

Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center

**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2024



Prepared By:
Brea Roberts
Director

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VISION

Our vision of the Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center is to be the premier resource for female entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses in Northeast Tennessee, by equipping women with the knowledge and resources needed to gain access to capital and opportunities for government contracting.

MISSION

The mission of the AppH-WBC is to serve women-owned small business concerns and women entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship training specifically developed to help women overcome the unique challenges they face in running their businesses, consulting services, networking events and connecting clients to the full array of SBA resources.



ABOUT

Our Services

Whether you're launching your first startup or scaling an existing business, the AppH-WBC is committed to fostering your success. Our services include:

- Business Counseling
- Training
- Networking
- Financial Resources

What is a WBC?

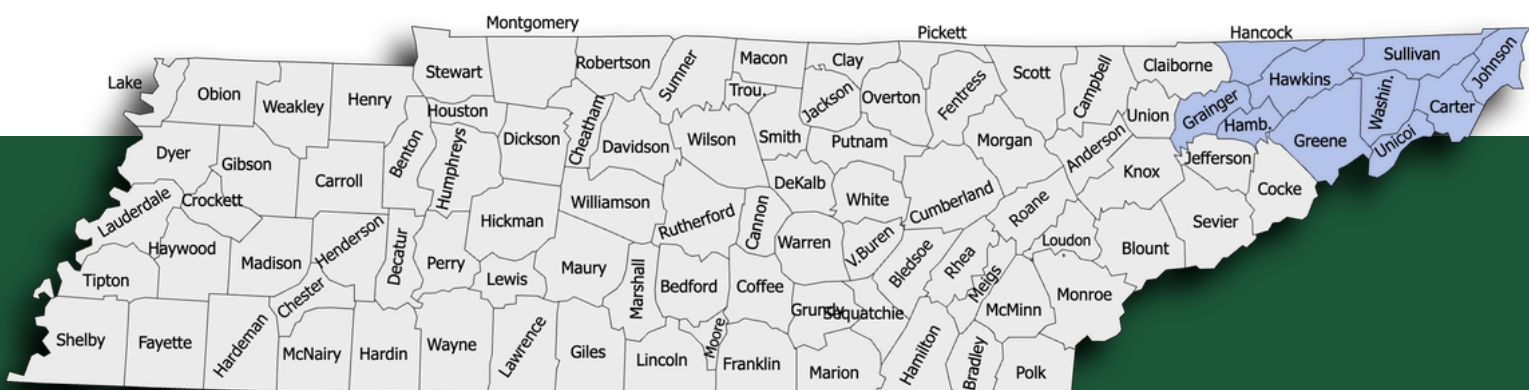
Women's Business Centers (WBCs) are a part of a national network of entrepreneurship centers throughout the United States and its territories, which are designed to assist women in starting and growing small businesses.

Fast Facts

- Backed by the SBA (U.S. Small Business Administration).
- There are over 130 WBC's across the country.
- We are the only WBC in Tennessee.

Location

Our main office is located in Kingsport, but we cover 10 counties: Carter, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington. Meetings can be at our office in Kingsport, we can come to you or have a virtual meeting!



YEAR IN REVIEW

161

**Unique
Clients
Served**

Unique Clients served is a sum of the one-on-one clients and clients that attend training events

3

**Business
Starts**

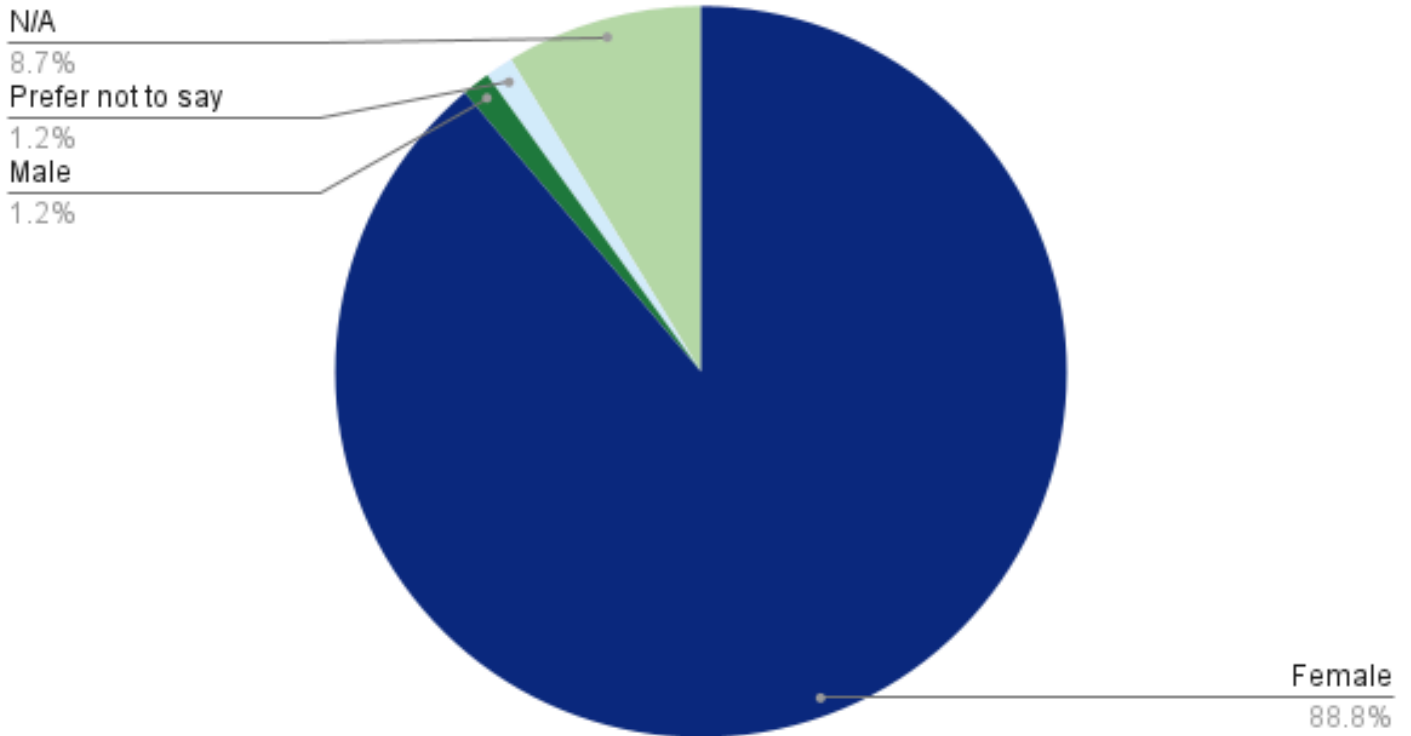
121

**Jobs
Created &
Retained**

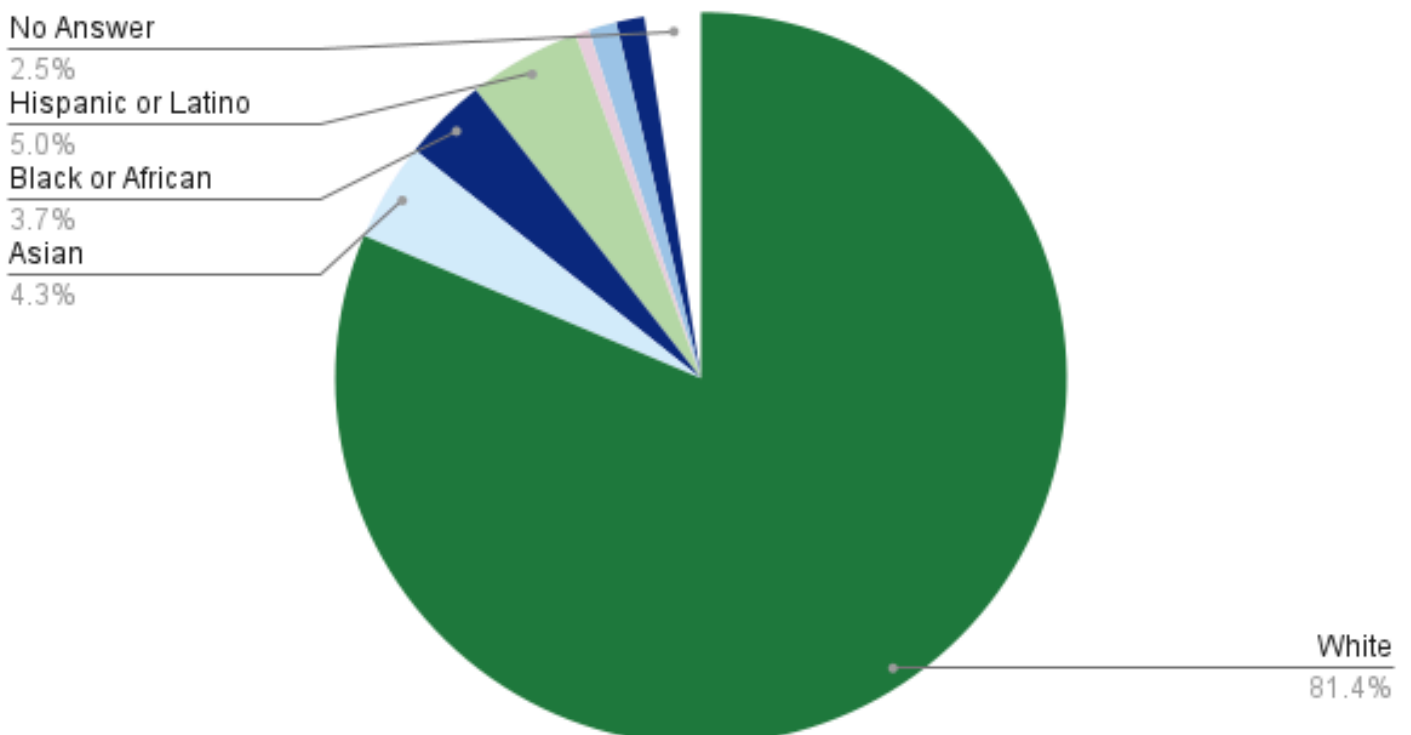
3 Jobs created
119 Retained

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

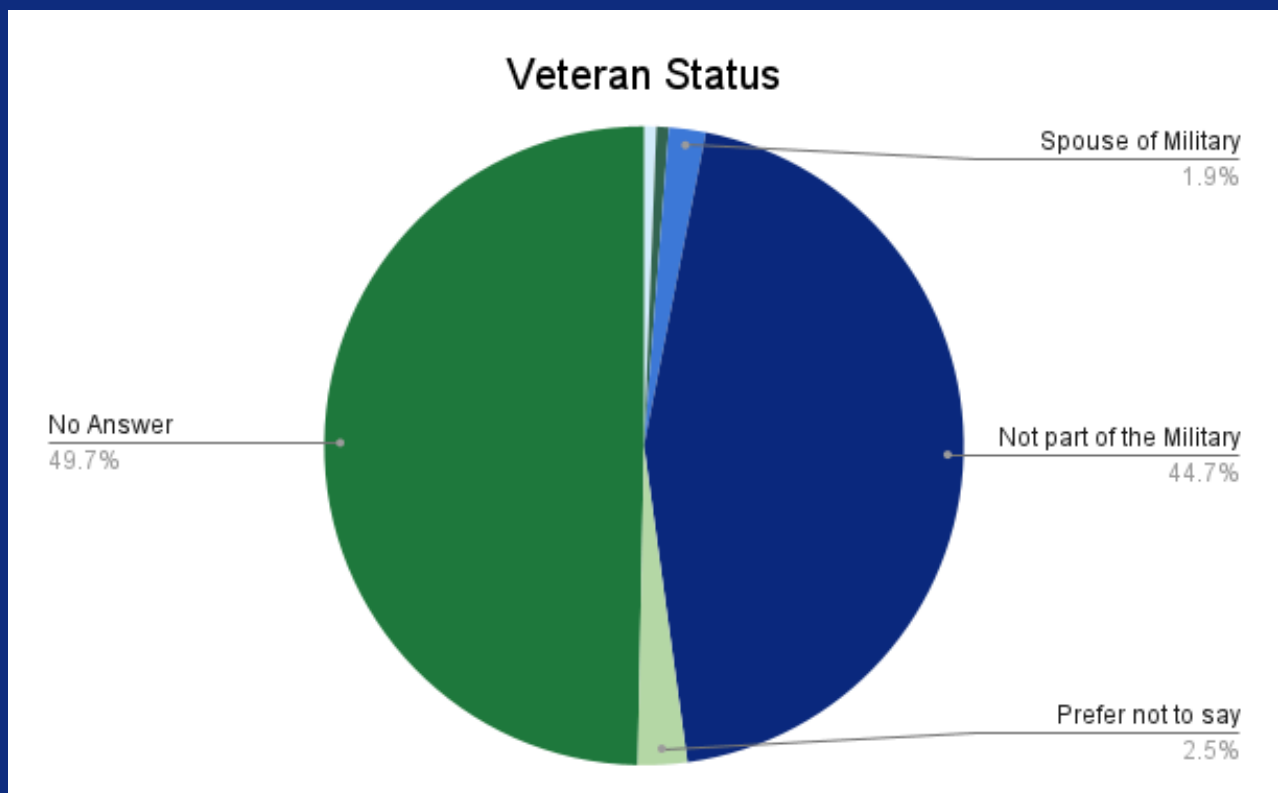
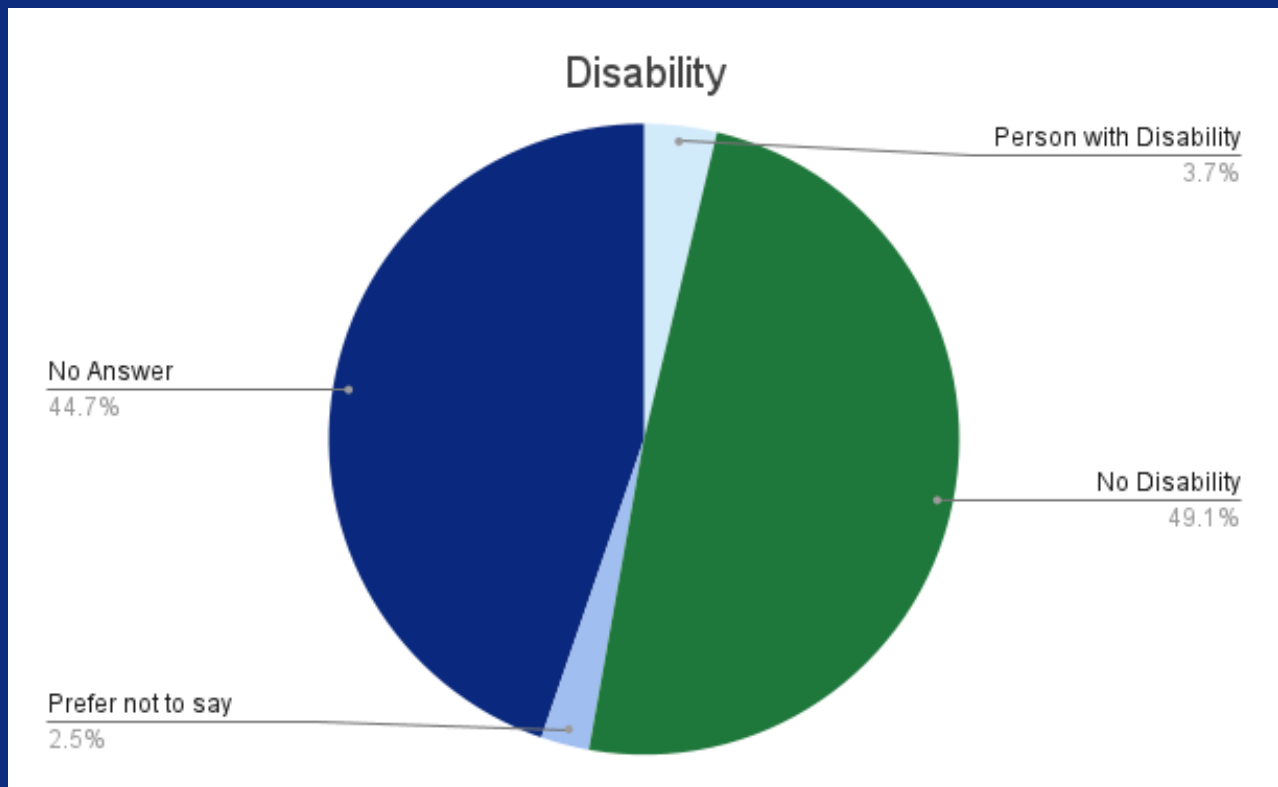
Client Gender



Race & Ethnicity

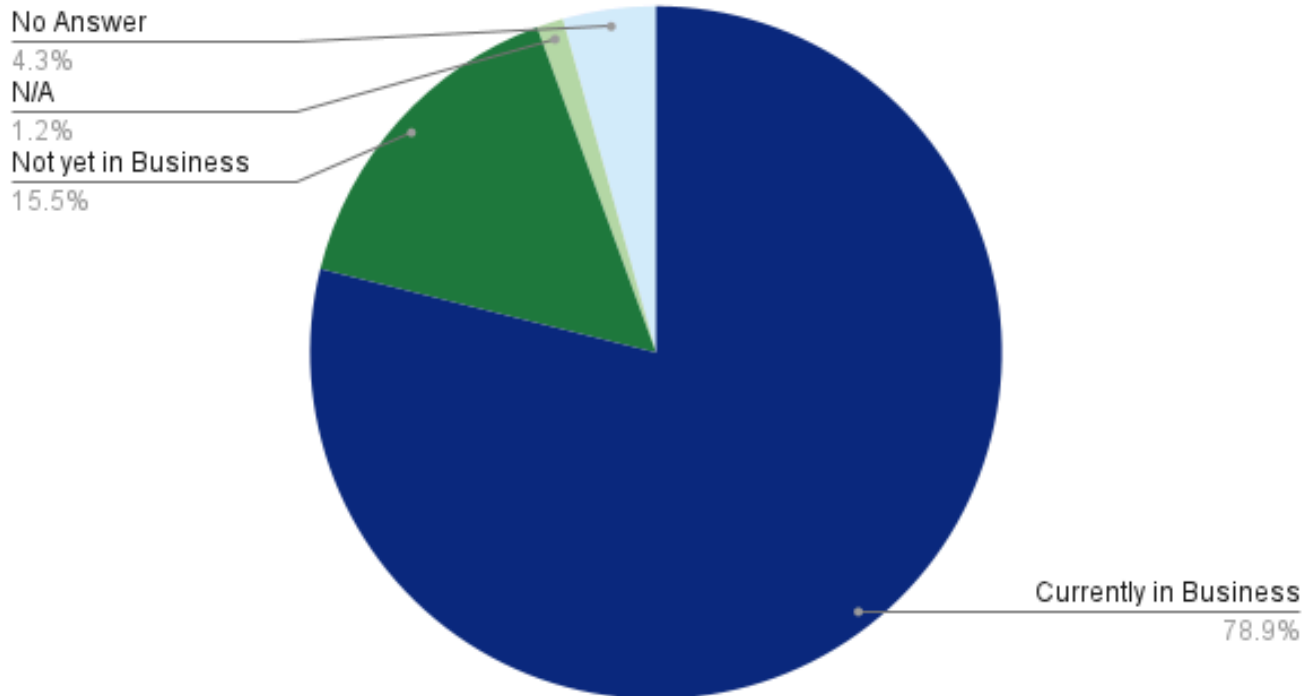


CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

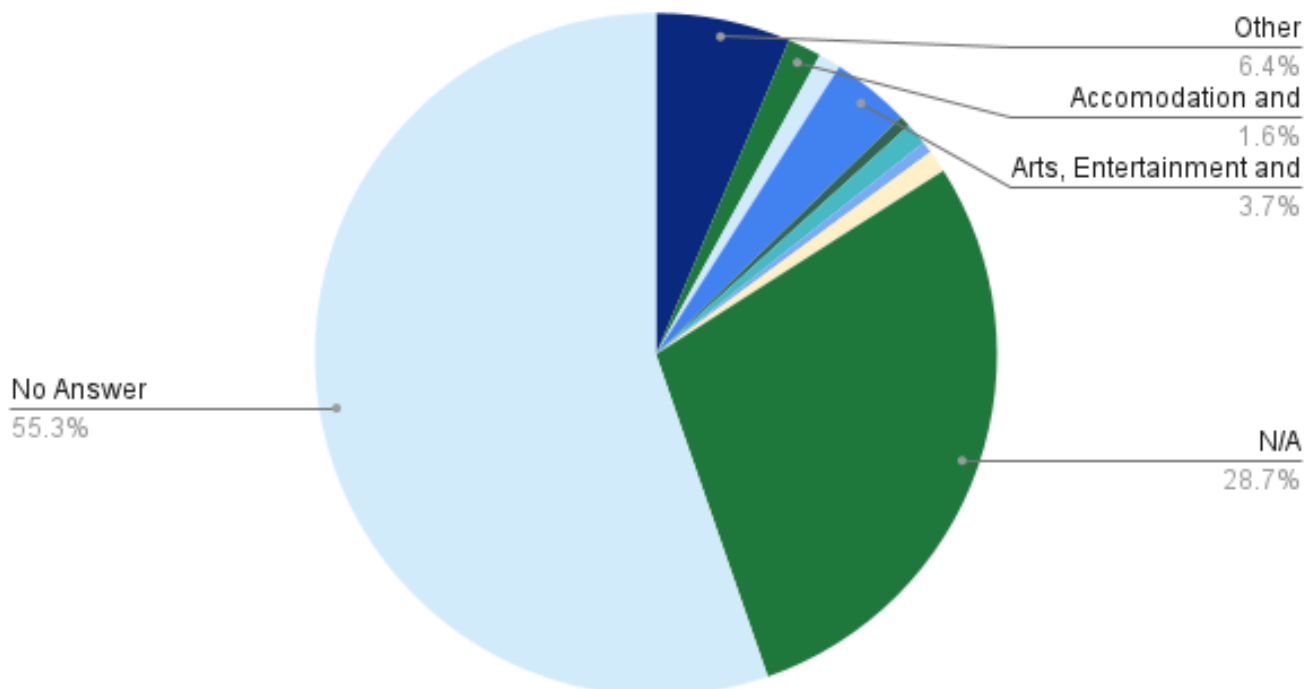


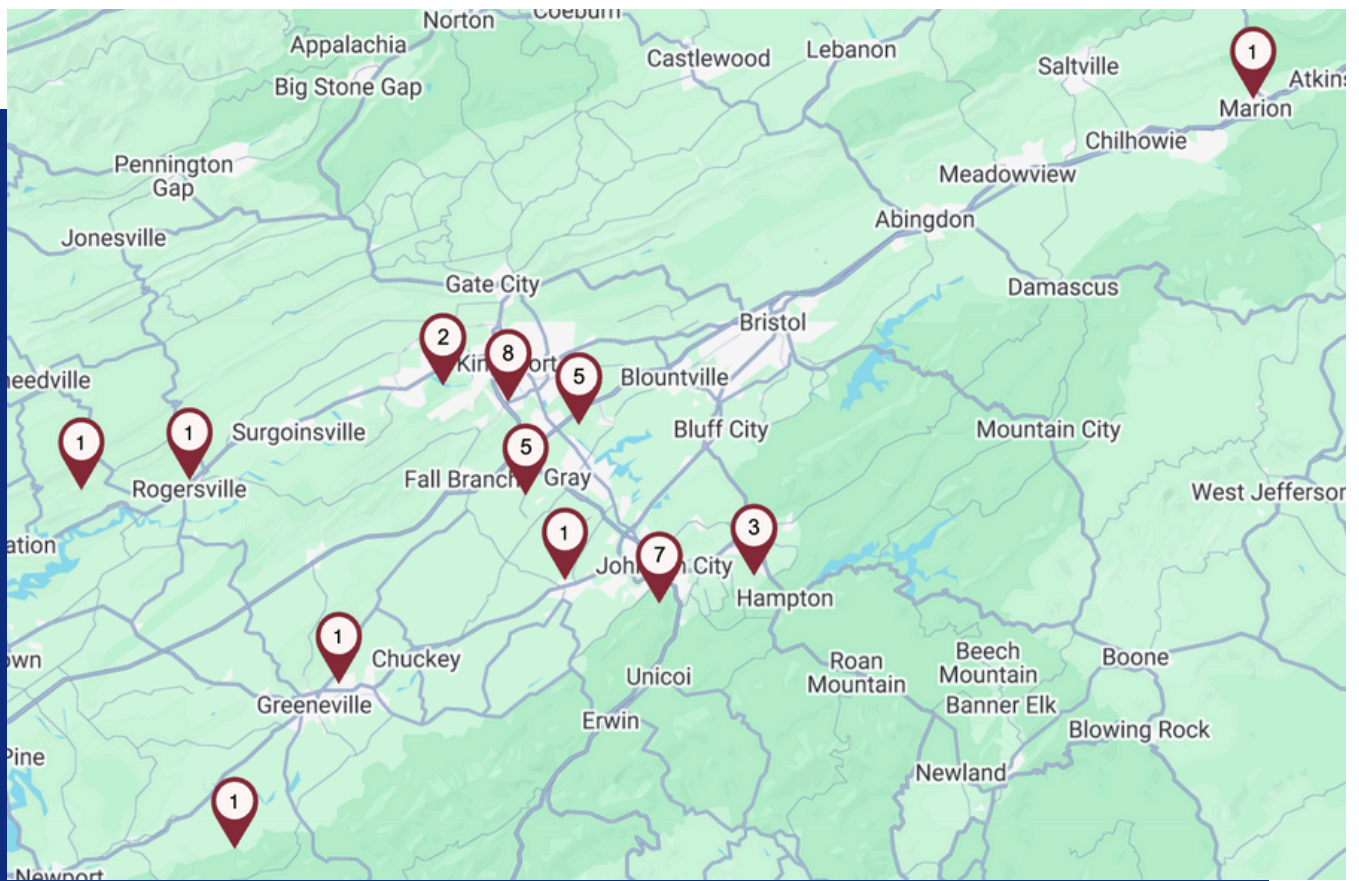
CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Business Status



Industry Sector



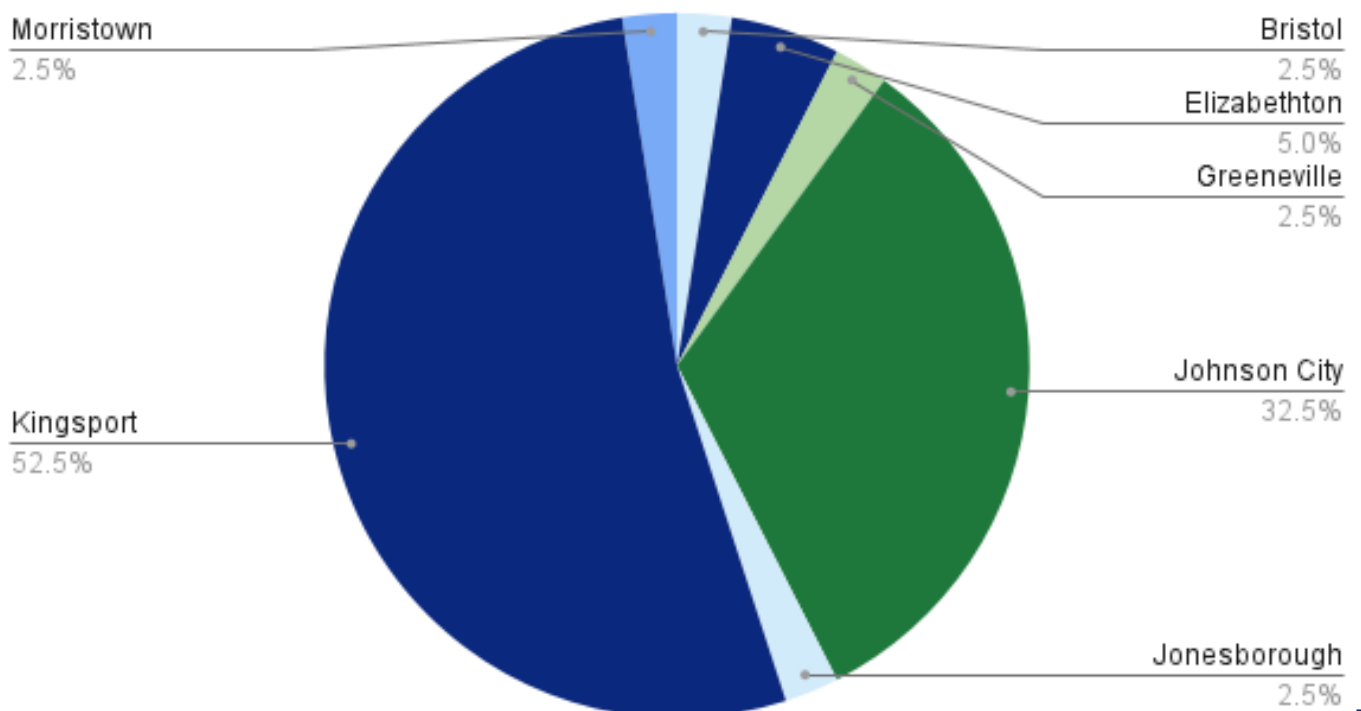


Client Map

Currently, most counseling clients are spread mainly among Kingsport and Johnson City.

Training clients do not often put their location, but from the attendees we know, this is approximately the breakdown of where the trainees are from.

Training Client Breakdown



Advisory Council



Kimberly Beddor

Transworld Business
Advisors



Janica L. Campbell

Law Offices of Janica L.
Campbell



Kevin Davis

Magnolia River



Kelly Hall

ETSU



Dana Harrison

ETSU



Keith Hickey

Three Roots Capital



Chrissy Idlette

Eastman



Carla Karst

LandStar



Sharon Moore

ONE Tennessee



Emily Oliver
Best Life Accounting



Mitch Richardson
NETVETS



Arlene Sanchez
Biz Exit Brokers &
Advisors



Tim Siglin
Help Me Stream
Research Solution



Wynne Tyree
Smarty Pants



Jen Yu
The Happy Mondays
Project

Staff



Brea Roberts
Director



Caroline Luethke
Communications &
Events Coordinator

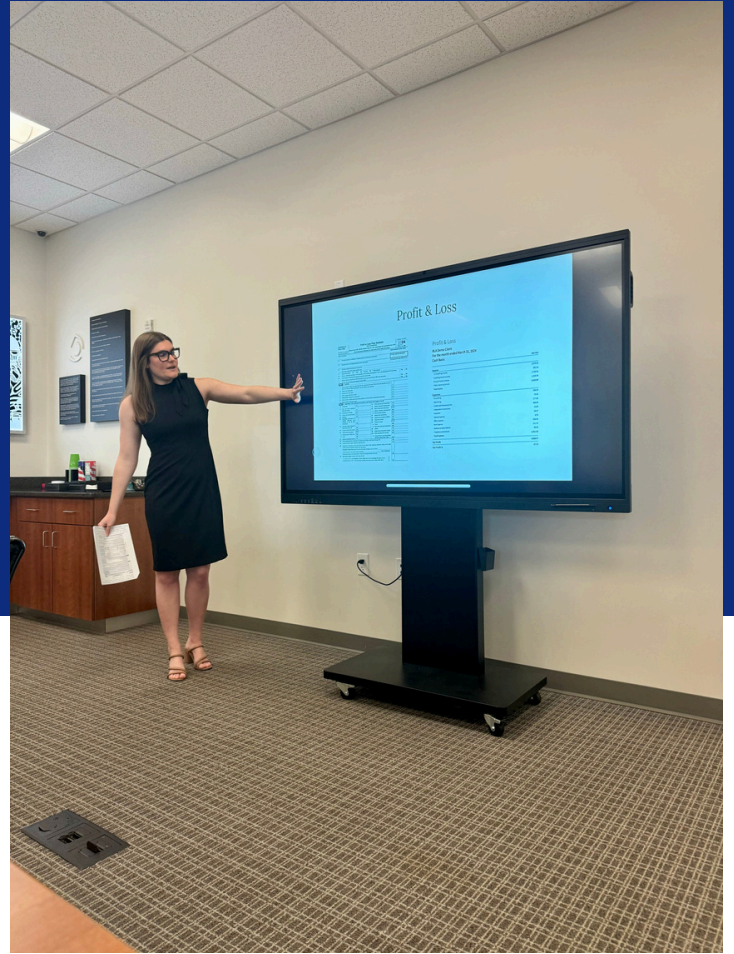


Sara Stewart
Summer Intern

Events



Events





Client Story

U.S. Small Business Administration's Tennessee District Office has awards each year, and one category is Women Owned Small Business of the Year.



Appalachian Maid Services, LLC

Appalachian Maid Services, LLC, owned by Jenna Tamayo, wins Women Owned Small Business of the Year

Appalachian Maid Services, a Tri-Cities-based cleaning company, has been named the Women-Owned Small Business of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Tennessee District Office.

Founded in May 2017 by Jenna Tamayo, Appalachian Maid Services provides residential and commercial cleaning services throughout Northeast Tennessee.

Tamayo and her team were officially recognized during a ceremony in Nashville on May 8, as part of the SBA's Small Business Week events. The award underscores the company's role in empowering local communities and exemplifying the potential of women-led businesses in the state.

Client Comments

I have met with Brea Roberts for counseling and I've attended several lunch-n-learns that AppH-WBC has hosted. After every meeting, I walk away with a plan and a path to enhance my business. It is time well spent.

Kimberly Tomlin, *Owner of Taste and See Charcuterie*

Got a great rundown of avenues to pursue once we get our bigger licensing i.e. women owned certification, government contracting, etc. For now, our licensure restricts many business opportunities. Thank you so much for your time and guidance—we really appreciate all the support from the Appalachian Women's Business Center!

Bianca Marais, *TriCities Electric*

Thank you so much for being so supportive as well, I truly appreciate the chamber and women's center!

Jenna Tamayo, *Appalachian Maid Services*

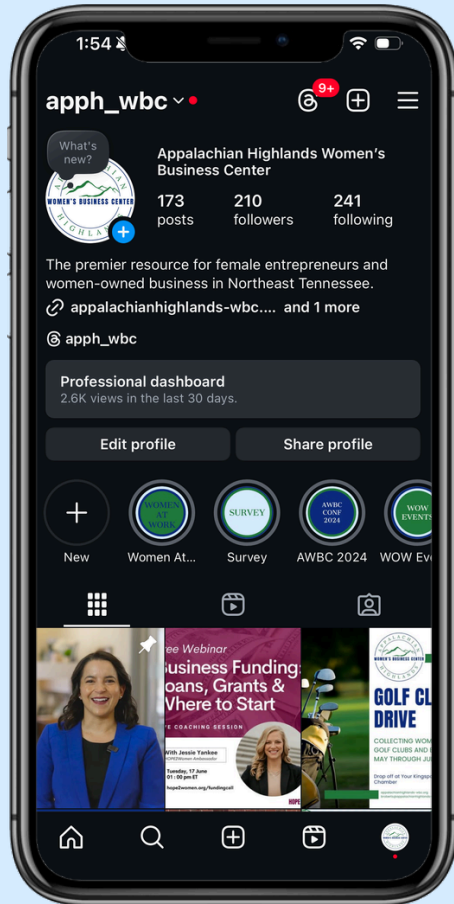
I am so excited and impressed with the GrowthWheel website! I am so happy you have introduced me to this wonderful support system! I truly feel like it will be my companion in all aspects of the 57 Investments journey that Mia and I have embarked on! Thank you Breanna!

Andrea Huff, *57 Investments*

Thank you so much for meeting with me. I believe we accomplished a lot. It was great talking with you! I don't think entrepreneurs get to pour their hearts out too often.

Mary Ellen Miller, *Marketing Mel*

STATISTICS



Website:

**3,022 Visits
2,600 Unique
Visitors**

Social Media:

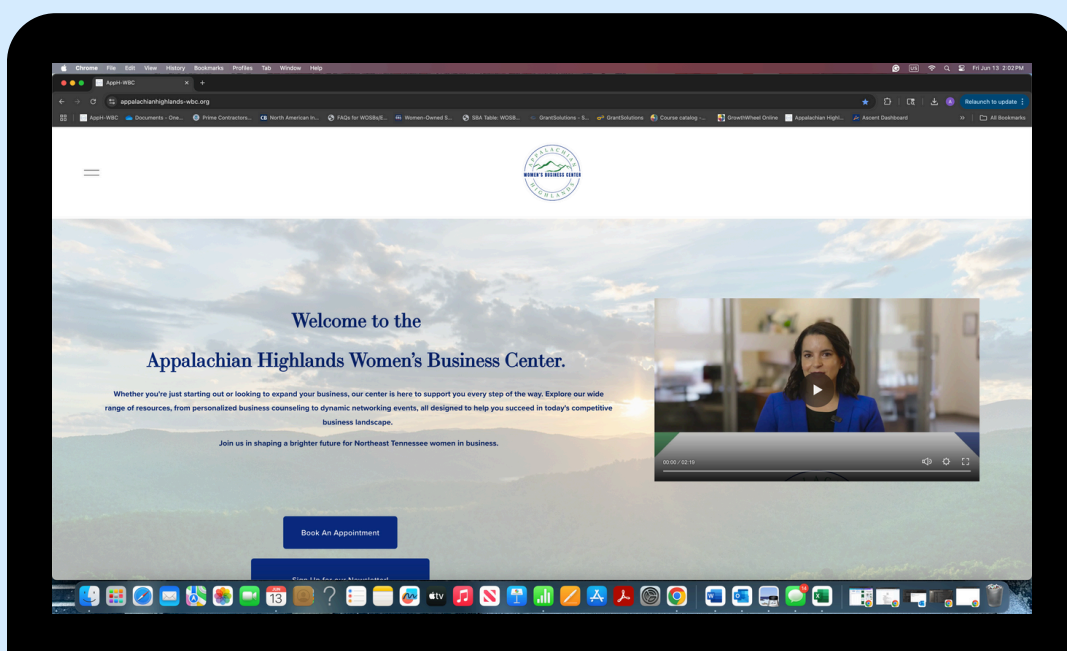
500 Followers

Newsletter

**100
Subscribers**

Survey:

**1,023
participants**



MEDIA



Women of Achievement

Roberts leads women's business center into future

By A.J. Kaufman, Managing Editor

Brea Roberts stepped up to lead the Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center earlier this summer and hit the ground running.

Also referred to as Appalach-WBC, the center is one of 17 new Women's Business Centers across the country announced by the U.S. Small Business Administration. It serves the Northeast Tennessee counties of Carter, Grainger, Greene, Hamblin, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Union and Washington. Most of the aforementioned are considered distressed or at-risk.

Now as the center's director, Roberts brings her vast and diverse experience within various industries to her role at the Kingsport Chamber. She most recently served as president of the Board of Directors at the Kingsport Child Development Center and executive director of Partner Technologies.

"I was looking for a job where I could create positive change, empower individuals, and give back to the Tri-Cities," Roberts told *The Business Journal*. "When I saw this job posting, I thought it was a great opportunity, and I loved the thought of guiding and mentoring women in business. This role is a chance to leverage my skills and experience to impact local economies and help women thrive."

She was specifically drawn to the Kingsport Chamber because of its strong reputation and says she appreciates the Chamber's "proactive approach to business development and its role in the region's economic strategy."

In her first two months on the job, Roberts has been working on training and certifications to prepare herself to offer entrepreneurship training and consulting services. Additionally, she is collaborating with ETSI to develop and administer a survey aimed at female small business owners and entrepreneurs.

"Our goal is to gather data that will inform the creation of tailored services and solutions and to help us understand our clients' unmet needs," she explained.

One notable success story was her initial networking event — "Ladies That Lunch" — which took place July 25. Her goal was to have 20 women attend, and in the end, 40 came to the event.

"We are thrilled we had so many women come out and support us, and we hope to keep growing," Roberts said.

Starting a business can be daunting, Roberts understands, but she hopes resources like the Appalach-WBC can help each step of the way.

"We want to help you get where you want to be, so please know you are welcome here, and we would love to help you," she added. "There can be many moving parts to starting a business, so it is okay to ask for help. You can do it and let us help you get started. Initiatives like ours are crucial for nurturing talent and fostering economic development. I am excited about the future and committed to working collaboratively with local businesses and organizations to further enhance the support systems available to women entrepreneurs."

The mission of Appalach-WBC is to "serve women-owned small business concerns and women entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship training specifically developed to help women overcome the unique challenges they face."

And they're surely overcoming those purported challenges. More than half of the over 100 businesses started in the region are female-owned. From 2019 to 2022, women-owned businesses' growth rate outpaced the rate of men by 94% for the number of firms, 233% for employment, and 82% for revenue. During the COVID pandemic, women-owned businesses added 1.4 million jobs and nearly \$560 billion in revenue to the economy.

A graduate of ETSI's MBA program, Roberts explains how all this happened.

"The growth of women-owned businesses in our region is a testament to the increasing desire of women to participate in starting or supporting small businesses," she concluded. "Women thrive due to a combination of factors, including enhanced access to resources, funding, and mentorship programs designed to support them. Additionally, women often bring unique perspectives and innovative approaches to business, which can lead to successful and sustainable ventures."

PHOTO COURTESY OF BREA ROBERTS

TimesNews Business Pulse


A SIX RIVERS MEDIA PRODUCTION

BREANNA ROBERTS
AppH-WBC

AUNDREA SALYER
KINGSFORT CHAMBER



NEWS


 Kingsport Times News

Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center announces council members

The Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center announced its 2025 Advisory Council members, according to a recent release.

Mar 24, 2025



 The Rogersville Review

National Small Business Month activities on tap

The Kingsport Chamber Small Business Programs will host a month's worth of events for National Small Business Month.

1 month ago



 WJHL

Local women's business center welcomes director

KINGSPORT, Tenn. (WJHL) — The Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center (AppH-WBC) is getting off the ground with Director Brea Roberts...

Jul 1, 2024



 Kingsport Times News

Regional businesswomen share stories of professional, personal life

The Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center hosted an event Wednesday for local women business professionals to discuss maintaining a...

3 weeks ago



 Kingsport Times News

ETSU alum named director of Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center

Roberts - 1 ... KINGSPORT — Brea Roberts was announced as director for the Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center, according to a news...

Jul 8, 2024



 WJHL

Kingsport Chamber to open women-focused entrepreneurship center

The Women's Business Center will provide training and counseling for women entrepreneurs, aid clients in securing federal contracts, and help them secure...

Apr 9, 2024



 Kingsport Times News

Luethke takes role with Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center

Luethke takes role with Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center · ut AppH-WBC · Trending Now · More information · ETSU alum named director...

Jul 19, 2024



 Kingsport Times News

Kingsport Chamber announces Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center

Kingsport Chamber announces Appalachian Highlands Women's Business Center. The Kingsport Chamber Foundation was one of 17 agencies across the...

Apr 9, 2024



NEXT YEAR WORKPLAN



Objectives

- Launch a Rural Women Entrepreneurs Cohort focused on business development in isolated communities.
- Develop and deliver a Skilled Trades Bootcamp for aspiring women in manufacturing and trade.
- Identify and support 5 local childcare entrepreneurs to start or scale their businesses.
- Pilot a Made in Appalachia product development and branding workshop series for women-led manufacturing ventures.
- Increase overall client reach in rural counties by 20% over the previous year.
- Build a Capital Readiness hub on our website that connects women-owned businesses to lenders and grant opportunities; increase website visits by 20% with this addition



Strategies

- Establish collaborations with technical colleges, workforce boards, and apprenticeship programs to connect clients to skilled workforce pathways.
- Host monthly virtual “Rural Roundtables” to gather needs, promote resources, and build trust in underserved counties.
- Create targeted childcare business toolkits and webinars on licensing, operations, and financial models.
- Partner with local manufacturers and chambers to offer “Supplier Readiness” sessions for women interested in contracting.
- Utilize social media storytelling to amplify the success of rural and manufacturing-focused women entrepreneurs.



Action

- Planning our first annual Small Business Summit-scheduled for August 26, 2025
- Creating a Women-Owned Business Directory-in progress
- Finalize partnerships with 3 workforce/technical training institutions by Fall 2025
- Host first “Skilled Trades for Women” info session in partnership with local trade schools by Late Fall 2025
- Design and launch Rural Women Entrepreneurs Cohort application process by Fall 2025
- Create a “Start Your Childcare Business” starter series (3-part webinar) and launch by August 2025
- Begin client identification and outreach for “Made in Appalachia” branding cohort by July 2025
- Develop and launch Capital Readiness resource hub (guides, lender connections, business plan tools) by August 2025
- Host 4 Rural Roundtable events (quarterly) with local partners starting in July 2025

Contact Us

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