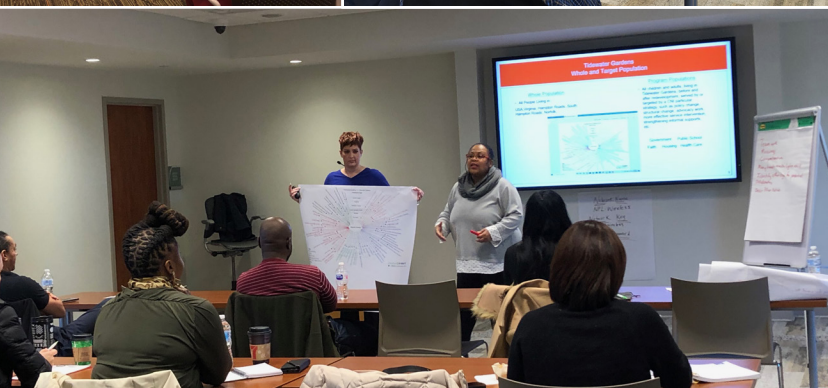
TIDEWATER GARDENS

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

IMPACT REPORT

YEAR 1

**JULY 2019 -
JUNE 2020**



PEOPLE  FIRST

 | EMPOWERED BY
URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.

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www.stpaulsdistrict.org



447 Walke Street, Norfolk, VA 23510



(757) 390-4625

PEOPLE FIRST EMPOWERED BY USI

Esther Shin, President

Donovan Duncan,
Executive Vice President

Kristie Stutler, Regional
Vice President

Tyronda Minter, Vice
President, Educational
Initiatives

Julian Wyatt, Associate
Project Manager

Nicole Todd, Senior
Project Manager

Vickie Madison, Assistant
Project Manager

Kashira Wilson, Assistant
Project Manager

Carmen Mckinnon,
Section 3 Coordinator/
Workforce Specialist

Alison Flowers,
Workforce Specialist

Dana Watson, Education
Specialist

Nicole Brown, Lead
Mobility Specialist

Charleen Thompson, Family
Support/Mobility Specialist

Alton Howard, Family
Support/Mobility Specialist

Michael Jones, Family
Support/Mobility Specialist

Lashanda Riddick, Family
Support/Mobility Specialist

Marquitta White,
Outreach Worker

Danisha Williams,
Outreach Worker

Stacey Bynum,
Administrative Assistant

CITY OF NORFOLK

Dr. Susan Perry, Director,
City Manager's Office of St.
Paul's Transformation

Dr. Zubin Adrianvala,
Senior Project Manager,
People First Initiative

Marcia McGill, Senior Project
Manager, Development

Katie White, Management
Analyst, City Manager's Office
of St. Paul's Transformation

NRHA

Steve Morales,
Project Director

Donna Mills, Chief
Housing Officer

Kimberly Thomas, Housing
Programs Director



CITY of NORFOLK

Office of the Mayor



DEAR SUPPORTERS, COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS:

On behalf of the City of Norfolk and the residents of the St. Paul's area, we are excited to support the People First Empowered by USI Initiative as we work to ensure better opportunities for everyone. Our commitment to the success of this project can be found in our leveraged support of resources and our participation in the recent Choice Neighborhood Initiative award which provides federal funding with local programming and community planning for a safe, supported and thriving St. Paul community.

The City has made openness and community engagement essential components of our success thus far. Norfolk has proactively reached out to residents, stakeholders, and the community at large encouraging a dynamic level of communication. We have created a table of community leaders to lead, guide and inform the implementation process through the St. Paul's Advisory Committee.

This Council illustrated its support for the residents of the St. Paul's communities through the annual appropriation of \$3.5 million, funded through a tax increase, for St. Paul's efforts. \$3 million of this is being invested into the People First initiative to provide improved education, employment and training opportunities to residents through a comprehensive family coaching system.

We welcome further opportunities to collaborate, coordinate leaders, and fully support the People First Empowered by USI initiative through aligned strategies. Together we can further support the shift for lasting equitable results for low-income and communities of color through education, economics, and health and wellness.

Continued best,

Kenneth Cooper Alexander, Ph.D. Mayor

DEAR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, RESIDENTS, COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS:



The journey to transform the St. Paul's area of Norfolk has been decades in planning, but we are now fully engaged in this transformation effort. People First has been our guiding principle, and I am pleased to support this report of the efforts of People First, Empowered by USI in preparing residents for the changes to come.

In the summer of 2019 the City of Norfolk entered into a contractual agreement with Urban Strategies, Inc., to provide comprehensive services to residents living in the three public housing communities of St. Paul's -Tidewater Gardens, Calvert Square and Young Terrace. The People First, Empowered by USI Initiative is responsible for assisting residents in the areas of housing, relocation, education, job training and health and wellness options. People First, Empowered by USI, began its work in earnest in the Tidewater Gardens community after the City and Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority received a \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Grant to transform the community into a vibrant and engaging neighborhood for all to enjoy.

While we are pleased with the work so far, the journey is not over. As the Councilwoman representing the residents of St. Paul's, and as Chair of the St. Paul's area Advisory Committee, I am committed to doing all we can to ensure that our residents have the greatest opportunities for a bright and productive future. I am proud of the financial commitment from the City of Norfolk to support this work, and of the dedicated City, NRHA and People First staff who work hard every day to bring this vision to reality.

Thank you for your support of our continuing efforts to create equitable, sustainable, livable and impactful communities that welcome people from all walks of life.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angelia M. Williams".

**Angelia Williams Graves Councilwoman, Super Ward 7
Chair, St. Paul's area Advisory Committee**

**USI | URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.***Families at the Center of Results***DEAR FRIENDS OF USI,**

In the history of our organizations' existence, never have we faced such unprecedented challenges. Both nationally and globally, we are currently facing a pandemic health crisis and widespread social unrest in response to the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and others at the hands of law enforcement. The increasingly visible occurrences of racism and the disproportion of COVID-related hardships has burdened the most vulnerable in our nation.

For Norfolk and the residents of the St. Paul's region, these challenges are compounded with years of disinvestment in a community that represents a rich history and that which is on the precipice of significant change.

Though the obstacles are great, especially for the residents of Tidewater Gardens, it is the USI mission and obligation to our communities to continue with our important equity work to ensure that families are stable and thriving.

Together, with our partners, we stand boldly to promote investment and commitment to the people in the Tidewater Gardens Neighborhood to ensure that individuals and families are safe, supported, and able to thrive. We reject institutional racism and antiquated systematic practices that have historically marginalized entire generations of people of color.

We're proud to present this report to the Norfolk community to celebrate the partnerships and crucial collaboration that we believe is required to lift up and equalize Virginians.

Your partner,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Esther Shin', written in a cursive style.

Esther Shin, President & CEO

Urban Strategies, Inc.

PEOPLE FIRST, EMPOWERED BY USI **RESULTS STATEMENTS**

**People First Project:**

All St. Paul's residents will be safe, supported, and thriving.

**Education:**

All children and youth in Tidewater Gardens are ready for school, thrive in and out of school, graduate from high school, and are prepared for college, career, and life.

**Economic Mobility:**

All households in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are economically independent.

**Health and Wellness:**

All children and adults living in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are mentally and physically healthy.

This inaugural report shares stories of families, strategic partners, and initial progress in our holistic effort to help Tidewater Gardens residents achieve their housing, education, economic mobility, and health and wellness goals.

As we enter our second year, we will build upon the progress we have made by creating a foundation built on trust and community engagement. We will continue to work with the City of Norfolk, NRHA, and all other stakeholders to ensure all Tidewater Gardens residents are **SAFE, SUPPORTED, AND THRIVING.**

ABOUT US

The City of Norfolk made a commitment, as plans were being developed to revitalize the St. Paul's Area, to put "people first." An authentic commitment to this strategy requires ongoing engagement and the willingness to listen. Listening in this context is not passive. Instead, it is an active process that includes the following values: 1) empathy, 2) accurately recording feedback, and 3) careful review and compilation of that feedback to ensure that the vision of the families at the center of this transformation strategically informs a community transformation plan that truly represents their needs.

Capturing a representative account of resident voices through over 50 public meetings and 1000s of staff hours engaging residents, provided the City with a direct opportunity to truly understand what the residents of Tidewater Gardens, Calvert Square, and Young Terrace believed would be essential to their success through this large-scale community transformation effort. Residents shared an expressed interest in having individualized support through the redevelopment process that supported their housing choice decisions, quality educational options, and access to employment resources. The initial housing phase began in 2019 with the families of Tidewater Gardens.

Reflecting their commitment, the City of Norfolk allocated **\$3.5 million annually** to provide high quality, comprehensive services to support families throughout the transformation process. These supportive services include health,

education, and economic mobility and a focus on enhancing life outcomes for residents every step of the way. The City's unprecedented investment was substantially enhanced in 2019 when, as a co-grantee with Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), they were awarded a \$30 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) program for the transformation of Tidewater Gardens. The City of Norfolk and NRHA conducted a rigorous national search to ensure that the agency selected to lead the supportive service's initiative had a demonstrated history of driving results **with** people living in communities undergoing change. A demonstrated leader in this field,

Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI) was selected to lead this purposefully woven family support initiative. With USI onboard, the merger of the City's vision with USI's mission became People First Empowered by USI (People First^{USI}).

With over 40 years of experience in community transformation, USI's core belief that residents best know their community and their needs guides our partnership work. Following the selection process, in July of 2019, People First^{USI} staff, all of whom were hired locally, immediately began engaging with the families of Tidewater Gardens, both collectively and individually. The growing team began working to develop relationships of trust with residents and identified pathways through family stabilization efforts that produced positive outcomes that led to stability and their ability to thrive. Collaboratively, the People First^{USI} team worked to ensure the residents

Of the 609 households,

76%

or 465 households, were enrolled in the People First, empowered by USI supports by the end of the first year.

of Tidewater Gardens are empowered to use their voices to advocate for improved access to resources needed to make personal decisions about their housing, employment, healthcare, and educational needs. The team is committed to developing real success-oriented opportunities for all 609 households from the Tidewater Gardens community. Proudly, the team acknowledges that the first year of People First^{USI} strategies have connected staff to residents and built trust-based relationships with the vast majority of the Tidewater Gardens' households.

During the initial year of service, People First^{USI} worked diligently, not only to build trust, but to implement a strategic results-driven framework and develop a strong Service Provider Network. The Service Provider Network aligns community resources and partners in each key Service Pillar (housing, education, health and wellness, and economic mobility) creating access to services to address the needs of Tidewater Gardens families. In year one, the People First^{USI} team led more than 50 partner organizations to examine neighborhood data, utilize that data to develop targeted strategies, and developed clear results statements for each Service Pillar. These results statements have been established as the north star for our collective work and shared accountability in driving equitable results for the families of Tidewater Gardens. Critical to success in year one and moving into year two, People First^{USI} partners include stakeholders from the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Redevelopment Housing Authority (NRHA), the Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee, Tidewater Gardens residents, and a robust Service Provider Network.

The results contained in this report demonstrate what is possible when dedicated partners work in high action and high alignment toward the common goal of transforming lives. Further, they reflect that People First Empowered by USI holds at its very core, the authentic commitment made by the City of Norfolk in 2018; People First.





STRATEGIC IMPACT: HOUSING STABILITY

To support stability, People First^{USI} connected Tidewater Gardens residents to quality housing based on their individual and family needs. Families were informed and assisted with their housing choice selection process which included using a *Housing Choice Voucher* or moving to another public housing community. The People First^{USI} staff assisted residents in locating new housing options, applying for and securing that desired home, working with the landlord and property manager on creating processes and support that would ensure success, and developing an early warning system to assist in a crisis, if necessary. Housing Stability is a core principle of this work and staving evictions is a top priority of the People First^{USI} team. In the initial year, the People First^{USI} team worked with NRHA to support 52 housing stability interventions. By building trust and moving families toward stability, the People First^{USI} team increased the opportunity for families who desired to return to the redeveloped site to remain eligible while supporting their overall goals.

Along with ensuring families remain housed, the People First^{USI} team also provided relocation assistance to 114 families during the first year. This process truly focused on the needs and desires of each family and respected their ability to create a housing plan. Of the 114 families who received relocation support in this first year, 71% were approved to relocate to new homes. The other 29% chose to transfer to another public housing community or awaiting

results of pending HCV applications. Of the 60 families who relocated with a Housing Choice Voucher, 39% selected a "Neighborhood of Opportunity"(NOO) while 53% chose a neighborhood of their first choice, based on personal reasons such as proximity to employment, proximity to support system, or because they simply liked the home and were given the option. In total 92% of families, selected the neighborhood of either their first choice or a HUD defined NOO - the first of many steps in the creation of lives that are safe, supported and thriving.

RELOCATION

114 Assisted Relocations in Year 1

RELOCATION COMPLETED

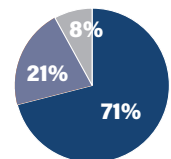
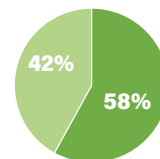
RELOCATION PENDING

Relocation Choices

RELOCATING WITH HCV

TRANSFERRING LIPH

PENDING HCV APPLICATION



Neighborhoods of Opportunity (HUD standards): 39%

- <40% poverty, <62% minority

Neighborhood of 1st choice: 53%

- Employment
- Proximity to support system
- Accessible transportation in walking distance
- Liked the House

Neighborhood of 2nd Choice: 8%

- Credit Issues, unsatisfactory rental history

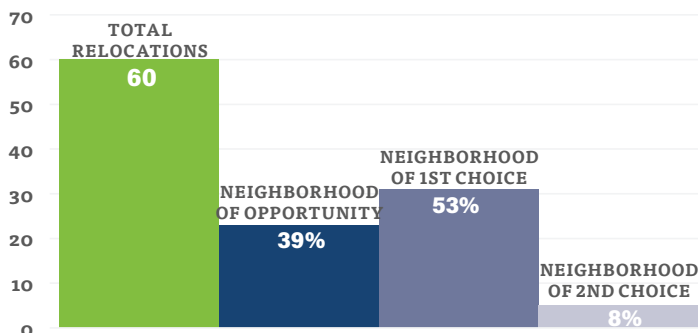
*Overall relocation breakdown (source: NRHA Dashboard 6/30/20)

- Neighborhoods of Opportunity: 30%
- Neighborhoods with <40% poverty: 69%
- Neighborhoods with <20% poverty: 36%

The majority of the 114 families assisted with relocation in the first year have selected a Neighborhood of their Choice, rather than a Neighborhood of Opportunity. Their selections were based action items included employment opportunities, proximity to support systems, and proximity to accessible transportation. * = includes relocation that occurred before People First^{USI} initiative.

NEIGHBORHOODS OF OPPORTUNITY & CHOICE

60 Relocations with HCV



COVID-19 IMPACT

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

~James Baldwin, late poet and activist

The families living in Tidewater Gardens of the greater Norfolk community have struggled to survive a gross consequence of inequities imposed by injustices resulting from systemic racism. Compounding that reality, as painfully witnessed on the national stage, are the damaging effects of COVID-19 on people of color, whose communities have long lacked the resources needed to access critical supports. Indeed, these systemic inequities that persistently disrupt the ability for families of color, specifically, to thrive are present within systems of health care, education, housing, and beyond. People First^{USI} is committed to intentional efforts that advocate for all people. In these times, we continue to convene our community partners to find solutions that create a more equitable society and work to put the voices of Tidewater Gardens families at the forefront of these discussions.

The impact of COVID-19 on Tidewater Gardens residents included the increase in food insecurity, loss of income, lack of access to virtual connectivity, limited access to prescription medications, and accessible healthcare services. The People First^{USI} staff provided ongoing support to mitigate these impacts, through immediate and safe contact, in accordance with health professional guidelines. A critical segment of our work during this time has been working with community partners to coordinate access to services that provide support and sustainability. At the start of the pandemic, we pivoted to conduct daily assessments (COVID-19 surveys) that allowed staff to understand needs in real time, wellness checks and identify resources and strategies that ensure families were safely housed and stable. These assessments allowed the team to provide immediate support focused on resident needs resulting from the pandemic.

During this COVID-19 period, People First^{USI} resourced solutions for and linkages to numerous emergency services that included supports like: 1) PPEs, 2) baby formula, 3)

toilet paper, 4) cleaning supplies, 5) a myriad of food pantry goods, 6) government benefits such as childcare, 7) health insurance, 8) phone/internet provider access and bill mitigation, 9) rental and utility assistance, and 10) helping solve other barriers such as not having required work-related tools for new employment opportunities, and not being able to afford the required adult education expenses necessary to increase skills that support advancing employment. Collectively, these supports focused on resources needed to mitigate or overcome obstacles for basic survival, for those most vulnerable to the broadly reaching negative social impacts of COVID-19.

People First^{USI} also provided solutions for the emerging issue of internet access. As a result of shutdowns and social distancing protocols, the need to function through virtual platforms quickly accelerated. Virtual access had risen as one of the greatest challenges faced by families with school aged children. Connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is an essential need which benefits entire families. People First^{USI} connected families to programs that aided with past due balances and access to low-cost internet service options. Through a partnership with Norfolk Public Schools, People First^{USI} worked to ensure families with school age children secured the equipment necessary to move to a virtual learning environment. As a result, for the 61% percent of Tidewater Gardens households who completed a COVID-19 survey in year one, residents who reported having internet access increased by about 8% from April to June. In addition, within the same surveyed population, the percent of families with access to an internet enabled computer or tablet increased by 14% between March to May. People First^{USI} continued to conduct outreach to households to ensure all families in Tidewater Gardens have the equipment and access needed for this new virtual reality.

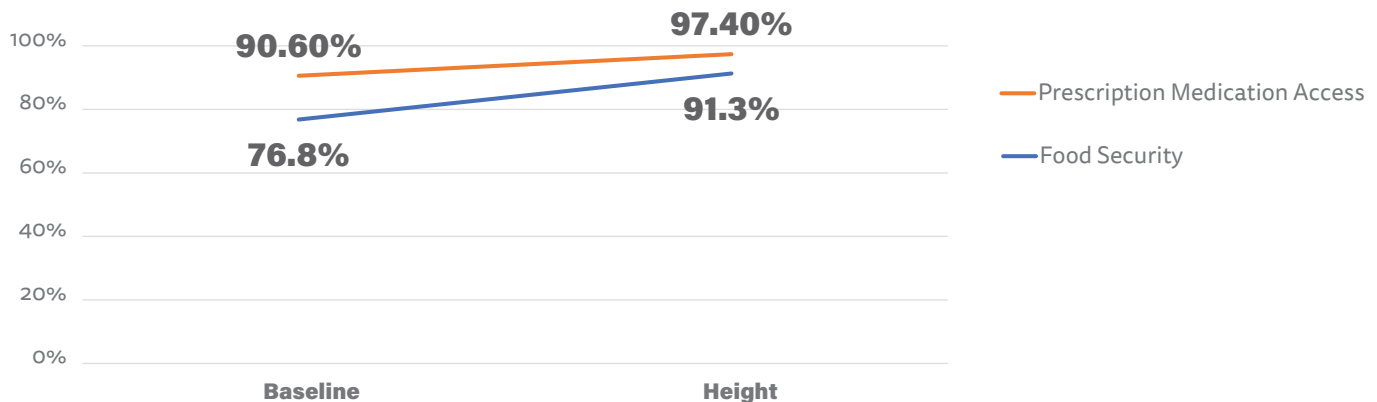
COVID-19 has not only further exposed the digital disparity, but also the food insecurity issues that exist in underserved

communities. The People First^{USI} COVID-19 survey results indicated a dramatic increase in food security for the 61% of residents surveyed in year one: in March, 76.8% of surveyed residents reported being “food secure.” Due in part to the assistance and partnerships of People First^{USI}, by June this shifted to 91%. Through our partnership with the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, which provides food to those experiencing food insecurity, over 4,093 meals were delivered to Tidewater Gardens families in the second quarter of 2020.

Relatively, the partnership with the United Way of South Hampton Roads produced a direct donation to establish the Family Need Fund, a donation of \$12,500, established

a 1:1-dollar match for People First^{USI} funds. This resource supported families with hard to fund barriers such as rent, utilities and other stabilizing efforts. From March to June, People First^{USI} utilized approximately \$7,288 from the Family Need Fund to assist 18 residents with needs such as utility deposits, rectifying utility balances, and rental assistance contributing to housing stability for those households. The trust built between People First^{USI} and Tidewater Gardens families assisted both in navigating these unprecedented times. People First^{USI} was able to support resident’s capacity to manage the momentum in maintaining stability throughout the process of transforming their lives and the lives of their families.

COVID-19 Response: Health



From April–June 2020 **4,093 meals** delivered to Tidewater Gardens families in partnership with the Foodbank

This data represents the 61% of the Tidewater Gardens residents who completed a COVID-19 survey in year one. People First^{USI} will continue to conduct outreach to support the remaining 39% of households in need of COVID-19 support.



STRATEGIC PILLAR: EDUCATION

PeopleFirst^{USI} provided the support and service connections Tidewater Gardens children needed to be prepared for college, career, and life. In 2019, the established Service Provider Network included the Norfolk Public School system and other education organizations; establishing processes to help track and accelerate children's educational outcomes; and, identifying a network of resources for families.

Aligned with our holistic approach to coach and connect families, the People First^{USI} team worked with partners to address the learner's life stages holistically as well: from cradle to career, and beyond. At the start of our work, the team immediately connected families with infants to high-quality early learning, family support programs, and provided parents and caregivers access to resources that stabilized and strengthened their relationship with their pre-school child. Our target was to have 24% of families with pre-school children participating in a center-based or formal home learning program by year's end. The team has enrolled beyond its target with 68% of families actively participating, which is 2.8 times the year one target.

As the inaugural year concluded, the People First^{USI} team made great strides to complete accurate individual and family level assessments. From these assessments, we were able to identify and address the educational needs of 836 children and their families. In year two, we will continue to strengthen our educational partnerships and programs in pursuit of equitable education strategies and outcomes that support infants' readiness to learn, elementary, and middle school students' proficiency in core subjects including math and reading, overall attendance, and the high school graduation rate of Tidewater Gardens students.

Early Learning Strategies

1. Create access to high quality early learning and family support programs/pre-school.
2. Provide access to resources that stabilize and strengthen relationships between parent/caregiver and child.
3. Link families to opportunities that expose children/parents to early literacy opportunities.
4. Provide early identification and intervention for developmental delays in early learners.

Education Strategies

1. Provide access to professionally supported one-to-one relationships between adults/youth.
2. Partner with parents to improve attendance at all school levels.
3. Bolster family/parent engagement in their child's school life.
4. Provide access to high quality out-of-school academic programs.
5. Build partnerships to ameliorate transportation barriers at all education levels.
6. Partner with systems to advance restorative approaches to reduce suspensions.
7. Connect youth to opportunities to develop career paths and goals by providing college and career exposure opportunities.
8. Create opportunities for youth to develop strong social/emotional competencies and improved health.

Results Statement: All children and youth in Tidewater Gardens are ready for school, thrive in and out of school, graduate from high school, and are prepared for college, career and life.

Year 1 Results

	Implementation Baseline 2018 323 Families Assessed	Year 1 Target	Actual
Number & Percent of resident children 0-3 participating in center based or formal home learning programs	38%	67 / 24%	68%

At year end, 68 percent are participating, which is almost three times the projection.



UNITED WAY OF SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS

INTERVIEW WITH DR. JARRETT N. BRUNNY

Supported through collaborative strategies, we endeavor to ensure positive educational outcomes for all children and youth in St. Paul's as one of the guiding stars for our work in Norfolk.

To this end, the People First^{USI} initiative sought to align itself with partners who contribute to the successful outcomes of the following: 1) students being ready for school; 2) thriving in and out of school; 3) graduating from high school; and, 4) being prepared for college, career and life. The United Way of South Hampton committed to mobilizing their United for Children partners as part of the People First^{USI} initiative.

"The challenge is too big and complex to attack alone, so United for Children aligns people and resources around the success of local children to change," explained the United for Children Program Director, Dr. Jarrett N. Brunny. The United Way of South Hampton Roads serves the St. Paul's area, the region's highest concentration of low-income families, and includes the three communities targeted by the St. Paul's Transformation, including Tidewater Gardens. This multi-faceted initiative creates new opportunities for children to succeed while providing hope to the families and helping to open doors for

more than 20,000 children living in or at risk of extreme poverty.

United for Children brings together community partners, including People First^{USI}, to provide resources and opportunities for these children and families. "We are committed to who these children are and who they will become as future leaders," said Brunny, "collectively, we are focused on driving results from cradle to career."

As a United for Children partner, People First^{USI} helps identify the individualized needs of children and their families and sources solutions that help close the achievement gap for low-income students. "The team has built trust with the community. They understand the community's assets and gaps, as well as each family's goals and baseline needs," Brunny said.

As partners, the staff are able to alert United for Children to interventions that directly address housing and health and wellness issues, but also impact educational goals. One featured program, the student and

family needs fund, satisfies basic needs for eyeglasses, clothes, and healthy food. "The program can remove a child's barriers to school attendance and optimize learning, Brunny explained. "For example, through the student and family needs fund program, a five-year-old boy received his first bed. We learned through his People First^{USI} staff that he'd never had a bed. Imagine the impact that has on his sense of worth, on his sleep, and subsequently his ability to be fully present in class based on this wraparound support. Working together in common sense ways, we can help break the cycle of generational poverty," Brunny said.

The People First^{USI} team recognize this complex opportunity and have embraced the strength of intentional collaborative work with community partners as a key practice to coordinating and delivering positive outcomes in the communities we collectively serve.

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: DEKETIA MORRIS



Deketia Morris' desire to live in a safe community with great educational options for her three girls is what motivates this nurse assistant.

She works 12-hour days to ensure her family has the essentials. Among her primary concerns when working with the People First^{USI} team was finding good schools for her children. Partnering meant the team took their time to understand Ms. Morris' desire to relocate to a neighborhood with accredited schools. She wanted to ensure that her children had social and educational resources they not only needed to survive but were pivotal for them to thrive. The People First^{USI} team committed to ensuring that all children in Tidewater Gardens were able to thrive educationally, and Ms. Morris' children were no different.

Ms. Morris initially recalls being nervous about the Tidewater Gardens transformation plan. Still, she decided to attend the community meeting held by People First^{USI}, to learn more about the process and how it could benefit her family. She credits

the staff for assisting her in making her dream a reality. Ms. Morris, a lifelong Tidewater Gardens resident, commented that while she had never heard of the neighborhood she selected, she is satisfied because it is now where she calls home. Ms. Morris is one of the 39% of Tidewater Gardens' families who People First^{USI} assisted in year 1 in relocating to a Neighborhood of Opportunity.

With the support of a People First^{USI} family support specialist who listened, Ms. Morris along with her three children are now living in a neighborhood where the poverty rate is less than 40% and her children are attending schools that are fully accredited. This distinction is important because their previous schools were only conditionally accredited. The value of this new neighborhood is that it meets Ms. Morris' specified needs and

contributes to the overall well-being of her family by providing a safe environment with low crime and quality housing.

In addition to helping her relocate to a neighborhood of opportunity, Ms. Morris' family support staff, Kashira, ensured she knew of and participated in other benefits listed in her individualized plan, including financial management training and credit repair services. Over time, participation in classes that provide guidance on managing financial resources empowers participants like Ms. Morris to make sound financial decisions and to manage finances effectively through budgeting, saving, borrowing, and investing. People First^{USI} also assisted Ms. Morris by connecting her to resources to ensure her daughters could continue their education virtually once COVID-19 occurred.

Ms. Morris offers the following advice to other residents currently going through the transformation process, "It is okay to be nervous, but it is better to move forward in life. People First, is here to help you move ahead and have something better."

"It is okay to be nervous, but it is better to move forward in life. People First, is here to help you move ahead and have something better."

– Resident DeKetia Morris



STRATEGIC PILLAR: HEALTH & WELLNESS

The People First^{USI} strategy to prioritize health outcomes is based on the understanding that health is central to one's overall well-being and significantly contributes to human happiness. However, communities of color are disproportionately prey to systemic challenges which subsequently impact health. For instance, social isolation in the form of concentrating people of color into communities where there are few immediately available and easily accessible resources contributes to poor health outcomes. This is especially true where the reality of layered negative factors such as poverty, environmental pollutants, infectious agents, and other adverse conditions are common conditions in communities of color.

People First^{USI} utilizes a trauma responsive approach which follows the research of Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D., the founder and medical director of the Trauma Center in Brookline. Van Der Kolk asserts that in order to create healing for individuals who have been caught in static feelings of frozen or panicked self of trauma, those feelings must be replaced with sensations rooted in safety, mastery, and connection. As such, People First^{USI} Family Support Specialists continue to prioritize connecting each household strategically to some form of ongoing group, network, or activity to increase those opportunities that can hold each individual in wellness as a foundation for improving all other outcome areas.

In year one, assessed individuals who report being in excellent health increased from a baseline of 27 percent to 46 percent, exceeding the established target of 35%.

Additionally, the percentage of residents who have health insurance more than quadrupled, from 22 percent to 89 percent. Focused and steadfast attention from Family Support Specialists who assessed then subsequently coordinated and linked residents to the appropriate resources is how the team disrupted these negative outcome trends.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented additional health and wellness challenges. The team's rapport with Tidewater Gardens identified individuals having problems accessing prescription medication, food, and other necessities, and required assistance. During the pandemic, 61% of households with whom People First^{USI} conducted a COVID-19 survey, showed an increased percentage of individuals who could secure a two-week supply of prescription medications from a baseline of 90.6 percent to 97.4 percent by June 2020.

Health & Wellness Strategies

1. Improve health outcomes through prevention and wellness programming
2. Increase the number of residents accessing quality physical, dental, and mental healthcare
3. Reduce barriers that prevent health equity
4. Create a pathway to wellness for aging out young adults and seniors
5. Create pathways to increase ongoing participation in opportunities that reinforce safety, mastery, and connection

Results Statement: All children and adults living in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are mentally and physically healthy.

Year 1 Results

	Implementation Baseline 2018 323 Families Assessed	Year 1 Target	Actual
Percent of individuals reporting being in excellent health	27%	35%	46%
Number and Percent of individuals with a Chronic Health Condition	108/30%	No target established	389 / 48%
Number and Percent of residents who have health Insurance	22%	247 / 43%	347 / 89%



THE FOODBANK OF SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA AND THE EASTERN SHORE

INTERVIEW WITH DR. RUTH JONES NICHOLS PRESIDENT AND CEO

Simply stated, our aligned efforts ensured Tidewater Garden families did not go hungry and gained the collateral benefits from being properly nourished. By supporting these basic needs, families are able to manage their stability as the community navigates through these uncertain times.

As a partner in the implementation of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore has committed to addressing food insecurity within Tidewater Gardens. This treasured institution, established in 1981, has supported the community by providing nutritious food items, in part, exemplified by the distribution of almost 15 million meals in the last year through a myriad of programs.

“We view People First Empowered by USI, as an additional thread in the safety net for those we serve. They share our vision of helping individuals realize their full potential and achieve self-sufficiency,” said Dr. Ruth Jones Nichols, president, and CEO of the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore. “What is unique about People First, Empowered by USI, is its ability to offer holistic family support, and its

systematic approach to identifying individuals’ and families’ various needs,” Dr. Jones Nichols added. “Our goal has been to leverage their core competencies to implement a holistic approach to meet the needs of those we collectively serve.”

The foodbank reports that in its service area, pre-COVID-19 pandemic, one out of every five Black/African American individuals lived in a food-insecure household, and 90,000 children qualified for free and reduced-price meals. Unfortunately, food insecurity in the community was worsened by COVID-19. This glaring statistic, in conjunction with the closing of the only grocery store serving the St. Paul’s community within two miles, made the connection to healthy food an immediate priority. This stark reality was discovered through the People First^{USI} team’s weekly COVID-19 surveys and these identified needs were addressed in real-time while

supporting life-saving strategies. As a result of this strategic response, the 76.8 percent of surveyed residents who reported being food secure in 2020, increased to 91 percent by the end of June. For greater clarity, families with children were now forced to critically rethink food choices due to the pandemic. The provisions of breakfast and lunch became an immediate requirement for parents where they were provided during the week, by schools pre-pandemic.

“As a strategic partner, People First, Empowered by USI, is not only committed to feeding the hungry, but to addressing systemic issues that have created the circumstances for people to live in a place where they don’t have consistent access to healthy nutritious food. Together we address some of the root causes that lead to individuals not having access to resources they need to improve their quality of life,” Dr. Jones Nichols said.

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: MARY SMITH



Tidewater Gardens resident, Mary Smith is already beginning to experience positive outcomes with her health and wellness since connecting with People First^{USI}.

Working with the staff to learn of emotional supports that would improve her mental health was a priority, she explained. Identifying coping techniques, seeking advice from trusted staff, medication, and the power in thinking calmly before responding has been a huge shift in how Ms. Smith manages these days.

Ms. Smith states she can now manage her anger and credits her Family Support Specialist, Mr. Mike, and the organization's mental health service partner agency for helping her get her life back on track. "My battles with controlling my anger have often led to me making poor choices. Mr. Mike has helped me to think before I act,"

Ms. Smith said bravely. In addition to advising her on coping techniques, Mr. Mike also helped Ms. Smith connect to a service provider who ensured that she had access to needed medication and the wellness support she needed to maintain her progress. As a parent, Ms. Smith's mental health not only contributes to her own life decisions but also the decisions she makes for her children.

Ms. Smith proactive, participatory approach to addressing her mental health is important because her ability to thrive is significantly challenged when burdened by the harmful impacts of stress and trauma. Not being able to affirmatively

support one's regular basic needs compounds the enormous stress of poverty that too often is manifested in ways that substantially inhibit one's ability to thrive, including anger and depression. Our efforts are focused, in part, on disrupting these factors at the individual level so that we better enable our families to thrive.

Ms. Smith has since advanced plans with her Family Support staff to achieve other goals, including her family's relocation plan and securing new employment. As a result, she is currently working, and her plan to relocate with her two sons to a safe and opportunistic neighborhood is in progress.

"I have achieved the goals I set for myself. I am excited to have this opportunity and happy I can share this with my sons! People First is a great organization; they give you the 'extra push' and support you need to reach your goals," she said.

"My battles with controlling my anger have often led to me making poor choices. Mr. Mike has helped me to think before I act."

– Resident Mary Smith



STRATEGIC PILLAR: ECONOMIC MOBILITY

A key result of People First^{USI} is to ensure that all households in Tidewater Gardens, before and after the transformation plan, are economically secure. At the end of year one, the average annual wage of Tidewater Gardens' residents was \$18,005. This represents an increase of over 51% with a more than \$6,000 positive change compared to the community's median household income of \$11,900 noted from Census Tract 48; used as baseline from the previous year. Of those residents who obtained employment, the average number of hours worked per week is 30.5 and the average annual earned amount is \$15,506. While this is a substantial increase, the team is working diligently to advance our families along an economic pathway that leads to an economically thriving community earning at a rate consistent with local and regional living wage standards. In Norfolk, the livable wage hourly rate for a single parent with one child is \$27.34, and for Virginia it is \$28.04. Through intentional partnerships like "Norfolk Works," a citywide workforce development initiative, the People First^{USI} mobility strategy will greatly impact the local economy with an influx of skilled and resilient employees, neighborhood driven economic improvements, and self-sufficiency measures centered on individual and community success.

From August 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, the People First^{USI} team has assisted 68 residents in securing employment in various industries including sales, healthcare and food services, personal care, office and administrative support,

building and grounds maintenance, and material moving. The team also provided support in connecting employed residents to additional trainings and educational supports that further encouraged sustainable employment. Ultimately, People First^{USI} endeavored to support each participant entering its collaborative employment pipeline with a sustainable career opportunity that provided growth towards a livable wage. To achieve this, the team provided individualized employment placement strategies that connected participants with jobs that were attractive to them and in doing so, promoted employment longevity.

Economic Mobility Strategies

1. Connect able-bodied working adults 18—64 to a coordinated pathway of economic mobility
2. Raise educational attainment levels of adults
3. Maximize Section 3 and local hiring
4. Increase access to financial empowerment skills and improve individual capacity to secure financial assets
5. Reduce barriers that prevent economic mobility and equitable access to wealth accumulation

Results Statement: All households in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are economically independent.

Year 1 Results

	Implementation Baseline 2018 323 Families Assessed	Year 1 Target	Actual
Percent of residents between 18-64 with wage income	47%	75%	75%
Average Annual income of households	\$11,900 (Median for Census Tract)	\$16,020	\$18,005

NORFOLK DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL PARIS

SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, NORFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION DEPARTMENT

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts” is not only a concept believed by Mr. Michael Paris, the Senior Business Development Manager responsible for administering “Norfolk Works” but it is coupled with the organizations’ mission which is to strengthen people, business collaborations, and the community by improving the economic outcomes for employers and their employees.

People First^{USI} is an active participant in providing support to residents through increased access to financial empowerment, raised educational attainment levels, and maximized Section 3 and local hiring practices.

Mr. Paris has witnessed the alignment of organizations and strategies of 15 community partners who collaborated to advance workforce development programs and processes that are centered on the success of the whole community. To accomplish its goal, Norfolk Works includes the Norfolk Workforce Investment Network (WIN) — a system of local, regional, and state service providers working to bring the full capability of the workforce system, to meet the needs of job seekers and businesses, alike. The program is designed to align economic and workforce development efforts; champion the recruitment of diverse Norfolk talent to support business attraction, retention, and expansion; and, collaborate with workforce partners to help Norfolk citizens prepare for and connect to in-demand employment opportunities.

Mr. Paris, who oversees WIN, relies on People First^{USI}, as the community partner who can connect with workforce talent residing in the St. Paul’s area of Norfolk, and can ensure this community is represented and actively participating in emerging training and employment opportunities. “Our partnership with People First, Empowered by USI, enables us to be inclusive, and include communities and their residents who historically have not participated in economic opportunities. We recognize there is an excellent and diverse talent across our region, and

that it’s a mistake to overlook underrepresented talent. People First, Empowered by USI, provides that access to a community historically disadvantaged for economic growth,” Mr. Paris stated.

“People First is a great collaborator and talent partner. They’ve added a lot of value by connecting with talent in the St. Paul’s community, helping us build new training pipelines and platforms for the unique talent they bring in while establishing a clear path to employment and careers for the constituents they serve,” Mr. Paris said. “For current and future employers, it’s one thing to know a city or region has 5,000 people available to work, it’s another to know they can connect with that talent. The results of our workforce initiative have let employers know that our region has a variety of talent pools, and they can trust they will have access to that talent,” he explained.

68

Tidewater Gardens residents gained employment from 8/1/2019–6/30/2020 through our workforce development efforts.

On average, these employees work 31 hours a week, and secured jobs in various industries including sales, healthcare and food services, personal care, office and administrative support, building and grounds maintenance, and material moving.

66

Families Relocated

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: CHERRIE BRYANT

Ms. Cherrie Bryant is a marine electrician and divorced single mother of five. Her family is her priority.

Ms. Bryant's infectious spirit is rooted in the positivity of what is possible if you dare to dream. When she saw the Tidewater Gardens Transformation plan as an opportunity to dream big for herself and her family, she took a chance on her dreams. Ms. Bryant attended a People First^{USI} meeting to learn about her relocation options and decided that the Housing Choice Voucher program would provide her family with the opportunity to do better and ensure access to good schools and a safe environment. Ms. Bryant wasn't alone. She, along with 114 other households in Tidewater Gardens, chose to receive ongoing assistance with relocation by partnering with the People First^{USI} team.

Ms. Bryant credits Ms. Kashira and Ms. Nicole, her Family Support Specialists, as instrumental in helping her find the right home for her family. Initially, she decided to find Housing Choice Voucher housing on her own but was not successful. She then decided to see how the People First^{USI} team could assist. By partnering with the staff, Ms. Bryant was able to find the perfect home for her family because she guided her process and the Family Support team found options that met her criteria. "The staff took the time to learn about me and my personality, ultimately finding out what would work best for me; they put me first," said Ms. Bryant.

The Bryant family relocated to the Old Dominion University area where her children now attend academically high performing schools. This is significant because of the intersectional benefits that positively impact the entire family. Specifically, benefits of moving to a better opportunity neighborhood improved educational outcomes, employment, and income. Additionally, Ms. Bryant and others who move to neighborhoods like those near ODU are met with access to high performing schools and greater access to resources, including significantly better overall health and mental wellness.

Ms. Bryant shared feeling safer, and not worrying about her children going outside. She also appreciated her college-aged neighbors making a positive impression on her children. The most significant change she has noticed in her children since relocating to the new opportunity area is "that their minds are more open to what is possible, to dream and explore", said Ms. Bryant. Her deep appreciation for Ms. Kashira's ongoing support and "always being just a phone call away" supported the Bryant family with this big leap.

Ms. Bryant is also taking advantage of other benefits in her personal transformation plan and is utilizing the financial management and credit repair assistance program with

hopes of purchasing a home. During the COVID-19 crisis, Ms. Bryant was unable to work but Ms. Kashira and the People First^{USI} staff made sure Ms. Bryant and her children had food, cleaning supplies, and critical resources to be secure and stable during the pandemic. People First^{USI} proudly notes that Ms. Bryant is gainfully employed again, through the assistance received from her Family Support team and the Service Partner Network.

"The staff took the time to learn about me and my personality, ultimately finding out what would work best for me; they put me first."

– Resident Cherrie Bryant

YEAR ONE SUMMARY

People First, Empowered by USI, are investing in people to ensure all Tidewater Gardens families will be safe, supported and thriving.

The Tidewater Gardens public housing community within the St. Paul's area is undergoing a multi-year revitalization plan, a priority identified by the City of Norfolk. This initiative envisions a transformation process driven by residents of Tidewater Gardens. This collaborative process would require all families dream and take advantage of resources and opportunities in moving their dreams into reality. This enormous service requires respect, transparency, honesty, equity, and grace from all parties to ensure the most impacted can control and guide their pathways toward stability.

Since the City of Norfolk recognized the need to put *People First* in order to genuinely help families meet their goals and have access to the services needed to thrive, it committed to an authentic strategy that prioritized the voices of the Tidewater Gardens' families. This was achieved through an authentic commitment of actively engaging and listening to community members who would be the heart of the proposed transformation. The City of Norfolk began an active process of empathic listening, coordinated through public meetings, to carefully collect and review feedback used for strategically aligning community voices to create a plan that truly represents their needs.

Last year, Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI) was retained to provide effective and high-quality transformative human services that included relocation. The City of Norfolk and USI's shared vision and mission became known as People First Empowered by USI. People First^{USI} established its presence in the St. Paul's community in July 2019 and began to build trust, understanding the community's baseline needs, and increased engagement using a results-based framework to strengthen family support and to drive equitable results. The People First^{USI} team also began building partner networks capable of yielding high action and high alignment services. While planning and executing strategies to universally impact the community's health and wellness, economic mobility and education, the team also focused on assessing, intervening and assisting the 609 households and 1,605 individuals who reside in the Tidewater Gardens community. Although the transformation and relocation timeline will stretch over

several years, the People First^{USI} team was able to enroll 76% of Tidewater Gardens' households in family support services in year one.

Mid-year, the team pivoted to identify and manage residents' needs for assistance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the height of the crisis, People First^{USI} assisted residents with securing unemployment benefits, utility and past due rent support, supplementary food benefits (SNAP), and access to the internet and medical prescriptions to encourage stability through these challenging times.

Through one-on-one assistance and community partnerships, Tidewater Gardens families have begun receiving the specific assistance each family and individual needs. Below are highlighted results from year one:

- People First^{USI} provided 114 families with relocation assistance. Staff developed a collaborative protocol with NRHA that allowed early intervention and proactively assisted families in addressing barriers which limited the number of evictions to 14.
- Of the 60 households that People First^{USI} assisted with relocation utilizing a Housing Choice Voucher, 92% relocated to either a Neighborhood of Opportunity (39%) or to their Neighborhood of 1st Choice (53%). Families who opted to move to a Neighborhood of Choice vs. Opportunity identified employment, proximity to support systems, and accessibility transportation as driving their relocation decision.
- Increased the percentage of work-able residents who have wage income from baseline of 47% to hit our target of 75%.
- Documented a 27% increase in the living wage paid to residents who gained employment during the first year.
- Surveys indicated average household incomes rising by more than \$6,000. This is a 51% increase from the initial assessment of \$11,900 (the recorded baseline taken from the 2019 Census Tract 48) to \$18,005. This exceeds the established target of increasing annual wages to \$16,020.

- Doubled the percentage of individuals assessed who reported being in excellent health, increasing from 27% to 46%. Additionally, the percentage of residents who have health insurance increased from 22% to 89%.
- Surpassed the year one goal of 41% of residents reporting that they have a place where they can go regularly (other than an emergency room) when sick. This is more than twice as many residents, who previously reported having a medical home.
- Nearly tripled the percentage of families with pre-school children who are actively participating in center-based or formal home learning programs. The established year one target was 24%, the achieved participating percentage at the end of year one, was 68%.

Looking Ahead – Year Two

In year two, People First Empowered by USI will continue to execute specific strategies for the strategic areas as of emphasis - education, housing, economic mobility and health and wellness. People First^{USI} commits to helping individuals and families achieve their goals in these areas by connecting them to opportunities, resources, and programs personalized for their success.

Monitoring and facilitating our partner families' housing needs will remain a priority as the number of families needing to relocate will increase due to active neighborhood construction plans. In year two, the ability to mitigate a variety of related risks like fees and fines which create obstacles for families to successfully meet goals will remain a focal point in this process. Obstacles such as: 1) gaining, or reestablishing a driver's license, 2) paying for skill-building course materials, 3) purchasing work attire, and 4) costs for educational enrollment, and 5) testing fees for certifications will be supported by intentional strategies to support individuals and the greater Tidewater Gardens community. Understanding that many residents will be challenged with the process of relocating, along with remaining stably housed after relocation will take specific supports. Though these are common barriers that threaten to and often disrupt the ability to move forward, the People First^{USI} team is committed to safety and stability of each and every household.

In year two, the approach will continue to rely on growing and strengthening community partnerships, and prioritizing the creation of family and individual development plans for families remaining within the community, those that have relocated, as well as those who wish to reconnect with our services. Additionally, the People First^{USI} team will advance the solutions and resources residents can rely on to achieve the goals mapped out in their custom development plans. Specific year two actions by pillar include:

- **Economic Mobility:** support more work-able residents through the completion of workforce development programs; enroll residents in financial empowerment programs; and, co-create workforce training and employment opportunities with more employment and economic development partners.
- **Education:** Promote two-generation literacy programs, where parents participate in learning with their children; make routine student home visits by qualified health and literacy providers; and, expand the number of education partners resulting in increased education-based programming available to the community, designed to support all-age students with becoming and remaining educationally proficient and on track to graduate high school.
- **Health and Wellness:** Support the increase of residents who participate in annual preventive health screenings and connect them to the appropriate health service(s) for their individualized health care needs; continue to address chronic health conditions and connect individuals to the specialized medical care they need; reduce stress levels of individuals by connecting them to programs and resources that build safety in their surroundings, mastery in their relationships, and connection to the world and its available opportunities.
- **Housing:** Continue to support families in moving to Neighborhoods of Opportunity and/or Choice and ensuring that 100% of Tidewater Garden's families remain stably housed.

NORFOLK DATA SNAPSHOT

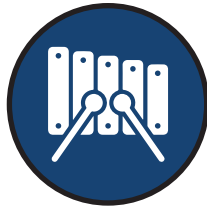
During the past year, People First^{USI} has made strides toward our collective success in these five strategic goal areas:



People First^{USI}
Family Support
and wrap-around
services



Job skills and
employment



Early childhood
development



Youth development



Financial education
and asset building



Individuals placed
in jobs



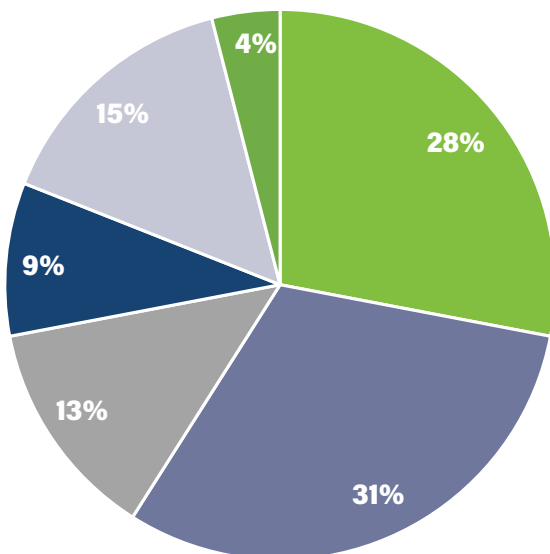
Individuals started
a business or
micro-enterprise



Children enrolled in
early education and
childcare programs



Caregivers and
parents engaged
in early childhood
development and
parenting education



984 TOTAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- Live in safe stable housing
- Housing and Neighborhood of Choice
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Successful in Education and Workforce Prep.
- Work for Fair Wage
- Children and Youth Education

During the onset of COVID-19, from March 18 – June 30, 494 total Development Plans were implemented with 40% being for Safe and Stable Housing/Securing Basic Needs.



The creation of this Service Partner Network took place over several months to ensure the St. Paul's community at Tidewater Gardens had access to a diverse, able, and ready network of support.