



UPPER SAVANNAH

Council of Governments

ACTIVITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2025

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

USCOG
to SUBMIT

2

CDBG grant
applications
in spring round

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are

13

active CDBG
projects in region,
totaling almost
\$14 million

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

\$11.27 million

EDA

Piedmont Tech
Health Sciences
Building bid package
being prepared

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LCWSC
\$5.4 million

EDA

Metric Road
water upgrade
under
construction

AGING

More than

11,600

meals served
to seniors
in Region
in December '24

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Continuing
to assist
local
utility
providers
with

SCIIP projects

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1,356

job seekers
served
at SC Works
offices in Region
in January '25

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

7,604

job seekers
served
at SC Works
offices in Region
in 2024

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

SC 250

Assisting
with SC 250
Committee
activities
pertaining to
Revolutionary
War history

See

DETAILS
on these and
other activities
in this report



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
Saluda County.....	Library Improvements.....	\$750,000
Laurens County.....	Clinton-Joanna WWTP Upgrade Phase II.....	\$1,618,000
City of Greenwood.....	Waller Avenue Streetscape.....	\$750,000
Greenwood County.....	DSS Building Improvements.....	\$1,278,510
City of Greenwood.....	Booker T. Washington Sewer Upgrade.....	\$840,000
City of Abbeville.....	Chestnut Street Park.....	\$250,000
Town of Ridge Spring.....	Town of Ridge Spring Sewer Rehab.....	\$1,700,000
Laurens County.....	Clinton-Joanna WWTP Upgrade.....	\$2,350,000
Greenwood County.....	Matthews Mill Phase II Sewer Upgrade.....	\$1,600,000
Town of Saluda.....	N. Main/W. Church Streetscape.....	\$721,212
Greenwood County.....	Mathews Mill Village Phase I Sewer Upgrade.....	\$1,275,000
Town of McCormick.....	N. Main/Augusta Streetscape.....	\$750,000
Greenwood County	Regional Planning	\$50,000
TOTAL		\$13,932,722

CDBG GRANT APPLICATIONS TO BE SUBMITTED

APRIL 2025 SPRING ROUND

Laurens County Joanna Sewer Rehabilitation - Funds are being requested to upgrade a gravity main located along West and East Calhoun streets in Joanna. The Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission would be the subrecipient of this grant. This project is expected to benefit approximately 150 units along Blalock Drive, Browning Avenue, and Reeder, Workman, East and West Calhoun, Moorehead, Banna and North Main streets in the Joanna community. Sample surveys, cost estimates and project details are currently under development.

City of Clinton Florida Street Sewer Rehabilitation - Project will upgrade sewer lines on East Ferguson, North Jones, East Florida, Hays, and North Holland streets. This project will benefit approximately 100 units. Surveys, engineering and cost estimates are currently under development. The proposed project includes approximately 1,545 linear feet of 10-inch gravity sewer line, 8,890 linear feet of 8-inch gravity sewer line and 27 manholes. The gravity sewer line would be rehabilitated using CIPP and point repairs where necessary.

There are **13** active CDBG projects in the region, totaling **\$13,932,722**

Saluda County Library Improvements - Saluda County was rewarded \$750,000 in December 2024 to renovate the new Saluda County Library location at 307 W. Butler Ave. The current library behind the courthouse consists of approximately 2,000 square feet of space, whereas the new library location consists of approximately 6,900 square feet. Improvements to include interior construction, parking improvements, ADA accessibility, and new HVAC unit. Improvements will provide this low-to-moderate income county with a larger facility, allowing for more educational materials, resources, and space for free library-hosted activities and programs. Project in start-up phase.

Clinton-Joanna WWTP Upgrade Phase II: Laurens County was awarded \$1,618,000 in July 2024 for the Clinton-Joanna Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade Phase II. This will help Laurens County continue the project that was awarded in August 2022 but came in over budget. In June 2023, the project for the plant was bid for construction, including installation of a second 750,000-gallon sludge holding tank as an alternate bid item. However, due to the high bids the second tank was unable to be funded. As a result, the project was awarded with the construction of only one 750,000-gallon tank. In the spring 2024 CDBG application round, funds were requested to continue upgrading the plant including the purchase and installation of the second sludge holding tank, aeration, mixers, pumps, controls, and other necessary fittings. Project cost is estimated to be \$1,780,000, with \$1,618,000 in CDBG funds and \$162,000 in matching funds provided by the Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission. The improvements consist of installing the 750,000-gallon tank. The drying beds were removed as part of the original scope in Phase I. The location is already cleared and will provide the space necessary to house the second tank and its equipment, without acquisition and/or land clearing. This additional tank will be the completion of the 2022 original scope, providing the Clinton-Joanna plant its necessary capacity to not only sustain its increasing wastewater volume, but to handle the facility's max capacity. Bid package at SC Department of Commerce for approval to sign contract.

Waller Avenue Streetscape: City of Greenwood was awarded \$750,000 in December 2023 for streetscape improvements to Waller Avenue in Uptown. Conditions on Waller included broken, pieced and misaligned sections of sidewalk, unsecure fencing, root overgrowth, ADA accessibility concerns, poorly patched sections of road, worn curbing, and lack of parking stall signage. Funds are being used to install sidewalks, brick roadway, curbing, ADA accessibility, parking stall indicators, landscaping and outdoor seating. Construction began Nov. 11, 2024, and is expected to be completed in March 2025.

DSS Building Improvements: Greenwood County was awarded \$1,278,510 in CDBG funding in December 2023 to improve the Department of Social Services building. The building needs a new roof, HVAC, improved restrooms, asbestos abatement, ADA accessibility, lobby/waiting area improvements, flooring, lighting, repainting, parking lot and safety improvements. The County has recently met with the engineer for the project. Engineering contract signed June 2024. Project in start-up phase.

Booker T. Washington Sewer Upgrade: City of Greenwood received \$840,000 in CDBG funds in June 2023 to improve sewer service in Booker T. Washington neighborhood. The project includes Central Avenue, North Hospital Street, Brewer Avenue, and New Street. Rehabilitation includes approximately 4,800 feet of 8-inch sewer line with Cured in Place Pipe (CIPP), rehabilitation of 25 brick manholes, and installation of new frames and covers. There will be approximately 65 service connections in public right of way; no acquisition is anticipated. Project will benefit approximately 56 units, occupied by estimated 119 persons. Construction began July 8, 2024.

City of Abbeville Chestnut Street Park: City received \$250,000 in CDBG funds in December 2022 to upgrade Chestnut Street Park, which is owned by the City and located at 400 Chestnut St. Improvements include playground equipment, picnic tables, mulch, and open-air pavilion. Additional work to include site preparation, installation of purchases, designated American Disabilities Act parking, and concrete work. Project estimated at \$275,000, going out to bid late February 2025.

Town of Ridge Spring Sewer Rehab: Town received \$1,700,000 in CDBG funds in August 2022 to rehabilitate three major sections of the Town's main sewer trunkline. A study completed in 2005 indicated excessive inflow and infiltration within the Town's system. Recent inspections indicated conditions significantly worsened. Project includes approximately

2,541 linear feet (LF) of 8” gravity sewer, 2,151 LF of 10” gravity sewer, 200 LF of 16” steel encased pipe (bore), 3,361 LF of CIPP and installation of approximately 42 manholes. Project costs estimated to be \$2,086,090, including \$386,090 from Town. Upper Savannah and the Town are in the process of acquiring the right of way. Project will go out to bid once right of way acquisition is complete.

Clinton-Joanna WWTP Upgrade: Laurens County received \$1,500,000 in CDBG funds in August 2022 to upgrade Clinton-Joanna Wastewater Treatment Plant. Improvements included removing existing drying beds and upgrading the WWTP process by installing two large sludge holding tanks, aeration, mixers, pumps, controls, and other necessary fittings for liquid land application of the digested sludge. Project cost was estimated to be \$3,026,000, including \$1 million from State Revolving Fund and \$526,000 from Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission (LCWSC). Project will benefit estimated 8,078 people. Bids came in over budget, worked with LCWSC and Department of Commerce to acquire additional \$850,000. Construction was completed in December 2024.

Greenwood County Mathews Mill Sewer Phase II: County received \$1,600,000 in CDBG funds in August 2022 to continue sewer improvements to the Mathews Mill area. Improvements included installation of approximately 825 ft. of 12-inch and 5,200 ft. of 8-inch gravity sewer line, 23 new pre-cast concrete manholes and reconnection of 109 structures. Construction to include Georgia Street, Bolt Avenue, Bond Avenue, Stevens Avenue, and Cross Street. Total project costs are estimated to be \$3,103,399, with \$1,503,399 from Greenwood Metro District. Project will benefit approximately 303 people. Completion expected in March 2025.

Town of McCormick Streetscape Phase II: A total of \$750,000 in CDBG funds were requested to continue the Town’s streetscape efforts. The project includes improvements to W. Augusta St in front of Town Hall to include sidewalks, curbing, speed table, and Veterans Memorial. Additional improvements will be made to the parking area behind Town Hall and the Fire Department, including new parking, alternative exit and entrance, and required underground retention pond. The Town committed an additional \$215,637 towards the completion of the project. The alternate exit from Town Hall parking to SC Works parking would involve the removal of several large trees and require relocation of the Town’s Emergency Services generator. Project provides an additional 23 parking stalls. Construction of sidewalks, Veterans Memorial and speed table will result in eliminating the majority of existing parking out front of Town Hall. Construction began in January 2023, completion expected June 2025.

Greenwood County Mathews Mill Sewer Phase I: Project was awarded June 2021 with \$1 million in CDBG funds. Greenwood Metro (GMD) pursued funding through Greenwood County to improve infrastructure within Mathews Mill Village in multiple phases. An additional \$275,000 in CDBG funding was required with GMD adding \$278,215. Project expected to improve sewer service to 174 units. Improvements to include Florida Avenue, Truett Avenue, Holloway Avenue, Grier Street, Kirksey Drive West, and Palmer Street. Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) funds were also acquired. Project costs are estimated to be \$3,519,851. Construction completed in July 2024. Project closeout expected February 2025.

Town of Saluda Streetscape: Town received \$721,212 in CDBG funding in November 2021 for streetscape at North Main and West Church streets. Project focuses on downtown beautification in hopes of providing a welcoming atmosphere for economic development. Improvements would encourage foot traffic, potentially stimulating business opportunities within the available storefronts. Project includes a \$102,562 local match for total cost of \$823,774. Construction began in May 2024, completion expected in March 2025.

Regional Planning Grant: Community Development staff is continuing to provide assistance to local governments in project development, needs assessments and technical assistance in the CDBG program.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission.....	Laurens County Metric Rd. Water Upgrades.....	\$5,422,800
Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission... ..	Laurens County Industrial Sewer.....	\$2,000,000
Piedmont Technical College	Health Sciences Building.....	\$11,271,697
TOTAL.....		\$18,694,497

Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission has been awarded grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to fund water system improvements to serve Malouf Companies and generally upgrade water services in the area around the Interstate 385 and US 221 interchange. The grant amount is \$5,422,800 and the total project cost is \$6,778,500. The grant will fund 29,500 linear feet of 16-inch water line and a 500,000-gallon elevated water tank on Metric Road. This project was bid out in March 2024 and bids were opened April 9, 2024. Construction on both project components is under way.

Piedmont Technical College has received an \$11,271,697 grant award from EDA for its Health Sciences Building project. This project consists of the construction of a new 27,000 square foot building for the Health Science programs. The building is to be constructed on 1.5 acres on the Piedmont Technical College Greenwood Campus adjacent to the existing Science Building. This project will provide spaces that simulate real-world conditions which align with industry standards to prepare the students to be work-ready upon graduation. The project cost is estimated at \$14,089,621. Preparations are being made to bid the project.

Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission was awarded a \$2,000,000 grant to upgrade the sewer facilities serving the Fibertex manufacturing facility in Gray Court. Specifically, the existing pump station and existing sewer line serving the plant were replaced providing additional capacity to accommodate the increased flow. The infrastructure improvements will help the company create 50 jobs and leverage \$50,000,000 in private investment. The total estimated project cost is \$2,735,000. Project construction is now complete and final reimbursement has been received.



Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program

The RLF is a locally controlled source of capital used to assist in financing start-up and expanding businesses. To be eligible, a potential borrower’s project must result in the creation of permanent jobs and leverage private sector investment.

	Active Loans	All Loans
Loans Closed	7	64
Total Dollars Loaned	\$235,000	\$4,543,620
Private Investment	\$1,238,710	\$32,206,448
Other Public Investment	\$0	\$2,140,500
Jobs Created and Retained	34	715
Cost Per Job	\$6,912	\$6,355
Private Investment Ratio	\$5.27: \$1	\$7.09 : \$1

CARES Revolving Loan Fund (CARES RLF) Program

Funded by the CARES Act, this locally controlled source of small business capital was established to help the region recover from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

	Active Loans	All Loans
Loans Closed	16	22
Total Dollars Loaned	\$789,546	\$1,004,096
Private Sector Investment	\$2,241,450	\$2,250,450
Other Public Investment	\$14,470	\$14,470
Jobs Created and Retained	96.5	112.5
Cost Per Job	\$8,182	\$8,925
Private Investment Ratio	\$2.59 : \$1	\$2.24 : \$1

AGING

Upper Savannah Area Agency on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Center Activity Report December 2024

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	CLIENTS
Assessments	Determine client eligibility and needs for Aging services	118
Caregiver Supplemental Services	Assists with supplies, supplements, assistive technology	14
Assistive Technology	Provides Lifeline monitoring for seniors at risk	19
Home Care	Helps seniors with light housekeeping, chores, personal care	40
Minor Home Repair	Provides ramps, handrails, grab bars, safety upgrades	6
Seniors Raising Children Supplemental Services	Assists with school supplies, clothing, and miscellaneous	3
Transportation	Trips to meal sites, medical, essential shopping	10,588 miles
Legal Assistance	Provided by SC Legal Services	9
Caregiver Respite	Offers a break for daily caregivers	68

Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals Report | December 2024

MEALS BY COUNTY	CONGREGATE MEALS	HOME-DELIVERED
Abbeville	384	1,552
Edgefield	264	1,430
Greenwood	772	4,814
Laurens	124	2,102
McCormick	240	1,165
Saluda	438	575
TOTALS	2,222	11,638

Other highlights - AAA staff is visiting senior centers to share aging services and join in activities and games with the seniors. Staff will visit a different senior center each month. On February 26, Upper Savannah AAA is hosting a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Conference/Workshop at the Greenwood Genetic Center with the goal of educating facilities on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Speakers will include SLED, Vulnerable Adult Investigations Unit (VAIU), Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Vulnerable Adults and Medicaid Provider Fraud (VAMPF), and Department of Mental Health Transitions program. The second Resident and Family Council Workshop will be on March 12 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. The Regional Aging Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet March 11th at 11 a.m.

More than **11,600** MEALS served to seniors in Region in **DECEMBER**

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Continued work with Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants administration on two current grants in Laurens County and one for Piedmont Technical College.
- Continued work on a potential EDA grant application in Gray Court.
- Participated in Economic Development Administration (EDA) conference call to share Hurricane Helene storm impacts in the region.
- Participated in a statewide call to discuss a potential COG role in Section 208 water quality permitting process.
- Met with statewide Drought Committee to evaluate drought status across region and state.
- Continued grant administration of the SC Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP). COG administration is required for nine grants totaling \$26,598,719, including projects for City of Abbeville, Town of Due West, Town of Edgefield, Ninety Six CPW, Town of Ware Shoals, City of Clinton, Laurens CPW, McCormick CPW and Town of Ridge Spring.
- Continued administration of a grant on behalf of the Greenwood County and McCormick County SC 250 committees to update and install signs commemorating Revolutionary War events across the county line.
- Attended unveiling of new SC 250 Revolutionary War markers in McCormick County.
- Updated Americans with Disabilities Act plans for upcoming CDBG grant monitorings in Laurens County and the City of Abbeville.
- Continued work on environmental reviews for CDBG and EDA projects.
- Attended a Vision Greenwood board meeting.
- Participated in a meeting with a housing developer to discuss a potential affordable housing project in Greenwood.
- Organized a lunch meeting for public administrators in the region to hear about parks and recreation grant opportunities.
- Met with the new Saluda County Planner to discuss comprehensive plan updates.
- Continued administration of a Town of McCormick grant for electric vehicle charging stations which was funded by the South Carolina Energy Office.
- Facilitated state-mandated training for eight planning commissioners, board of zoning appeals members, and staff in McCormick.
- Responded to planning and zoning technical assistance requests from McCormick County, the City of Abbeville, and the Town of Donalds.
- Participated in statewide COG/MPO transportation planning meeting.
- Met with Greenwood County to discuss funding needs for a Highway 246 widening project.
- Attended a statewide meeting to promote expanding opportunities for walking and other pedestrian-related activities in planning projects.
- Participated in a Chamber of Commerce sponsored panel discussion on transportation issues in Greenwood County.
- Presented the final regional Roadway Departure Safety Implementation Plan to Laurens County Council and Laurens Rotary Club.
- Met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to discuss resiliency planning needs for transportation.
- Continued working with a Greenwood County community on the SC Brownfields Environmental Site Testing (BEST) Program to pay for environmental assessments for a potential community development project. The Promised Land School has an underground tank onsite with some type of liquid inside. The project is evaluating the liquid to see what it is and if it can be safely removed. If the liquid can be safely removed, the entire tank can be taken out and the site will be backfilled.
- Continued assisting the Upper Savannah Land Trust with various planning activities including coordinating the annual meeting. The Land Trust is helping protect 57,884 acres of land with more than 132 easements across Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee and Saluda counties.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Roydarius Simpson

While in the WIOA program, Roydarius was able to work with his Career Coach and receive supportive services to help him get back and forth to training. Once he completed the CDL Class A course he was able to get his CDLs and immediately obtain employment through Warner in Atlanta doing over the road trucking.

Soon after due to needing to be with his family, Roydarius was not able to stay over the road and was concerned that he would not be able to find a job locally. Career Coach Crystal Cheatham assisted him with job searching and found a job with Laurens County. Roydarius applied and got the job.

He now works in the streets and sanitation department making \$18 per hour and working 35 hours per week. Roydarius was excited when he realized that he was going to be able to keep doing what he loves and also be there for his family.

Upper Savannah Workforce Board Update

The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board met on February 3, 2025. Once again the Board had a full agenda, great attendance and had much discussion on several topics.

The Board voted to begin the process of restructuring several county SC Works affiliate sites into connection points to allow for more service availability to the lower traffic centers. The Board also voted to begin looking for another location to relocate the Laurens County SC Works Center to a more feasible facility.

Votes were secured to continue to move forward with the application for Courtney Gunter for the vacant Laurens County seat on the Board.

SC Works/WIOA Success Story - Roydarius enrolled in the WIOA program due to his interest in obtaining his commercial driver's license (CDL). WIOA was able to partner with Commercial Driving Academy to help Roydarius achieve this goal.

While in the WIOA

New Workforce Board Member

Our latest Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board member is Mike Hembree, Director of Human Resources at Savannah Lakes Village.



Mike Hembree

Job Fairs

SC Works and our partners continue to offer at least one job fair each month, with multiple hiring events in between. In January, we hosted:

- Education Solutions Services Hiring Event
- Sphinx Virtual Hiring Event
- ES Foundry
- Walmart Distribution

A total of 146 job seekers attended ES Foundry open house Job Fair where there were on-site interviews.

SC Works hosted the Edgefield County Career and Resource Fair Feb. 20 at Old Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in North Augusta. Twenty-four employers and 19 resources from both Upper Savannah and Lower Savannah regions attended event. There were 56 job seekers including 33 possible hires according to post fair surveys.

SC Works Services Overview

Our SC Works offices throughout the region continue to support the needs of community Job Seekers and Employers with the support of our many partners. Below are some of our recent numbers:

WIOA CAREER SERVICES			
	Nov. 2024	Dec. 2024	Jan. 2025
Enrollments (Active & F/U)			
Adult	0	4	5
Dislocated Workers	0	0	0
Youth	5	1	1
Follow-up (Adult, DW, & Youth)	137	170	141

Center Traffic Counts	January 2025	Program Year '24
Abbeville	30	93
Edgefield	6	142
Greenwood	623	3,267
Laurens	187	1,490
McCormick	16	54
Newberry	467	2,462
Saluda	27	96
Total Center Traffic	1,356	7,604

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

