

## **NEED**

### **A. Resident Population Demographics:**

As the follow data indicates, there is a great need for a Jobs Plus program at the Jamestown and Indian Rock Village public housing developments in the Southeast part of the City of Roanoke, VA. The proposed program model intends to address many resident needs by improving employment opportunities and increasing earned income— decreasing reliance on public assistance, including the need for public housing.

The table below details demographic information of the 890 residents living at Jamestown Place and Indian Rock Village:

Number of families	296
Number of residents age 0-13	395
Number of residents age 14-17	85
Number of people age 18-64	388
Number of age18-64 on SSI	81
Number of non-disabled age 18-64	307
Number of work-able age 18-64 with zero earned income	186
Percentage of work-abled with zero earned income	60.6%
Employment rate for age18-64	39.4%
Average earned income among age 18-64	\$8,183
Ethnicity: Black	60%
Ethnicity: White	35%
Ethnicity: Other	5%

Demographic data shows that residents have low incomes and high unemployment rates. Almost 44% of those living at the prospective Jobs Plus sites are considered “work-abled” by definition and are thereby potential Jobs Plus and JPEID participants.

### **B. Other Employment-Related Programming:**

Jamestown and Indian Rock Village are currently served by a ROSS Service Coordinator and Family-Self Sufficiency Coordinators. Both of these programs focus on

resident employment and supportive services that remove barriers to employment in order to promote self-sufficiency. RRHA anticipates that the Jobs Plus program would replace both of these programs, however the eight households currently participating in FSS would be given the opportunity to choose whether they would like to remain in the FSS Program and continue to escrow or join Jobs Plus and take advantage of JPEID. The FSS Coordinator will meet with current FSS participants individually to review their circumstances and weigh the benefits of each program. The Coordinator will refer interested individuals to the Jobs Plus program, but will not refuse services to any family that wishes to enroll or continue participation in FSS. Because FSS client numbers at Lansdowne Park will likely decline during the *Jobs-Plus* program, the Coordinator will focus recruitment efforts on other public housing sites and Housing Choice Voucher recipients. Another sixty individuals are currently enrolled in the ROSS program. The ROSS Coordinator has made more than 500 service referrals for 173 residents in the last three years. The ROSS Coordinator would be moved to other RRHA sites not served by Jobs Plus and ROSS enrollees would be recruited to participate in Jobs Plus.

The two prospective Jobs Plus developments are located in Southeast Roanoke and are somewhat removed from the rest of RRHA public housing. This area of Roanoke does not contain as many service agencies as other parts of the City so Jobs Plus could make a significant difference by providing place based services that do not require transportation elsewhere. The sites can access public transportation, but while public transportation is available, hours are limited and the service is not available at all on Sundays. This places limitations on services and employment opportunities. For example, evening GED classes are offered from 6-9 pm in Roanoke, but the last bus runs at 8:30pm so those riding the bus miss part of each class. Having onsite opportunities would eliminate these types of challenges.

### **C. Labor Market Information:**

As defined in the Local Plan developed and implemented in 2016 by the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, these industries are considered “target sectors” for the region:

- Healthcare and Life Sciences
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Transportation & Warehousing
- Financial Services
- Information Technology
- Education

Local growth sectors include: Healthcare (specifically registered nurses, personal care aides, medical assistants and Certified Nursing Aides); Information Technology (specifically software developers, computer systems analysts, and computer user support specialists); Transportation (specifically tractor-trailer truck drivers, laborers/freight movers, industrial truck/tractor operators, and school/special client bus drivers); and Construction (specifically carpenters, HVAC, electricians, and plumbers/pipefitters/steamfitters). While little growth is projected in manufacturing, it remains a target sector due to the large presence of vacant existing positions. Employers are consistently expressing a need for skilled workers such as machinists, as well as team assemblers and laborers/freight movers.

Career pathways exist in Healthcare, Transportation, and Construction. Opportunities exist for those interested in healthcare to progress from a personal care aide all the way up to a registered nurse. Those interested in transportation can begin by working with the local agency contracted to provide school bus drivers. They can also go straight to tractor-trailer driver training at VWCC where they can receive the basic certification. Once they receive that certification, they can become certified to transport hazardous materials, which greatly increases earned wages. Those interested in Construction can work as apprentices to plumbers and electricians through the local unions and get paid while they train, progressing in pay as they advance in skill. Case Managers will be educated concerning all available career pathways and

they will work to educate participants about the pathways and the potential pay increases with advancement.

Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) offers a wide variety of short-term workforce training programs that can provide certification for in-demand jobs. Their RSVP program can help prepare participants to ensure even footing with other participants, offering remediation, tutoring and other assistance that might be needed in conjunction with the actual hands-on job skill curriculum. Current workforce programs through VWCC include healthcare programs such as, Certified Medical Assistant, Medical Billing Support and Pharmacy Technician; and manufacturing programs such as Basic Manufacturing Skills, Machining-Fundamentals, Turning, and Advanced Machining (CNC & G-code), Manufacturing Maintenance, Welding, Heavy Equipment Operation, Forklift Training, and Truck Driving. In addition to VWCC, Total Action for Progress (TAP) offers a Certified Nursing Assistant training program. Goodwill Industries of the Valleys also offers healthcare programs as well as IT programs through MedCerts, an online curriculum to assist residents who need a more flexible schedule.

RRHA's Jobs Plus program will work alongside the Workforce Development Board and local training providers to educate residents concerning the job duties of in-demand occupations in the Roanoke area. In-demand occupations will be highlighted on bulletin boards in the Centers and on social media. An upcoming training schedule will be sent out regularly to residents to ensure they're aware of opportunities. Trainings for in-demand occupations will be highlighted on these schedules. Case Managers will work to ensure that residents who voice interest in a particular field are made aware of the necessary qualifications, available trainings, and potential career pathways that exist to a living wage. Case Managers will work directly with

training providers to enroll interested residents in workforce development training programs and provide them with the supportive services necessary to ensure their consistent participation in and completion of the training.

#### **D. Resident Feedback**

RRHA collects feedback from the residents in various ways. Annual site meetings are held to collect feedback and input from residents. FSS participants are asked for feedback during program participation and are given a formal evaluation to complete upon leaving the program. Jobs Plus has incorporated residents into the Executive Team meetings, Partner Committee meetings and has solicited feedback one on one from active participants in the program. All feedback received from residents is compiled and discussed by staff. Information gathered during site meetings is compiled, responses are given in writing, and when requests can be met, added to the annual RRHA plan. FSS staff and management look at evaluation forms to see what was helpful and what suggestions can make the program more relevant and supportive to the participants. Jobs Plus adjusts constantly based on the feedback received from residents. Case Managers and other staff are tuned in to what residents are saying in order to make program content relevant to what they need. More than once, staff have suspended plans and reworked based on resident input concerning what is helpful. For example, something as simple as class time can be a major barrier to participation. It may be most convenient to the partners to come between 2-3pm, but many residents told us that it creates a hardship for them because that's when the school bus drops off their children. Staff took this input, shared it with the partners, and going forward no classes are scheduled during that time frame in the afternoons. Resident participation is challenging enough when circumstances are ideal. Not seeking and listening to participant and/or potential participant input will create difficulty within any program.