

# TIDEWATER GARDENS

## NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

### IMPACT REPORT

YEAR 2

JULY 2020-  
JUNE 2021



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[www.norfolk.gov/4827/People-First](http://www.norfolk.gov/4827/People-First)



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**DEAR FRIENDS AND RESIDENTS,**

The courage, patience, and understanding that everyone has displayed this year is by all means commendable and speaks to our resilience as a city. People First continued its great work as the City, NRHA, and Urban Strategies Inc. (USI), staff continued to deliver outstanding service and helping residents of the Tidewater Gardens community navigate the impact of the pandemic while transitioning to new homes and addressing health and employment.



Norfolk City Council remains committed to the annual appropriation of \$3 million to support the work of People First. As of June 30, 2021, more than 570 families have received individual plans to guide them along the road towards success. We have come a long way, and we have more work to do – but we can recognize our success thus far. This includes significant improvements in average annual income, connecting children to early childhood programs, and increasing healthcare enrollments. Inside

this report you will find details of the work that has been accomplished.

We continue to be grateful for the work of the members of the St. Paul's Advisory Committee. This group of dedicated residents and leaders of non-profits and community organizations have been providing critical guidance to the City, NRHA, and USI staff in implementing the transformation effort. We greatly appreciate Councilpersons Paul Riddick and Danica Royster for their unwavering leadership of this group of committed individuals.

Thank you for taking the time to continue share your thoughts and working together to create quality housing, neighborhoods of choice, and healthy, inclusive communities.

Best,

Kenneth Cooper Alexander, Ph.D.

Mayor





## DEAR RESIDENTS, COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS:

People First is the guiding principal in the transformation efforts of the St. Paul's area of Norfolk, and that principal took on even more significance as we continued efforts during the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. I am pleased to support this report of the continued successful work of People First, Empowered by USI, which serves as the catalyst of empowering change for residents impacted by this transformation.

In March, 2020, our everyday lives changed dramatically as the pandemic forced us to stay at home, stay socially distant, wash our hands and wear masks to prevent contracting the deadly corona virus. It was a difficult time for us all, but especially for our residents who were already struggling with poverty, unemployment, healthcare disparities and crime. The services of People First, Empowered by USI, served as a much needed safety net for our most vulnerable residents.

People First staff were able to pivot, put safety protocols in place and never miss a beat in assisting our residents with housing, relocation, education, job training and health and wellness services. We are pleased to announce that close to 57% of residents from the Tidewater Gardens community have been successfully relocated to housing of their choice, and 94% of Tidewater Gardens residents have received an initial assessment and are working with counselors to determine the right services they need for success. More importantly, employment levels have risen from 47% to 77%, annual income increased by more than \$6,000 a year. Percent of residents with health insurance rose from 22% to 89%.

As councilmember and co-chair of the St. Paul's area Advisory Committee, I continue my dedication and commitment to the residents of St. Paul's and the citizens of Norfolk to always put People First in all decisions made during this transformation. I applaud the hard work, tenacity and vision by the staffs of People First, NRHA and the City of Norfolk who are focused everyday on making this transformation project a huge success.

And I thank each of you for your insight, suggestions, encouragement and oversight as we continue on this journey to provide equitable, sustainable and livable communities in Norfolk where everyone is welcome.

Yours in Service,

Danica Royster

Councilwoman, Super Ward 7

Co-Chair, St. Paul's area Advisory Committee



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

### **DEAR FRIENDS OF PEOPLE FIRST EMPOWERED BY USI,**

While much of the country is bracing for the unknown connected to the eviction moratorium and public health pandemic, it is clear that stability and the spirit of community is essential to moving us forward after a very trying two years. That stability and spirit can be found in Tidewater Gardens, from the daily successes of our neighbors to the collaboration of our committed partners, and throughout the landscape of positive change occurring throughout the St. Paul's area.

As Tidewater Gardens residents, community partners, and neighboring stakeholders managed the lingering obstacles the global health pandemic has had on vulnerable communities, what I am certain about is the banding together of the community during these unprecedented times. This is noted as the People First empowered by USI team members dug deep to ensure every resident had the best options and services available as they chose the next steps of their journey. Though the obstacles may vary, residents of Tidewater Gardens have proven their voices will not be silenced and their successes will be celebrated, and it is the USI mission and obligation to our communities to continue with our important equity work to ensure that all families are stable and thriving.

Together, with our partners, we stand boldly to promote equity and transparency to the community of the Tidewater Gardens to ensure that individuals and families are safe, supported, and able to thrive. We welcome innovation, creativity, and collaboration to upend the harmful systems that have marginalized communities of color for far too long.

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, mobilize, and propel Virginians to their greatest destiny.

Your partner,

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.

## **YEAR TWO**

Though this year continued to be plagued by challenges brought on by continued racial injustice across the nation and the COVID-19 pandemic, it was also a year filled with innovation, success, and new beginnings for Tidewater Gardens residents.

We're thrilled to share this impact report which depicts these successes through the stories of families, strategic partners, and progress. Our holistic approach supports families in achieving their goals in each of our key service pillars:

- Housing Stability
- Education
- Economic Mobility
- Health & Wellness

The achieved results are a testament to the impact People First Empowered by USI was able to achieve in Year Two through our aligned partnerships with the families of Tidewater Gardens, the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), and our committed service provider network.

We continue to strengthen our partnerships and remain committed to our shared result of ensuring that all Tidewater Gardens residents are **SAFE, SUPPORTED, AND THRIVING.**

## ABOUT PEOPLE FIRST<sup>USI</sup>

The City of Norfolk selected Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI) as a partner to support and prioritize family needs and housing choices during the transformation of Tidewater Gardens. With the City's vision and USI's high-quality, comprehensive support for families, People First Empowered by USI (People First<sup>USI</sup>) was born.

The name "People First" is a reflection of an authentic commitment to serve the residents of Tidewater Gardens and our collective willingness to listen, support, and partner to ensure families are stable and thriving and that people are always at the center of our work.

In partnership with the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), the Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee, Tidewater Gardens residents, and a robust network of service providers, People First<sup>USI</sup> team members connect families to supportive services, community resources, and opportunities in each of our identified key service pillars: Housing, Education, Health and Wellness, and Economic Mobility.

**In Year Two of the partnership, People First<sup>USI</sup> was able to increase engagement among the original 618 households from the Tidewater Gardens community, going from 76% of families engaged in family support services in Year One to a powerful 94% in Year Two.**

Engagement with families is ongoing. It begins with an intake, continues through resident assessments, facilitating service connections, and working with each household to develop Individual Development Plan (IDPs) and Family Development Plan (FDPs), including those to address needs related to COVID-19. The team is committed to continuing to develop results-oriented outcomes for all.





# COVID-19 RESPONSE

When the fears of widespread COVID-19 infections shut down local economies and communities, it was quickly apparent that the devastating impacts of this global pandemic would be felt the hardest among people of color in communities that have suffered from generations of injustices resulting from systematic racism.

The families living in Tidewater Gardens in Norfolk know this struggle all too well. It became imperative that People First<sup>USI</sup> act quickly to strengthen partnerships and rally teams to support our most vulnerable and create solutions that encourage a more equitable society. Today, more than a year and a half later, we are still working to support individuals and families in Tidewater Gardens that have experienced massive disruptions to their lives, jobs, and livelihoods.



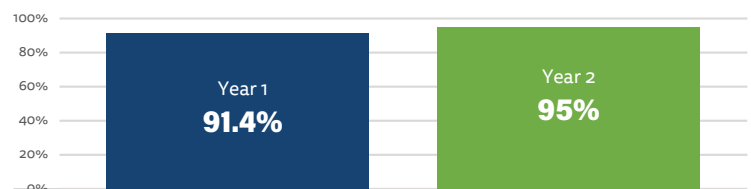
## COVID Outreach Efforts

- Performed daily, safety assessments to understand the need
- Conducted wellness checks and referrals for emergency services
- Deployed resources and supplies, including PPE, baby formula, food, etc.
- Addressed widespread food insecurities among residents
- Worked with families and partners to ensure they had accessible healthcare services and supply of prescribed medications
- Distributed resources, information, and assisted with applications for rent and utility assistance
- Addressed lack of access to digital resources
- Helped distribute technology to school-age children for virtual learning, in partnership with Norfolk Public Schools
- Expanded access to health partners for mental health and chronic health conditions
- Targeted outreach for vaccination clinics

The trust built between People First<sup>USI</sup> and Tidewater Gardens families was a key component in helping families navigate unprecedented times and stability.

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

## INCREASE IN FOOD SECURITY FOR TIDEWATER GARDENS RESIDENTS







## STRATEGIC IMPACT: HEALTH & WELLNESS

COVID-19 brought front and center the health inequities that run deep in communities of color. The experience of trauma and exposure to toxic stress comes not only from childhood adversities but also from discrimination and racism that are often unnamed, undiagnosed, and untreated. Our staff works through these issues every day with our families.

People First<sup>USI</sup> utilizes a trauma-responsive approach to addressing health and wellness that 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. For this reason, People First<sup>USI</sup> placed a focus this year on engaging a variety of new health partners who could deliver services that respond to the needs of the community, including Kaleidoscope Counseling, Prime Plus, Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, and Peoples Pharmacy.

People First<sup>USI</sup> Family Support Specialists continue to prioritize connecting each household to comprehensive health services, mental health services, and other support programs to improve holistic health outcomes.

### 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

## HOLISTIC WELLNESS



**Health Year 2 Goal: Maintaining high rates of Health Insurance and Connection to Medical Home while increasing the % accessing services to manage chronic health conditions**

	Implementation Baseline 2018 323 Families Assessed	Year 1	Year 2
<b>Number and Percent of residents who have a place where they go regularly other than an emergency room</b>	200 / 33%	206 / 83%	404 / 81%
<b>Number and Percent of individuals connected with services to manage Chronic Health Condition</b>	No Data Available	159 / 48%	197 / 88%
<b>Number and Percent of residents who have health Insurance</b>	22%	347 / 89%	448 / 89%

## PARTNER PROFILE:

# Peoples Pharmacy LLC



Located in a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) and USDA-defined food desert, Peoples Pharmacy serves several health disparate populations, including the residents of Tidewater Gardens. Through the partnership with People First<sup>USI</sup> residents with chronic health conditions have access to ongoing services to ensure the proper management of chronic health conditions. This targeted strategy was specifically implemented to create health equity for the families of Tidewater Gardens.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Peoples Pharmacy ensured equitable support to residents of Tidewater Gardens with chronic health conditions through chronic care management, personalized health and nutrition assessments, medication access and adherence, and transition of care services. Peoples Pharmacy also provided equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and testing for the residents of Tidewater Gardens.

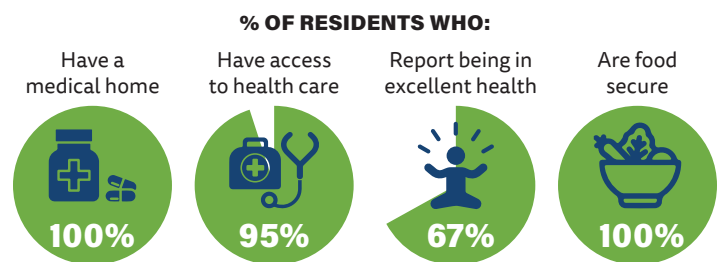
The most concerning risks of COVID-19 were amid individuals of color managing chronic health conditions since infection among these individuals would likely be fatal. A total of 35 residents with chronic health conditions received ongoing services through Peoples Pharmacy during this trying year. This partnership allowed us the opportunity to move the percent of individuals effectively managing their chronic health condition from 48% in Year One to 88% in Year Two.

Peoples Pharmacy also worked with Tidewater Gardens residents to establish current medical homes - or a place to receive primary care - a key component to stabilizing health and reducing the need for emergency services. This supported residents during their transition process and provided continuity of healthcare services post-transition.

“The best outcome of this partnership is the opportunity for residents in a medically underserved community to receive comprehensive health care that promotes healthy lifestyles, good physical and mental health, and tools and coping mechanisms to alleviate and better manage stress.”

*Dr. Anna Peoples, Peoples Pharmacy*

Data above shows that we are actively progressing towards these partnership targets:



*People's Pharmacy and USI Shared Metrics*

Residents of Tidewater Gardens that are experiencing high stress and/or verbalizing a need for ongoing support during the transition can receive support from Peoples Pharmacy via Chronic Care Management (CCM), monthly performance outcome assessments with families. We are so grateful to Dr. Peoples and her team for their ability to provide culturally responsive care that drives real-time quality improvement plans.

### COVID-19 VACCINE

## Pharmacist: Lifting COVID-19 restrictions could spell more disaster for the African American community





## STRATEGIC IMPACT: HOUSING STABILITY

Housing is the foundation upon which all other services are based. People First<sup>USI</sup> assists families with the process of relocation but also with accessing a higher quality of life that comes with safe, quality, affordable housing. People First<sup>USI</sup> works holistically to address the challenges that are impacting each individualized household.

In the past two years, People First<sup>USI</sup> staff provided mobility counseling services to Tidewater Gardens residents. These services include application support, understanding benefits, assistance with housing search, assistance with housing needs, and working with property management staff to ensure success, but also intensive education around options, exploration of neighborhood characteristics, and the right to return to the newly developed site. With this counseling comes a partnership between the People First team and the family to understand the opportunities and challenges with each housing option.

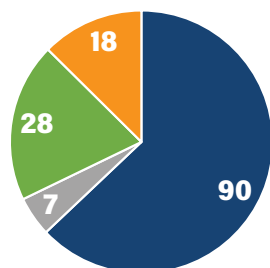
With a keen focus on supporting resident choice and the deconcentration of poverty, the People First<sup>USI</sup> staff help relocate families to neighborhoods with lower rates of poverty (40% or less) where access to opportunity and better health outcomes will be greater. While the HUD definition of a “Neighborhood of Opportunity” also includes a caveat that the neighborhood is less than 62% minority concentration, we believe that the racial makeup of a community isn’t the inherent problem or solution, but that a safe place with access to jobs, schools, healthcare, transportation, and community support is of more importance and value.

An imperative quality of People First<sup>USI</sup> supportive services is that we always keep people at the center of our work. We seek to ensure that each family’s choice (utilizing a Housing Choice Voucher, moving to another public housing community, or exploring homeownership) is honored and supported, trusting that their decision is made in the best interest of their needs.

### HOUSING STABILITY YEAR 2: ASSISTED FAMILIES IN MAKING THE RIGHT RELOCATION CHOICE FOR THEIR FAMILY

#### PF USI ASSISTED RELOCATIONS (N=143) BY TYPE

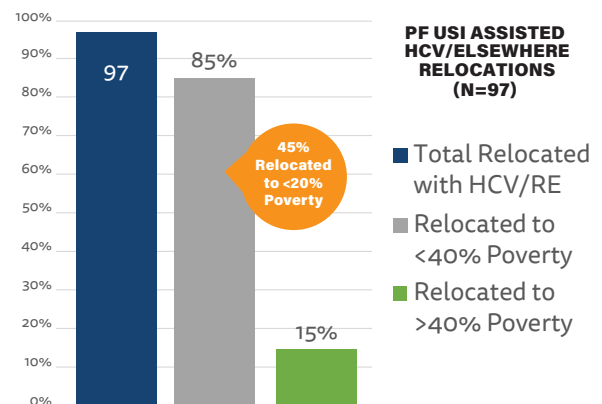
- HCV
- Rented Elsewhere
- PH Unit Transfer
- Project Based Housing



### In Year Two, People First<sup>USI</sup> assisted 143 or 92% of the 156 families who relocated from Tidewater Gardens.

- 63% of families relocated using a Housing Choice Voucher.
- 20% of families opted to transfer to another public housing community.
- 12% of families chose to relocate to Project Based Housing
- 5% of families rented elsewhere

Of the 97 People First<sup>USI</sup> assisted families relocated using HCV or by Renting Elsewhere, (82) or 85% moved to areas with <40% poverty.



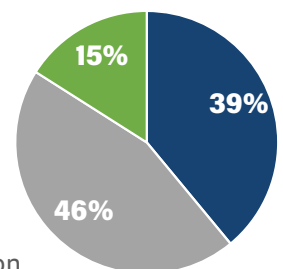
See breakdown below:

Reasons for residents opting not to move to Neighborhoods of Opportunity or lower-poverty areas included liking the neighborhood or unit they found in housing search, proximity to support system, and proximity to transportation, while only three had identified barriers that impacted their relocation options for which they have been connected to services to resolve.

### HOUSING STABILITY YEAR 2: ASSISTED 85% OF FAMILIES IN MOVING TO NEIGHBORHOODS WITH <40% POVERTY RATE

#### PF USI ASSISTED RELOCATIONS (N=97)

- Relocated to NOO as Defined by HUD (<40% Poverty, <62% Minority Concentration)
- Relocated to <40% Poverty but >62% Minority Concentration
- Relocated to >40% Poverty



## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT:

# A MOM IN SEARCH OF PEACE FOR HER FAMILY

For the past three years, Terri Little, 28, has lived in the Tidewater Gardens community. After a series of traumatic events, including finding that her car was damaged from a shooting on Christmas and finding mold in her home, Ms. Little was granted emergency move status to find new housing options.

The idea of moving was hopeful, but the process of relocation has been a trying one. Ms. Little was looking for a three- or four-bedroom house with space for her four kids, but even after viewing more than 19 properties that met her criteria, she still didn't have any movement on the process. She had a Section 8 Housing Voucher that covered the rent and utilities, but she was facing a series of denials that she suspects were the result of discrimination.

Working closely with Imani, a People First<sup>USI</sup> Family Support Services staff member, she was finally able to secure a house in a Neighborhood of Opportunity.

"It meant a lot to have Imani's support. I feel like if I didn't have the help, it would have taken me much longer."

Moving to this neighborhood means that Ms. Little and her family don't have to stress about basic needs like safety and security - something that was always on her mind before. Her kids love that they have more room and a big backyard to play in.

"I live right across from the beach. It's nice and very quiet. It's safer for my family. It's very peaceful. You don't have to worry about gunshots."

Now that Ms. Little is settled in her new home, she can spend her energy focusing on the future. She's exploring her dream of business ownership and has already started two separate LLCs to sell beauty products and clothing and start her own transportation business. The sky is the limit for this resilient and motivated woman. She will continue to receive support from People First<sup>USI</sup> in achieving whatever goals she establishes for herself and her family.

### The People First<sup>USI</sup> Difference

*It is a strategic initiative of People First<sup>USI</sup> to hire all staff locally who bring expertise that you cannot teach. Our employees not only know the neighborhood, the community, and the challenges residents face, they have often also experienced them directly. USI is an organization of color (84% people of color and 73% Black), which provides a cultural competency and familiarity that families recognize and connect with as they discuss and tackle some of their toughest challenges.*







## STRATEGIC IMPACT: EDUCATION

More than one million\* American children live in unstable housing, most of whom face significant environmental, social, and emotional circumstances that threaten their ability to thrive. None is more evident than educational disparities.

People First<sup>USI</sup> provides the support and service connections youth need to succeed. We strive to change their trajectory by supporting them through the strategic development of programs, partnerships, and policy recommendations that lead to more equitable educational outcomes.

This mission was challenged with the impact the pandemic had on education access across the world, resulting in an intense focus on cultivating partners to support scholars and families through a difficult year. Partnerships with local organizations continue to be paramount to the success of outreach efforts.

From early learning centers and virtual learning support with afterschool and out-of-school opportunities, job-readiness, and college success programs, People First<sup>USI</sup> compiled a team of support and intervention specialists to pair with individualized family support programs, to ensure students remained academically stable throughout the school year.

One notable achievement in the area of early childhood development is the award of a new grant opportunity, through our active partnership with United Way of South Hampton Roads. The United Way grant will be used to pay the costs for children to attend early learning centers, transportation mitigation for parents who need it, incentives to help us strengthen family engagement, dual-generation strategies to increase literacy, and support for our Outdoor Diverse Books Initiative, which underscores the critical importance of children seeing themselves represented in the stories they read.

Our goal is always to center parent voices, listen, and advance parent-led actions. We are proud of the relationships, difficult conversations, and alignment we've been able to build in service to Tidewater Gardens scholars and their families. This flexible funding will allow us to creatively engage parents as the People First<sup>USI</sup> team mitigates barriers and creates strategies as scholars navigate in-person and virtual learning spaces.

*\*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2019*

**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 2 Outcomes

		Year 2
<b>High School Graduation Rate</b>	Baseline: 78%	83%
<b>Number &amp; Percent of resident children 0-3 participating in center-based or formal home learning programs</b>  Amid the pandemic, families cited reluctance to send their kids to daycare facilities, which pose a high risk of infection. Even as daycare centers opened, parents shared that they chose to minimize transition and wait until the next school year to send their kids to early education centers.	Year 1: 68%	55%

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PERSEVERE AMID GLOBAL PANDEMIC

As the world shut down during the global COVID-19 pandemic, most people's way of life looked a lot different. For seven high school students living in Tidewater Gardens, the challenges were great. Amid fear of infection rates among teachers and students, classes transitioned to an online setting and everyone had to learn how to teach and learn virtually.

The already deep achievement gap, unequal access to technology, and the worry about drop-out rates and low engagement were concerning. The People First<sup>USI</sup> Family Support Services team was at-the-ready, making connections to community partners to provide virtual support programs to residents.

Gratefully, the commitment of our partners to ensure that all children have access to high quality education services resulted in unmatched, real-time innovation that equated to increased support for Tidewater Gardens children. People First<sup>USI</sup> partners truly stepped up to the plate to meet the needs of young residents. Communities in Schools provided home visits, connected students to tutors, started a STEM program, and even distributed food to families. The Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Virginia adjusted their afterschool programming to a virtual learning support program and weaved in sports and athletics programs to help keep scholars focused. Teens With a Purpose pivoted their arts outreach program to also include virtual learning support, afterschool cultural programming, and provided a place for scholars to work with access to technology.

Despite the challenges a pandemic brings, life must go on. Tidewater Gardens high school juniors and seniors continued to plan for the future, even while the immediate future looked uncertain. People First<sup>USI</sup> hosted a college prep and readiness workshop to prepare the youth for college, discussing important topics like financial aid, time management, and other important skills needed for success in college. The People First<sup>USI</sup> Workforce Specialists will continue to support the students who chose to go straight into a career after graduation.



People First<sup>USI</sup> recently hosted a Summer Blast event for the community to gather and celebrate these students. Thanks to a partnership with **Teens with a Purpose**, the voices of many young people were lifted up through song and spoken word. View highlights from this performance at [https://youtu.be/gb9r\\_SoCaMw](https://youtu.be/gb9r_SoCaMw).



*In June of 2021, the community was able to gather in person to celebrate the incredible accomplishments of Tidewater Garden's resilient graduates.*

## PARTNER PROFILE: TEENS WITH A PURPOSE



Throughout the transition for families at Tidewater Gardens, People First<sup>USI</sup> felt it was essential to help young people, in particular, feel connected to a “place” so that even as they were relocated, they could come back. Teens with a Purpose, a creative youth development organization, provided this safe space.

What we didn’t know at the outset of the partnership was what drastic changes young people would experience amid the pandemic. As we all pivoted services to meet the changing needs of the community, [Teens With a Purpose](#) modified its regular programming to also support the education needs of students.

Typically its programs allow youth to explore the arts in a way that empowers young people to use their voice, creativity, reflection, and to take action to transform lives and impact communities. However, as learning shifted online, TWP also shifted to provide virtual and live, small-group learning support, tutoring, and homework support with help from volunteers from Tidewater Community College, Old Dominion University and Communities in Schools. With the City of Norfolk providing Wi-Fi at Purpose Park, TWP is able to provide a stable and safe place to learn with access to technology. Programs served 30 children five days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and included after-school cultural activities, such as poetry, technology and visual art.

In this way, TWP attended to the necessary safety, mastery, and connection through the arts during uncertain times. This crucial support not only met the immediate needs of the community but also allowed young people to grow, explore, and mitigate their own trauma and emotional health.

“Youth are our greatest resource, they are our now and our future,” said Deirdre Love, Founder/Executive Director of TWP. “With focused investment in each young person made possible through this partnership, we are witnessing powerful transformation and look forward to continued work to help young people work toward safety mastery and expression through the arts and as peer leaders and role models to their community.”

### Banding together in a crisis

In the 2020-2021 school year, students were faced with many challenges due to the transition to virtual learning amid

the COVID-19 global pandemic. We are so grateful to our community of partners who stepped up to provide extra assistance and stability to the youth of Tidewater Gardens during this trying time.

### Thank you, partners, for your crucial support!

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeast Virginia
- Children's Harbor
- Communities in Schools
- Hampton Roads Community Action Program (Head Start)
- Light Years
- Minus 9 to 5 of Eastern Virginia Medical School
- New Generations
- Norfolk Public Schools
- Ready Academy
- Teens With a Purpose
- YMCA of South Hampton Roads







## STRATEGIC IMPACT: ECONOMIC MOBILITY

People First<sup>USI</sup> is making strides to help some of its most vulnerable residents through job training opportunities, financial education, and the identification of long-term sustainable wage employment opportunities.

In partnership with Norfolk Works, People First<sup>USI</sup> has engaged more than 20 employment partners including the fields of home health care, retail, warehouse and driver, customer service, food service, housekeeping, hospitality, government contractors, and Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Engaging employment partners who offer positions tied directly to resident qualifications and fields of interest, has allowed the People First<sup>USI</sup> Family Support and Workforce staff support individuals in gaining employment. As the employment landscape changed and shifted nearly beneath our feet in 2020, Tidewater Gardens residents enrolled in Family Support Services were supported in obtaining 97 jobs. In this same time period, there was an approximate 8.45% increase in residents working full time. At the conclusion of Year Two, while the percentage of employed individuals went down slightly from Year One (from 74% to 73%), the number of employed saw an overall increase of 56.

Our economic mobility goals not only include connecting people to employment but moving people to higher and living wage opportunities and supporting our families in building generational wealth. For many residents, employment options are hampered due to educational attainment. As such, in addition to employment relationships, People First<sup>USI</sup> has worked with the City of Norfolk this year to strengthen our relationship with Tidewater Community College (TCC). TCC has numerous innovative programs designed to support students' short-and-long-term economic mobility goals, including the REV (Reemploying Virginians) grant that provides qualifying students free access to educational training for jobs that Virginia employers are eager to fill. The "Get Skilled, Get-A-Job, Give Back" program (G3) at TCC connects students with training and resources to secure jobs in high-demand fields and support their families without the burden of student loan debt.

Through the TCC partnership, workforce staff also engaged with the Dignity of Work program. This is a 5-week virtual program for residents interested in Construction and/or Section 3 job opportunities. This program is self-paced, free (estimated as a \$2500 training program), and provides computers and internet for residents where there is a barrier. Program Training includes: Construction Fundamentals, Forklift Certification, OSHA 10 Certification, and Flagging Certification. We were thrilled to see our first cohort of

12 students from Tidewater Gardens and surrounding communities this year. Once complete, the People First<sup>USI</sup> Workforce and/or Section 3 Coordinator will connect residents to employment and/or Section 3 employment opportunities as those become available.

A committed local staff, strong partnerships, and the motivation of each individual are key factors to initial achievements in economic mobility.

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

### Year 2 Results

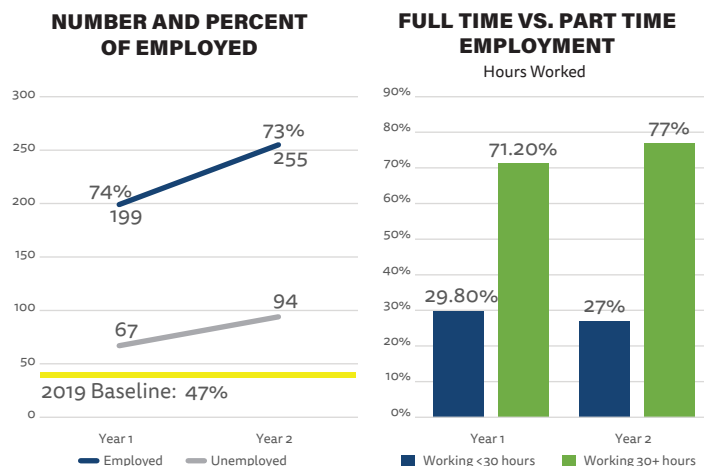
	Year 1 Actual	Year 2 Actual
<b>Percent of residents between 18-64 with wage income*</b>	74%	73%
<b>Average Annual wage income</b>	\$18,005	\$18,826
<b>Full time employment</b>	71.20%	77%

**8.45% increase in residents working full-time**

**Tidewater Gardens residents enrolled in Family Support Services were supported in obtaining 97 jobs**

*\*Through various engagement strategies, the People First<sup>USI</sup> team added more targeted families to our family support services which increased our total population.*

### ECONOMIC MOBILITY YEAR 2: INCREASED THE NUMBER OF HH WITH WAGE INCOME AND FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT





## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT:

# CREATING A NEW BEGINNING FOR HERSELF THROUGH FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Naya Artis, 47, recently began exploring her options for moving from Tidewater Gardens, her home for the past eight years.

However, she experienced a hurdle not unfamiliar to most. Her credit score was a little low - limiting her options for safe, stable housing that met her family's needs.

It seems her student loan balance was dragging on her score, but she wasn't aware of how badly it was impacting it.

The People First<sup>USI</sup> team connected her with a free financial literacy program through BankOn Hampton Roads. Feeling it would help her become financially empowered and feel confident making sound financial decisions, Ms. Artis enrolled in the program.

And she gave it her all.

For eight months, she attended bi-weekly meetings and completed homework assignments - even amid disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and her demanding work as an in-home caregiver. She was also able to establish a savings account during the program, which she had not had before. She was truly dedicated to making changes in her financial health, knowing that it would open up future opportunities.

"I was trying to set things in place so I wouldn't have a problem when I decided to move. I would like to be in a position where there are not any barriers."

Ms. Artis is feeling good about the direction she is going and has her sights set on an even bigger goal. She hopes to one day be a business owner, running her own home care agency. She'd like to see her name on the checks and to be able to pass work along to others.

Thanks to a strong financial foundation and her own dedication, we have no doubt she will make this vision a reality.



### Partner Profile: BankOn Hampton Roads

[Bank On Norfolk](#) is a free financial literacy program funded by the City and is a branch of the regional Bank On Hampton Roads effort that began in 2012. Bank On combines classroom instruction with coaching to help participants become financially empowered and feel confident in making sound financial decisions. Participants learn strategies for overcoming paycheck-to-paycheck living and speedy ways to reduce debt and increase savings. They also have access to a financial coach to build a financial plan centered on individual goals and dreams.

Bank On is part of a national organization with over 95 coalitions across the United States organized to improve your financial opportunities by teaching financial literacy and connecting the un-banked and under-banked to financial institutions that offer our certified bank accounts.

## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: MAKING HER DREAM A REALITY

For Sophia Jacobs, the dream of owning her own business started about six years ago when she was working as a firewatcher at a local shipyard. The job of a firewatcher is considered a basic, low-paying position that is charged with watching out for fires that may start. It was her curiosity and drive that took her to the next level.

Sophia asked many questions and requested to be placed near the painting and insulation operations at the yard. A dream was percolating in her mind - she thought, 'I can do that.' After observing in this way, she began to formulate a plan.

Working with People First<sup>USI</sup> staff, Sophia explored resources to become a self-employed maritime ship painter. People First<sup>USI</sup> family support services team connected her with the Women's Business Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at **Old Dominion University's Dream Builder Program**, which connects aspiring female entrepreneurs to online courses and mentors in the community.

**"The program was inspiring because it was with other people in my age range thinking of new things, trying to build a dream," said Sophia. "It was really exciting."**

Sophia was connected with the owner of KRT, Inc, Kimberly Tucker, an industry leader. She has many construction government contracts at the area's biggest shipyards and could give Sophia insights on obtaining

difficult-to-obtain, yet lucrative contracts. In fact, Kimberly pledged \$15,000 seed money for Sophia to get started. People First<sup>USI</sup> and ODU were able to help Sophia make that connection.

**"Working with my mentor was amazing. It helped to know it was more than just me. She was really inspiring; I really look up to her. She's black like me and strong like me - well, she's way stronger than me - she's a powerhouse!"**

Under the mentorship of Kimberly, Sophia is well on her way to making her dream a reality as she handles the difficult business owner tasks such as paying taxes and obtaining all of the correct licenses. What's next for her? Her vision is to build her business to help her customers, but also be a resource to others in the community.

**"Right now, I have a big plan. I have to start with getting the painting, insulation, and cleaning going, but I also want to get my own building and a daycare spot so people don't have to struggle with daycare."**

### Partner Profile: Old Dominion University

Research shows that investments in improving women's education, employment skills, and financial capability can deliver long-term benefits, supporting women's full economic participation and contributions to healthier, more stable communities.

DreamBuilder is a 9- to 12-week entrepreneurial training program sponsored by [Old Dominion University's Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship \(IIE\) - Women's Business Center \(WBC\)](#). The class is unique in that the work is done in cohort groups, helping to remove training barriers, and utilizes a customized learning center and supplemental curriculum created specifically for Tidewater Gardens residents.

**"It is an honor to be a part of the Economic Mobility Team for People First, and to play a role in developing the next generation of successful entrepreneurs." - Erica Small-Cisco, Program Manager, Women's Business Center - Old Dominion University**

[Link to YouTube video:  
https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=U2odsOWzElk&t=9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2odsOWzElk&t=9s)

## YEAR TWO SUMMARY

People First, Empowered by USI are deepening relationships with staff, families, partners, and stakeholders to ensure all Tidewater Gardens families are safe, supported, and thriving.

Moving into year three, People First Empowered by USI will continue to execute specific strategies to improve conditions of well-being for each of our Tidewater Gardens families in all of our key service pillars - education, housing, economic mobility and health and wellness. Building on the successes and the trust earned with families to date, we will continue to support families in both the development and achievement of goals based on the priorities that they hold for their families. As we have learned over the past year, we can anticipate that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to spike and recede, changing the needs of families in its wake. Along with job loss for adults that we saw in year two, we understand that the shifting landscape of education over the past year has likely also contributed to learning loss for children. As such, we will double down on our efforts to address any educational regression and in ensuring that children and families are receiving the level of support they need to safely and successfully navigate a changing world. We commit to continuing to understand the need changes of our families in real time, activating and engaging partners to meet those needs and working with our partners to alter service delivery to meet our families where they are in this moment in time.

Through year 3 we will continue to relocate families for the Tidewater Gardens community with our eye on ensuring that family choice is honored and supported, that access to low poverty neighborhoods is increased, that all families remain stably housed, and that residents understand their right to return. We will do this through ongoing relationships and access to supports that educate individuals on all aspects of the relocation process, prepare and support families in navigating any challenges they encounter after relocation, and deploy resources to assist families as needed when barriers are encountered.

Though we anticipate the coming year will be filled with challenges, we are dedicated to responding to the resolution of those challenges in service to our commitment that all St. Paul's families are safe, supported, and thriving.

### Specific year three actions by pillar include:

#### Economic Mobility:

1. Continue to focus on enrollment of job seekers in workforce development opportunities that lead to employment.
2. Enroll residents in skill building programs that lead to Section 3 employment.
3. For the employed population, concentrate efforts on

increasing income through skill building, education and connection to workforce training to move individuals to higher paying jobs.

4. Continue to activate partnerships to support the entrepreneurship goals of residents.
5. Focus on asset building through financial empowerment and homeownership.

**Education:** We will continue working with our families and education partners on our aligned goals are to ensure that all children are kindergarten ready, proficient in core academics, and graduating on time; college or career ready. We will seek to accomplish this through:

1. Increasing parent capacity for supporting their children's educational needs.
2. Building support networks for children transferring or who have transferred schools as a result of relocation.
3. Create programming to support learning loss as a result of the pandemic.
4. Prioritize enrollment in two-generation literacy programs, where parents participate in learning with their children.
5. Focus on early learning enrollment targeting the increase in the number of children safely enrolled in high quality early learning.

#### Health and Wellness:

1. Continue to focus on increasing the number of residents who participate in annual preventive health screenings.
2. Continue to address chronic health conditions and connect individuals to services to appropriately manage those conditions.
3. Continue to support the education and access to the COVID-19 vaccine.
4. Continue to support, educate, and connect families to innovative programs and resources for self-care and that build safety in their surroundings, mastery in their lives, and connection to others.

**Housing:** With the goal of ensuring that all Tidewater Gardens remain stably housed, People First<sup>USI</sup> will:

1. Support family readiness to relocate and make housing choices that are right for their family.
2. Continue to support families in moving to Neighborhoods of Opportunity or neighborhoods with lower poverty rates.

## YEAR TWO SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

- Building family capacity to negotiate challenges after relocation.

### Relocation

In Year Two, People First<sup>USI</sup> assisted 143 or 92% of the 156 families who relocated from Tidewater Gardens.

- 63% of families relocated using a Housing Choice Voucher.
- 20% of families opted to transfer to another public housing community.
- 12% of families chose to relocate to Project Based Housing
- 5% of families rented elsewhere

### Housing Choices

In Year Two, People First<sup>USI</sup> assisted 143 or 92% of the 156 families who relocated from Tidewater Gardens.

- The majority (63%) of families relocated from Tidewater Gardens using a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV).
- 39% of 97 families relocating with HCV or Renting Elsewhere moved to a Neighborhood of Opportunity as defined by HUD (Neighborhood with <40% poverty rate and with <62% minority concentration)
- 85% of 97 families relocating with a Housing Choice Voucher or Renting Elsewhere relocated to neighborhoods with <40% poverty rate with 45% of those same families moving to a neighborhood with <20% poverty rate.

### Economic Mobility

- Increased the number of Tidewater Gardens households with wage income and fulltime employment
- 73% (255) of Tidewater Gardens residents are employed
- 77% of able-bodied workers are employed 30+ hours

- 50% of residents have bank accounts
- 97 jobs were obtained during year 2 with an increase in annual earned income

### Health and Wellness

- Expanded access to health partners for mental health and chronic health conditions
- 89% (448) of Tidewater Gardens residents have health insurance
- 88% (197) of Tidewater Gardens residents are connected to services to manage chronic health conditions
- 81% (404) of Tidewater Gardens residents have a regular medical location other than an emergency room

### Education

- Secured a \$50,000 grant award to support families in increasing enrollment in early learning programs.
- 83% Tidewater Gardens high school graduation rate
- 55% of 0-3 children are in center-based/formal home learning programs

### People First<sup>USI</sup> Team

- 94% of the eligible, original 618 families were engaged with the People First<sup>USI</sup> team; that's an increase of 25%
- Grew the People First<sup>USI</sup> team with 20 culturally responsive team members who trained on Trauma and USI's case management model, Learning for Effective Actions in Revitalizing Neighborhoods (LEARN) data entry training, components of Results Based Accountability (Results Count), mobility support and relocation and Motivational Interviewing.

## PARTNERS

USI believes in collaborative leadership, meaning no one organization can do this work alone. We assembled a highly responsive Service Provider Network, including partners in all of our service pillars: Housing Stability, Economic Mobility, Education, and Health and Wellness. Some of them include:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys and Girls Club</li> <li>Children's Hospital of The King's Daughter</li> <li>CHIP of South Hampton Roads</li> <li>City of Norfolk Community Services Board - Services</li> <li>City of Norfolk Department of Human Services</li> <li>City of Norfolk Department of Public Health</li> <li>Communities in Schools</li> <li>Concerned Citizens of Booker T Washington</li> <li>Crestar Health, LLC</li> <li>Dollar Bank</li> <li>Dominion Energy</li> <li>EVMS (Minus 9 to 5)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore</li> <li>Garden of Hope</li> <li>Girls on the Run</li> <li>Hampton Roads Committee of 200+ Men</li> <li>Hampton Roads Community Foundation</li> <li>Hampton Roads Community Health Center</li> <li>Hampton Roads Workforce Council (former Opportunity, Inc.)</li> <li>Kairos Freedom Schools of Virginia</li> <li>Kaleidoscope Counseling</li> <li>Mosaic Steel Orchestra</li> <li>Norfolk Public Schools</li> <li>Norfolk Works</li> <li>Old Dominion University: Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peoples Pharmacy, LLC</li> <li>Primeplus</li> <li>Ready Academy</li> <li>Teens with a Purpose</li> <li>The Basilica of Saint Mary</li> <li>The Planning Council</li> <li>The Up Center</li> <li>The Young Investors Group</li> <li>Tidewater Community College</li> <li>United Way of South Hampton Roads</li> <li>Virginia Department of Health</li> <li>William A. Hunton YMCA</li> <li>YMCA</li> <li>YWCA</li> </ul> |
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