

UPPER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 Annual Report to the Board Members Representing Abbeville County
 For the Fiscal Year Ending 2021

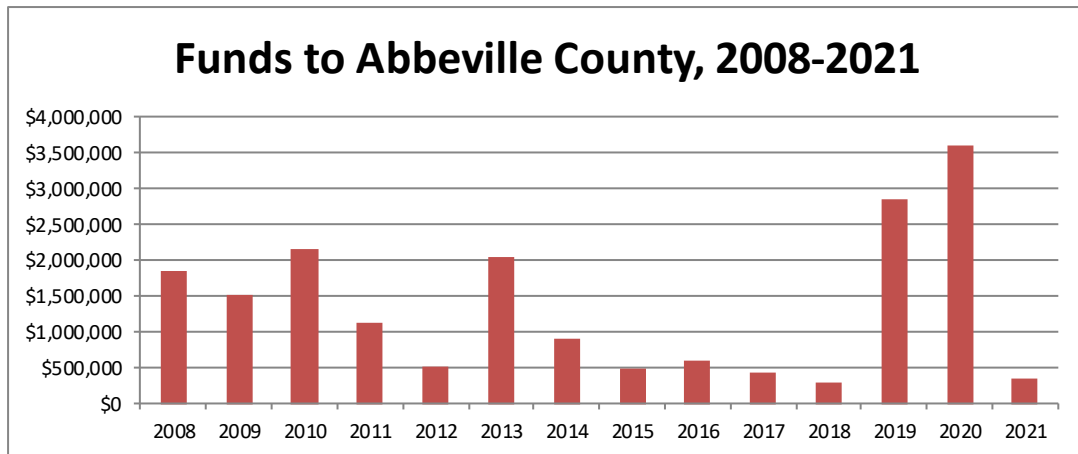
Financial Review - Upper Savannah COG Revenue Highlights

Local Government Funding	\$153,497
State Aid to COGs	40,965
Federal & State	2,097,411
General, In-kind & Miscellaneous	83,700
Contractual & Direct Services	<u>3,677,189</u>
TOTAL	\$6,052,762

Return on Investment – Abbeville County – Fiscal Year 2021

Local Government Investment	\$17,179
Funds to Abbeville County	
Aging Direct Services	\$250,075
Workforce Development Direct Services	<u>96,604</u>
TOTAL	\$346,679

Return on Investment: 20:1



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.

Abbeville County Highlights

National Park Service Access – Received funding confirmation of a grant application submitted on behalf of Abbeville County to fund road and access improvements at three trailhead locations (Beulah Church Road, Secession Avenue Extension and Lorenzo Road) on National Park Service land in the southeastern part of the County. The grant was funded through USDOT Eastern Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) at \$3.3 million.

Treatment Plant Upgrade – City of Abbeville was awarded a \$2,554,000 grant to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant on Long Cane Creek. The project is complete. The plant is operating within the limits of its permits and with improved efficiency. The Upper Savannah COG staff administered the project on behalf of the City. The grant was awarded under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) 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 final project cost was \$3,685,767. The request for final reimbursement has been submitted.

CARES Revolving Loan Fund Program – RLF closed three loans to businesses in Abbeville County totaling \$187,500. The loans leveraged \$130,000 in private investment, created five jobs and helped retain 12 jobs.

Workforce Development – Workforce staff helping an expanding industry with recruitment, obtained a state training grant for a struggling company, and helped Flexible Technologies find essential workers during the pandemic.

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.

Response to Healthcare Hiring Needs – Upper Savannah received a \$500,000 grant to train 100 EMT/Paramedics over the next four years. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board prioritized training for healthcare workers in response to the pandemic.

SC Works – SC Works Centers are the focal point of the workforce development system. More than 1,000 job seekers were matched with jobs through the SC Works system.

Outreach to High School Students – Upper Savannah is best known for its innovative approaches to reaching job seekers and employers. It offered pop up job fairs in conjunction with high school graduation practices. Booklets were distributed to more than 2,000 graduating seniors in the region listing companies which hire current high school students or recent graduates.

Abbeville County Council Retreat – Upper Savannah COG assisted County Council with a strategic planning workshop. This is the fifth year in a row that USCOG has helped Abbeville County Council with the goal-setting portion of its agenda. The workshop was held on January 25, 2021, at the Abbeville County Administrative Building. Upper Savannah produces a summary of the

retreat and submits that to the County for their use, but it is also distributed among staff at USCOG for use in applying for grants for specific projects.

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 project applications for Laurens County. Hired an Economic Recovery Specialist for the region with grant funds to help local governments deal with federal and state COVID related requirements and funding opportunities.

Planning Commissioner Training – Hosted numerous workshops to provide planning commissioners, zoning appeals board members, and staff with state-mandated training. Across the region, 81 people received the required training. COVID requirements have reduced the numbers this year because in-person training and certification were limited and individual on-line training was allowed.

Upper Savannah Land Trust – Continued providing technical assistance to the Upper Savannah Land Trust, which has preserved almost 53,000 acres in an eight-county area that includes the USCOG region.

Transportation Planning – Continued working with SCDOT on various transportation planning projects. Represented USCOG in statewide virtual meetings on updating the state bicycle and pedestrian plan and the Upstate regional freight plan.

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. Continuing to pursue grants and partnerships to expand transit in all regional counties.

CDBG-Coronavirus Grants – Submitted applications for both CDBG-CV1 Public Services and Public Facilities funding. Received grant awards and began start-up process with the City of Abbeville, Laurens County School District 55, and funding for food services region-wide and transit services in Saluda County.

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

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

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 17 years. There is no more local funding in this program.

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 described below, 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 1,793 contacts and attended 60 outreach events from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) – Program provided funding to 283 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 incontinence 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 51 people in the Home Safety Program throughout the region during FY 2021.

Assistive Technology (lifelines) – Program assisted approximately 30 seniors throughout the region with lifelines.

Legal Services Program – Program served 25 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 101 people in FY 2021.

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.