UPPER SAVANNAH
Council of Governments

ACTIVITY REPORT

OCTOBER 2026

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

USCOG submits

3

CDBG grant applications in fall round

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are

10

active CDBG projects in region, totaling more than

$8.4 million

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

$11.27 million

EDA

PTC Health Sciences Building project construction 60 percent complete

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

USCOG has applied for two

EDA

water grants

AGING

More than

21,000

meals delivered to seniors in Region in August through September 2026

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Transit Study

Abbeville County considering volunteer driver program

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

2,788

direct job search services provided at SC Works July-Sept.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

24/7

Career Readiness Workshop Hub launched

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Provided planning commissioner training for rural community

See **DETAILS** on **these** and **other activities** in this report

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
City of Clinton	Florida Street Sewer Rehab	$924,300
Laurens County	Beards Fork Forcemain Replacement	$999,970
Greenwood County	Department of Public Health Building Improvements	$923,890
Abbeville County	DSS Parking Lot Improvements	$445,328
Saluda County	EMS Station Blood Storage Equipment	$65,872
Laurens County	Joanna Sewer Rehab	$1,321,050
Saluda County	Library Improvements	$750,000
Greenwood County	DSS Building Improvements	$1,278,510
Town of Ridge Spring	Town of Ridge Spring Sewer Rehab	$1,700,000
Greenwood County	Regional Planning	$50,000
TOTAL		$**8,458,920**

CDBG GRANT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

SEPTEMBER 2026 FALL ROUND

Town of Johnston Park – The Town is requesting $300,000 in CDBG funds to construct a park and pavilion on a town-owned vacant lot located at 612 Calhoun Street in downtown Johnston. The park and pavilion would provide community space to host public events and entertainment. Currently the Town does not have space of this capacity. The location of the proposed park has potential to support economic development and private investments throughout downtown, while encouraging new business opportunities. The project would require a $159,872 match from the Town.

Town of Edgefield Ten Governors Rail Trail – The Town is requesting $300,000 in CDBG funds to extend the Ten Governors Rail Trail that connects downtown Edgefield to Slade Lake. The trail extension is proposed from Slade Lake to the newly constructed Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center and Recreational Facility that is under construction. The trail extension will provide a safe route from downtown to the newly constructed facility promoting safe and healthy communities and facilitating access to county resources and recreational opportunities. The project area is located in the Town of Edgefield or on Town of Edgefield owned property that wraps the southwestern portion of Slade Lake and extends briefly west before connecting to an abandoned railroad bed that extends east, connecting to Star Road.

City of Abbeville Demolition – The City is requesting $480,860 in CDBG funds to demolish 28 identified residential units that are dilapidated and are in the process of condemnation. These abandoned units are a health and safety threat. The City proposes to demolish these uninhabitable structures to eliminate slum and blight, reduce criminal activities, encourage private investment and promote economic development within the City. The units are on Ferry, Garlington, Haigler, Harrisburg, Robinson, Richey and Henry Streets, Main St. South, Main St. North, Morse Ave., Pinewood Circle, Spencer St. West, Thomas Lane, Virginia Dr., Williams Lane, Enright Lane, Secession Ave., and Hampton Court. The project will require a $48,572 match from the City.

There are **10** active CDBG projects in the region, totaling **$8,458,920**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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City of Clinton Florida Street Sewer Rehabilitation – The City of Clinton was awarded $924,300 in CDBG funds in July 2026 and $1,500,000 in Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) funds to rehabilitate sewer lines that provide service to the low-to-moderate income Florida Street community. The deteriorating sewer lines were installed around 1970 and are in need of immediate rehab. Project proposes cured-in-place piping and sections of dig and replace on E. Ferguson, Florida, Main, Hays, N. Holland, and Jones streets, and Prather Circle. No acquisition is anticipated, all work will take place in an existing easement or public right-of-way. Project construction is estimated to cost $2,374,300. This project in start-up phase.

Laurens County Beards Fork Forcemain Replacement – The County received $999,970 in CDBG funding in July 2026 to replace Beards Fork Sewer Forcemain. This portion of line receives and conveys wastewater from approximately half of the City of Clinton. This trunkline and 10 inches force main receives approximately 273,500 gallons of wastewater per day. The ductile iron pipe was installed in 1981 and has deteriorated beyond repair. The construction will consist of approximately 6,900 linear feet (LF) of 10-inch PVC force main, 100 LF of 10-inch DIP force main, 40 LF of boring, 10 cubic yards trench excavation, 400 vertical foot manhole rehabilitation, 37 manhole ring and cover replacements, fittings, valves, controls, connections, testing, stone beddings, stabilization, mobilization, and gravel. Construction is estimated to cost $999,970. The total project is estimated to cost $1,189,970. This project is in start-up phase.

Greenwood County Department of Public Health Building Improvements - Greenwood County was awarded $923,890 in December 2025 for both interior and exterior building improvements, which will cover interior and exterior ADA accessibility enhancements, sidewalk and parking lot renovations, asbestos abatement, HVAC system replacement and installation, installation of drop ceilings, door and flooring replacements, and updated lighting. Project is in start-up phase, working on final environmental clearance.

Abbeville County DSS Parking Lot Improvements - Abbeville County was awarded $445,328 in December 2025 for parking lot improvements, addressing substantial cracks in parking lot foundation, uneven surfaces, and need for ADA parking signage markings and ramps. The project will include asphalt replacement, striping, signage, sidewalk, curb stop and speed bumps. Project is in start-up phase and recently met last to look at final items for the bid package.

Saluda County EMS Station Blood Storage Equipment - Saluda County was awarded $65,872 in December 2025 to provide residents and visitors with life-saving pre-hospital blood to aid in medical trauma calls. The County does not have any emergency medical facilities to aid in trauma calls, relying on the availability of air medical services and ambulance transportation to nearest emergency medical facility. Medical facilities can range from 40 minutes to an hour and a half depending on the extent of medical needs. Funds will purchase equipment to store, transport, and administer blood while on scene or during transport to the nearest medical trauma facility. The funds will provide for an autonomous portable refrigerator unit, cables, adaptors, vehicle mount, blood warmer, backup battery, and blood. Project expected to go out to bid in October.

Laurens County Joanna Sewer Rehabilitation - Laurens County was awarded $1,321,050 in June 2025 to upgrade water and sewer in the Joanna community. Improvements will take place on Calhoun Street, Reeder Street across Workman Street, across N. Main Street (Hwy 76), along Taylor Street, and crossing under the railroad to Sumter Street. Water construction will consist of 1,600 linear feet (LF) of 6” water line, 70 LF of 12” steel casing pipe (bored and jacked under SC Hwy 76), four fire hydrants assemblies, re-connection to the existing water mains, and 43 water service re-connections. Sewer construction will consist of 1,850 LF of 8” gravity sewer line (remove and replace), 580 LF of high-density polyethylene pipe bursting, 180 LF of 20” steel casing pipe (bored and jacked under SCDOT roads and railroad), six manholes, rehab of approximately eight existing manholes and 33 sewer service re-connections. Project requires no acquisition and is estimated to cost approximately $1,688,300, including $367,280 from Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission. Construction began July 6, 2026.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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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 residents with a much larger facility, allowing for more educational materials, resources, and space for free library-hosted activities and programs. Package at SC Department of Commerce waiting on approval to sign contract.

Greenwood County 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, and parking lot and safety improvements. The engineers are working on the final bid package, interior asbestos has been removed, and exterior asbestos removal and window replacement has been completed.

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 which have since 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 cured-in-place piping and installation of approximately 42 manholes. Project costs estimated to be $2,086,090, including $386,090 from Town. Right of way acquisition is complete and engineers are working to complete the bid package. Package at Commerce waiting on approval to sign contract.

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. 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 second 750,000 gallon holding tank has been installed, project has now been completed. Project monitoring was held in June and project will be officially closed out in November.

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.

Projects Closed out in 2026: Town of Saluda Streetscape, City of Abbeville Chestnut Street Park, Town of McCormick Streetscape Phase II

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
Piedmont Technical College	Health Sciences Building	$11,271,697
TOTAL		**$11,271,697**

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. Piedmont Tech opened bids on July 10. Eleven bids were received. A contract with the low bidder, Hogan Construction, has been signed and the project is underway. Construction is 60 percent complete.

Upper Savannah has applied for two EDA water grants for Edgefield and Laurens counties. USCOG is applying on behalf of the **Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority** for the Murrah Road Water Main Project, which includes an elevated water tank and booster pump station. The proposed project consists of construction of approximately 16,500 linear feet of 24-inch water main along Murrah Road, a one million gallon elevated water tank, 3.2-million gallon booster pump station, and associated work to the existing water system along Murrah Road. USCOG is also applying on behalf of the **Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission** for the Highway 221 Water Line Replacement Project. The project involves the construction of 15,400 linear feet of 24-inch water line and associated appurtenances including multiple connections to the existing water system. The proposed transmission main would be installed along Highway 221 from the intersection with Highway 39 North to the existing Maddens elevated water tank at Stagecoach Road. Both applications are pending EDA approval.

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	4	64
Total Dollars Loaned	$139,000	$4,543,620
Private Investment	$663,130	$32,206,448
Other Public Investment	$0	$2,140,500
Jobs Created and Retained	18	715
Cost Per Job	$7,722	$6,355
Private Investment Ratio	$4.77: $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	10	22
Total Dollars Loaned	$566,796	$1,004,096
Private Sector Investment	$1,901,200	$2,250,450
Other Public Investment	$14,470	$14,470
Jobs Created and Retained	47	112.5
Cost Per Job	$12,059	$8,925
Private Investment Ratio	$3.35 : $1	$2.24 : $1

AGING

Upper Savannah Area Agency on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Center Activity Report May-September 2026

Number of Clients/Month	May	June	July	August	September
Assessments	157	156	117	115	109
Caregiver Support/Respite	54	26	30	65	51
Assistive Technology	10	9	9	8	8
Home/Personal Care	35	46	45	48	48
Minor Home Repair	6	4	1	0	4
Seniors Raising Children	3	1	21	11	5
Transportation	158	161	147	151	146
Legal Assistance	7	5	7	6	4

Congregate Meals (# of meals) | May-September 2026

County	May	June	July	August	September
Abbeville	396	422	428	414	416
Edgefield	242	339	359	349	336
Greenwood	789	859	861	785	829
Laurens	164	200	198	186	183
McCormick	310	345	400	386	388
Saluda	466	487	455	457	454

Home-Delivered Meals (# of meals) | May-September 2026

County	May	June	July	August	September
Abbeville	1,065	1,184	1,266	1,207	1,399
Edgefield	863	920	1,177	1,307	1,348
Greenwood	2,804	3,148	3,030	2,486	2,653
Laurens	1,090	1,065	1,390	1,360	1,830
McCormick	719	785	672	622	760
Saluda	440	507	502	457	518

Other highlights - The AAA staff attended numerous events and networking opportunities (McCormick Chamber of Commerce, Senior Connection in Calhoun Falls, Self Regional Luncheon, Senior PREP event at Abbeville Library, Coffee with Cornerstone, Laurens County Library, Laurens County Chamber of Commerce), while also visiting local senior centers.

More than **21,000** **MEALS** served to seniors in Region in **August and September**

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Created the annual update to the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that keeps Region eligible for funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- Continued work on Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants administration on one current grant in Laurens County and one for Piedmont Technical College.
- Continued work on an EDA Disaster Supplemental Grant Program application for Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority. The proposed project consists of construction of approximately 16,500 linear feet of 24-inch water main along Murrah Road, a new elevated water tank (EWT), a booster pump station (BPS), and associated appurtenances.
- Continued work on an EDA Disaster Supplemental Grant Program application for Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission to complete Laurens County Hwy 221 Water Line Replacement Project.
- Met with EDA representatives to review submitted applications and changes in EDA reporting requirements.
- Attended a frequently asked questions session on the upcoming SC Department of Commerce Rural Development Initiative grants.
- Will meet with SC Office of Resilience staff to discuss potential grant funding.
- Attended a Greenwood County Industry and Innovation Alliance meeting to learn about making manufacturing and industrial practices more resilient and sustainable.
- Provided state-mandated planning commissioner training to seven Town of Saluda staff and board members. A follow-up training session is scheduled for late October in Edgefield.
- Hosted county and municipal clerks for a luncheon meeting to discuss social media management.
- Hosted county and municipal public administrators for a luncheon meeting to learn about disaster response programs from the SC Office of Resilience.
- Attended a joint Edgefield County Council/County Planning Commission meeting to discuss potential land development regulation updates.
- Responded to several city planning and zoning requests for information from across the region.
- Assisted GLEAMNS Human Resource Commission with receiving and compiling the annual board evaluation of their executive director.
- Met with SCDOT Planning Office to review updates to the regional Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Participated in statewide discussion group on encouraging more sidewalks, bike paths, and other non-motorized means of transportation in urban and rural parts of SC.
- Presented the Public Transit Feasibility Study to Abbeville County Council; study leads to consideration of a volunteer driver program in Abbeville County. Will present the Public Transit Feasibility Study to Saluda County Council in October. The study was completed by the Western Transportation Institute for Abbeville, Laurens and Saluda counties, which do not have public transportation.
- Met with the statewide Drought Committee to evaluate drought status across the region and state.
- Continued grant administration of the SC Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP). COG administration is required for nine grants totaling $26,598,719.
- Continued working with the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission to support community development projects across the region.
- 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.
- Continued work on environmental reviews for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and EDA projects.
- Attended a Vision Greenwood board meeting and a United Way of the Lakelands board meeting.
- Continued assisting the Upper Savannah Land Trust with various planning activities including coordinating the annual meeting. The Land Trust is helping protect 60,140 acres of land with more than 150 easement projects across Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee and Saluda counties since its establishment in 2000.

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Report

Workforce Service Update | September - October 2026

The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board continues to strengthen the regional workforce system by connecting job seekers with high-demand employment opportunities, supporting area employers, expanding innovative training models, and building resilient talent pipelines across Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties. Activities during September and October 2026 highlight the successful execution of major regional hiring initiatives, the launch of modern self-paced service delivery tools, and continued investments in career advancement across rural communities.

Workforce System and Strategic Activities

Launch of the Virtual Career Readiness Workshop Hub: Upper Savannah SC Works officially rolled out its 8-part online workshop series accessible 24/7 on demand. Designed to complement in-person coaching and mobile outreach, this self-paced, registration-free platform equips rural and schedule-constrained job seekers across all seven counties with core employability skills, including resume construction, interview techniques, and career transition strategies. Visit upperscworks.com/career-readiness-workshop-hub/ for more information.

Workforce Development Month Engagement: Coordinated regional outreach throughout September celebrating South Carolina Workforce Development Month, highlighting local business partnerships, training provider achievements, and participant milestones across digital and local media channels. Visit upperscworks.com/workforce-development-month/ for details.

Rural Service Integration via Community Connection Points: Expanded integration of the SC Works Mobile Career Coach, local Adult Education centers, and partner sites (including Piedmont Technical College) across Abbeville, Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda counties to maintain seamless in-person touchpoints following the transition to community-based delivery.

Laurens County Co-Location Growth: SC Works operations at 291 Professional Park Road in Clinton (co-located with the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce) expanded recruitment collaborations with local manufacturing and logistics employers.

Workforce System Activity (September 2026)

Program Year 2026–2027 entered its second quarter with robust regional engagement. SC Works system operations through July through September recorded:

Metric / Service Delivered	Regional Total	Key Details & Highlights
Customer Center Visits	979	Led by Greenwood (580) and Newberry (308)
New Job Seeker Registrations	197	Newly registered individuals across seven counties
Direct Job Search Services	2,788	One-on-one staff assistance and self-service support
Recruitment & Hiring Event Participants	377	Job seekers participating in regional hiring events
Direct Employer Services	260	Specialized staff assistance provided to business clients
Unique Employers Served	95	Businesses receiving dedicated workforce solutions
Internal Job Orders Created	29	New regional job listings posted

Employer Engagement and Hiring Events

Employer recruitment and job fairs accelerated significantly during September, anchored by the signature Fall Regional Job Fair and localized hiring drives:

Fall Regional Job Fair (Greenwood): Hosted on Thursday, Sept. 24, at Piedmont Technical College, the event brought together 46 employers and engaged 242 job seekers, serving as the region's premier multi-sector recruitment event.

Targeted Employer Hiring Events: SC Works facilitated dedicated hiring sessions across the seven counties for prominent regional employers and staffing partners, including:

- VLS Environmental Solutions: Laurens - Sept. 25-26
- Motor City Racks: Laurens – Sept. 26
- SwipeJobs: Recruitment drives in Greenwood, Laurens, Newberry, Abbeville, and Saluda
- Burton Center: Abbeville – September 12
- GPS Jobs & Saluda Nursing: Recruitment sessions in Newberry
- Senn Freight Lines and ESS: Hiring events in Greenwood, Laurens

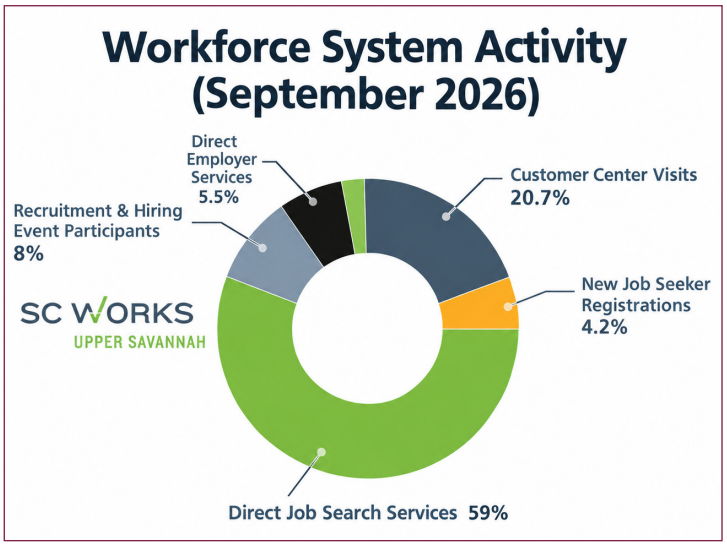
Workforce Training, Credential Attainment, and Talent Development

The Board maintained targeted investments in high-demand industry sectors, leveraging WIOA funding alongside SC WINS and regional partner resources:

Healthcare Career Pathways: Healthcare remains the leading sector for occupational skills training and credential attainment, with participants actively completing credentials in Phlebotomy, Patient Care Technician, Nurse Aide, and Medical Billing.

Transportation, Logistics, and Advanced Manufacturing: Strong enrollment continues in CDL Class A certification, industrial maintenance, welding, and machine operation, supplying qualified workers to regional production and distribution hubs.

Soft Skills and Employability Integration: Incorporating structured modules—such as Setting Powerful Goals and digital career readiness curriculum—ensures participants enter or advance within the workforce with strong baseline workplace competencies.



Looking Ahead - As Upper Savannah advances through the second quarter of Program Year 2026–2027, strategic priorities will center on:

Driving Engagement on the Workshop Hub: Promoting the new 24/7 Virtual Career Readiness Workshop Hub across partner networks, libraries, and social platforms to boost rural participation.

Expanding Incumbent Worker Training: Collaborating with regional employers in manufacturing and healthcare to upskill current staff.

Optimizing Mobile Coach Deployments: Scheduling Mobile Career Coach visits aligned with community events and partner locations in McCormick, Saluda, Abbeville, Edgefield counties.

Targeted Recruitment Partnerships: Deepening recruitment coordination with local chambers of commerce and economic development boards to support upcoming business expansions and fall hiring needs.

SUCCESS STORIES

SC WORKS UPPER SAVANNAH

Lesonna Lewis, Greenwood County

Advancing Healthcare Careers: Phlebotomy Training Success

Lesonna Lewis, age 47, enrolled in the WIOA program at Greenwood SC Works on March 31, 2025, seeking to advance her career and strengthen her long-term financial stability. She chose to pursue Phlebotomy training at The Village Career Center to gain in-demand healthcare skills.

To support her goals, WIOA provided tuition assistance alongside vital supportive services including transportation, uniforms, and testing fees. Lesonna also completed soft skills training on goal-setting to enhance workplace readiness.

Following a successful completion, Lesonna applied her skills at Laurens County Disabilities and Special Needs Board, earning $21.63/hr in full-time, 40 hr/week role.

"Investing in education creates opportunities for a brighter future."



THE VILLAGE CAREER CENTER
A certified training provider empowering WIOA participants with hands-on occupational skills in Phlebotomy, along with supportive services, to achieve financial stability and growth.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

