

We are a network of 10 Councils of Governments working to positively influence quality of life and economic development in South Carolina.

South Carolina Councils of Governments (SC COGs) navigate state and national policy issues, advocate on behalf of multiple regions, and leverage successes to build a grander story for our state. We are proud to offer this impact report to highlight the results we've generated and opportunities secured for the residents of South Carolina.

economic & community development

federal & state grants

On behalf of our local governments, SC COGs pursue competitive grants for infrastructure and community revitalization projects. More than half of the grants secured are **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**. Others include **SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA)** and **U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)** grants.



229 grants were secured, administered and managed, totaling nearly **\$274 million**.

access to capital

SC COGs are able to leverage valuable financial resources in the form of loans and private capital through federal partners like the **U.S. Economic Development Administration**, **Appalachian Regional Commission**, **U.S. Department of Agriculture**, and the **U.S. Small Business Administration**.

Since inception, SC COGs lending programs have loaned **\$157 million**, creating **11,544 jobs**.



Since the early 1980s, COGs have leveraged **\$358 million** in private capital.

workforce training

Working with a variety of federal and state funding partners, SC COGs operate **SC Works Centers** to provide much needed workforce training throughout our state.



63,545 job seekers served through **39** SC Works offices.

WIOA clients, including youth, displaced workers and adults totaled 4,587.

Each SC COG has a Workforce Development Board that prioritizes how federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds will be utilized - resulting in re-employment or job training for South Carolinians of all ages and backgrounds.



Workforce Training for 350 Front-line Healthcare Professionals in Rural Communities

The Pee Dee Regional COG, in collaboration with Upper Savannah Council of Governments, implemented a \$2.2 million Rural Healthcare Grant to train approximately 350 front-line healthcare workers to serve rural communities in the partnering organizations' 13-county region and two counties each in the Waccamaw and Santee-Lynches regions. To date, more than 200 participants have been enrolled to work as emergency medical technicians/paramedics, certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, pharmacy technicians, certified medical assistants, or surgical technicians.



Workforce Development Mobile Unit Serves Hard-to-Reach Rural Areas

Lower Savannah COG's Workforce Development Division rolled out its mobile unit at the beginning of Program Year 2022. For that program year the mobile unit saw 484 customers in some of its most rural and hard-to-serve areas geographically.





Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) grants

The South Carolina Legislature allocated \$1.3 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funds to the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) for infrastructure grants. These grants were distributed through a competitive grant process for Community Impact, Regional Solutions and Viable Planning grants. **Each grant will bring transformative impact to their communities.**

SC COGs play an important role in ensuring that these funds were properly used by providing **grant writing, capacity building and strategic planning support** to the member governments who applied to use these funds. Even if they did not assist in grant writing support, some member governments are now contracting with a COG to manage their grant and oversee implementation. The following is a snapshot of the work completed in year one of this two-year grant. We look forward to sharing updates in the future regarding implementation and impact to rural communities.

- **212** grants were awarded in South Carolina, totaling **\$1.3 billion.**
- **59** of the grants awarded will be administered by a SC COG.
- **65** grants written by SC COGs on behalf of localities and special purpose districts, which resulted in **\$307 million** awarded to South Carolina communities.



serving our aging population

Seven of the 10 SC COGs are designated as their region's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), working with the SC Department on Aging to deliver services like **in-home care, transportation, legal services and more** to the aging population throughout South Carolina.

- **116,557** clients were impacted by SC COGs Aging Programs.
- **1,846,510** meals were served (in-home and at congregate meal sites) to a total of **20,142** seniors.




serving local governments

SC COGs work to benefit all of South Carolina by functioning as an extension of county and local governments, serving as a resource for technical assistance, and securing state and federal dollars to address critical issues for our communities. Support ranges from facilitating council retreats and training staff to providing governmental assistance in budgeting and human resources.

planning assistance

In fiscal year 2023, SC COGs assisted city and county governments in meeting statutory planning requirements for their jurisdictions, and in filling gaps within staffing and management of services. SC COGs completed comprehensive plans, updated zoning documents, and assisted with large scale GIS projects.

-  • **365** planning projects
- **8** comprehensive plans

Collaborative SC BEST Brownfields Project Underway

Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) received a \$1 million sub-grant from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) to facilitate eligible environmental assessment activities across the state. CRCOG is partnering with the other nine COGs for site selection, program work, and funding disbursement. The project is known as the South Carolina Brownfields Environmental Site Testing (SC BEST) Program. Funding for site work was available in spring 2023, with a project period until June 30, 2024. The SC BEST program was in its start-up phase as of the end of FY23. By September 30, 2023, 40 sites had been approved for testing in 25 counties.





transportation planning & projects

Each COG engages in transportation planning. All manage rural transportation planning and four of the 10 serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for urban transportation planning. Working with transportation policy committees, COG Boards recommend and prioritize transportation projects in coordination with the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT).

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) spotlight: Regional Mobility

Regional Mobility is an SCDOT-defined program comprised of federal funds and state match. The purpose of Regional Mobility is to complete Rural and Urban System Upgrade projects for MPOs and COGs.

Eligible activities include planning, preliminary engineering and design, rights of way acquisition and construction. Projects include, but are not limited to, intersections, road widenings, new roads, and operational and safety enhancements.



- **155 Regional Mobility projects**
- **Nearly \$495 million in total investment**

(as of October 2023 in the 10 SC COGs TIPs)



Mass Transit Infrastructure Projects Making Progress

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) continues to lead development of Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT), the state's first mass transit infrastructure project. With a commitment of up to \$375 million in federal funding, plus a local half-cent sales tax match, LCRT is on pace to complete 60% design in the first half of 2024. The \$625 million bus rapid transit system is scheduled to begin operation in 2029.



To learn more about SC COGs, please visit sccogs.org.