

Beauty from the Shadows

MISSION SERVICES: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Goodwill 
South Florida 



Like the magnificent moonflower that silently blooms in the shadows of night, we too spend the majority of our life going unnoticed. Which is how we proudly prefer it, operating predominantly out of the public eye, while quietly brightening the lives of tens of thousands of people. We are Goodwill South Florida, an organization dedicated to uplifting individuals and our community through our five Social Enterprise business model and Mission Services.

For years, we have been a beacon of hope for individuals with disabilities and those facing barriers to employment and independence. Through our rehabilitation, career assistance, and placement services, we have empowered countless individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and contribute meaningfully to society.

While its Mission Services Division has operated behind the scenes, Goodwill South Florida has consistently delivered impactful results, often without seeking recognition or acclaim. Their dedication to serving marginalized communities has remained steadfast, despite the lack of spotlight. Goodwill South Florida has been effective and deeply committed to serving individuals with disabilities. Through a range of tailored programs and services, Goodwill South Florida has been a lifeline for those with diverse abilities.

In the shadows, beauty and effectiveness often go unnoticed, but like the moonflower and Goodwill South Florida, their true essence cannot remain concealed forever. Goodwill South Florida's Mission Services is stepping into the light and looks forward to our impact being as breathtaking as the journey from obscurity to prominence.

Goodwill South Florida — Mission Services

People Served and Placements 2009 to 2024

YEAR	PEOPLE SERVED 86,784	TOTAL PLACEMENTS 20,632
2024	7,482	629
2023	3,740	1,140
2022	4,548	1,162
2021	4,675	950
2020	4,857	871
2019	7,060	1,385
2018	6,888	1,515
2017	6,430	1,287
2016	5,935	1,286
2015	6,365	1,769
2014	5,645	1,172
2013	4,938	1,254
2012	4,914	1,428
2011	5,072	2,398
2010	4,521	1,495
2009	3,714	891

Completing a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is crucial for organizations like Goodwill Industries of South Florida, as it serves as a foundational step towards ensuring that their mission services are precisely aligned with the current and emerging needs of the community. In 2023, we conducted a CNA that facilitated a deep dive into the community's dynamics, enabling us to identify gaps in services and areas of unmet needs.

2023 Community Needs Assessment Summary & 2024 Update

Goodwill Industries of South Florida provides this update to our recently completed CNA. This comprehensive analysis is a cornerstone of our efforts to identify the evolving challenges and opportunities within our community. This document shares data-driven insights, highlights critical areas of need, and outlines our actionable recommendations designed to foster meaningful change.

The following are the CNA findings with the underlined areas denoting our initial progress.

Our 2024 Community Impact

7,482 People Served

104 Placements (External)

850 Counseling Services Provided

973 Onsite Job Fairs Attendees

208 Digital Skills Trainings

187 Career Simulation Virtual Reality

11,060 Services Provided

525 Placements (Internal)

668 Placement Services Provided

280 Career Fundamentals Trainings

534 Soft Skills Trainings

4,313 Trainings Provided

Understanding the broader labor market trends is essential for addressing community needs effectively. Here’s what our research has uncovered:



National Labor Market Dynamics

- Labor participation rates have declined consistently since the early 2000s, driven by an aging workforce, demographic shifts, and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There is currently a significant mismatch in the labor market, with 8 million job openings and only 6.3 million active job seekers. This gap highlights the urgent need for targeted skills development and workforce re-entry programs.

Regional Insights

- Broward and Miami-Dade counties mirror these national trends but exhibit unique local challenges and opportunities.
- Growth sectors in Miami-Dade and Broward counties include construction and hospitality, while healthcare and technology continue to face acute labor shortages.
- Transportation and warehousing industries are emerging as critical growth areas, requiring immediate focus on skills training and job placement.

Challenges Ahead

- The persistent skills gap between available jobs and job seeker qualifications.
- Decreased workforce participation rates, influenced by factors such as childcare costs, mental health challenges, and economic uncertainties.

Opportunities for Action

Addressing these challenges will require a multi-faceted approach, including upskilling programs, strategic partnerships, and initiatives to re-engage non-participating workforce segments.

Did you know...

14% of the State’s population consist of individuals with disabilities.

Our stakeholder surveys and interviews provided rich insights into community priorities and challenges. Respondents represented a diverse cross-section of community members, including program participants, board members, employers, and nonprofit partners.

Key Social Issues

1. **Affordable Housing:** Identified by nearly all respondent groups as the most pressing community challenge.
2. **Mental Health Services:** A growing concern, exacerbated by the pandemic and economic pressures, impacting individuals’ ability to participate in the workforce.
3. **Employment Opportunities:** Highlighting the need for robust job creation and placement initiatives.

Populations Requiring Support

- **People with Work Barriers:** Struggling to meet basic needs despite holding jobs.
- **Individuals Experiencing Homelessness:** Closely tied to the availability of affordable housing and access to steady employment.
- **Single Parents and Immigrants:** Facing unique barriers to economic stability and workforce integration.
- **People with Disabilities:** Facing major employment barriers requiring focused training, support, and advocacy.

Participant Insights

Program participants emphasized quality of life as a critical concern, indicating a need for more holistic, person-centered support services.



Did you know...

There are thousands of South Florida households below the ALICE Threshold that can’t afford living essentials. Here are % of households below the ALICE Threshold by county: Broward (46%), Miami (51%) and Monroe (33%).

NOTE: ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county.

Data based on the 2023 United Way of Miami-Dade and United Way of Broward Report.

Addressing barriers to employment is fundamental to achieving economic stability and growth in our community. Key barriers identified through the CNA include:



Affordable Housing

- 49% of respondents cited high housing costs as a significant challenge, directly impacting workforce stability and mobility.

Living Wages

- 30% highlighted the inadequacy of wages in supporting families, especially in industries like hospitality and retail.

Public Transportation

- 26% pointed to limited access to reliable transportation as a key obstacle to employment and job retention.

Stakeholder Variations

- Government agencies focused heavily on housing as a top concern.
- Educators prioritized skills training and workforce preparedness.
- Job seekers emphasized the immediate need for employment placement and career guidance.



Did you know...

Over the last decade, Goodwill South Florida has served over 86,784 people with disabilities and barriers to work and placed over 20,632 people in life changing jobs.

Our analysis of service availability revealed significant gaps that must be addressed to meet community needs effectively:

Financial Literacy Education

- Essential for empowering individuals to manage personal finances and build economic resilience.

Senior Employment Training

- A growing need as more seniors seek to re-enter the workforce to supplement retirement income or maintain engagement.

Reentry Services

- Support for justice-involved individuals is insufficient, limiting their ability to reintegrate into society and the workforce.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Partnerships with public school systems and workforce boards can bridge these gaps.
- Leveraging community resources to expand access to training and employment services.

Top-Growth Industries:



Healthcare



Food Service / Hospitality



Janitorial / Grounds Maintenance



Construction



Retail / Customer Service



Expanding the reach and impact of Goodwill's services, addressing the specific needs of historically underserved and vulnerable populations, and ensuring that these initiatives are in alignment with the current and projected socio-economic landscape of the South Florida region.



Stakeholder Feedback

- Goodwill's role as a leader in workforce development and support for individuals with disabilities was widely recognized.
- There is a strong opportunity to enhance Goodwill's visibility, partnerships, and service outreach.

Strategic Recommendations

1. Population Focus

- Expand services for individuals with disabilities, work barriers, single parents, immigrants, and other underserved populations.
- Address homelessness through targeted housing and employment initiatives.

2. Workforce Development

- Strengthen training programs in soft skills, digital literacy, and industry-specific certifications.
- Offer short-term credential programs tailored to high-demand sectors.

3. Mental Health Integration

- Develop partnerships with mental health providers to offer accessible support services.
- Integrate mental health resources into existing workforce development programs to ensure holistic care.

4. Networking and Collaboration

- Build stronger relationships with nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses to enhance service delivery.
- Expand engagement with local businesses to create job placement opportunities and align training programs with employer needs.

5. Marketing and Outreach

- Tailor messaging to different audiences, emphasizing Goodwill's impact and the breadth of its services.
- Implement targeted outreach strategies to reach high-need communities, utilizing data-driven approaches to identify and engage underserved populations.

6. Innovative Programming

- Explore the establishment of Opportunity Centers and Excel Centers to provide comprehensive workforce development services, including high school diploma programs and wraparound support services.

Goodwill Industries of South Florida is expanding its service offerings to meet the evolving needs of the disability community and continue its tradition of care and empowerment.

Redesigning Adult Day Training Centers

- Transforming these centers into simulated communities to help individuals with disabilities develop new skills and foster independence.
- The interactive training environment will replicate real-life scenarios, enabling participants to progress to advanced training and eventual paid employment.

Transition to Adulthood Program

- Tailored for youth with individualized education programs, this initiative equips young adults with life skills, career planning, and social competencies to navigate adulthood successfully.
- The program fosters independence and self-confidence, empowering participants to reach their full potential.
- Creates training programs and launch workforce development labs to provide additional credentialing options.

Respite Care Services

- Introducing a supportive service to provide families of individuals with disabilities much-needed breaks.
- This initiative enriches participants' lives through engagement in new experiences while offering caregivers the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate.

By introducing these new services, Goodwill broadens its impact and strengthens its legacy as a vital resource for individuals with disabilities and their families.



Did you know...

Of the over 2,968 Goodwill employees and trainees in 2024, over 29% (875) have disabilities.

As we move forward, we are committed to implementing the following steps to bring these recommendations to life:



Mission Services Goals

- Enhance workforce inclusion by increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and strengthening employer commitment to disability hiring.
- Expand recruitment and community engagement through targeted outreach, strategic marketing, and collaborative partnerships.
- Increase job placements by strengthening internal hiring and expanding external employer partnerships.
- Enhance programs and services by redesigning adult day training, integrating mission services, and aligning offerings with community needs.
- Strengthen workforce readiness by redesigning training programs and launching workforce development labs.

Immediate Actions

- Launch pilot programs to address critical gaps identified in the CNA.
- Identify and address staff training needs to enhance their skills.
- Identify and establish partnerships to expand resources and support services.

Strategic Goals

- Define Goodwill’s role in tackling affordable housing and mental health challenges through partnerships and program development.
- Leverage data to target marketing efforts and prioritize service delivery in high-need areas.

Long-Term Vision

- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing Excel Centers to address educational gaps and provide holistic workforce development support.
- Expand collaborative partnerships to maximize impact and drive sustainable community change.

Did you know...

23% of the State’s population that experienced homelessness were located in Broward, Miami-Dade or Monroe Counties.

These insights shared reflect our collective commitment to addressing the critical challenges facing our community.

Together, through collaboration and innovation, we can create a future where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. These action steps can significantly enhance Goodwill South Florida’s ability to meet the needs of its community, particularly the most vulnerable groups, in a meaningful way. Just as the moonflower embodies beauty that emerges when the world can be shrouded in darkness, Goodwill South Florida’s Mission Services Division is poised for a transformative phase of rebirth. Our tireless efforts are ready to shine brightly, illuminating the path to a brighter future for all those they serve.





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