



The Economic Impact of Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina



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Executive Summary



- Goodwill Industries is a U.S. business headquartered in Derwood, Maryland with a primary mission to facilitate equitable access to job training, education, and employment in the communities it serves in order to help all residents maximize their potential and provide opportunities for success. Founded in 1902, Goodwill has since expanded across the United States to form a broad-based network of locally governed affiliates that can tailor programs to meet local needs.
- In South Carolina, this mission is advanced through two regional affiliates. Palmetto Goodwill serves 18 counties across the Lowcountry and eastern South Carolina, while Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina serves 16 counties across much of central and western South Carolina. Both organizations operate a network of retail stores, donation centers, and workforce service programs that generate revenue to support job training, career placement, education assistance, and wrap-around services for individuals facing employment challenges.
- In addition to meeting the needs of these local communities, these activities also generate a significant economic footprint within each service region. The day-to-day business operations of each Goodwill affiliate generates jobs and incomes for local residents, which increases demand through new spending activity at local businesses on a variety of goods and services. Moreover, by providing employment services that offer job training and connections to employers, these affiliates help individuals to enter or re-enter the workforce, which leads to higher earnings and reduced reliance on public assistance that generate additional economic benefits.
- Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina served more than 23,000 individuals through various job training, career placement, education assistance, and other community services in 2024 alone, and has served nearly 250,000 individuals since 2017. This includes more than 10,000 individuals successfully placed directly into employment in 2024 with average starting wages of approximately \$16/hour and 36 hours of work per week.
- The total estimated economic impact of Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina is \$638.4 million annually. This represents the total value of all goods and services associated (either directly or indirectly) with the economic activities of both organizations. This impact also corresponds to approximately 15,000 jobs in the combined 34-county service region that would not exist otherwise.
- The specific economic impact of Palmetto Goodwill on its 18-county service region is \$309.8 million, which corresponds to 6,157 jobs and \$214.5 million in labor income for local residents. In a similar fashion, the total estimated impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina on its 16-county service region is estimated to be \$328.6 million, which corresponds to 8,780 jobs and \$311.3 million in labor income.



Section I

Introduction

Goodwill Industries is a U.S. business headquartered in Derwood, Maryland with a primary mission of providing equitable access to job training, education, and employment in the communities it serves in order to help all residents maximize their potential and provide opportunities for success. Goodwill Industries was founded by Reverend Edgar J. Helms in Boston, Massachusetts in 1902. Helms' business model of serving the community started when he began hiring people who faced significant barriers to employment (e.g., the poor, recent immigrants) to repair and resell used clothing and household items that he collected. The revenue generated from the sale of these items not only supported his employees, but also other community services he organized that were largely geared towards job training and job placement for local residents. His model of "not charity, but a chance" became the guiding philosophy of Goodwill.

Throughout the 20th century, Goodwill expanded across the United States to form a network of locally governed affiliates. Each affiliate tailors programming to local needs to include job training, employment placement, vocational rehabilitation, and other support services. The sale of donated goods through retail stores continues to be the primary funding mechanism for Goodwill organizations.

In South Carolina, this mission is advanced through two regional affiliates. Palmetto Goodwill serves 18 counties across the Lowcountry and the eastern half of South Carolina while Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina serves much of the central and western portions of the state. Both organizations operate a network of retail stores, donation centers, and workforce service programs that generate revenue to support job training, career placement, education assistance, and wrap-around services for individuals facing employment challenges – all of which support a sizable economic footprint that extends statewide.

The direct, day-to-day operations of these Goodwill affiliates generate jobs and incomes for local residents, which then increases demand through new spending activity at local businesses on a variety of goods and services. In addition, by providing employment services that offer job training and connections to employers, these affiliates help individuals to enter or re-enter the workforce, which leads to higher earnings and reduced reliance on public assistance that generate additional economic benefits.

The purpose of this study is to specifically document the economic impact of Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina on their respective service areas as well as on South Carolina as a whole. The results will highlight both the direct and indirect economic activity generated through each organization's business operations as well as how mission-driven workforce investments translate into additional measurable gains for local and regional economies through job placement efforts.



Section II

Economic Impact Methodology

The economic impact of any organization is based on how it increases the demand for goods and services in its local region that would not have existed otherwise. These impacts are typically broken down into direct, indirect, and induced effects. The direct effect of an organization refers to an initial change in local economic activity that results from expenditures that the organization itself makes within the local economy. For example, as part of their ongoing operations, organizations like Goodwill regularly purchase materials and services from local suppliers. These expenditures, in turn, increase local demand and thus stimulate additional local economic activity.

The indirect effect refers to impacts that result from additional rounds of spending that occur due to inter-industry linkages between local businesses. For example, if a Goodwill affiliate were to purchase new computer equipment or printed flyers to promote local giving, then the equipment vendor and printing vendor would experience an increase in demand, thus requiring them to purchase additional supplies and materials from their own suppliers. As a result, these vendor suppliers would also experience an increase in demand. Such additional rounds of spending continue on and ripple through the local supply chain and affect many industries in the region.

The induced effect refers to impacts that result from additional rounds of spending that occur due to increases in household income. For example, if a Goodwill affiliate were to purchase new computer equipment, this would lead to an increase in demand for the equipment vendor. As a result, some of the vendor staff may see an increase in their income levels. Part of this additional income will then be spent in the local economy on items such as food, housing, or entertainment. These industries will then see an increase in demand for their goods and services, which will lead to an increase in incomes for some of their employees, a portion of which will also be spent locally.





These successive rounds of indirect and induced spending – collectively referred to as the economic multiplier effect – eventually diminish, which allows a specific value to be calculated for each. With each round of spending, some money “leaks” out of the local economy. For example, employees generally save part of their income or spend it outside of the local region. To estimate the total economic impact of an organization economic multipliers are used. Multipliers vary depending on the size of the region, the industry, and the size of the local supplier network, and they are typically applied to measure impacts on employment, labor income, and overall economic output.

In addition to all ongoing operations, a second way in which Goodwill organizations uniquely generate new economic activity is through the additional economic contributions it makes through workforce development and job placement activities. When participants in Goodwill programs secure employment, they earn wages that provide another source of new local spending activity that, in turn, supports further economic activity through increased household spending. This also generates additional indirect and induced effects similar to those previously described for operational expenditures. In this study, this “job placement effect” is specifically modeled by using the educational attainment distribution of program participants and the median wage associated with each educational attainment level.¹

To estimate the impact of both Goodwill affiliates in this study, detailed structural models (known as input-output models) of the South Carolina economy were used, which contain specific information on economic linkages between different industries. The input-output modeling software IMPLAN was utilized in combination with other customized regional forecasting models that were developed. This allows for the inclusion of additional local data, industry knowledge, and ongoing economic growth trends. All raw data for this analysis were provided by Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina.

The structural input-output models used in this analysis estimate impacts in terms of three specific measures: economic output, employment, and labor income. Economic output reflects the dollar value of all final goods and services that can be attributed (directly or indirectly) to a Goodwill affiliate. It can also be thought of as an aggregate measure of total spending activity that results from all of the affiliate’s direct expenditures within the local economy. Because it includes all spending by consumers and businesses on both goods and services, it is an all-inclusive measure of the impact on total economic activity. Employment measures the total workforce associated with total economic output. Labor income reflects all employee compensation associated with total employment estimates, including wages, salaries, and benefits.

¹ For those with a high school diploma or less, the full value of the median wage is attributed to the organization’s employment assistance efforts. For those with some college or higher, the marginal increase in the median wage above and beyond that of a high school graduate is attributed to the organization’s assistance.

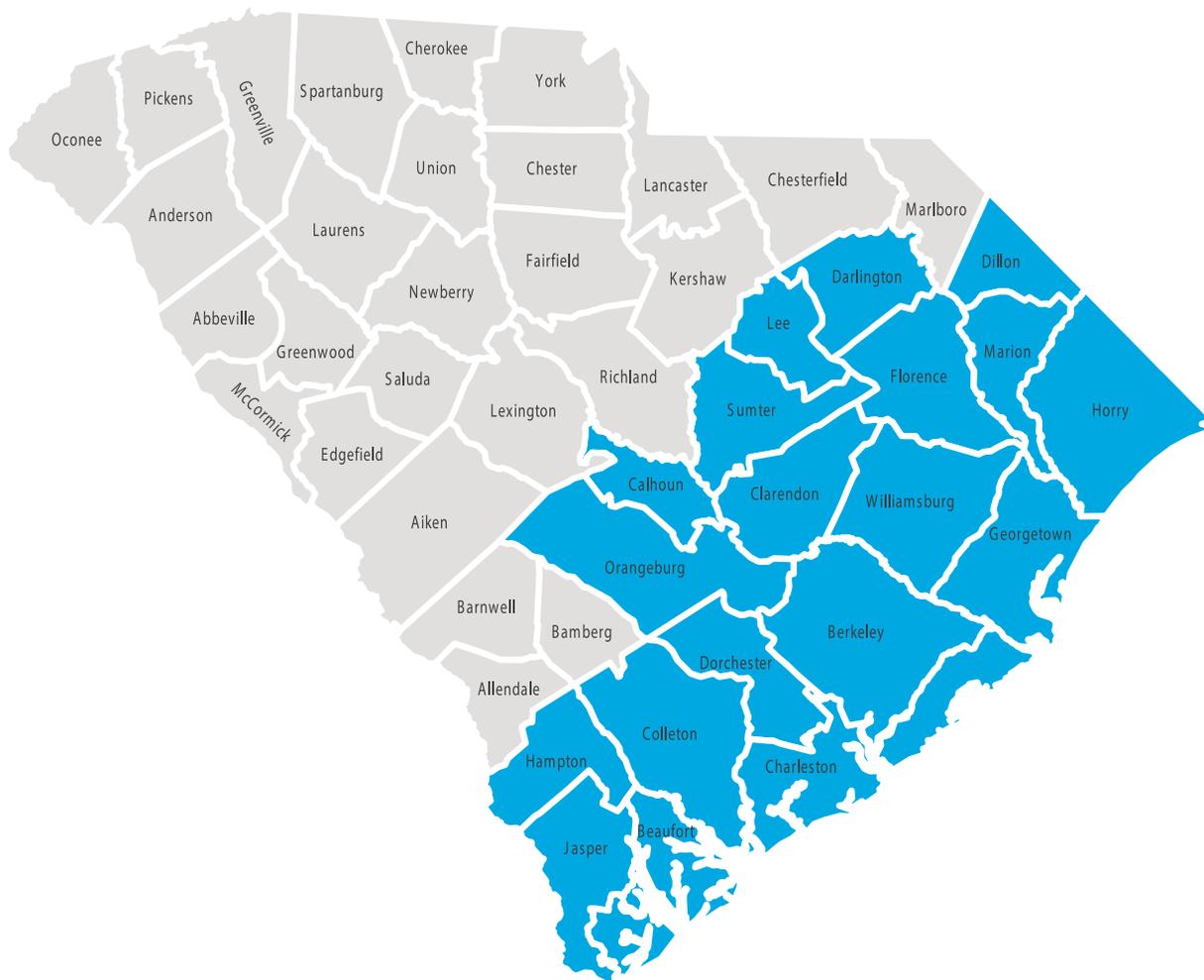
Section III

The Economic Impact of Palmetto Goodwill

Organizational Background and Individuals Served

Palmetto Goodwill traces its roots to the local affiliate Goodwill Industries of Lower South Carolina, Inc., which opened in 1979. In the years since, Palmetto Goodwill has expanded both its retail operations and workforce services, and today it serves 18 counties in the Lowcountry and coastal South Carolina region, as shown in **Figure 1**.

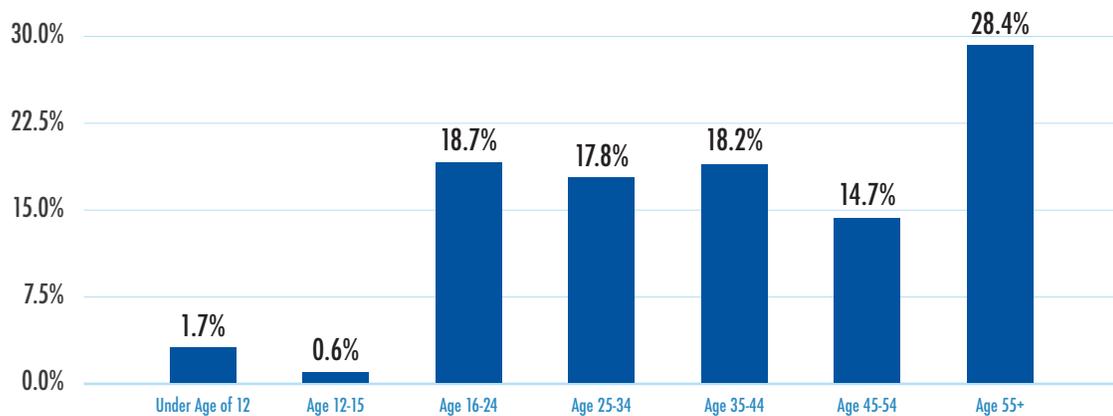
Figure 1: Palmetto Goodwill Service Area



Through its various job training, career placement, education assistance, and other community services, Palmetto Goodwill served more than **11,000 individuals** in 2024 alone and has served over **107,000 individuals** since 2017.

As of 2024, Palmetto Goodwill employed more than 1,460 individuals² across 33 retail stores, 32 donation centers, and 12 career opportunity centers. Through its various job training, career placement, education assistance, and other community services, Palmetto Goodwill served more than 11,000 individuals in 2024 alone and has served over 107,000 individuals since 2017. **Figure 2** highlights the specific age distribution of program participants in 2024. Note that approximately half (50.7%) were in the “prime working age” group of 25 to 54 years old, while 28.4 percent of those served were over the age of 55. This latter group represents a growing segment of both the regional and state population as part of a broader demographic shift in the United States towards an older population. Approximately 18.7 percent of participants were early-career workers between the ages of 16 and 24.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Palmetto Goodwill Program Participants, 2024

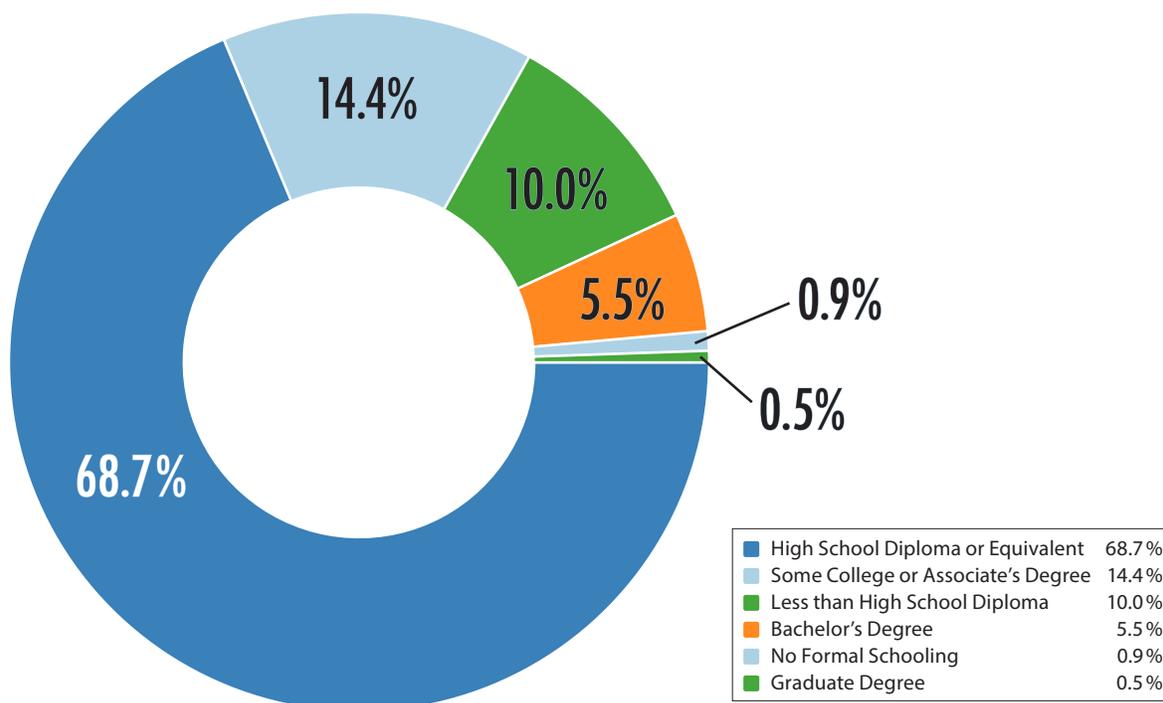


² With a mixture of full-time and part-time employment, these 1,450 individuals equate to approximately 1,011 full-time equivalent (FTEs) positions.



The majority of individuals served by Palmetto Goodwill in 2024 (68.7%) had either a high school diploma or equivalent. Approximately 10.0 percent had less than a high school education, while 5.5 percent of program participants had a bachelor's degree or higher. **Figure 3** breaks down each of these educational attainment categories.

Figure 3: Educational Attainment of Palmetto Goodwill Program Participants, 2024



Palmetto Goodwill's mission is also to serve those with disabilities, those re-entering the workforce with a criminal history, and those transitioning from military to civilian service. In 2024, approximately 1,000 veterans and 1,200 members of military families participated in Palmetto Goodwill programs. Additionally, more than 680 individuals with at least one disability and over 200 individuals with a criminal background received services through Palmetto Goodwill.



Economic Impact: Operations

Each year, Palmetto Goodwill supports thousands of South Carolinians through job training, employment services, and mission-driven retail operations. These activities not only provide individuals with opportunities to advance their careers, but also contribute significant economic value to the local region through all ongoing business activities in support of these operations. **Table 1** summarizes the economic impact of Palmetto Goodwill’s core operations, which includes the impacts of all spending activity (both labor and non-labor expenditures) made by Palmetto Goodwill within its 18-county service region.

Table 1: Economic Impact of Palmetto Goodwill’s Operations

Eighteen-County Service Region			
	Annual Employment	Annual Labor Income	Annual Total Impact
Direct Effect	1,011	\$37,748,837	\$82,807,048
Multiplier Effect	450	\$23,779,083	\$67,844,265
Total Impact	1,461	\$61,527,920	\$150,651,313

Palmetto Goodwill employs the equivalent of 1,011 full-time positions paying more than \$37.7 million in wages annually to carry out all day-to-day operations. This level of business activity generates a total, direct annual economic impact of \$82.8 million within the 18-county service area.

This level of direct economic activity also leads to additional rounds of local spending activity—known as the multiplier effect—which totals approximately \$67.8 million in additional economic output along with 450 additional jobs. These multiplier effects reflect the increased demand for goods and services of local suppliers resulting from local expenditures on the part of Palmetto Goodwill as well as the local economic activity generated across all industries that is the result of increased household spending. The combination of all direct effects and their subsequent multiplier effects leads to a total annual economic impact of approximately \$150.7 million, which supports 1,461 total jobs in the 18-county service area each year.



In a similar fashion, expanding the region of analysis statewide reveals that the total economic impact of Palmetto Goodwill increases to \$154.3 million annually, along with 1,558 jobs and over \$66.5 million in labor income. This level of economic activity includes approximately \$71.5 million that is generated through the economic multiplier effect – that is – through secondary spending that results from increased demand for local suppliers and the stimulative effects of local spending by workers. These results, which are shown in **Table 2**, highlight how the bulk of Palmetto Goodwill’s economic impact that derives from all ongoing operations (over 97 percent) takes place within the 18-county service region.

Table 2: Economic Impact of Palmetto Goodwill’s Operations

South Carolina			
	Annual Employment	Annual Labor Income	Annual Total Impact
Direct Effect	1,011	\$37,748,837	\$82,807,048
Multiplier Effect	547	\$28,780,414	\$71,531,125
Total Impact	1,558	\$66,529,251	\$154,338,173

Economic Impact: Job Placements

Palmetto Goodwill’s job placement efforts are at the heart of its mission to support economic mobility. Palmetto Goodwill provides career services ranging from resume development and interview preparation to digital literacy training and credential programs. By helping thousands of local residents secure employment each year, Palmetto Goodwill is able to help expand the local labor force and increase total household income, both of which contribute to stronger, more resilient communities.

In 2024, Palmetto Goodwill reported placing 4,013 individuals into employment, with individuals having an average starting wage of \$17 per hour and 35.1 hours per week of work. Utilizing the methodology outlined in Section II, this study estimates that this level of job placement generated \$116.7 million in new labor income in 2024.

This additional \$116.7 million in labor income is then spent by residents in the local economy on a variety of goods and services such as restaurants, medical care, housing, and entertainment. These spending levels ultimately result in higher local demand and is estimated to generate an additional economic impact of \$159.1 million in the local region, which supports approximately 683 jobs.



Annual Economic Impact



Total Annual Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Economic Output
	6,157	\$178,228,130	\$309,709,456

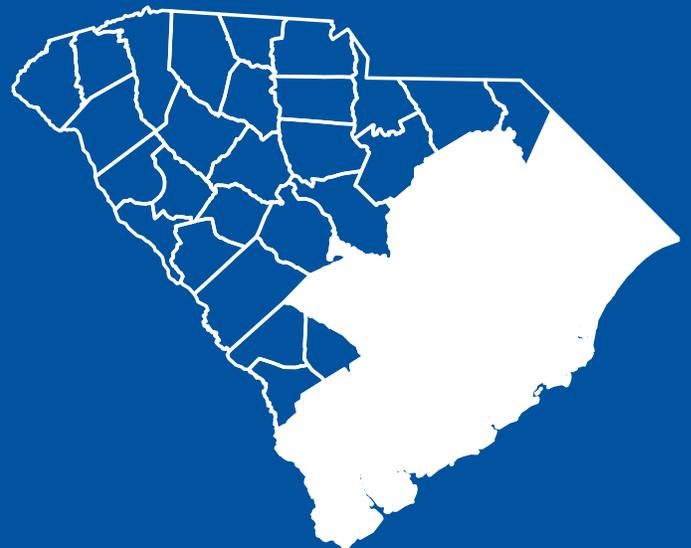


Impacts from Goodwill Operations		Employment	Labor Income	Economic Output
	Direct:	1,011	\$37,748,837	\$82,807,048
	Multiplier:	450	\$23,779,083	\$67,844,265
	Total:	1,461	\$61,527,920	\$150,651,313

Impacts from Goodwill Job Placements	Impact Metric		Dollar Value
	Total Impact		\$159,058,143
	Employment		4,696
	Labor Income		\$116,700,210

Service Area

In 2024, Palmetto Goodwill reported placing **4,013 individuals** into employment, with individuals having an average starting wage of **\$17 per hour** and **35.1 hours per week** of work.



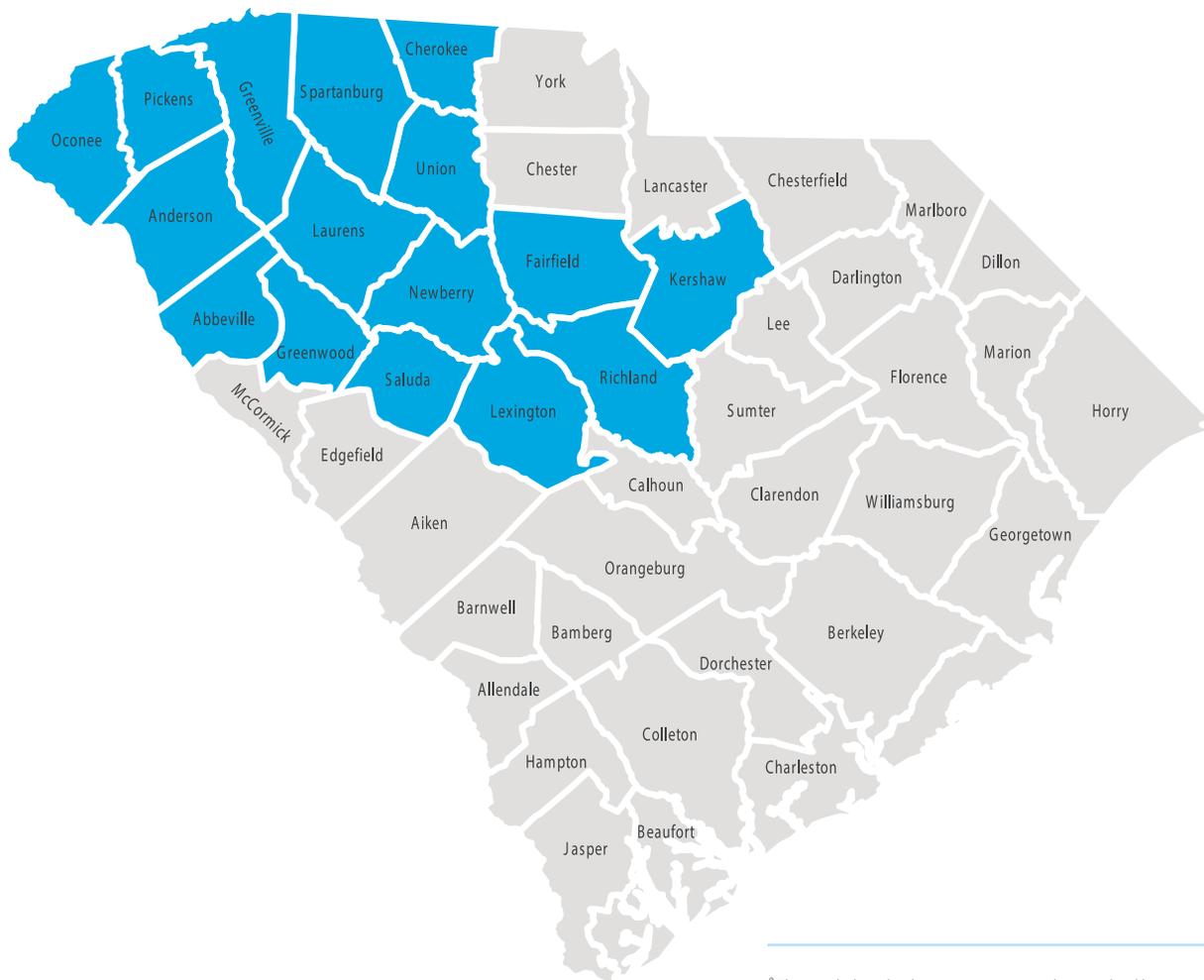
Section IV

The Economic Impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate /Midlands South Carolina

Organizational Background and Individuals Served

Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina was founded in 1973 and serves 16 counties, as shown in **Figure 4**. Workforce initiatives of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina include more than 20 training programs in five career pathways³ and web-based services where individuals can connect one-on-one with a career specialist, search local job postings, build resumes, and prepare for interviews.

Figure 4: Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina Service Area



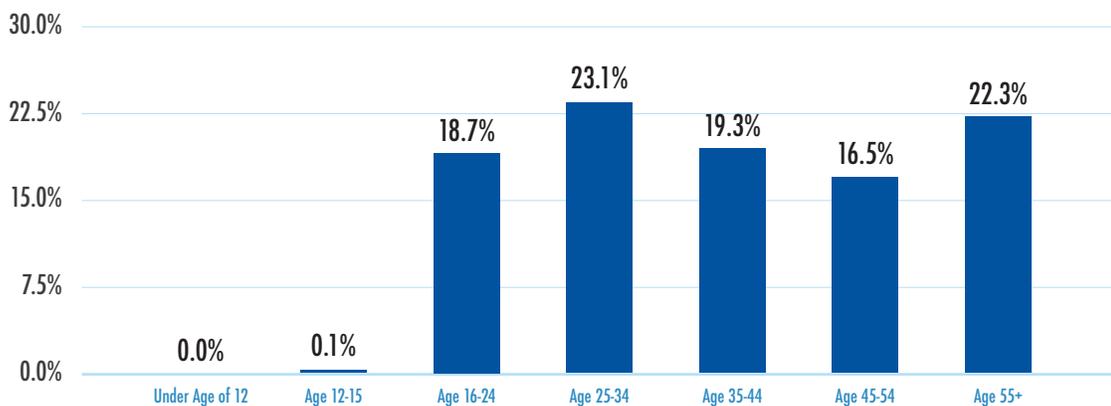
³ These include technology, transportation & logistics, healthcare, and other skilled trades.



Through its various job training, career placement, education assistance, and other community services, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina served nearly **12,000 individuals** in 2024 alone and has served over **141,000 individuals** since 2017.

As of 2024, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina employed more than 1,400 individuals⁴ across 41 retail stores, 48 donation centers, and 23 career opportunity centers. Through its various job training, career placement, education assistance, and other community services, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands served nearly 12,000 individuals in 2024 alone and has served over 141,000 individuals since 2017. **Figure 5** highlights the specific age distribution of program participants in 2024. Note that approximately 58.9 percent were in the “prime working age” group of 25 to 54 years old, while 22.3 percent of those served were over the age of 55. This latter group represents a growing segment of both the regional and state population as part of a broader demographic shift in the United States towards an older population. Approximately 18.7 percent of participants were early-career workers between the ages of 16 and 24.

Figure 5: Age Distribution of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina Program Participants, 2024

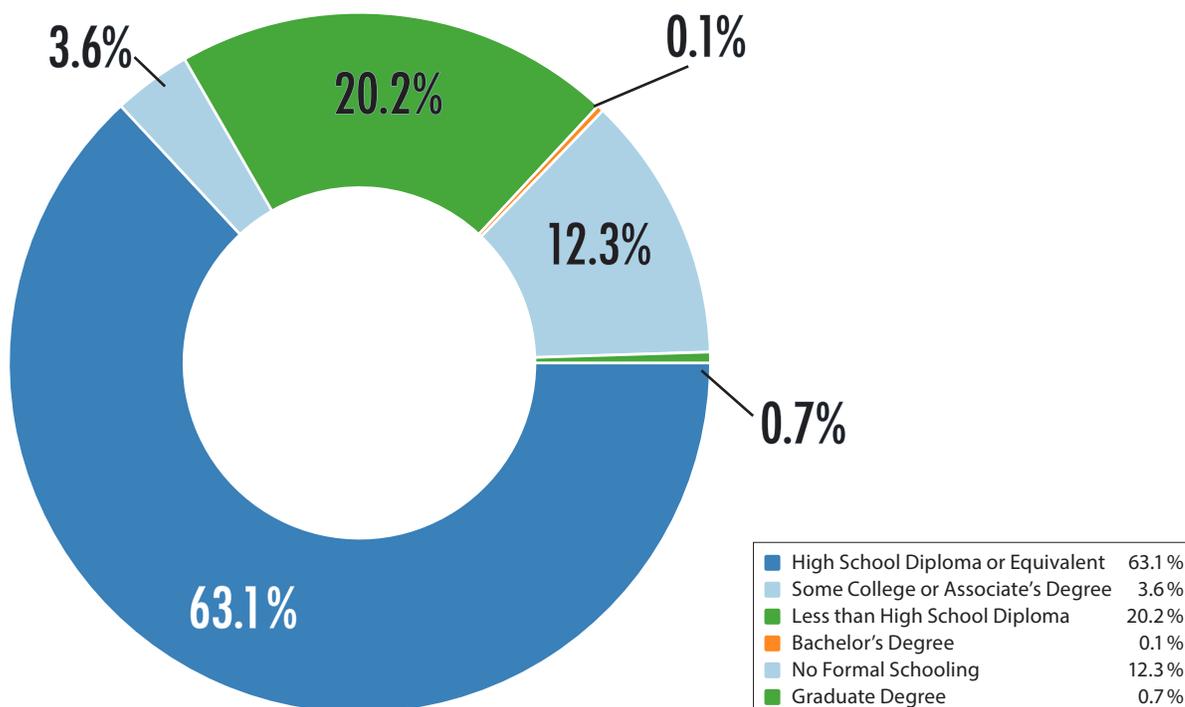


⁴ With a mixture of full-time and part-time employment, these 1,400 individuals equate to approximately 973 full-time equivalent (FTEs) positions.



The majority of individuals served by Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina in 2024 (63.1%) had either a high school diploma or equivalent. Approximately 20.2 percent had less than a high school education, while 0.1 percent of program participants had a bachelor’s degree or higher. **Figure 6** breaks down each of these educational attainment categories.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina Program Participants, 2024



Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s mission is also to serve those with disabilities, those re-entering the workforce with a criminal history, and those transitioning from military to civilian service. In 2024, approximately 530 veterans participated in Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s programs. Additionally, more than 220 individuals with at least one disability and over 440 individuals with a criminal background received services through Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina.



Economic Impact: Operations

Each year, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina supports thousands of South Carolinians through job training, employment services, and mission-driven retail operations. These activities not only provide individuals with opportunities to advance their careers, but also contribute significant economic value to the local region through all ongoing business activities in support of these operations. **Table 3** summarizes the economic impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s core operations, which includes the impacts of all spending activity (both labor and non-labor expenditures) made by Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina within its 16-county service region.

Table 3: Economic Impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/ Midlands South Carolina’s Operations

Sixteen-County Service Region

	Annual Employment	Annual Labor Income	Annual Total Impact
Direct Effect	973	\$32,309,415	\$64,818,860
Multiplier Effect	469	\$24,862,980	\$53,606,619
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Total Impact	1,442	\$57,172,395	\$118,425,479

Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina employs the equivalent of 973 full-time positions paying more than \$32.3 million in wages annually to carry out all day-to-day operations. This level of business activity generates a total, direct annual economic impact of \$64.8 million within the 16-county service area.

This level of direct economic activity also leads to additional rounds of local spending activity—known as the multiplier effect—which totals approximately \$53.6 million in additional economic output along with 469 additional jobs. These multiplier effects reflect the increased demand for goods and services of local suppliers resulting from local expenditures on the part of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina as well as the local economic activity generated across all industries that is the result of increased household spending. The combination of all direct effects and their subsequent multiplier effects leads to a total annual economic impact of approximately \$118.4 million, which supports 1,442 total jobs in the 16-county service area each year.



In a similar fashion, expanding the region of analysis statewide reveals that the total economic impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina increases to \$120.8 million annually, along with 1,443 jobs and over \$57.4 million in labor income. This level of economic activity includes approximately \$56.0 million that is generated through the economic multiplier effect – that is – through secondary spending that results from increased demand for local suppliers and the stimulative effects of local spending by workers. These results, which are shown in **Table 4**, highlight how the bulk of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s economic impact that derives from all ongoing operations takes place within the 16-county service region.

Table 4: Economic Impact of Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s Operations

South Carolina			
	Annual Employment	Annual Labor Income	Annual Total Impact
Direct Effect	973	\$32,309,415	\$64,818,860
Multiplier Effect	470	\$25,092,662	\$55,992,408
Total Impact	1,443	\$57,402,077	\$120,811,268

Economic Impact: Job Placements

Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina’s job placement efforts are at the heart of its mission to support economic mobility. Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina provides career services ranging from resume development and interview preparation to digital literacy training and credential programs. By helping thousands of local residents secure employment each year, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina is able to help expand the local labor force and increase total household income, both of which contribute to stronger, more resilient communities.

In 2024, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina reported placing 6,138 individuals into employment, with individuals having an average starting wage of \$16 per hour and 37.0 hours per week of work. Utilizing the methodology outlined in Section II, this study estimates that this level of job placement generated \$191.6 million in new labor income in 2024.

This additional \$191.6 million in labor income is then spent by residents in the local economy on a variety of goods and services such as restaurants, medical care, housing, and entertainment. These spending levels ultimately result in higher local demand and is estimated to generate an additional economic impact of \$210.2 million in the local region, which supports approximately 1,200 jobs.



Annual Economic Impact



Total Annual Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Economic Output
	8,780	\$248,775,673	\$328,670,009



Impacts from Goodwill Operations		Employment	Labor Income	Economic Output
	Direct:	973	\$32,309,415	\$64,818,860
	Multiplier:	469	\$24,862,980	\$53,606,619
	Total:	1,442	\$57,172,395	\$118,425,479

Impacts from Goodwill Job Placements	Impact Metric		Dollar Value
	Total Impact		\$210,244,530
	Employment		7,338
	Labor Income		\$191,603,278

Service Area

In 2024, Goodwill Industries of the Upstate/Midlands reported placing **6,138 individuals** into employment, with individuals having an average starting wage of **\$16 per hour** and **37.0 hours per week** of work.



Section V

Conclusion

Goodwill Industries, a national nonprofit founded in 1902, strives to advance equitable access to education, job training, and employment through a network of locally governed affiliates. In South Carolina, Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina carry out this mission across 34 counties by operating retail stores, donation centers, and workforce programs that fund and deliver essential services for individuals facing barriers to employment.

These efforts generate substantial community and economic benefits. The daily business operations of both affiliates support local vendors, create jobs, and increase household income, while participants who secure employment through Goodwill contribute additional spending that further strengthens local demand.

In 2024, Palmetto Goodwill and Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina served more than 23,000 residents – and nearly 250,000 since 2017 – including the placement of over 10,000 individuals directly into jobs with average starting wages of about \$16 per hour and 36 hours of work per week.

When combined, the activities of both organizations generate an estimated total economic impact of \$638.4 million annually, supporting roughly 15,000 jobs across their service areas that would not exist otherwise.

In the coming years, South Carolina will continue to face a tight labor market as population growth and demographic shifts increase demand for workers while also simultaneously reducing supply. Thus, the role of Goodwill in supporting education, job training, and employment will become even more important in sustaining and increasing long-run rates of economic growth for the Palmetto State.





