

CASE STUDY

People Inc.

Workforce Development in Virginia

In 2022, People Incorporated of Virginia provided a wide range of services that helped the whole person, whether it was tailoring job trainings, providing necessary rental assistance, recommending childcare services, or brainstorming transportation alternatives. Due to their long history of working in the region, the People Inc. staff can connect clients to the necessary services.

People Inc. is committed to advancing workforce opportunities in rural America. Their mission is to provide opportunities for economically disadvantaged people to reach their full potential and enhance their lives and their families. Founded in 1964, People Inc. serves 16 counties and cities in Virginia as their Community Action Agency with over 30 programs in areas like workforce development, early childhood education, financial services, housing services and more.

They are a founding member of four regional business service teams that work closely with area businesses on their needs and challenges. They collaborate with businesses to identify and develop training opportunities and assist with incumbent worker upskilling programs. In 2022, they supported 13 incumbent worker training projects, with seven unique businesses providing training to 56 employees. They also own and manage 32 affordable housing properties across Virginia and northeast Tennessee.

Rural Works

Rural Works is a national network of workforce development practitioners collectively pursuing local systems change and employer engagement strategies to equitably sustain and scale their impact within their respective communities. The common theme includes building strong employer partnerships, finding best practices in workforce development and sharing them broadly, and tracking the overall impact of these programs on individuals and communities. The goal is to support each community served by the network to offer best practice-level workforce development programs at individual, community, and systems levels.

Rural LISC backbones this network by providing technical assistance with regional and national subject matter experts, supplying data alignment strategies to demonstrate scale for rural economies, and compiling data to demonstrate to stakeholders the impact of their programming and resource development.

One of the original members of the network is People Incorporated of Virginia. They have partnered with Rural LISC on workforce development efforts, digital literacy initiatives, and Financial Opportunity Centers. With funding from the **Ascendium Education Group**, they have focused on workforce initiatives, specifically work-based learning opportunities and on-the-job training.

Providing collaborative work-based learning

An integrated training model offers a combination of soft-skills training, classroom training, and hands-on experience through paid work experiences and on-the-job trainings and experience for new and incumbent workers.

2022 Spotlight: The Center of Manufacturing Excellence, based in the Somic America plant, hosts a small cohort of 2-4 students at a time as they learn from a dedicated educator. The students have access to a small equipment room, where they can practice their skills before heading to the plant floor. While learning is based on Somic-specific equipment, skills are transferable to other area employers.

“These programs have taken years of collaborative planning and implementation between workforce partners, funders, and businesses. We can proudly say that all programs are operational and thriving, but there is a lot of room for growth.”

—Elizabeth Carico, Director of Workforce Development



Collaborative Members

- HBI PACT
- Alternative Secondary Education
- Adult Education
- Community Colleges (VHCC, NRCC, WCC)
- Consortium Board (Chief Local Elected Officials)
- New River Mt Rogers Workforce Development Board
- DSS (multiple jurisdictions)
- Virginia Employment Commission (AJC)
- Department for Aging and Rehabilitation
- Job Corps
- Grayson Nursing and Rehab
- Healthcare Academy of SWVA
- Center for Manufacturing Excellence
- Bondurant Contractor and Supply
- Somic America

2022 BY THE NUMBERS

146 clients started or completed a training or certificate program

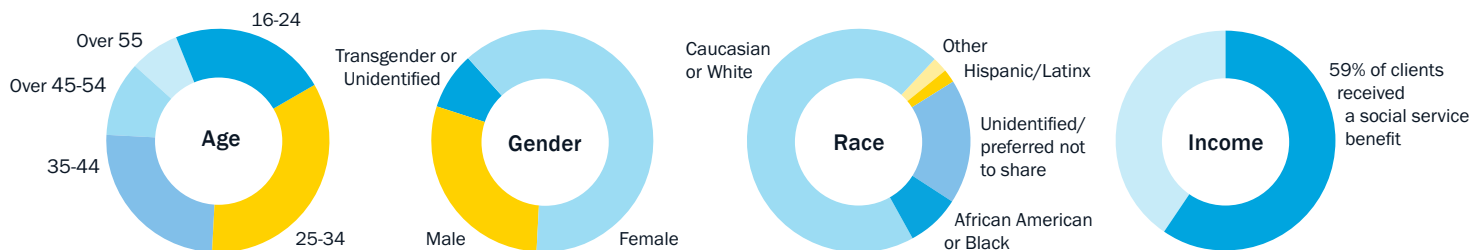
25 clients placed in an internship, apprenticeship, or work learning program

136 clients placed in a job (full time or part time)

77 retained a job due to services | **54** moved up in their existing job

17 employers engaged | **\$1M+** leverage funding obtained

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



2022 Services Accessed

- Employability Training
- Application, Resume, and Interview Prep
- Literacy & Numeracy Education
- GED Prep
- Maternity and Childcare
- Transportation
- Housing, Utility, Food Emergency Assistance
- Tuition, Books, Supplies, Tools, Safety Gear, and Uniform Assistance
- Career Pathway Navigation
- Digital Inclusion Assistance
- Financial Literacy

2022 Sectors of Focus

- **Healthcare** – Providing CNA training with the Healthcare Academy of Southwest Virginia, and work-based learning at Grayson Nursing and Rehab to get hands-on skills/clinical practice
- **Manufacturing** – Supporting an Advanced Manufacturing Technician certification with the Center for Manufacturing Excellence, in partnership with Somic America
- **Skilled Trades** – Hosting a Home Builders Institute with Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training. “Core” Certification, including a program homed in a nearby DOC correctional center.

Current challenges

- **Limited organizational capacity to address high demand of area employers and job seekers.**

On-demand trainings are either fast-tracked or offered on demand, making them more frequently available, but the People, Inc team are working to expand the availability.

- **Slow adoption of work-based learning with area employers**

The development of these programs is moving forward as more and more companies are looking for innovative solutions to fill positions.