

HELPING PEOPLE PROSPER - HELPING COMMUNITIES THRIVE

2020-2021

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

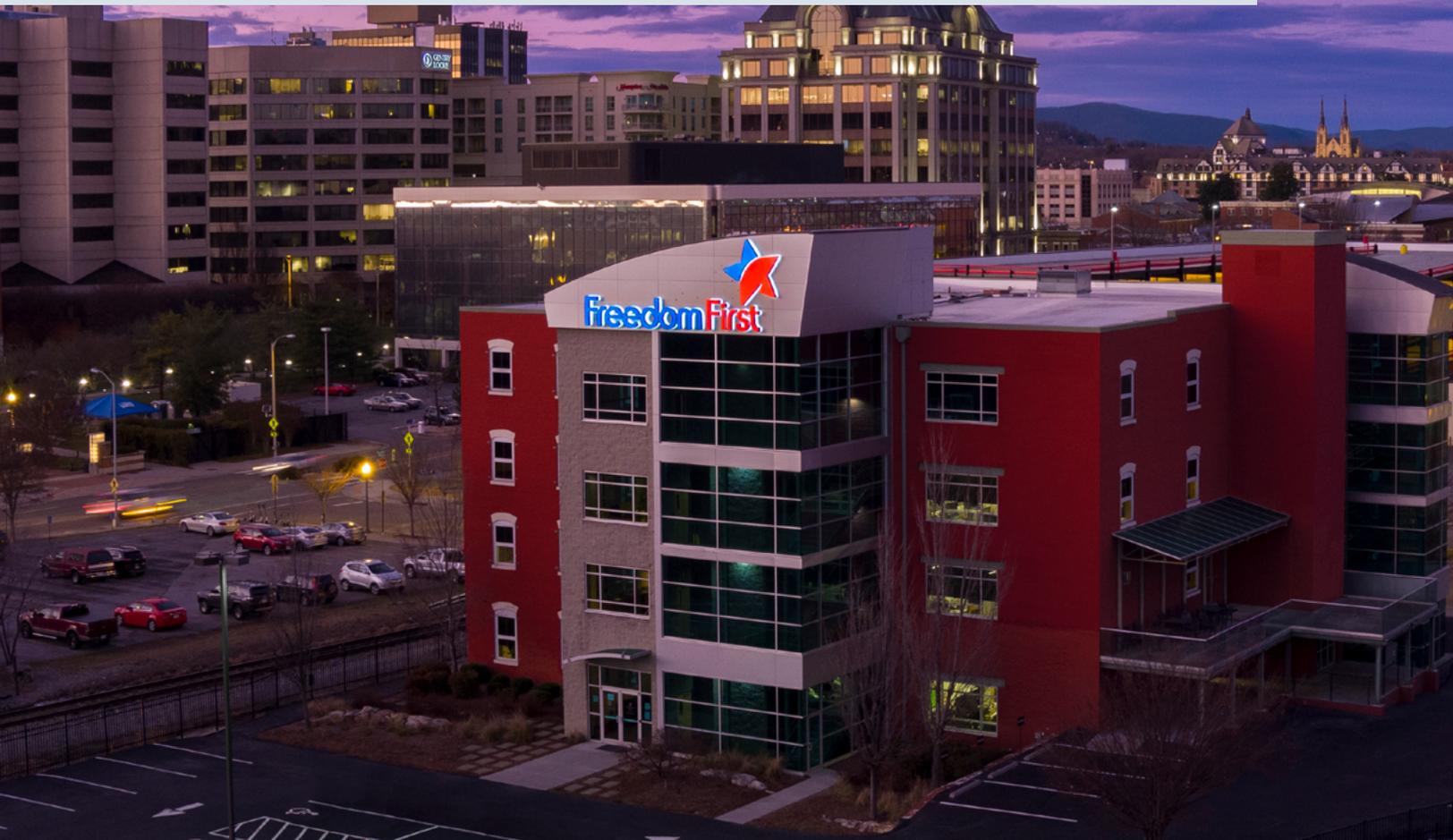


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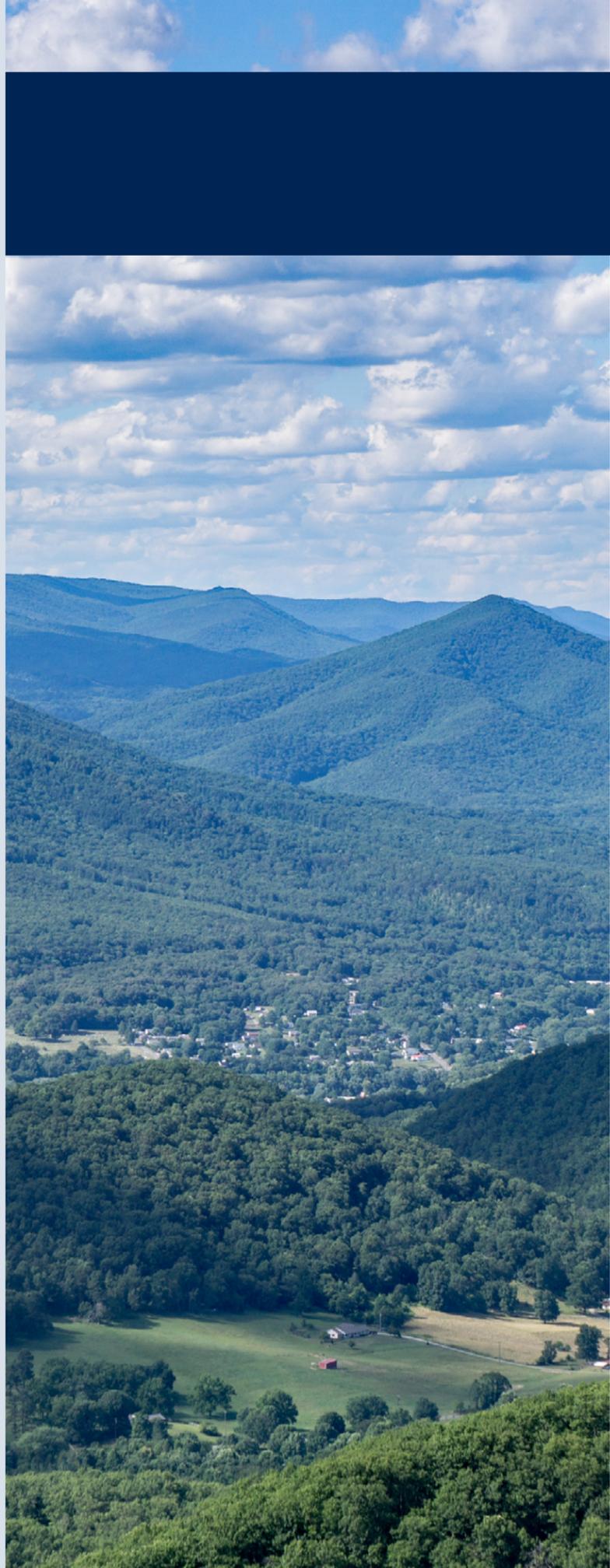
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Message From Paul Phillips

In 2020 and 2021 we were faced with an uncertain future that none of us were prepared for. It became evident that now more than ever that Freedom First needed to step up as a Community Development Financial Institution and take care of our members, employees, and the broader community we serve.

Our mission calls on us to always be *Helping People Prosper – Helping Communities Thrive*, and this philosophy is a core element of who we are as an organization. And it's under this umbrella statement where you'll find our purpose: to help *everyone* improve their financial well-being, to help businesses and nonprofits achieve their goals, and to help communities be more vibrant, equitable, and inclusive.

You'll find that this report is structured to demonstrate exactly *how* we are fulfilling the promises held in each of the above statements. From the individual looking for guidance on how to understand their credit report to the commercial developer breathing new life into disinvested areas through historic preservation projects, Freedom First is working hard to ensure that the capital we bring to our region *stays* here.

63 Percent

of new loans granted in 2020-21 were directed into Community Development Financial Institution Target Markets.

\$486 Million

in loans originated in Community Development Financial Institution Target Markets in 2020-21, which are economically distressed and historically underserved areas in our region.

Freedom First's status as both a [Community Development Financial Institution](#) (U.S. Treasury) and [Low-Income Designated Credit Union](#) (National Credit Union Administration) allows us to secure national funding and effectively deploy that capital to underserved markets within our service area. That means we are able to ensure that national funds and community-sourced deposits are combined to deploy locally in low-income communities, rural communities, economically distressed areas, and other historically underserved populations.

We look forward to continued growth that will allow us to scale our positive impact even more than what you will find in this report, and we appreciate the continued support of our members, employees, community, and leaders.

Sincerely,

Paul Phillips, President/CEO



Financial Well-Being For All

The [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) (CFPB) defines Financial Well-Being as “having financial security and financial freedom of choice, in the present and in the future.” This definition encompasses four distinct elements that can help people understand what Financial Well-Being means to them.

PRESENT SECURITY

Control over your day-to-day, month-to-month finances

PRESENT FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Financial freedom to make choices to enjoy life

FUTURE SECURITY

Capacity to absorb a financial shock

FUTURE FREEDOM OF CHOICE

On track to meet your financial goals

Freedom First’s Impact Banking products and services directly support the Financial Well-Being of our members by helping credit-challenged people establish savings, build credit, have a second chance loan review, access affordable auto loans, fund their professional development, and so much more.



\$7.3 Million

in Impact Loans supporting Workforce Development, second-chance personal loans, affordable vehicle financing, credit building opportunities, and more.



\$663,000

in non-mortgage debt reduced for Financial Empowerment Center participants in 2020-21, and 16% of participants increased their credit score by at least 35%.



\$174,000

in savings increased for Financial Empowerment Center participants. And 34% of participants have been able to reduce their delinquent accounts on their credit reports, opening the door for more affordable options.



\$18,500

in Scholarships awarded to local students in 2020-21 who are pursuing higher education.



Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center

The [Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center](#) - a partnership between the [City of Roanoke](#), [Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund](#), and [Freedom First Enterprises](#) - began operations in the spring of 2020 out of Freedom First’s Crossroads Branch. Luckily, the professionally trained counselors were able to adapt quickly despite challenges that arose from the pandemic and provide seamless one-on-one coaching sessions over the phone or video call to serve over two-thousand community members at no cost to them.

“It was important to us that we open on schedule because we can provide a very valuable service to people in a time of crisis,” said Financial Empowerment Center Manager Keri Garnett. “Our partnership with the City of Roanoke allows for us to offer a public service to anyone who lives in the Roanoke area, regardless of their membership status with Freedom First.”

Scholarships

For decades, Freedom First has been investing in the young minds of our region through scholarships to local rising senior high school and college students.

In 2020-2021, we awarded \$18,500 in scholarship funds to local students who are hoping to study psychiatry, entrepreneurship, nursing, law & criminal justice, marketing, community development, architecture, internal medicine, information technology, and veterinary science.



Furthering Education

One feature of the Responsible Rides® program is a focus on financial literacy and education through the Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center. Alicia met with Araceli Ruiz, a professionally trained and certified Financial Empowerment Center counselor, who helped Alicia better understand her credit score and answered her questions about personal finance.

“I had no defense against Araceli’s optimism. She prompted me to think about furthering my education and increasing my marketable skills. Her focus and encouragement motivated me to start taking classes.”

A Salem native with a passion for women’s healthcare, Alicia now attends Virginia Western Community College where she studies Entrepreneurship and Business Administration. Araceli was the one who pointed Alicia in the direction of the Freedom First scholarship program that helped her take a step closer to this new goal by securing the funds to purchase a laptop for her online classes.

“I have really enjoyed being a member and all of the services Freedom First provides, especially the community aspect of it,” Alicia said when asked what drew her to Freedom First. “It seems like Freedom First really cares about making a difference in the community. It has made a difference in my life, and I’ve spread it around to other people.”



Araceli Ruiz, Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center Financial Counselor

2,087 community members participated in financial counseling sessions through the Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center at no cost to them.



\$1.2 Million

in Responsible Rides® affordable vehicle loans to 113 borrowers needing affordable, reliable transportation.



1 in 3

Responsible Rides® borrowers in 2020-21 were single parents with no other means of reliable transportation for their families.

Reliable Transportation

Alicia made a resolution not to accumulate a lot of debt, but when a lack of credit history meant she couldn’t obtain a traditional auto loan, she realized that the [Responsible Rides® program](#) could be the solution for her. Alicia had very specific needs for her vehicle – she not only wanted to make sure her father and sister would feel comfortable riding in it, but she also needed to make sure it had enough space to store her sister’s walker and be easily accessible.

She worked with Kim English, Responsible Rides® Coordinator, to find trusted dealerships who have built strong partnerships with the program. COVID-19 made the car buying experience extremely stressful due to shrinking inventory, supply chain disruptions, and financial uncertainty among potential sellers, but Alicia kept searching. Despite the unusual circumstances, Alicia was able to find the exact car she was searching for. She walked into her nearest Freedom First branch and picked up her check for the auto loan the same day.

Responsible Rides®

This program is designed for hardworking people with low- to moderate-incomes who need reliable transportation to get to and from work, doctor’s appointments, grocery shopping, and everything many of us take for granted. Participants take part in financial education classes focused on both managing personal finances and car maintenance so they’re equipped to not only affordably purchase a car, but keep one in great shape for years to come. In 2020-2021, we loaned \$1.2 Million to 113 borrowers in need of affordable, reliable transportation.



Homeownership

Freedom First's Affordable Housing Program is by no means a one-size-fits-all solution. Allison Wolf, Freedom First's Housing Advocate, often works with members for months - or even years - to help first-time homebuyers build credit, save for a down payment, access down payment assistance, understand closing costs, find a trusted Realtor, and recommend custom underwriting for unique cases that might otherwise be denied via a more traditional route.



"Buying a home is complicated and stressful for anyone, whether you have a great deal of resources available to you or not," said Allison. "Many of the members I've worked with over the years either don't realize that homeownership is achievable for them, or they are totally overwhelmed by all of the paperwork and costs that add up. That's where this program can help."



\$304 Million

in Home Loans to nearly 1,500 borrowers in Southwest and Central Virginia in 2020-21 from a wide range of loan programs, including FHA, VA, Virginia Housing, USDA, and more.

\$99 Million

of the total Home Loans were to Low-to-Moderate Income borrowers, who made up 43% of the total number of borrowers in 2020-21.



\$456,000

in Down Payment Assistance was secured for Freedom First borrowers in 2020-2021 through partner organizations such as the [Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta](#).



A Home Within Reach

Franklin, a young Roanoke man looking to spread his wings and live independently, came to Freedom First hoping to buy a home of his own. He had experience living as a renter but moved back in with his parents when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Franklin began his career journey 10 years ago when he joined the Carilion team after successfully completing the [Project Search Special Education Program](#) through Montgomery County Schools. He's an active participant in Young Life, [Best Buddies of VT](#), and his softball team made it to the Special Olympics National Games in 2019. He had enough saved up for a down payment, but with no credit score he struggled to qualify for a traditional mortgage.

Freedom First's Affordable Housing Program uses alternative credit sources - such as bill payment history verified through account transactions - to provide custom underwriting for people in situations similar to Franklin's. Thanks to the hard work of all parties involved, Franklin closed on his townhouse in June of 2021. But purchasing a home was just the first step - he now has undertaken a variety of home improvement projects to truly make it his own.

A True Advocate

Freedom First's Housing Advocate, Allison Wolf, worked closely with Franklin and his mother Anne to help him buy his home. There were a number of obstacles, such as rejected offers and complications with his home inspection.

But the three banded together and worked through each problem until Franklin was finally able to call himself a proud homeowner. "Allison was so great and a very positive person to work with," Anne said. "As a parent, you love to see your children achieve their goals."





Support for Small Businesses

Freedom First has fully in-house Commercial Lending, Commercial Credit, and Business Banking teams staffed by local experts who understand our region's markets, people, and culture. Why is this important? Because when the underwriter or banker is local, they have a fuller understanding of what works in our market and can make informed decisions on how to best meet the business's needs. When the decision-makers are located states (and sometimes countries) away, a small business owner may not be able to get a loan, account, or affordable rate because the whole picture is not being considered.

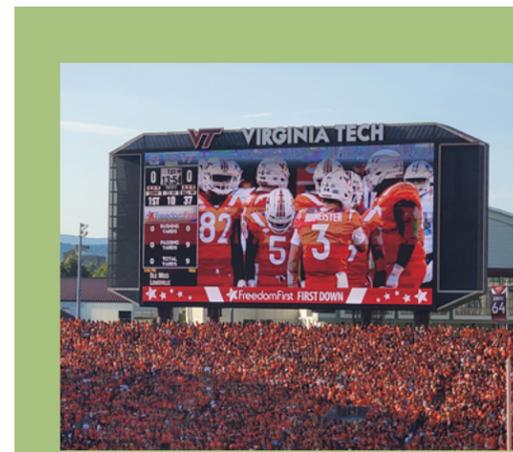


Weathering the Storm

Freedom First was one of the first in the region to make the U.S. Small Business Administration [Paycheck Protection Program](#) loans available to local businesses. We were able to quickly deploy \$28 Million through this program to businesses needing help mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, most of which was already either forgiven or paid off in full.

These 100% forgivable government-insured loans were made possible through the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) and are designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll during a time of economic hardship and uncertainty.

Freedom First's business members who participated in the program expressed a great deal of appreciation for help navigating the complicated and rapidly changing program guidelines, being able to pay their employees and avoid layoffs, and overall keeping their businesses afloat during periods of lockdown and supply chain disruptions.



Sponsorships

Freedom First contributed \$330,000 in support for community events, local athletic teams, and other local organizations in 2020-21. You may recognize many of the events we supported, including Virginia Tech football & basketball, Liberty Flames basketball, the Down by Downtown Music Festival, Steppin' Out Blacksburg, Roanoke Go Outside Festival, Roanoke Strawberry Festival, Bourbon & Bubbly (supporting the Southwestern Virginia Chapter of the American Culinary Federation and the Roanoke Hospitality House), Dickens of a Christmas, Christiansburg Kiwanis Wilderness Festival, and the Local Colors Festival.



\$28 Million

in Paycheck Protection Loans to over 200 local businesses through the U.S. Small Business Administration to offset impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21.



\$130,300

in [Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus](#) funding deployed from the City of Roanoke to local "Micro-Businesses" at risk of closing or laying off employees due to COVID-19.

\$330,000



contributed to support local community events and sponsorship opportunities in 2020-21.



2,500

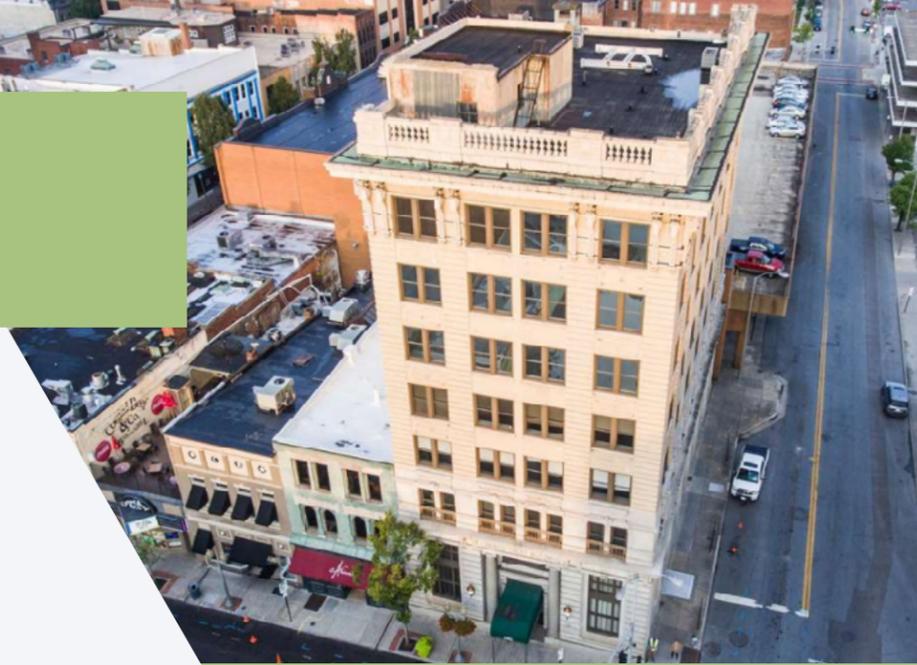
loan forbearances in the form of skipped payments were granted to consumers and businesses in 2020-21.

Economic Revitalization



Freedom First works hard with local developers, business owners, and entrepreneurs to breathe new life into our region through commercial redevelopment of existing properties, preserving and honoring the buildings' historical significance to the surrounding community. One such project Freedom First was excited to finance was the restoration of the historic Fire Station #1 building in downtown Roanoke.

The 1907 station has not been in public use at all for more than a decade. The building, which was replaced by a new station at the corner of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road in 2007, is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Hunter Greene, Director of Architecture at Hill Studio, said they plan to preserve the fire poles, an ornate spiral staircase, woodwork and other unique features of the building. Local firefighters are keen to see this beloved landmark restored to its original beauty while serving a new purpose to bring vitality to the City.



New Life for Historic Landmarks

Because of Freedom First's commitment to celebrating our local culture, many business owners turn to us for financing when taking on a development project involving historic preservation. One such instance was the [Liberty Trust Hotel](#), a 7-story 54-room boutique hotel that originally opened in 1910 as the First National Bank Building. At that time, the Liberty Trust served as the headquarters for the first bank founded in Roanoke where commercial transactions were facilitated for the Shenandoah Valley Railroad forerunner of the Norfolk & Western Railway.

Now, the Liberty Trust is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a Virginia Historic Landmark where guests can enjoy a taste of the past while visiting our Valley region. Historic preservation projects require a great deal of care and red tape to ensure that each property's defining historic features are properly preserved or recreated while also adhering to modern safety and building code requirements. Because of the complex nature of these developments, it can be difficult to secure financing. That's where a community partner such as Freedom First is able to step in and provide initial funding, help find gap financing partners, and work with the developer to see the project through to fruition.



\$253 Million

in 770 Commercial Loans to local business owners looking to purchase property, finance construction and development, and establish new business lines in 2020-21.

\$10.3 Million



in National Capital brought into our community from outside sources and deployed throughout our service area in 2020-21.

National Capital

When we discuss 'national capital,' we are referring to the money that Freedom First secures from outside sources and disseminates in our local communities. Those sources may include the U.S. government (via the [Community Development Financial Institution Fund](#), [U.S. Treasury Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), etc) or large private foundations. Freedom First's role is to make a case for why the funds could be used effectively in our region to fill gaps and reach underserved communities, then execute the plan to deploy it effectively when funds have been secured.



Community Impact Grants

Each year, Freedom First supports the work being done by community organizations to break down barriers, enable people to fully participate as local citizens, and help families achieve economic success and a better quality of life through our [Community Impact Grants](#) program. By funneling capital resources into the hardworking organizations directly serving our community's most vulnerable people, we're able to broaden our positive impact. The more resources our nonprofit partners have to work with, the more people they can serve effectively and the more vibrant our region will be overall.



\$70,000

in Community Impact Grants awarded to 13 local nonprofits supporting direct responses to COVID-19, community and household economy, health and human services, and arts/culture.



\$26,600

given to the community through Scoop, Freedom First's free ice cream truck staffed by employee volunteers.

Grant Recipients

In 2020-21, Freedom First awarded \$70,000 in Community Impact Grants to the following nonprofits:

- A Tree Planted Counseling
- Blue Ridge Literacy
- Commonwealth Catholic Charities
- Family Service of Roanoke Valley
- Kid's Soar
- Mill Mountain Theatre
- New Freedom Farm
- NRV CARES
- Opera Roanoke
- Restoring Hope Roanoke
- Roanoke Small Business Development Center
- Roanoke Valley Speech and Hearing Center
- Salem Ministers Conference Community Food Pantry



A Spirit of Giving

2020 and 2021 were challenging years for many organizations, especially nonprofits. Freedom First recognized the need and stepped in to provide relief beyond what we could offer through the Small Business Association's Paycheck Protection Program or Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus funding from the government.

In addition to our Community Impact Grants totaling \$70,000 given to 13 local nonprofit organizations, Freedom First also contributed \$5,000 each to the local chapters of the NAACP, \$10,000 to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia, \$33,285 to the United Way of the Roanoke Valley, and numerous other charitable donations throughout the year. These additional funds helped our nonprofit partners keep their doors open, expand programs benefiting our community, and truly make a difference in the lives of thousands of families throughout our region.

One Scoop at a Time

Did you know that Freedom First operates a [free ice cream truck](#) for our community? In 2020-21 we handed out 23,224 free ice creams to children and community members throughout the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

Freedom First employees volunteered 300 hours of their time to drive 2,726 miles around the region and bring free ice cream to schools, churches, nonprofits, local businesses, and community organizations. Overall, our contributions to the community through Scoop totaled to over \$26,600 in 2020-21.



2020-21 Nonprofits Supported

[A Tree Planted Counseling](#)
[Agape Center Lynchburg](#)
[AAF Roanoke](#)
[American Red Cross](#)
[Angel Tree Program](#)
[Apple Ridge Farm](#)
[BAPS Charities](#)
[Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central VA](#)
[Blue Ridge Autism & Achievement Center](#)
[Blue Ridge Land Conservancy](#)
[Blue Ridge Literacy](#)
[Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Boys and Girls Clubs of SWVA](#)
[Bradley Free Clinic](#)
[Buzz4Good](#)
[Center in the Square](#)
[Central Virginia Regional Rescue](#)
[Children's Trust](#)
[CHIP of Roanoke Valley](#)
[Christiansburg Institute](#)
[Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association](#)
[Commonwealth Catholic Charities](#)
[Community Foundation Serving Western VA](#)
[Community Investment Collaborative](#)
[Community School](#)
[Council of Community Services](#)
[Credit Union House of Virginia](#)
[Downtown Blacksburg, Inc.](#)
[Downtown Lynchburg Association](#)
[Downtown Roanoke Inc.](#)
[Eastmont Community Foundation](#)
[Family Life Services](#)
[Family Promise of Greater Roanoke](#)
[Family Service of Roanoke Valley](#)
[Feeding Southwest Virginia](#)
[Global Partners in Peace and Development](#)
[Good Samaritan Hospice](#)
[Grandin Theatre Foundation](#)
[Habitat for Humanity New River Valley](#)
[Habitat Roanoke Valley](#)
[Harrison Museum of African-American Culture](#)
[Hospitality House of the Blue Ridge](#)
[India Heritage Society](#)
[IDRF Mid Atlantic Chapter](#)
[Jefferson Center](#)
[Jubilee Family Development Center](#)
[Junior League of Roanoke Valley](#)
[Kid's Soar](#)

[Lancerlot Sports Complex](#)
[Latinas Network](#)
[Liberty University Foundation](#)
[Local Colors](#)
[LEAP](#)
[Local Impact for Tomorrow \(LIFT\)](#)
[LoveABLE Services, Inc.](#)
[Lynchburg Beacon of Hope](#)
[Lynchburg Daily Bread](#)
[Lynchburg Grows](#)
[Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance](#)
[Make-a-Wish Virginia](#)
[Mid-Atlantic CCIM](#)
[Mill Mountain Theatre](#)
[Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce](#)
[MRF NAACP](#)
[New Freedom Farm](#)
[NRV Agency on Aging](#)
[NRV CARES](#)
[Onward New River Valley](#)
[Opera Roanoke](#)
[Prevention Council of Roanoke County](#)
[Renovation Alliance](#)
[Restoration Housing](#)
[Restoring Hope Roanoke](#)
[Roanoke Branch NAACP](#)
[Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center](#)
[Roanoke Outside Foundation](#)
[Roanoke Refugee Partnership](#)
[Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Roanoke Regional Partnership](#)
[Roanoke Regional SBDC](#)
[Roanoke Valley Christian Schools](#)
[Roanoke Valley Speech and Hearing Center](#)
[Roanoke Valley SPCA](#)
[Rotary Club of Roanoke-Downtown](#)
[Salem Area Ecumenical Ministries](#)
[Salem Ministers Conference Community Food Pantry](#)
[Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Sleep in Heavenly Peace](#)
[SWVA Chapter of American Culinary Foundation](#)
[Special Olympics Virginia - Southwest Region](#)
[SpiritFM](#)
[SVH Services \(St. Vincent Homes\)](#)
[Straight Street Roanoke Valley](#)
[The Advancement Foundation](#)
[The Least of These Ministry](#)
[The Rescue Mission of Roanoke](#)

[The Spot on Kirk](#)
[Total Action for Progress \(TAP\)](#)
[United Way of Roanoke Valley](#)
[Vinton Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation](#)
[Virginia Tech University Foundation](#)
[YWCC Educational Foundation](#)
[Vittles for Vets](#)
[Warm Hearth Foundation](#)
[West End Center for Youth](#)
[Women's Resource Center of the NRV](#)
[Wonder Universe: A Children's Museum](#)
[WVTF Public Radio](#)
[YMCA at Virginia Tech](#)
[YMCA of Virginia's Blue Ridge](#)



Fostering Lasting Partnerships

Something unique about how Freedom First benefits nonprofits and other local organizations is that the contribution does not start and end with just a check. Of course, financial contributions are an important way to assist nonprofits and community organizations in achieving their missions to make our community a better place, but Freedom First also forms long-lasting and deep partnerships with our local nonprofits.

Many of Freedom First's programs are operated in coordination with nonprofits who directly serve our region's most vulnerable people. For example, Responsible Rides® operates in partnership with [Total Action for Progress \(TAP\)](#) in the Roanoke Valley, [New River Community Action](#) in the New River Valley, and [STEP, Inc.](#) in Franklin County. Freedom First is also a founding partner of [Local Impact for Tomorrow \(LIFT\)](#) alongside [Carilion](#), [Delta Dental](#), and [Roanoke City Public Schools](#). The Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center is not only operated in coordination with the City of Roanoke and the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, but the counselors are trained to refer participants to wraparound social services through partnerships with local agencies and nonprofits as well.

\$208,300

in In-Kind Donations from Freedom First and its employees to local nonprofits in 2020-21. This includes not just individual contributions but also corporate contributions and matching funds.

\$33,300

raised for the United Way of the Roanoke Valley in 2020-21, including employee donations and a corporate match from Freedom First.

111

nonprofits supported by Freedom First in 2020-21.

Giving Through Sports

In 2021, Freedom First began partnering with local universities Virginia Tech and Liberty University to donate and raise awareness for nonprofits in the New River Valley and Lynchburg region. For example, for every free throw successfully made at a home basketball game at either university, the guest nonprofit of the night would receive \$100.

Our team members not only enjoyed a night out at a college basketball or football game with the leaders and beneficiaries of different nonprofits, but they also had an extra reason to celebrate the home team's successes as well!





Local Impact for Tomorrow

LIFT ([Local Impact for Tomorrow](#)) is a health and wellness initiative sponsored by a coalition of community partners, including [Carilion Clinic](#), [Delta Dental of Virginia](#), Freedom First Credit Union and [Roanoke City Public Schools](#). LIFT believes that the key to strengthening a community starts with the family, and the easiest way to reach families is through their neighborhood school. The LIFT Center serves Southeast Roanoke by providing vital support and services to the students and families of [Fallon Park Elementary](#). The Center features a pediatric clinic, oral health and mental health services, financial coaching, health and wellness education, and access to other community resources in one convenient location.

Beyond Physical Health

At the ribbon cutting of the LIFT Center at Fallon Park Elementary in early 2022, Roanoke City Public Schools Superintendent Verletta White said, “Good health and well-being are vital to ensuring that students are ready to learn.” This tangible connection between physical, mental, and financial health and an individual’s ability to succeed is at the core of why the nonprofit founding partners of LIFT joined forces with the City to make change. Three consecutive Community Health Needs Assessment cycles identified the community as a high-priority area in great need of access to health and wellness services and support.

“Engaging Fallon Park teachers, students, and families in the services and programming offered is essential for positive long-term results,” said Shirley Holland, Carilion Vice President of Planning and Community Development and Freedom First Board Member. “We’re now able to confidently develop programming to meet the community where they are with services directly related to their needs, which is vital to creating lasting positive health outcomes for these students and families.”



Dave Prosser, Executive Director

Freedom First Enterprises

Freedom First Enterprises is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed in 2017 to complement the credit union and further the mission of Helping People Prosper - Helping Communities Thrive. In addition to acting as the fiscal agent for coalitions such as Local Impact for Tomorrow and the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers, Freedom First Enterprises also provides professionally-trained financial counselors to staff the Roanoke FEC.



572 Students

enrolled in the 2020-21 school year at Fallon Park Elementary School in Southeast Roanoke, all of whom are eligible to use the clinic and wraparound services provided through LIFT.



\$175,000

contributed to LIFT by Freedom First Enterprises as startup capital and gap financing for the clinic construction and program administration.

69.4% of Students



enrolled at Fallon Park Elementary in 2020-21 were considered economically disadvantaged. This statistic is important because economically disadvantaged families can benefit the most from the health, dental, and financial wellness resources provided through LIFT.

Targeted Investment

A [Community Development Financial Institution](#) (CDFI) is a financial institution that predominantly provides safe, sound financial products and services in eligible [CDFI Target Markets](#); is accountable to the communities they serve; and helps to build the financial capability of the people they serve. While the National Credit Union Administration's [Low Income Designation](#) is based on the *makeup* of the communities they serve, CDFI certification is based on where an institution's *dollars go*. Freedom First has both certifications, but CDFI certification in particular is notable in terms of capital deployment to underserved areas.



There are three types of CDFI Target Markets: economically distressed geographic areas (CDFI Investment Areas), Low Income Targeted Populations (individuals/families below 80% of Area Media Income), and Other Targeted Populations (historically underserved communities, largely defined by race/ethnicity). In 2020-21, Freedom First deployed 63% of its total loan dollars to CDFI Target Markets for a total of \$486 million deployed in the form of targeted investment. When the ripple effect of providing capital to underserved communities is taken into account, the overall impact of these investments is exponential.



\$486 Million

of new loans granted in 2020-21 were directed into Community Development Financial Institution Target Markets.

63 Percent



of Freedom First's entire loan portfolio was made to Community Development Financial Institution Target Markets in 2020-21.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In September of 2019, the [National Credit Union Foundation](#), the charitable arm of the U.S. credit union movement, adopted an 8th Cooperative Principle for credit unions in a call for credit unions throughout the nation to support "empowering through empathy" through efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

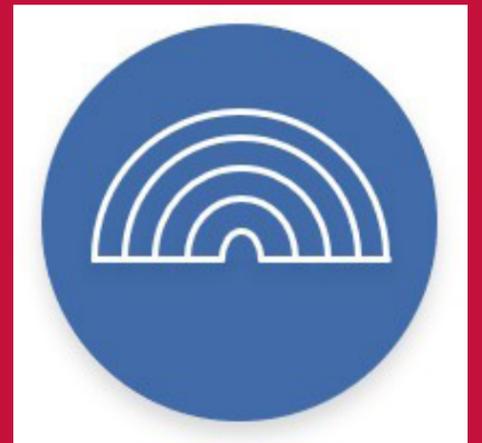
Freedom First joined our peers in the [Credit Union Diversity, Equity, Inclusion \(CU DEI\) Collective](#), where members signed a pledge to commit to positive change towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The push for more inclusive and equitable practices, policies, and products is still underway with much progress to be made, but positive change is in motion at Freedom First. As a Community Development Financial Institution dedicated to empowering those historically shut out of traditional financial systems, a renewed focus on DEI is right in step with our mission of *Helping People Prosper – Helping Communities Thrive* and Financial Well-Being for All.

The 8th Cooperative Principle

"Credit unions support diversity, equity and inclusion as a shared credit union cooperative principle and continue to have a responsibility and take a leadership role in building and serving more diverse, equitable, and inclusive communities."

— The National Credit Union Foundation's 8th Cooperative Principle for Credit Unions (2019)



Community Impact Overview



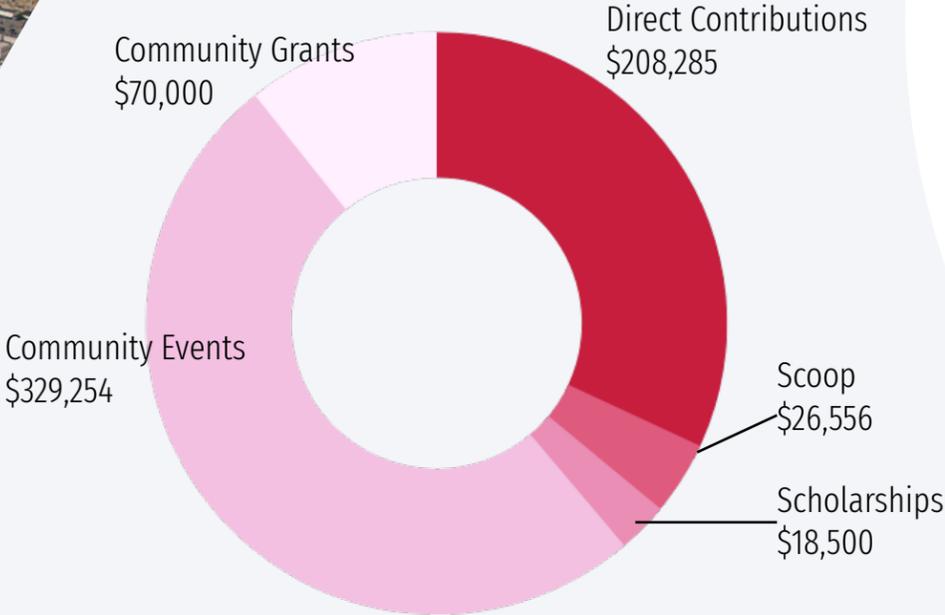
2020-2021 By the Numbers

	2020	2021
Assets	\$743,428,726	\$886,860,508
Deposits	\$590,498,665	\$753,180,785
Loans	\$563,531,351	\$682,702,427
Net Income	\$5,082,023	\$6,979,006
Members	57,138	59,592

*As of December 31, 2020 and December 31, 2021

Serving 22 Counties and 10 Cities Across Virginia.

Community Give-Back



2 out of 5



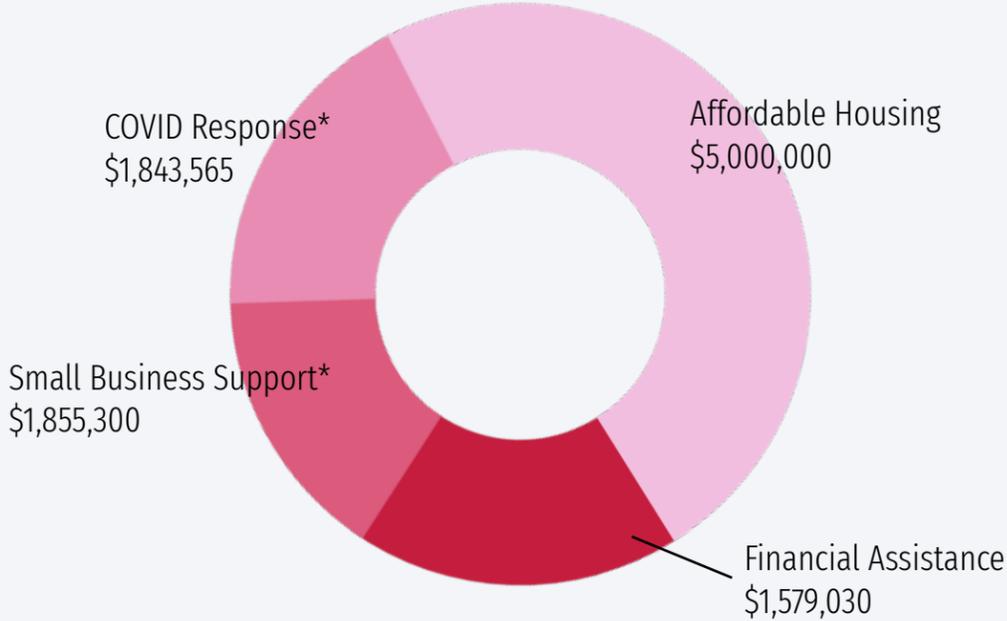
home loans were made to people of modest means in 2020-21.

3 out of 5



home loans were made to first time homebuyers in 2020-21.

National Capital Deployed



*Not including \$28M in Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loans



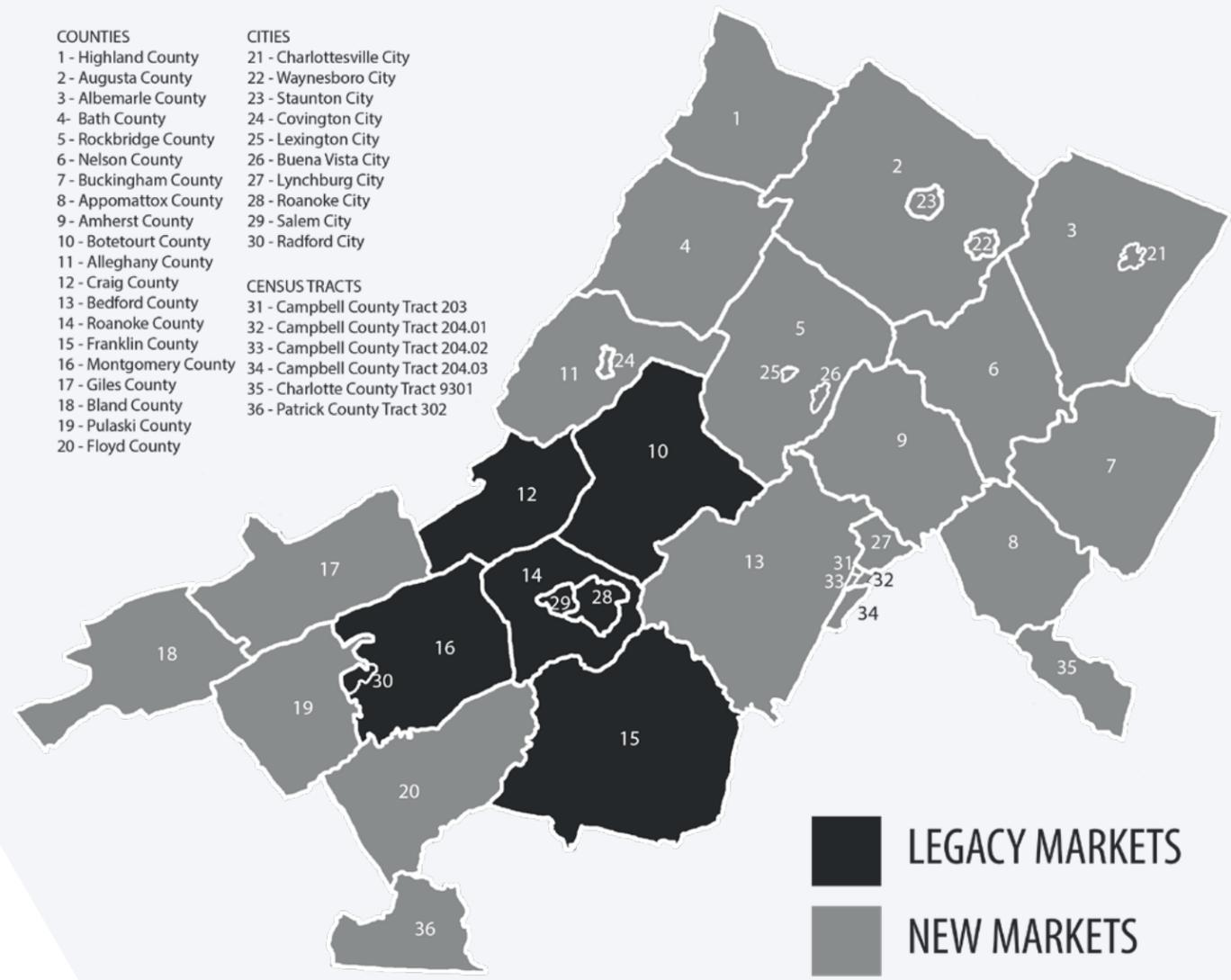
An Expanded Service Area

In 2021, Freedom First made the exciting announcement that we expanded our service area beyond the Roanoke and New River Valleys to include Central Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, and more areas in Southwest Virginia.

Where to Find Us

At the time of publishing this report, Freedom First has 11 branches operating throughout the Roanoke and New River Valleys, with an additional branch in Blacksburg undergoing renovations and more in the pipeline to serve Lynchburg. With the addition of our Bonsack branch in Roanoke County, Freedom First has the most brick-and-mortar branches of any financial institution in the Roanoke area. Paired with our robust suite of digital services, Freedom First is the most convenient place to bank in Roanoke.

- COUNTIES**
 - 1 - Highland County
 - 2 - Augusta County
 - 3 - Albemarle County
 - 4 - Bath County
 - 5 - Rockbridge County
 - 6 - Nelson County
 - 7 - Buckingham County
 - 8 - Appomattox County
 - 9 - Amherst County
 - 10 - Botetourt County
 - 11 - Alleghany County
 - 12 - Craig County
 - 13 - Bedford County
 - 14 - Roanoke County
 - 15 - Franklin County
 - 16 - Montgomery County
 - 17 - Giles County
 - 18 - Bland County
 - 19 - Pulaski County
 - 20 - Floyd County
- CITIES**
 - 21 - Charlottesville City
 - 22 - Waynesboro City
 - 23 - Staunton City
 - 24 - Covington City
 - 25 - Lexington City
 - 26 - Buena Vista City
 - 27 - Lynchburg City
 - 28 - Roanoke City
 - 29 - Salem City
 - 30 - Radford City
- CENSUS TRACTS**
 - 31 - Campbell County Tract 203
 - 32 - Campbell County Tract 204.01
 - 33 - Campbell County Tract 204.02
 - 34 - Campbell County Tract 204.03
 - 35 - Charlotte County Tract 9301
 - 36 - Patrick County Tract 302



LEGACY MARKETS
NEW MARKETS



We now serve an area covering 22 counties and 10 cities across Virginia. If you live, work, worship, go to school, or regularly do business in any of these localities, you can become a member of Freedom First.

2020-21 Board of Directors



Brent Cochran
Chairman
[LEAP, Grandin Co-Lab,](#)
[Community Sourced Capital](#)



Wayne Strickland
Vice Chairman
Retired, [Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission](#)



Melinda Payne
Secretary
Retired, [City of Salem Economic Development](#)



Michelle Davis
2021 Treasurer
[Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia](#)



Ron Williams
Director
Retired, [The Roanoke Times](#)



Andrea Garland
Director
[City of Roanoke](#)



Shirley Holland
Director
[Carilion Clinic](#)

Corporate Leadership



Paul Phillips
President & CEO



Sarah Andrews
Chief Operations Officer



Linda Johnson
Chief Financial Officer



Shon Aguero
Chief Banking Officer

Incoming 2021 Directors



Keith Perry
Director
[Carilion Clinic](#)



David Lowen
Director
Retired, [Foti, Flynn, Lowen & Co.](#)



John Budd
2020 Treasurer
[Budd CPA](#)



Judith Harrison
Director
Retired, [Mountain View Neighborhood Preservation](#)

Outgoing 2021 Directors

Thank You, Judy!

We want to say a huge thank you to retiring Board Member Judy Harrison. She dedicated 10 years to the Freedom First Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee, and she also served Carilion Credit Union for decades prior to that. Judy represented Freedom First well to our employees, members, potential members, and the community at large. Thank you for your years of service and for setting a great example for current and future members of the Board of Directors.



HEADQUARTERS
207 BULLITT AVE SOUTHEAST, ROANOKE, VA 24013



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