

UPPER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 Annual Report to the Board Members Representing Laurens County
 For the Fiscal Year Ending 2020

Financial Review - Upper Savannah COG Revenue Highlights

Local Government Funding	\$153,027
State Aid to COG	40,965
Federal & State	2,146,123
General, In-kind & Miscellaneous	91,200
Contractual & Direct Services	<u>3,791,342</u>
TOTAL	\$6,222,657

Return on Investment – Laurens County – Fiscal Year 2020

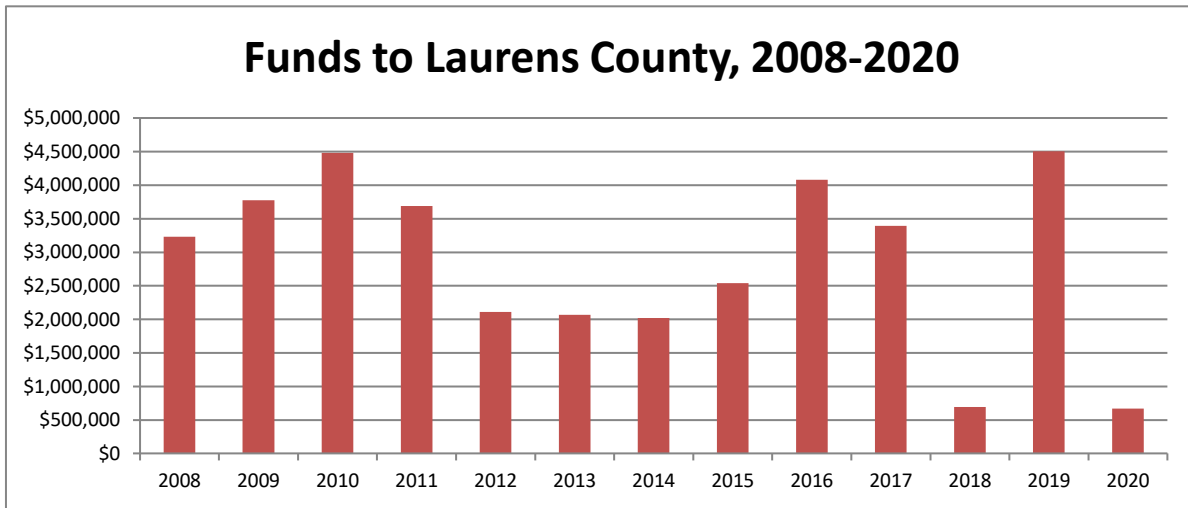
Local Government Investment	\$46,794
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Funds to Laurens County

Aging Direct Services	\$397,737
Workforce Development Direct Services	<u>274,029</u>

TOTAL	\$671,766
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Return on Investment: 14:1



Direct Services funding consists of federal and state dollars for Workforce Development and Aging program services provided to the counties in the Upper Savannah region based on performance, need and eligibility. The COG administers these two programs under contract for direct service delivery and is responsible for the allocation and fiscal administration of these dollars. The funds assist in delivering services that provide for the health, welfare and employment of certain segments of a county’s population, thus easing the financial and administrative burden on local governments.

Laurens County Highlights

Laurens County Lydia Mill Sewer Upgrade Phase II – CDBG request of \$750,000 funded in June 2019, with local match of \$107,700. Partnering with Laurens County Water & Sewer Authority, the upgrade will include Sycamore, Peachtree, Oak, Elm, Chestnut, Magnolia, Spruce, Pine and Poplar streets in City of Clinton. In addition to the residential areas, the project will include section of trunk sewer line which not only serves the entire Lydia Mill area but also other areas of the City of Clinton. Project construction is under way.

City of Clinton Mill Village Water Upgrade II – CDBG request for \$626,802 funded in June 2017. Waterline upgrade in the Clinton Mill Village around Beauregard/Davis Street area. Construction completed in FY 20.

Waterline Upgrade and Water Tank – Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission (LCWSC) was awarded a \$3,100,000 grant to upgrade a waterline along Stagecoach Road and to construct a water tank at Milam Road. Both project components will enhance the LCWSC's water system operations and help maximize the benefits of the new water plant. The project is under way and the Upper Savannah COG staff is administering the project on behalf of the Commission. The grant was awarded under EDA's supplemental funding in response to natural disasters occurring in 2017. The damage and impacts of Hurricane Irma resulted in a presidentially declared disaster in South Carolina which made this project eligible. The total project cost is \$3,875,000.

Industrial Training Center – Piedmont Technical College was awarded a \$1,500,000 EDA grant to fund a portion of the Upstate Center for Manufacturing Excellence. This 45,000 square foot state of the art industrial training center will benefit workers and industries in the college's service area. The total project cost is \$12,453,414. Construction of this facility was completed in August 2020 and the Upper Savannah COG staff administered the project on behalf of the College.

CARES Act Grant Application – Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission applied for EDA CARES Act funds with the help of Upper Savannah COG staff. The project was to involve construction of a new water line and water tank to serve an industrial area north of the US221/I-385 interchange. The total project cost was to be \$4,857,000 with \$3,885,600 being requested from EDA. Upper Savannah was recently notified that the project was not funded due to lack of funds.

Laurens County SC Works Center – Helped workers from two plant closures prepare for new opportunities. Obtained a grant to help Greenwood and Laurens young offenders get jobs.

Focus on Manufacturing – The largest need in the Upper Savannah area is preparing workers for jobs in manufacturing. There are hundreds of jobs which are unfilled and several thousand job seekers in the Upper Savannah region. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board works with both businesses and job seekers to address short-term and long-term needs. Upper Savannah developed linkages with workforce boards in Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg to start improving the pool of manufacturing workers in the Greater Upstate Region.

SC Works – SC Works Centers are the focal point of the workforce development system. More than a thousand job seekers were matched with jobs through the SC Works system.

WIOA Enrollment – Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enrollment totaled 322 in FY 2020. Enrollment figure was down from last year due to low unemployment in the first part of the year, the challenges of the pandemic beginning in March, and a reduction in WIOA funding.

Outreach – Upper Savannah is best known for its innovative approaches to reaching job seekers and employers. It has had a large event in October, but the March event was canceled due to the pandemic. The Upper Savannah Facebook feeds reach thousands each week.

Laurens County SC Works Center – More than two thousand Laurens residents visited the Laurens SC Works Center. Helped workers from Continental Tire by hosting a job fair. Helped write resumes for Shaw Floor employees due to their closure in Clinton and set up two separate job fairs with eight employers each.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) Update – Maintained the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to keep the region eligible for EDA funding. Assisted in the development of four project applications for CARES Act funding in Edgefield, Laurens, McCormick, and Saluda counties. Developed an EDA CARES Act application to hire an Economic Recovery Specialist for the region to help local governments deal with federal and state COVID-19 related requirements and funding opportunities. This application was funded.

Census 2020 – Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in-person Census activities were halted in February and did not restart until later in the year. Assisted with Census promotion as much as feasible using social media and other formats for other types of meetings.

Planning Commissioner Certification – Hosted numerous workshops to get planning commissioner, zoning appeals board members, and staff certified. Across the region, 58 people had received the required training. COVID-19 requirements have reduced the numbers this year because in-person training and certification stopped and individual on-line training was allowed.

Upper Savannah Land Trust – Continued providing technical assistance to the Upper Savannah Land Trust.

Transportation Planning – Continued working with SCDOT on various transportation planning projects. Developed a draft Long Range Plan with assistance in ranking projects from SCDOT. Represented USCOG on meetings to develop a freight mobility plan for the Appalachian COG region to include Laurens County.

Transit – Received, reviewed, and ranked transit grants from regional providers and forwarded them on to SCDOT. Participated in transit discussion groups in Greenwood and Laurens counties. Developed a draft demographic update to a past regional transit feasibility study for SCDOT review.

Environmental Reviews – Completed environmental reviews for Community Development Block Grant projects through January 2020.

Americans with Disabilities Act – Continued updating ADA plans for local governments as needed.

County and Municipal Clerks Meeting – Organized and hosted a regional meeting for county and municipal clerks to discuss topics of common interest.

HOME – Continued monitoring completed projects with the HOME Investment Partnership Program. HOME is a HUD-funded program that provides rehab or new construction funding for homes of low-income individuals and rental units. Monitoring tenant income and rent levels will continue for the next 20 years. There is no more local funding in this program.

InfoMentum – Continued working with the data management and mapping tool accessed through a partnership with Appalachian COG. The InfoMentum program allows staff to produce quick maps for grant applications and also to use layers of demographic information to focus projects on the most needy areas. ACOG in Greenville staffs and maintains this program and USCOG is a subscribing partner.

Planning – Continued assisting various municipal and county planning commissions with development or zoning questions as needed.

Grant writing – Assisted with grant writing for municipalities as requested.

Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Services – The Upper Savannah Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides, coordinates and contracts for services to the Upper Savannah region's senior population. In addition to the regional services through the ADRC, Upper Savannah contracts with the region's senior centers and other providers to meet the needs of senior adults. Contracted services include transportation, home-delivered meals, congregate dining with activities, home care, and health and wellness promotion.

State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) – The SHIP program helps seniors and individuals with disabilities research and understand Medicare coverage options with their Medicare prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plans. This Program also counsels and assists beneficiaries with Medicare Part A & B issues and Medigap coverage, and alerts seniors to fraudulent Medicare and Medicaid practices through the Senior Medicare Patrol Program. The Upper Savannah SHIP Program made 1,576 contacts and attended 14 outreach events from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) – Program provided funding to 308 caregivers as well as information, assistance, education, support, and referrals to many more throughout the region. The program provides respite, which is a break from daily care-giving that is important in helping caregivers do a better job over a longer period of time. The program also helps caregivers with supplemental services, such as incontinent supplies and assistive technology. The FCSP also continues to be available for grandparents 55 and older caring for grandchildren 18 and younger. Many grandparents take on the parental role in order to keep the grandchildren out of the overburdened foster care system. The FCSP helps those grandparents who have stepped into the role of parent due to death, incarceration or other parental problems with some funded services as well as information and support groups.

Information, Referral and Assistance (IR&A) – The IR&A program is designed to provide seniors and people with disabilities access to helpful resources. Upper Savannah staff includes two certified IR&A specialists.

Home Safety Program – The program has helped many individuals throughout the region with projects that improve unsafe areas in the home, including the building of handicap accessible ramps and installation of handrails, grab bars, etc. Partnerships with area churches have maximized the funding potential. The AAA helped 71 people in the Home Safety Program throughout the region during FY 2020.

Assistive Technology (lifelines) – Program assisted approximately 36 seniors throughout the region with lifelines.

Legal Services Program – Program served 35 seniors with various legal concerns such as Power of Attorney, will preparation, and grandparent custody issues. Attorneys throughout the region have agreed to work with the ADRC at reasonable rates to better serve the senior population.

Home Care Program – Upper Savannah AAA provides a Home Care Program that helps seniors who are in need of services such as light housekeeping and some personal care. The program provides consumer choice for the seniors and their families and adds support to keeping older persons in their homes as long as possible. The program served 148 people in FY 2020.

Advocate for Senior Citizens – Continued to serve as an advocate for 2,242 seniors in the region's nursing homes and residential care facilities through the continued administration of the Regional Ombudsman Program. The Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman investigates and works to resolve problems or complaints affecting residents in nursing homes and residential care facilities. The Ombudsman also educates residents and family members about long term care and related issues while advocating for the protection of the resident's rights.