

WORKING TOWARD A HEALTHIER, WEALTHIER JACKSON FOR EVERYONE

The Refill Jackson Initiative
2020 Annual Report



THE
REFILL JACKSON
INITIATIVE



VISION

A healthier, wealthier Jackson
for everyone

MISSION

To empower young adults
seeking an improved quality of
life through tailored support
and job training

VALUES

Accountability
Respect
Open-mindedness
Perseverance



DEAR FRIEND OF REFILL:

2020 forced us to go deep—in search of ways to feel and be safe amidst a global pandemic, to better understand our neighbor and all that was happening in our country, to remain connected to those who matter most.

These actions in our personal lives were also driving forces in our professional lives. Like every other non-essential business in Mississippi, the Refill Jackson Initiative (RJI) closed with the statewide shutdown, from mid-March to mid-May. As the state began to reopen, we knew it was imperative that we also reopen—while federal and state governments were providing aid and assistance, we recognized that the economically insecure young adults whom we train would only be made more insecure as a result of the pandemic and any resulting economic fallout.

And so we went deep. We researched and put into practice expert advice for operating safely and reducing the risk of transmission. We worked with fewer participants (or members, as we call them) to allow for social distancing and safe classroom participation, and with fewer members in each cohort, we had more time to learn about and address each member's unique barriers to the workforce. We strengthened partnerships with nonprofits across the city as we banded together to ensure that those we work with were not lost or left behind. We kept in touch with alumni to ensure that they still had access to employment and training opportunities.

Each eight-week training program is designed to empower our members with the confidence, motivation, and skills necessary for success in work and in adulthood. In the classroom, members explore their interests and how those interests align with career paths; write a resume; practice interview skills; and learn to search for jobs and manage their money. Working one-on-one with staff members, they set personal and professional goals, break them down into actionable steps, and then complete those steps. During on-the-job training, members practice their communication skills and their ability to work on a team, incorporate feedback, and show initiative.

We hope that you'll keep this framework in mind as you read about our successes in 2020 and the ways that we've gone deep to improve the services that Refill provides to our city's young people.

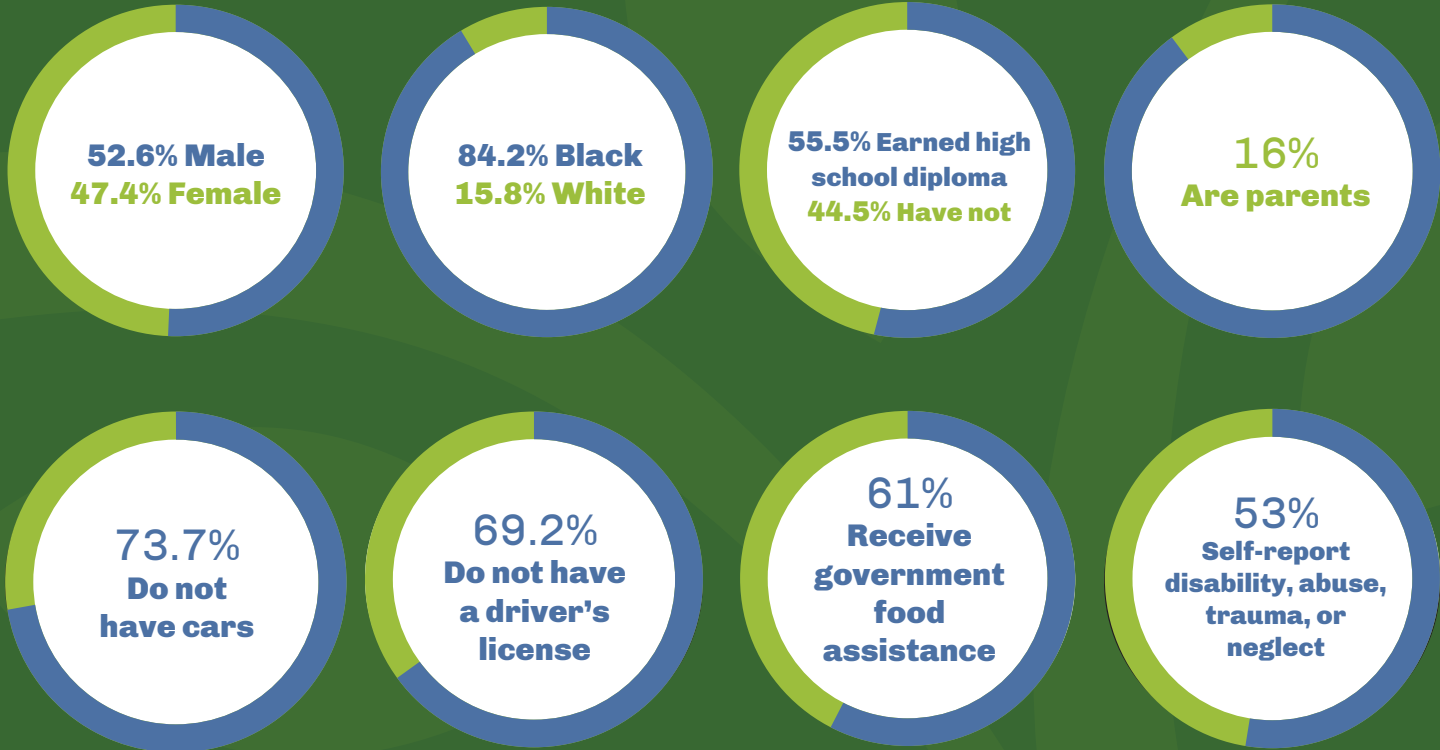
As a recipient of this annual report, you have supported us in some way—perhaps financially or through an in-kind donation, maybe as a volunteer, or as someone who has given advice that helped shape our program. Thank you for staying connected to our mission and continuing to support our members. Without you, this work would not be possible.

Jeff Good
Chair of the Board

Carol Burger
Vice Chair of the Board

Jordan Butler
VP of Education & Training

2021 STATISTICS



IN 2020, RJI TRAINED 38
YOUNG ADULTS.



76% graduation rate



76% of graduates pursuing employment or education



24% of graduates completed paid internship



62% employed



10% in school

SUCCESS STORIES

Actions matter, and so do second chances.

From the first day of training, we teach our members the benefits of diligence and hard work. Through a cycle of instruction, practice, and feedback, they learn that meaningful actions—such as getting to work on time, communicating clearly and respectfully, and showing initiative—add up over time to build a reputation of reliability, determination, and commitment. And that reputation earned over time is what can foster a willingness in others to extend a second chance. This lesson is not an easy one to learn—some can learn it abstractly, through discussion; others must learn it through experience.

Two of our graduates, Ja'Qon Clincy and Camille Fuller, can attest to the redemptive power of a second chance. Camille began training with RJI initially on August 17 but was dismissed because of behavioral issues. After receiving some tough feedback, Camille took the next month to work on her behavior with a therapist and to independently study for her high school equivalency and driver's license. This dedication to improvement secured Camille a place in our cohort that began on October 19. During training, she earned her GED and driver's license, and since graduating in December, Camille has successfully maintained employment at a restaurant in Ridgeland.

After an incident with friends led to detention and pending charges, Ja'Qon knew that he needed to make better, more deliberate choices for his future. This realization led him to enroll in an online university and RJI's training program. During training, Ja'Qon worked hard, earning the respect of the supervisors at his on-the-job training site, which in turn helped him secure a full-time job at the Good Samaritan Center following graduation. Ja'Qon's efforts to improve himself influenced the court's decision to reduce his felony charges to misdemeanors, and if Ja'Qon meets the terms of his probation, the charges will be removed from his record.



EXTERNAL OJT SITES

The COVID-19 pandemic forced almost every business across the U.S. to change its business model, and RJI was no exception.

During the statewide shutdown, RJI and our full-service restaurant Refill Café closed. When the state began to reopen in May 2020, few people were commuting downtown for work or leaving their homes for lunch. Because Refill Cafe existed first and foremost as the setting for RJI members to practice employability skills on-the-job, we were faced with a serious question: How would RJI accomplish its mission if Refill Cafe had very few customers to serve?

Over the summer, we experimented with conducting on-the-job training (OJT) at two external sites. Members worked in Stewpot's food pantry and community kitchen; they also prepared and served the meals for We Will Go's summer camp for kids. Because of the success of this model, we decided to close Refill Cafe and transition OJT exclusively to external sites.

Members are now assigned to one of five OJT sites: The Book Rack, the restaurants of Mangia Bene Restaurant Management Group, St. Dominic Hospital, Stewpot Community Services, or Whole Foods. Depending on their ability and maturity levels, members are either accompanied by a staff member who provides real-time support and feedback, or they work independently at the OJT site and are evaluated by an OJT site employee who is trained in our workforce competencies.

This shift from conducting OJT onsite in a more controlled environment proved beneficial for two reasons: (1) members can be placed at sites that are more in line with their interests (i.e., food service, healthcare, retail, social work) and (2) good performance at an OJT site can turn into a real job offer.

Members are evaluated weekly on five competencies: dress code and personal hygiene, response to supervision, communication, initiative, and teamwork. OJT is an essential component of our training model as members are given the opportunity to practice and develop these competencies that are learned and discussed during class in a real-world setting.



LOOKING AHEAD

At RJI, we take our mission to heart. If our goal is to empower young adults with the skills necessary for success in work and in life, we must look at each facet of their lives. As our core work continues, we also continue to explore partnerships and solutions to ensure that our members are healthy, safe, and educated and have the resources to feed, clothe, house, and transport themselves.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

We have recently begun working with Open Arms Healthcare Center so that our members have access to affordable physical and mental healthcare. We also help our members navigate Hinds Behavioral Health Services and bring in experts who explain the health insurance marketplace and assist interested members with finding and enrolling in a health insurance plan. For those members who have vision problems, Rogers Family Eye Care provides free exams and glasses.

Many of our members experience dental pain. One of our goals for 2021 and beyond is to identify affordable dentists willing to work with our members.

EDUCATION

Fifty-six percent of our members have their high school diploma or equivalency, which means that the remaining 44 percent are not qualified for many entry-level jobs. Earning a high school equivalency is not an easy feat, especially for those young adults who left school in the eighth or ninth grade.

Members who wish to pursue their GED are given a tailored course of study after completing the GED Ready Practice Test. However, our eight-week training period is not long enough to prepare our average member to take the GED. We are actively exploring ways to address this barrier to employment with the Mississippi Community College Board.

Thanks to the Governor's Emergency Education Response Fund, we are in the process of revising and expanding our curriculum to include a more robust and intentional approach to socioemotional learning so that our young adults have the cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills necessary for personal and professional success.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

Our members often enter training without their basic needs being met. Many do not have the clothing required for an interview, and almost 60 percent qualify for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Because of donations of both cash and clothing, we are able to assist members with getting the professional clothes needed to make a good impression at an interview. Our goal by the end of the year is to ensure that each member leaves the program with one professional outfit, including shoes.

Our social workers assist members with their applications to SNAP and ensure that their enrollment stays up-to-date. For those who do not wish to enroll in or do not qualify for SNAP, we work with community partners like Voice of Calvary Ministries to get them food as needed.

HOUSING

Almost 20 percent of members are housing insecure—meaning that they have recently faced homelessness, are “couch surfing” with family or friends, or live in situations where it is not unlikely that they will be kicked out. Our social services team works closely with organizations like Southern Christian Services and Stewpot Community Services to address housing needs.

TRANSPORTATION

Our members' most common and most acute need is access to reliable transportation. Jackson is a car-reliant city because alternatives like public transportation, walking, biking, and rideshare are not reliable or affordable. We are in the final stages of launching a comprehensive transportation program that will ensure members: (1) can get to and from training and employment, (2) possess the skills and knowledge to operate a vehicle and enter confidently into car ownership, and (3) have access to reputable businesses and non-predatory loans for purchasing a car.

FINANCIALS

Income Statement
for the period of 01/01/2020 to 12/31/2020*

INCOME

Donations	
Individual/Small Business Contributions	\$115,968.28
Corporate Contributions	\$255.00
Pledge Revenue	\$77,520.00
Restaurant Donations	\$2,562.08
Total Donations	\$196,304.36
Non-Government Grant Revenue	
Corporate Grant Income	\$3,000.00
Foundation/Trust Grant Income	\$233,449.92
Government Grant Revenue	
Federal Grant Income	\$410,314.68
State Grant Income	\$2,000.00
Total Grant Revenue	\$648,764.60
Program Revenue	
Total Restaurant Sales	\$16,645.70
Program Service Fees	\$1,707.00
Total Program Revenue	\$18,352.70
Other Income	
Total Other Income	\$10,140.59
Total Income	\$873,562.25

EXPENSES

Org Salaries & Benefits	
Total Org Salaries & Benefits	\$413,563.38
Restaurant Labor	
Total Restaurant Labor	\$50,111.38
Costs of Goods Sold	
Total Costs of Goods Sold	\$11,636.74
Contract Services	
Total Contract Services	\$86,835.70
Direct Cohort Expenses	
Total Direct Cohort Expenses	\$84,299.38
Operating Expenses	
Total Operating Expenses	\$20,920.31
Facility & Equipment Expenses	
Total Utilities	\$17,123.08
Total Facility & Equipment Expenses	\$87,118.20
Travel & Meeting Expenses	
Total Travel & Meeting Expenses	\$3,108.66
Total Other Expenses	\$36,977.93
Total Expense	\$794,571.68
Net Income (Loss)	\$78,990.57



DONORS

\$1,000 TO \$9,999

BancorpSouth
BankPlus
Kirk and Cindy Carraway
Century Club Charities
Citizens National Bank
Toni Cooley
Wayne and Ouida
Drinkwater
Fountain Family Foundation
Jeff and Debbie Good
Dr. Bobby Graham and
Dr. Sharon Martin
Matthias Krenn and Emily
Stanfield
Lucas Foundation for Better
Living
Molly MacWade
Jerry and Sue McBride
Mike McRee
Luther and Janet Ott
Emerson and Judy Robinson
Randy Sanders
St. Andrew's Cathedral
St. James' Episcopal Church

\$10,000 TO \$19,999

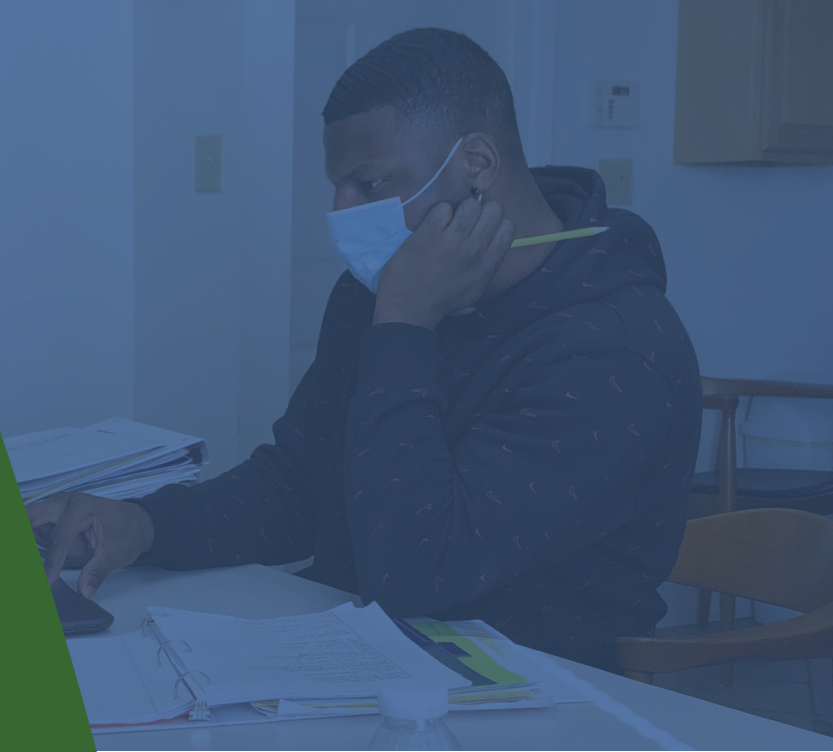
Atmos Energy
Entergy
Kelton Michael Heidelberg
Trustmark National Bank

\$20,000 TO \$49,999

Oxfam America
State Workforce Investment Board
Walker Foundation

\$50,000 OR MORE

James and Donna Barksdale
Central Mississippi Planning and
Development District
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Anonymous
Anonymous



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Amber Parker
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Devin Winsett
Member Advocate and Instructor