

PROJECT PROFILE: SOLVING FOOD INEQUITIES- SOUTH ALBANY, GEORGIA

CLIENT: FOOD FOR LESS, INC/PIGGLY WIGGLY; CITY OF ALBANY, GEORGIA AND J.P. PROPERTIES

Located in Southwest region of the State of Georgia, the City of Albany is a growing economic hub, known for its manufacturing industry. While certain census tracts are in the City limits have experienced growth, many continue to struggle with historic inequity, including the South Albany section. Recognizing a need to prioritize revitalization of this area, City leaders identified food access gaps to be a crucial issue to resolve. The sole full-service grocer, offering fresh and staple foods, was a Harvey's Supermarket, forced to close in 2018 in part due to damage from Hurricane Michael. In turn, the City of Albany opened an RFP for grocers, seeking to permanently close this food desert through local incentives to the best fit grocer. Simultaneously, Aspire Grant & Development, LLC was hired by J.P. Properties, owner of the property formerly occupied by Harvey's. Aspire set out to build a dynamic team between J.P. Properties, Food for Less/Piggly Wiggly and the City, winning the RFP. After several grant and incentive investments, the store held its soft opening just before the December 2021 holiday season, as promised to the community. Through state, local and grant funding under the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, Food for Less Albany, Inc./Piggly Wiggly will be driving economic and community growth in South Albany for years to come. Aspire has authored several economic impact models for this project, all of which have been on target with estimated impacts as cited by City leadership. In February of 2022, Ms. Barbara Francis, Albany's economic development manager, said since the soft opening of the discounted grocery store, unemployment in Albany has decreased, with the store hiring 67 part-time and 30 full-time employees. Aspire was pleased to monitor and measure the induced and indirect impacts of the jobs on the local labor market and Doughtery County, Georgia economy.