

NOVEMBER 1, 2023–OCTOBER 31, 2024

GROWTH

GROWING RELATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL WEALTH IN WEST TENNESSEE HOUSEHOLDS

Innovate **FLOURISH**

ANNUAL REPORT



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MyCityRides.org
Get somewhere.

***Pictured:** GROWWTH Participant, Kiana, on her new scooter from MyCityRides. GROWWTH's transportation assistance program offers resources to employed Participants. Through the MyCityRides partnership, eligible Participants can purchase a scooter at twenty percent of cost.*

Executive Summary

Innovate & Flourish



**STEPHANIE
GODWIN-CHU**

Project Director
GROWWTH

GROWWTH serves parents in West Tennessee by providing career readiness training, foundations in soft skills for workplace success, employment resources, access to skilled credential training programs and job placement supports.

Through our program, participants can envision a better life and take the necessary steps, with guidance and supports, toward alleviating the barriers that can easily become stumbling blocks to success. **GROWWTH is about opportunity and elevation** for those who have faced difficulty doing it on their own. Our Participant's come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. However, those who find success in what GROWWTH offers have a few things in common—tenacity, grit, perseverance and the ability to dream.

Our program **grew by 470% within year one!** In GROWWTH's second year, we saw ways to **innovate, flourish, and create sustainable practices** for program growth and effective care coordination and case management. We also embarked on new partnerships that have helped the families we serve thrive against the odds.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'SG' followed by a flourish.

Stephanie Godwin-Chu



Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households

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Memphis, TN 38152

TANF Opportunity Pilot Act Grant

University of Memphis / GROWWTH
EDISON ID: 76493



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@UofM_GROWWTH

*Follow us on social media to keep
up with GROWWTH activities!*



GROWWTH

Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households

GROWWTH is a part of a study funded by the Tennessee Department of Human Services which is being conducted to determine how these pilot programs help people improve their economic well-being. GROWWTH is a pilot study designed to improve outcomes for low-income and TANF eligible families in the state of Tennessee by introducing research-driven, evidence-based approaches to moving people in West Tennessee out of poverty and towards self-sufficiency.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Elevating West Tennessee families into self-sufficiency and economic mobility by respecting their voice and choice.

VISION STATEMENT

GROWWTH will leverage our collective assets and knowledge to move West Tennessee's most vulnerable households to a life of thriving.

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Holistic ecosystem comprised of innovative education and training, workforce development expertise and community support networks

Leveraged partner resources to alleviate barriers enabling families to achieve economic sustainability

GROWWTH provides customized, place-based solutions that help to meet program participants where they are and ensure that outcomes are achievable. This customized approach helps individuals take ownership of their success and set goals that help to create sustainable results. To support these participants, GROWWTH provides milestone payments, wrap around services, case management, and support to help close the gaps that create barriers to economic stability.



Speaking to Memphis Shelby County Schools Family Engagement Specialists | Jan. 2024



Participant and Employer at GROWWTH Hiring Fair | Aug. 2024



Staff Enrolling a Participant in Class A Driving Academy | March 2024

Who We Serve

GROWWTH enrolled 1,148 West Tennessee Families between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2024.

185—NORTHWEST TENNESSEE

Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, Weakley counties

183—SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE

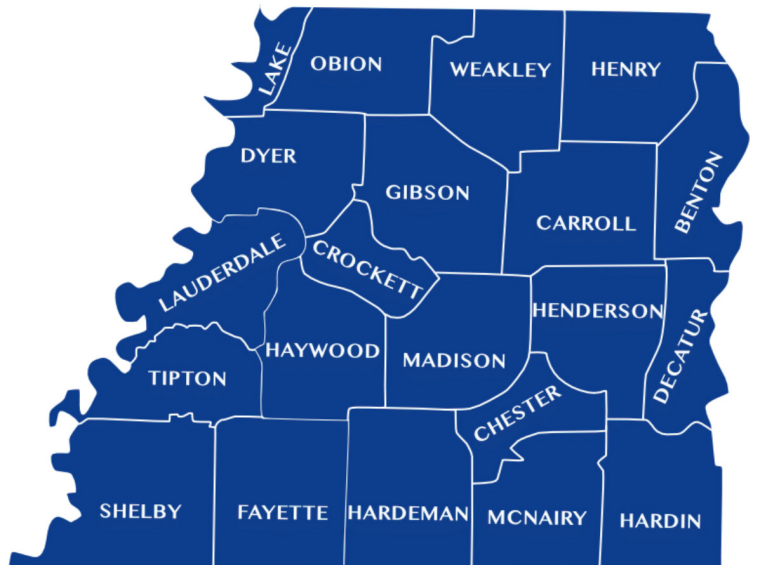
Madison, Hardeman, Decatur, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, McNairy counties

780—GREATER MEMPHIS

Shelby, Fayette, Lauderdale, Tipton counties

ENROLLMENT BY COUNTY

Benton (4)	Gibson (37)	Lauderdale (10)
Carroll (19)	Hardeman (25)	McNairy (3)
Chester (5)	Hardin (4)	Madison (60)
Crockett (7)	Haywood (22)	Obion (35)
Decatur (15)	Henry (24)	Shelby (747)
Dyer (30)	Henderson (49)	Tipton (13)
Fayette (10)	Lake (11)	Weakley (18)





GROWWTH Orientation at Professional Allied Health | June 2024

GROWWTH Insights

By The Numbers



1,148

Enrolled in GROWWTH



96%

GROWWTH Academy
Approval Rating



503

GROWWTH Academy
Graduates



134

Participants Completed
Training Programs



+\$933,000

In Training Tuition Paid



83

Credentials / Certifications
Earned



187

Employment Milestones



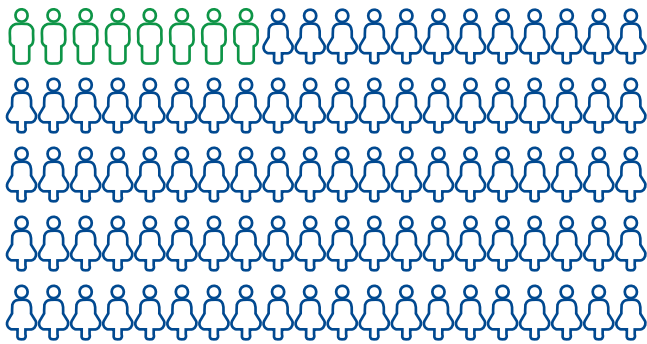
\$19,600

Earned In Financial Wellness
Milestones

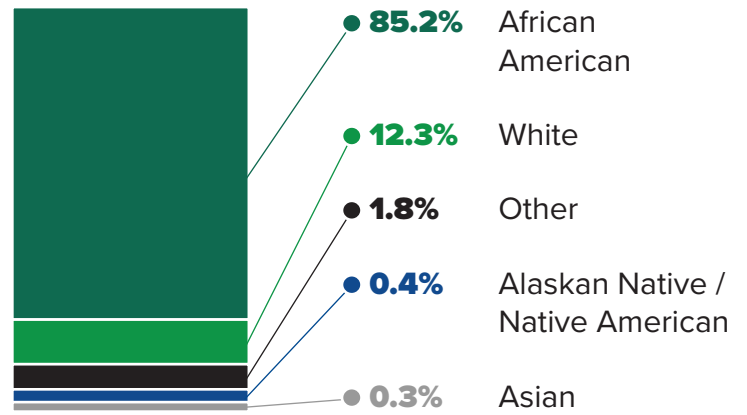
Demographics

BY GENDER

8% Men 92% Women



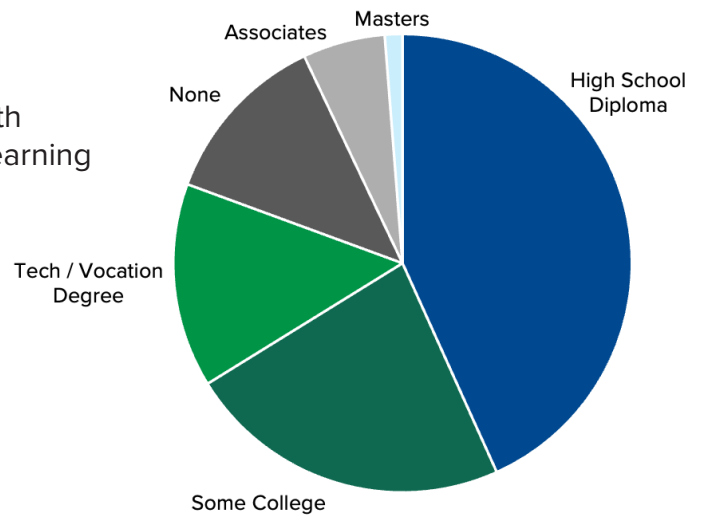
BY RACE



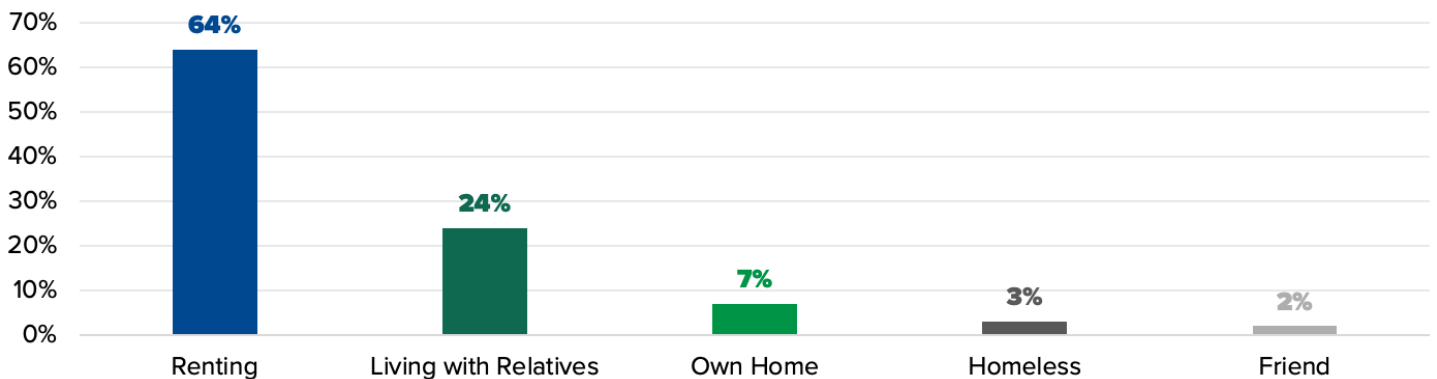
Educational Background

While 89.5% of GROWWTH participants completed 12th grade, their highest education levels vary, with 41.7% earning a diploma, 22.1% attending some college, and others pursuing vocational or higher degrees.

- High School Diploma (41.7%)
- Some College (22.1%)
- Tech / Vocation Degree (13.9%)
- None (11.9%)
- Associates (5.6%)
- Masters (1.2%)



Housing Status



Self Reporting

Education and background information is self reported by participants at the time of enrollment.

Creating Stability

Care Advocacy Team



Whether that be housing problems, evictions, food insecurity, mental health or wellness issues, that's where care coordination comes in once they are referred to us through the case managers. I can speak more with participants about their specific need and help them in their situation.

One example I love to give, a participant who was referred to me had just lost her son to gun violence. It was an urgent situation as she wanted counseling services for herself and her other child. She expressed how she was feeling, her grieving, and frustrations. Past that point, we were able to refer her to the SMART Center as they offer tele-health services. That's how we navigate the best course of action for our participants.

My favorite part working in GROWWTH is putting together the different initiatives and projects for our participants. Recently we finished our wellness series, virtual events that brought together outside organizations to discuss topics like financial wellness, mental wellness, physical wellness.

These hour-long sessions helped the participants learn and gather new information. The incentive was a \$500 milestone for participants attending a certain number of sessions. It's a really fun project.

I find the success of my work in the wellness programs, incorporating ways to focus on the body or wellness. A different project we did were the wellness boxes the care coordination team put together. It's a package consisting of different coping methods, books, coloring books, stress balls, things like that. We've had participants come back and say how much they enjoyed them. They let us know how much they needed them."

–Damonique Miller
Care Coordinator
GROWWTH



My primary responsibility is to lead the case managers and intake staff in the direction to promote self-sufficiency amongst our participants. We coordinate our participants from the beginning to the end of the GROWWTH life cycle, from the inquiry form, meet with an intake specialist, referral to a case manager, I am the point of contact should any problems arise. As lead case manager, a good day at GROWWTH is a happy team working together connecting participants to their goals.

The most common barriers for our parents are transportation and housing. It's hard for them to get to work and remote jobs aren't as frequent as they used to be. Having reliable transportation is crucial for them to work. We may not be able to connect them to certain jobs. As far as housing, it's hard to assist participants with other goals if that is a big barrier. Most participants aren't interested in working or back to school if they worried where they will lay their head at night."

–Jasmine Lewis
Lead Case Manager
GROWWTH



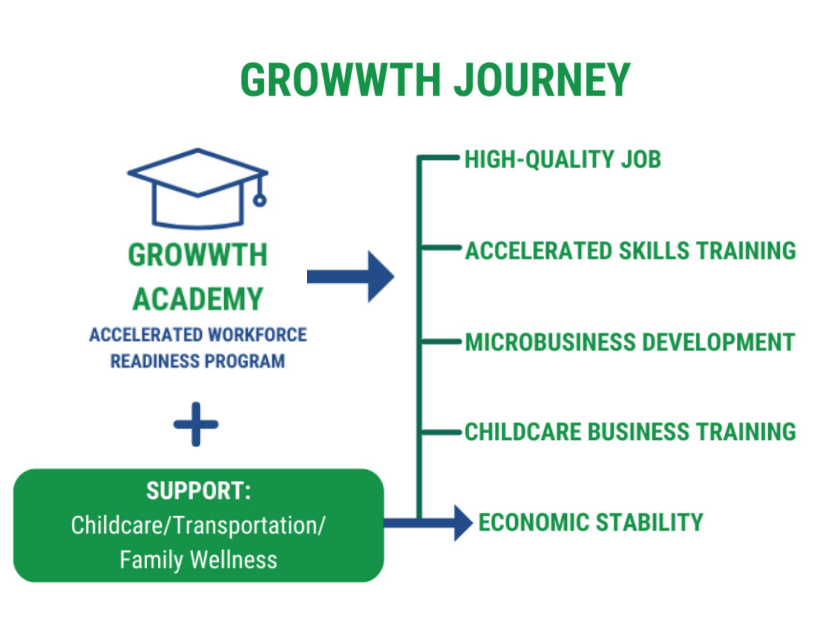
Pathways To Self Sufficiency

End of Randomization

In June of 2024, GROWWTH met the requirements of the Tennessee Opportunity Pilot Initiative’s randomized control trial by enrolling over 700 Participants in the program. From that point forward, all Participants enrolled in the GROWWTH program, were automatically eligible for full services including access to milestone payments, training dollars, care coordination, mental health and wellness supports, and supportive services. GROWWTH continues to work with the remaining waitlisted Participants as they approach the end of their delayed service requirement.

GROWWTH Academy

Group A Participants enroll in GROWWTH Readiness Academy asynchronous online, in person or via a virtual classroom with a GROWWTH Training Specialist. These classes are designed to equip individuals with the skills necessary to succeed in the next phase of their journey, whether it be seeking a high-quality job, starting a credential training program and/or Microbusiness Bootcamp. As Participants progress through GROWWTH Academy and complete each Journey, they earn milestone payments. A total of three milestone payments are issues for completion of GROWWTH Academy.





GROWWTH Participants celebrating culinary training completion with instructor, Chef Quan Anderson, and Roshunda Buchanan of 2Unique | Dec. 2024

Starting The Journey

Trauma Informed Workforce Training

The 11 modules that make up GROWWTH Academy cover topics such as adapting to change, effective communication, financial management, resume building, accountability, trauma informed behavior, job search, interview skills and more.

503—Participants completed GROWWTH Academy in grant Year 2.

To accommodate the expansive growth of the workforce readiness training program, two additional Training Specialists were brought on board. GROWWTH’s Training Specialists are able to manage three large GROWWTH Academy cohorts at a time, each holding approximately 60 active students at a time.

Overview

JOURNEY 1

Encourages growth mindset, self-regulatory skills, and collaboration in the workplace.

LEARNING MODULES:

- » How to Communicate Well
- » Adapting to Change
- » “What Happened?” | How We Regulate, Relate & Reason
- » Understanding My Emotions

JOURNEY 2

Helps examine the importance of resource management and effective communication in the workplace.

LEARNING MODULES:

- » Planning My Career
- » Managing My Money
- » Building Accountability
- » Navigating Workplace Culture

JOURNEY 3

Includes lessons and activities specific to career readiness and increasing personal marketability in the workforce.

LEARNING MODULES:

- » Mastering My Job Search
- » How to Interview Well
- » Rock My Resume

The Motivators

Training Specialist Team

GROWWTH Academy helps motivate parents to achieve goals. The Training Specialist team guides parents by offering progress reports, feedback on assignments, course instruction, follow-up phone calls, virtual meetings, and workshops. Training Specialists provide Participants with a plan to encourage organization and time management to achieve goals.

The team adapts instructional practices to meet the individual needs of learners.

They ensure Participants understand the GROWWTH Academy content and gain the tools to apply the principles in the real world. Our modules begin with a positive focus mindset needed to adapt to change, providing trauma-informed knowledge, social and emotional awareness to help regulate and navigate situations, effective communication, money management strategies, self-motivation and personal accountability.

*From left to right: Training Specialists
Matthew Ferguson, Adrienne Turner
and Precious Jennings*



“

Most of our parents have an idea of what they would like to do, but don't know the necessary direction. We provide them with road maps for their desired destination to obtain economic stability.”

–Matthew Ferguson
Training Specialist
GROWWTH

“

GROWWTH Academy leads parents to overcome their lack of confidence in learning and technology to complete their course. Parents select a pathway that best fits their individual interests.”

–Adrienne Turner
Training Specialist
GROWWTH



*2Unique Community Salvation Foundation
Certification Celebration | June 2024*

Career Impact

GROWWTH Academy Evaluation

Participants complete GROWWTH Academy before moving on to pursue training and employment goals. Participants can choose from a variety of accelerated training programs.

GROWWTH Academy survey results collected in January-May 2024, among 106 individuals with both pre- and post-test. Estimates include only individuals with valid data on the variable of interest at both time points.

AT THE END OF GROWWTH ACADEMY:

- » 89% strongly agree that they are confident in their workplace skills such as decision making, time management, and having a positive mindset
- » 96% are happy with what they learned in GROWWTH Academy

The feedback about GROWWTH Academy was overwhelmingly positive. In fact, 62% of respondents indicated that they would change nothing about GROWWTH Academy.



Trezevant at GROWWTH Hiring Fair | Aug. 2024



*Celebrating Culinary Training
Completion with Care Coordinator | Dec. 2024*

GROWWTH Approved Training Providers

Group A Participants who have graduated from GROWWTH Academy can enroll in credential training programs. GROWWTH not only pays for the tuition of the approved programs of 12 months or less in length, but also provides milestone payments to the Participants for completion of the courses and obtaining their certification. Many GROWWTH Participants are single parents who have limited resources and inability to afford training without this assistance.

GROWWTH can assist eligible GROWWTH Academy graduates with tuition assistance for accelerated credential training programs (12 months or less). In addition, Participants earn milestones for completion.

Training programs include those offered by state schools and community colleges such as Dyersburg State and TCAT. Fields of study include healthcare, dental care, information technology, HVAC, CDL truck driving, cosmetology, culinary, welding, billing and coding, logistics, etc. In Year 2, GROWWTH worked with 20 Approved Training Providers across the region and counting.

134—Participants competed training programs in Year 2.

83—Participants attained a certification/credential in Year 2.

GROWWTH facilitated tuition assistance for 229 Participants in Year 2. GROWWTH approved credential training programs range in length from 4 weeks to 12 months.

TRAINING SECTORS

PROVIDERS BY INDUSTRY



■ **Healthcare (57%)**

- » Licensed Practical Nurse
- » Dental Assisting
- » Certified Clinical Medical Assisting
- » Certified Nurse Assistant
- » Medical Billing and Coding
- » Patient Care Technician
- » Phlebotomy

■ **Other (20%)**

- » Culinary
- » Animal Care and Grooming
- » Bookkeeping
- » Veterinary Assistant

■ **CDL Trucking (16%)**

■ **IT / Technology (4%)**

■ **Cosmetology (3%)**



GROWWTH Hiring Fair | Nov. 2024

Building Futures

Business Services

The Business Services team connects West Tennessee employers to a qualified workforce of program participants. Graduates from the GROWWTH Academy complete workforce readiness training and are ready to apply their skills in the workplace!

As participants gain workforce skills, complete training programs, and earn certifications, the organization supports them in overcoming barriers to employment.

KEY EMPLOYMENT MILESTONES:

- » 30-day employment
- » 6-month employment
- » High-quality job attainment

CURRENT IMPACT:

- » 121 participants reached 30-day milestones
- » 25 participants attained 6-month milestones
- » 41 high-quality job milestones were awarded

As a part of our mission of promoting economic sufficiency in West Tennessee households, we desire to create change for generations to come. Our Business Services team builds relationships with local employers and GROWWTH Participants to assist with job placement.



Local employer speaking with Participant at Hiring Fair | Aug. 2024



GROWWTH Resume Coaching at Hiring Fair | Nov. 2024

EMPLOYER PARTNERS

GROWWTH employer partners reduce barriers to employment by providing training resources and full-time jobs to GROWWTH Academy graduates. Employers participate in GROWWTH Industry Council activities and employer readiness training.

ABM	MLG&W
Acadian Ambulance	MOST, Inc.
Baptist Memorial Healthcare	Nidec
Brownsville Press/ Brownsville Radio	Nike
CKS Packaging	NSK
Design Team Sign Company	Nucor Steel
Eagles Nest Family Services	Obion County Chamber
Economic Opportunities	Olympus
Ever Zinc	Orpheum Theatre
Facilitates Performance Group	Precision Coils
FedEx	ReNew Biomedical
First Student	Shelby County Government
Freed Hardeman University	Southern Security Federal Credit Union
Friends for All	Southern Security Federal Credit Union
Geon	St. Francis Hospital
Hamilton Ryker	Stanley Black & Decker
Hill Services	TCAT Jackson
Hyosung HICO	The Star Center
Internal Revenue Services	TK Elevator
Jackson State Community College	TN Department of Corrections-West TN
Knowledge Quest	Top Cat Masonry
Memphis Electrical JATC	Trezevant Episcopal Home/Trezevant Manor
Memphis Shelby County Schools	University of Memphis
Methodist Healthcare	Volunteer Home Care
	Westin Hotels
	Xcelente Trucking & Logistics LLC
	YMCA of Memphis & The Mid South

“

I have known Keva Irvin-Edwards for years, but I am excited about her new adventure with the GROWWTH Program. With her expertise in helping people in the community and the opportunities that GROWWTH provides, I believe she will help participants to thrive and advance themselves in their personal and professional lives. Trezevant looks forward to seeing what opportunities arise in 2025 and how we can continue to partner alongside [GROWWTH].”

—Jo Sehar
Human Resource Generalist
Trezevant Manor

“

Your commitment to improving the lives of families is truly inspiring and your problem-solving skills are remarkable. I feel incredibly fortunate to have your guidance and support in navigating important life decisions.

—Brittany M.
Participant
GROWWTH



JC Yepez, Financial Inclusion Officer, speaking with Participant at GROWWTH Hiring Fair | Aug. 2024

Financial Literacy

GROWWTH offered program Participants an opportunity to earn a special milestone by attending financial classes. As Participants reach their goals and earn higher wages, this additional knowledge plays a crucial role in helping them maintaining economic stability.

MONEY MANAGEMENT IN MAY

As an extension of GROWWTH Academy, Participants were offered 8 virtual learning opportunities during the month of May. The classes were facilitated by community partners and moderated by GROWWTH Care Coordinators. Participants who actively participated in 4 of the sessions, earned a four hundred dollar milestone payment. Participants also had the option to open a new savings account with their local credit union with a minimum \$200 balance as one of their financial wellness activities.

TOPICS:

- » Your Financial GPS
- » Budgeting with Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center
- » Keeping Your Debt in Check
- » Predatory Lending
- » GROWWTH Milestones and Supportive Services
- » How to Save Without a Sale
- » Banking with Hope Credit Union



Bankwork\$ Class in Session | Oct. 2024



Participants Prepare for Careers in Banking



98—Participants engaged in wellness sessions within the month.

49—Milestones earned = **\$19,600** in financial wellness.

We appreciate our supportive partners who assisted by organizing and facilitating financial wellness opportunities for GROWWTH Participants. All classes were offered online with GROWWTH staff present as moderators. Participants had the opportunity to gain valuable information, ask questions and receive resources for immediate use.

MONEY MANAGEMENT IN MAY INSTRUCTORS:

- » Karen Madlock, *Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center*
- » Molly Polatty, *Shelby County Trustee*
- » JC Yopez, *Hope Credit Union*
- » Dr. Rita Green, *GGreen ADult Education Services LLC (GRADES)*

Youth Wellness and Enrichment

In April 2024, GROWWTH launched Youth Wellness and Enrichment Supportive Services. The program allows families to use up to \$2,000 per household per program year to cover the cost of activities for their children. A wide range of enrichment and wellness activities are covered including tutoring, sports, school clubs and memberships, summer camps, enrichment camps, creative arts, and more.



“Seeing participants coming in and having their problems resolved. Seeing a participant attain a high-quality job or complete their certification training. I know then, we are doing the work that has been set forth for us to do.”

—Jasmine Lewis
Lead Case Manager

Microbusiness Bootcamp

GROWWTH will help create or grow 30 small businesses in the West Tennessee region. Eligible Participants who are accepted into the Microbusiness Bootcamp, can apply for up to \$50,000 to invest into their business. The program is made possible through partnerships with Community LIFT, River City Capital and the Crews Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Memphis.

20—Small business registrations in Tennessee funded by GROWWTH.

43—Individuals accepted into GROWWTH Microbusiness Bootcamp, a 6-week training program.

18—Participants have been approved for funding to date (Cohorts 1 & 2).

16—Participants began Cohort 3, completing classes in November 2024.

GROWWTH MICROBUSINESS SHOWCASE | SEPT. 2024



Corey with Impeccable Taste



Tina with Between Girlfriends



Brittany with Be Royalti jewelry

“

After successfully completing the cohort, my dream of becoming a business owner is now a reality.”

—Shandrekia C.
Participant
GROWWTH



American Job Center staff recruiting in
Brownsville, Tennessee | April 2024

Workforce Innovations

Partner Spotlight

Workforce Innovations, Inc., on behalf of the Northwest and Southwest Tennessee Workforce Boards, has seen tremendous benefits to hundreds of low-income parents in the 17-county region because of the GROWWTH program. Since the program launched, 241 individuals have participated in GROWWTH in the nine Northwest counties and 275 have participated in the eight Southwest counties.

“We are grateful to the University of Memphis and the Tennessee Department of Human Services for allowing us to serve as a partner in this wonderful program to bring these services to our region.”

–Jennifer Bane
Executive Director
Workforce Innovations, Inc.

By incorporating GROWWTH services into the American Job Center (AJC) network throughout the region, eligible individuals can receive streamlined services from multiple programs through one staff member. This braiding of services and resources allows for a comprehensive approach to meeting parents’ needs.

GROWWTH’s innovative workforce readiness academy, unique milestone payments, and wrap-around supportive services not only help individuals overcome traditional barriers, like transportation, that may prevent them from entering and remaining in the workforce, but they also provide support and encouragement in other aspects of their lives, such as housing, mental health, and personal well-being. We are grateful to the University of Memphis and the Tennessee Department of Human Services for allowing us to serve as a partner in this wonderful program to bring these services to our region.



Impact Spotlights

Stories of Transformation and Triumph

The GROWWTH program is more than just an opportunity—it's a transformative experience that equips individuals with the tools, resources, and support they need to overcome challenges, achieve their goals, and thrive personally and professionally.

In this series of Impact Spotlights, we're proud to share the journeys of individuals who have embraced the chance to rewrite their stories. From discovering new career paths and achieving long-held dreams to finding renewed confidence and purpose, these stories reflect the heart of what GROWWTH stands for: empowering parents to rise above obstacles and reach their full potential.

Through dedication, resilience, and the guidance of the GROWWTH team, these participants have turned aspirations into accomplishments. Whether it's earning a degree, starting a business, or finding meaningful employment, each story is a testament to the impact of investing in people and their futures.

We invite you to read their journeys, celebrate their successes, and be inspired by the incredible transformations they've experienced. Together, we're building stronger individuals, stronger families, and a stronger community.

***Pictured:** Rico, a single father of six kids, understands the value of a high-quality job and sustainable career path. Rico enrolled in our GROWWTH program and learned to ask the right questions when applying for positions. He's now empowered to start his own remodeling and welding business to care for his young family.*

Embracing Growth and New Opportunities



JUSTIN

Participant
GROWWTH

“I was looking for an opportunity for employment. I was struggling to find companies as well as be competitive enough for the ongoing changes in our society from tech to finance. Whenever I did apply, I was not entirely sure what I was getting myself into. As I was being debriefed on what GROWWTH was about, I was very excited to have an opportunity to go to school for a higher paying skillset. I was always limited to doing sales, medical or some labor-intensive work despite being talented in other areas. I didn’t have any authentic certifications to highlight my abilities.

I had to move to Bolivar, TN in 2019 whenever I began working on my own software startup servicing the flooring industry. COVID hit and I found myself going through a difficult breakup with the mother of my children after 10 years of being together. I spent a year and half weeping and finding myself. When I decided to pursue a career in software development and cybersecurity, I knew I had no way to cover the cost for the CompTIA certifications. After my first meeting with GROWWTH, I honestly was not expecting to have

those certifications offered. When I was told to select my courses, I was even more shocked I was able to grab a bundle. Now, I can get more than one certification, giving me a good competitive edge entering this industry.

I think GROWWTH offering the milestone payments was one of the coolest experiences I’ve ever had. Right now, I am looking forward to studying for my exams. I am currently working on a few projects of my own while I continue with my career in information technology. One of my goals I mentioned to GROWWTH was to write a book and start my own business again. I use about 5 to 10 different AI systems daily to help me achieve this goal. I do it for my sons and for them to have an inherited legacy.

Thank you, GROWWTH, and thank you to all the staff that’s been patient with me and friendly, always ready to help.”

From Setback to Comeback



PIERRE

Participant
GROWWTH

Pierre has been making strides toward personal and professional growth since enrolling in our program.

“After becoming disabled because of congenital heart failure since 2017, I’ve found it impossible to secure employment in my field of 15 years. I needed a transition and the GROWWTH Program provided just that. For the last several years I’ve felt like I was wasting away, but GROWWTH offered me a path forward. This opportunity renewed my sense of purpose.”

As part of his journey, Pierre began pursuing industry-recognized CompTIA certifications, including A+, Network+, and Security+. These certifications equip him with essential IT skills and opportunities in technology-driven industries. Through the GROWWTH Program, Pierre has been able to access the resources and support needed to excel in his credential training.

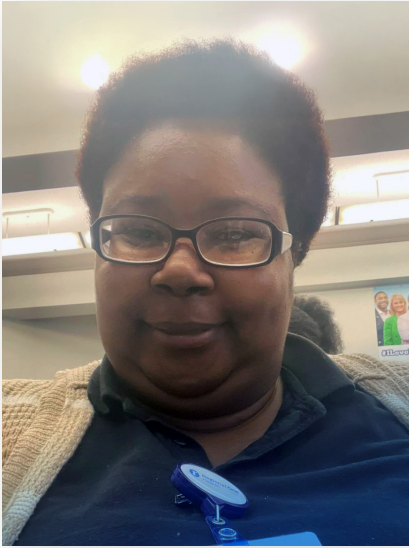
Building on his newfound skills and confidence, Pierre participated in the Fall 2024 City Hackathon in Memphis, from November 15 to 17 at University of Memphis’ FedEx Institute of Technology. This 36-hour event brought

together over 100 creative and technical volunteers to develop innovative solutions to civic challenges, including improving transportation for job access.

“I’m working on my resume, taking part on side projects and even applied to Elon Musk’s new data center. After receiving my certification, I want to work in cyber security becoming self-sufficient and no longer rely on disability benefits. As a single father with two daughters in high school, I want to make sure they have everything they need. I want to set a strong example of perseverance for them.”

Pierre’s journey is a testament to how the GROWWTH Program empowers individuals to achieve both personal development and community impact. His accomplishments highlight the transformative power of education, collaboration, and innovation.

Pathway to Patient Care



LAGUSTA

Participant
GROWWTH

Before GROWWTH, I was a stay-home parent in between jobs. Then, I found GROWWTH surfing Facebook. I read more about it, which sounded like something I could do. I decided to enroll and with the information I gathered from the enrollment seminar, it helped me decide my career outlook. The program

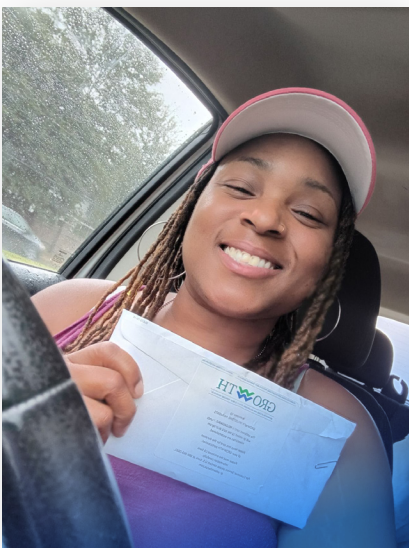
helped me with parenting, how to deal with people and pursuing higher education.

I'm looking forward to being in the medical field. With GROWWTH's support, I'll be able to pursue my LPN degree and work in a clinic or hospital. I look forward to working in an environment that's calm and professional.



With GROWWTH's support, I'll be able to pursue my LPN degree and work in a clinic or hospital."

Focused on the Future



DEIDRA

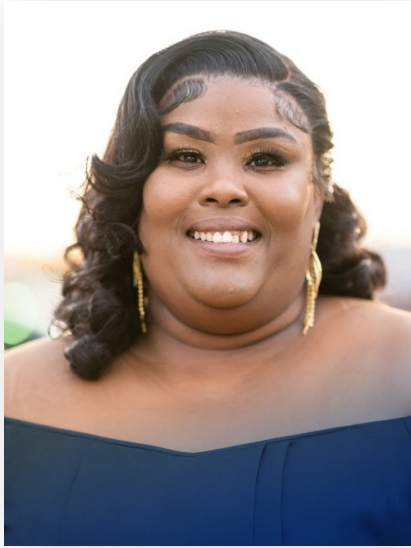
Participant
GROWWTH

I learned about GROWWTH when it was launched in 2022 and that I would be a good candidate. My goal was to finish school. At the time, I was working multiple jobs, and it felt like I was in a dead-end with my career choice. I found out I fit the criteria to get help and resources to achieve my goals.

better about future planning. It was also good having someone check in on me. I'm looking forward to moving forward in my career at the Internal Revenue Service and utilize my associate's degree a little bit more. Within the next two years I want to get my bachelor's degree.

GROWWTH was extremely helpful in motivating me, building confidence to know there was help available. It helped me financially with the milestone payments. It helped me get a little bit

A Mother's Journey to Achievement



SHANDREKIA

Participant
GROWWTH

“The program is life-changing and rare. It feels incredible to have someone in your corner, supporting and rooting for your success.”

I am a 36-year-old mother of three. Currently, I am unemployed but completing my externship with Davita Renal Care.

Before joining the GROWWTH program, I was merely a statistic, allowing my past to dictate my future. Stability was elusive, and everything I aspired to achieve seemed out of reach. I settled for dead-end jobs, barely making ends meet, but deep down, I yearned for more.

Last year, I entered the GROWWTH program with the determination to seize every opportunity presented to me. This program funded my return to school, covering not only tuition but also study guides, books, and the state board test.

GROWWTH provided me with a once-in-a-lifetime chance, and as a result, I now hold a Clinical Medical Assistant Certification. Additionally, I had the privilege of participating in

the Microbusiness Bootcamp. After successfully completing the cohort, my dream of becoming a business owner is now a reality. I am the proud owner of Purnell's Pro-Cleaning Services.

To anyone considering joining GROWWTH, I would advise you to seize this opportunity without hesitation. The program is life-changing and rare.

It feels incredible to have someone in your corner, supporting and rooting for your success. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to grow with GROWWTH.

Building Communities, One Dream at a Time



ELLA

Participant
GROWWTH



GROWWTH helped me realize a dream!”

Ella has worked in the real estate finance industry over four decades, mainly because it has never felt like work.

“When I considered retiring, I realized my passion for the industry is still very strong and my desire to continue growing, learning, supporting and participating in the industry is equally strong.” With the support of the Crews Microbusiness Center and as a Cohort 2 participant with GROWWTH, Ella transitioned into solopreneurship in April 2024, becoming owner and principal of ECH Consulting Services, LLC.

According to Ella, ECH Consulting Services aims to foster sustainable growth in homeownership, estate planning, and cultural collaboration within historically underserved communities. Their vision focuses on enhancing diversity and inclusiveness in the real estate finance and sales industries.

On June 22, during National Homeownership Month, ECH Consulting Services

collaborated and hosted a Homebuyer Expo with THDA, NAREB, and sponsored participants Century C21 Action Realty, Madison County District 2 Councilman Johnny Dodd, First Bank, First Horizon, Hiller, Bank of England, Leaders Credit Union, and Regions Bank. According to Ella, “Several attendees expressed a desire to be homeowners within the next 12-24 months. We will work with them to pursue this goal.” In addition to helpful information, the expo also included free lunch, prizes, and a Proclamation presented from the Madison County Mayor’s office by Councilman Richard Donnell.”

Ella expressed her gratitude to GROWWTH for the support, opportunity, and resources. “GROWWTH helped me realize a dream!”

A Journey to Empowerment



LATONYA

Participant
GROWWTH

“

Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to advocating for children and families.... When it came time for me to seek advancement, I initially felt unworthy.”

I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Growth Program for the invaluable support, education, tools, and skills you provide to individuals striving for personal and professional growth.

Your commitment to enhancing the lives of participants is truly commendable. I would especially like to thank Jasmine and Stephanie for fostering such a welcoming environment. Their encouragement made it easy for me to inquire about all aspects of the program. I am thrilled to share that I have secured employment, and while it has taken some time to adjust, I am filled with joy and gratitude for the role this program has played in my journey.

Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to advocating for children and families across Shelby County. When it came time for me to seek advancement,

I initially felt unworthy. However, the support from your team made the process not only manageable but also empowering. I will be forwarding my employment letter to you as a token of my appreciation.

Once again, thank you for everything you have done to help me become the best version of myself.

Purpose and Possibility



JESSICA

Participant
GROWWTH

Jessica received household items and gifts with assistance from GROWWTH after her home caught fire.

I personally never thought in my wildest dreams that I would ever have this kind of opportunity. It has been my dream, since I learned how to weld in high school, to own my own shop.

As a younger person, I didn't have the dedication or drive to really aim for this goal. I was young and ignorant. I did gain many skills on my path, but nothing as far as being a potential business owner, except what I knew I didn't want to do if I ever did. There were many, many instances where I was sexually harassed and I knew if I had my own shop, it would be a safe space for whoever came to work for me.

Now, because of GROWWTH and the amazing people who are behind the scenes running everything, and the dedicated teaches, and whoever came up with this beautiful concept, my life long dreams are actually within my grasp. It is a feeling unlike any other and I hope that this program can continue in the future.

To know that I have been given the opportunity to learn the skills needed to successfully own and operate a business of my own has been the most exhilarating,

freeing, and wholesome feeling I've ever known.

I have a renewed sense of pride and hope for my future. I feel like my life has a good purpose and direction again after years of struggle. This program, and specifically, the micro business bootcamp, AND the people who facilitate it have been a *shining* example of Christ's message of love for your fellow man. We are supposed to help and support each other, love each other, and be kind and generous of spirit, and they all have been that in more ways than I could have ever dreamed.

I hope that this program continues into the future so that others are able to have the same blessings that I have received: knowledge, guidance, compassion, direction, and purpose.



GROWWTH Care Coordinators provided families with wellness toolkits to take home.

A Place to Call Home

New Office Opening

In 2024, GROWWTH embarked on a transformative journey to better serve the Greater Memphis community. What began as a small team of four staff members had grown into a thriving organization of 26, necessitating a larger and more functional space. This growth aligned perfectly with GROWWTH's mission to provide support, resources, and opportunities for participants and their families.

The search for a new home led GROWWTH to an empty bookstore. In early 2024, renovations began to transform the space into a vibrant and welcoming hub for the community. By July, the team officially moved into the newly renovated space, marking a new chapter for the program.



Walker Avenue Site Prior to Renovation



Renovated Meeting Space

This new space was designed with purpose. It now serves as a training and instructional site, a meeting hub for participants and staff, and a central location for events and workshops. The GROWWTH team envisioned the space as more than just an office—it was meant to be a place where participants and their families could connect, grow, and thrive.

In October 2024, GROWWTH proudly hosted an Open House to celebrate the new space and welcome the community. The event provided participants and their families an opportunity to meet with Case Managers and Care Coordinators, explore the facility, and experience the resources available.

The evening was lively and filled with activities for all ages. Families enjoyed food, music, crafts, face painting, and games. GROWWTH Care Coordinators distributed wellness toolkits to support families beyond the event. Over the course of the evening, GROWWTH welcomed 43 families, 93 children, and 18 staff members to celebrate this milestone.

The Open House was more than a celebration; it was a testament to GROWWTH's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive community. With the new space, the program is better equipped to offer in-person assistance through the GROWWTH Academy, host hiring events and training sessions, and provide the resources participants need to succeed.

This new chapter represents GROWWTH's dedication to building a brighter future for Greater Memphis families.



Face Painting Session at GROWWTH Open House



Family in Costume at GROWWTH Open House



Front Door to New Walker Office

Financials

EXPENSES FOR PARTICIPANTS (NOV 2023-OCT 2024)

GROWWTH Academy Milestone Payments	\$425,600
Employment Milestone Payments (30-Day / 6-Month and High Quality)	\$51,710
Training Stipends Awarded	\$335,400
Training Program Tuition Paid	\$933,302
Childcare Assistance	\$19,624
Supportive Services / Emergency Funds	\$111,869
Transportation	\$14,325
Family Wellness	\$55,716
Auto Repairs	\$11,205
Y2 TOTAL:	\$1,958,753

Meet Our Staff

LEADERSHIP



Tracy Robinson
*Executive Director,
Center for Regional
Economic Enrichment*



Stephanie Godwin-Chu
*Project Director,
GROWWTH*



Jasmine Lewis
*Lead Case Manager,
GROWWTH*

FINANCE

Liz Buck,
Business Officer
Veronica Allen,
Finance & Data Clerk

CASE MANAGERS

Makiyah Bowens
Zacarya Bratcher
Andrea Davis
Toni Marlow
Taylor Rossell
LaVon Thompson
Nyesha Williams
Raven Wilson

INTAKE ASSISTANTS

Adrienne Hudson
Mar Mata
Elizabeth Sloane

ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING SPECIALISTS

Matthew Ferguson,
*Training Specialist /
Quality Assurance*
Precious Jennings
Adrienne Turner

COORDINATORS

Matthew Breazeale,
*Communications
Coordinator*
Sherhunda Gentry,
*Engagement
Coordinator*

BUSINESS SERVICES

Keva Irvin-Edwards
Tiffany Lewis

CARE COORDINATORS

Rae Finch
Damonique Miller
Jamie Pearson
Victoria Rayner
Connie Stanton
Bishop Wilson



Pictured: GROWWTH Staff at Job Corp Career Fair | March 2024

Acknowledgments

CONTRACT PARTNERSHIPS

- » Community Lift
- » Economic Opportunities
- » MyCityRides
- » Workforce Innovations (*American Job Centers of Northwest and Southwest Tennessee*)
- » YMCA of Memphis & The Mid-South

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- » The American Job Centers of Greater Memphis
- » Church-Families and Communities Together (C-FACT)
- » Crews Center for Entrepreneurship
- » Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center
- » The Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce
- » Hire Local 901
- » Hope Credit Union
- » Hopeworks
- » Memphis Shelby County Schools
- » Neighborhood Christian Center
- » Opportunity R3
- » Sister Supply
- » The SMART Center

GROWWTH ACADEMY FEEDBACK EVALUATION

Jonathan Bennett, Ph.D.
*Center for Community
Research and Evaluation*
University of Memphis

IN MEMORIUM

Dr. Richard L. Irwin
*Former Executive Dean
College of Professional
& Liberal Studies (CPLS)
Center for Regional Economic
Enrichment (CREE)*
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