



UPPER SAVANNAH

Council of Governments

ACTIVITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

USCOG REGION RECEIVES

3

CDBG grant awards in fall round

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are

15

active CDBG projects in region, totaling more than **\$13.5 million**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LCWSC \$5.4 million

EDA

water upgrade project to bid out in March

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

820

Revolving Loan Funds have created or retained more than 800 jobs

AGING

Classes for older adults

GetSetUp virtual classes for people 60 and over are available

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Have helped train

27

Planning, zoning personnel since October

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Upper Savannah

Regional Job Fair

Scheduled for March 21, 2024

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1,034

job seekers served at SC Works offices in Region in January 2024

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

CARES Act CDBG-CV

more than 38,000 meals delivered to seniors in their homes since March '22

See

DETAILS on these and other activities in this report



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
City of Greenwood.....	Waller Avenue Streetscape.....	\$750,000
Greenwood County.....	DSS Building Improvements.....	\$1,278,510
Town of Ninety Six.....	Community Center Demolition.....	\$324,600
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.....	Mathews Mill Phase II Sewer Upgrade.....	\$1,600,000
City of Abbeville.....	Structure Demolitions.....	\$221,564
City of Clinton.....	Fire Truck Purchase.....	\$500,000
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
Laurens County.....	Highway 56/76 Sewer Upgrades.....	\$899,795
Greenwood County.....	Regional Planning.....	\$50,000
TOTAL		\$13,510,681

CDBG GRANT APPLICATIONS TO BE SUBMITTED

APRIL 2024 SPRING ROUND

Laurens County - Clinton-Joanna WWTP Upgrade Phase II

The Clinton-Joanna Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase I was funded through CDBG in 2022 and is currently under construction to upgrade the facility for the land application process. In April 2020, Laurens County Water & Sewer Authority entered into an agreement with Synagro to land apply the biosolids from the Clinton-Joanna WWTP. EPA describes biosolids as primarily organic materials produced during wastewater treatment which may be put to beneficial use. An example is the addition of biosolids to soil to supply nutrients and replenish soil organic matter. This is known as land application. Additional funds are needed to install the

second 750,000 gallon holding tank that will meet the facility's max capacity. The tank will replace the function of the drying beds and significantly reduce the harmful vector attraction to the facility by removing the environment in which they thrive. The second tank will also reduce the regional demand for landfill space and landfill slope failures attributed to biosolids. Construction is estimated to cost \$1,780,000. Approximately 8,078 persons would benefit from the improvements, of which 4,662 are considered low-to-moderate income (58%). The project will benefit more than 4,000 households and hundreds of businesses, based on the sample surveys completed in 2022.

City of Greenwood - Mathews Mill Phase III
The project is located between South Main Street

and Highway 225 S Bypass. Construction will take place on Chace Avenue, Wright Avenue, Grier Street, Edgefield Street and Kirksey Drive West. The project involves the installation of approximately 7,200 feet of 8-inch gravity sewer line with 26 pre-cast concrete manholes, replacing the existing 6-inch and 8-inch clay sewer lines and brick manholes, reconnecting service laterals to 128 homes. Where possible, the new sewer lines will be constructed in the existing roadways which will allow the homes to be served from the front of the property and the existing sewer lines that are located behind and under the houses to be abandoned. It is anticipated that new rights-of-way will be required on 17 properties. Cost of construction is still being determined; project beneficiary surveys are also in progress.

There are **15** active CDBG projects in the region, totaling **\$13,510,681**

Waller Avenue Streetscape: City of Greenwood was awarded \$750,000 in December 2023 for streetscape improvements to Waller Avenue in Uptown. Conditions on Waller include 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 will be used to install sidewalks, brick roadway, curbing, ADA accessibility, parking stall indicators, landscaping and outdoor seating. The engineering phase has begun.

DSS Building Improvements: Greenwood County was awarded \$1,278,510 in CDBG funding also in December 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.

Community Center Demolition: Town of Ninety Six was awarded \$324,600 in CDBG funding to demolish the Ninety Six Mill Village Community Center. The structure is condemned due to mold, asbestos, and unstable interior conditions. The Town would like to use CDBG funds to demolish the structure and turn the site into greenspace. This project is in the 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 the Booker T. Washington neighborhood. The project will take place on Central Avenue, North Hospital Street, Brewer Avenue, and New Street. Rehabilitation will include 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 the public right of way; no acquisition is anticipated. This project will benefit approximately 56 units, occupied by an estimated 119 persons. Project went out to bid Feb. 8, 2024; bids will be opened March 13, 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. Park improvements involve purchasing fixed playground equipment, picnic tables, mulch, and an open-air pavilion. Additional work to include site preparation, installation of the purchases, designated American Disabilities Act (ADA) parking, and concrete work. Project is estimated to cost \$275,000. Project going out to bid in April 2024.

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 are estimated to be \$2,086,090, including \$386,090 from the Town. Ridge Spring has an estimated population of 920, of which 68.47 percent are considered low-to-moderate income (LMI). Engineer working on bid package. Upper Savannah and the Town are in the process of acquiring the right of way. Project will go out to bid once 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 include 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, contract was signed Oct. 17, 2023 and construction began in December 2023. Completion expected Aug. 30, 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 include 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. Contract has been signed and construction scheduled to begin March 4, 2024. Completion expected around Feb. 27, 2025.

City of Abbeville Structure Demolitions: City received \$221,564 in CDBG funding in November 2021 to demolish and clear 12 vacant and condemned houses located on 102 Brooks St. East, 106 Brown St., 412 Cambridge St. West (Lots 3, 7 & 9), 403 Poplar St.; 102 Secession Ave; and 101, 103, 106, 109 and 112 Wilson St., in City of Abbeville. Asbestos testing has been completed, working on contract package for Commerce approval, project will go out to bid soon.

City of Clinton Fire Truck: City received \$500,000 in CDBG funding in November 2021 for purchase of a new fire truck to replace a 2008 model in current use. The truck has been ordered with delivery date expected June 2024.

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 began April 10, 2023.

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 2024.

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. The project includes a \$102,562 local match for total cost of \$823,774. Construction to begin in April 2024.

Laurens County Highway 56/76 Sewer Upgrades: Project awarded in September 2020, with \$715,000 in CDBG funds, \$120,000 local match for total project cost of \$835,000. Project repaired two major sections of trunk line at intersections of Hwy 76/Springdale Drive and Hwy 56/Springdale Drive. Construction began Jan. 16, 2023, and is complete. Project soon to be closed out.

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
TOTAL.....		\$7,422,800

Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission has been awarded grant from 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 is expected to be bid out in March 2024.

Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission has been 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 will be 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 approximately 60 percent complete.



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	8	64
Total Dollars Loaned	\$335,000	\$4,543,620
Private Investment	\$1,900,270	\$32,206,448
Other Public Investment	\$0	\$2,140,500
Jobs Created and Retained	49	715
Cost Per Job	\$6,837	\$6,355
Private Investment Ratio	\$5.67: \$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	19	22
Total Dollars Loaned	\$902,546	\$1,004,096
Private Sector Investment	\$2,250,450	\$2,250,450
Other Public Investment	\$14,470	\$14,470
Jobs Created and Retained	94	105.5
Cost Per Job	\$9,602	\$9,518
Private Investment Ratio	\$2.49 : \$1	\$2.24 : \$1

AGING

Upper Savannah Area Agency on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Center Activity Report December 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	CLIENTS
Assessments	Determine client eligibility and needs for Aging services	162
Caregiver Supplemental Services	Assists with supplies, supplements, assistive technology	33
Assistive Technology	Provides Lifeline monitoring for seniors at risk	25
Home Care	Helps seniors with light housekeeping, chores, personal care	67
Minor Home Repair	Provides ramps, handrails, grab bars, safety upgrades	9
Seniors Raising Children Supplemental Services	Assists with school supplies, clothing, and miscellaneous	0
Transportation	Trips to congregate meal sites, medical, essential shopping	253
Legal Assistance	Provided by SC Legal Services	17
Caregiver Respite	Offers a break for daily caregivers	46

Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals Report | December 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024

MEALS BY COUNTY	CLIENTS	NUMBER OF MEALS
Abbeville	152	5,328
Edgefield	94	2,898
Greenwood	518	15,210
Laurens	129	5,180
McCormick	79	2,689
Saluda	86	2,534
TOTALS	1,058	33,839

Other highlights - Upper Savannah AAA helping sponsor GetSetUp virtual classes designed for people 60 and over; seniors can sign up at www.getsetup.io/partner/uscog and join classes. Upper Savannah has issued Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for contractors to provide Aging services (including home-delivered meals, congregate dining and transportation) to the Upper Savannah Region for FY 2025. The current RFPs are located at www.upsavannah.com. RFPs are due March 20, 2024.

More than **33,000** MEALS served to seniors in Region over last **TWO MONTHS**

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- The CDBG-CV Public Services projects are underway. The Home Delivered Meals project is in its 18th month. From March 2022 through September 2023, 38,098 meals have been delivered with this program.
- Received approval to extend the CDBG-CV Public Services grant. This will allow the Home Delivered Meals project to continue to serve meals to seniors in our region through June 5, 2024.
- Held a state-mandated training session for planning commissioners, board of zoning appeals members, and staff for Edgefield, Saluda, and McCormick County Planning Commissions. Twenty-seven have been trained since October 2023.
- Assisted the Town of Edgefield with zoning research and questions.
- Continued grant administration of the SC Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP). The Upper Savannah region is receiving almost \$80 million in grant funding to assist with improvements for clean drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater resilience. Sixteen projects totaling \$79,891,066 were awarded throughout the region, with projects in all six counties. COG administration is required for nine of these 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 work on environmental reviews for Spring CDBG applications and current EDA applications.
- Submitted a federal land access grant application to improve a bridge crossing Long Cane Creek in Abbeville County.
- Completed an EDA grant application for a potential project at Piedmont Technical College.
- Updated regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for USCOG board review and submission to Economic Development Administration (EDA). This update keeps the region eligible for EDA funding.
- Began work on an EDA grant application for a sewer project in Gray Court.
- Completed the first-round administrative planning funding application for the newly formed Southeast Crescent Regional Commission. This program has \$2 million in funding available for infrastructure and other projects in South Carolina.
- Continued working with a Federal Highways Administration group studying the cause of roadway departure crashes in our region. A full report is expected in the fall.
- Met with SCDOT staff to discuss urban boundary updates in the region.
- Took part in Zoom meetings to discuss national trends in rural road safety and regional transportation planning in rural areas.
- Continued working with several local governments on the SC BEST program to pay for environmental assessments for potential economic development projects. Three projects in the region have been approved for funding: former McCormick County Administration Building, Lydia Mill in Clinton, and Project Academy in Clinton. Currently considering a project involving the demolition of an old mill store in Ninety Six in conjunction with a CDBG application.
- Hosted regional lunch meetings for Mayors, City and County Clerks, and Public Administrators.
- Continued meeting with interested individuals seeking to start a “Friends” group to help the Ninety Six Historic Site promote the park and apply for development funds as needed.
- Continued assisting the Upper Savannah Land Trust with various planning activities including coordinating the annual meeting. Land Trust is helping protect more than 55,000 acres of land with over 120 easements across Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee and Saluda counties.
- Continued work on Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants administration on two current grants in Laurens County.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Success Story**, Cliff Stanley, H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant - Cliff enrolled in the Level UP program in August of 2022. He completed the recommended Biology course to be taken



before Paramedic and then enrolled in the Paramedic Certificate program in January 2023. His sense of humor provided the morale the entire class needed to keep going on the tough days. He completed his training in December 2023 and earned his Paramedic

License in January 2024. He is currently working as a full-time paramedic with Abbeville County EMS.



- **H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Update** (In partnership with Pee Dee Region) - Our three target groups are 1) unemployed; 2) underemployed and 3) incumbent workers in the Healthcare Sector. Our goal in the Upper Savannah Region under this grant was to fill the need of Emergency Management Services. As a result, to date we have served.

- 100 Individuals enrolled in Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and/or Paramedic Training with several earning associate degrees.
- 80% plus have been placed in employment or advanced current employment.
- 94% have retained employment for 12 months.

- The grant is wrapping up the active training phase and moving into final placement and follow-up services.

- **Rapid Response (Layoff)** - Our staff is participating in Rapid Response activities in partnership with SC DEW and Piedmont Technical College to provide support to 52 workers laid off at Ascend Performance Materials. Staff has been onsite several times to speak with the affected workers about services through SC Works and an exclusive Job Fair has been scheduled for March 5th & 7th, 8am – 11am at PTC, Greenwood Campus.

- **Upper Savannah Regional Job Fair** - SC Works of Upper Savannah and Piedmont Technical College are hosting the Regional Job Fair March 21, 2024, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Medford Event Center. There are 80 employers already scheduled to attend. Staff has distributed more than 2,000 flyers throughout the region and is putting up road signs outside SC Works offices and other regional partner offices with event information.

- **SC Works Services Overview** - Our SC Works offices throughout the region continue to support the needs of our community job seekers and employers with the support of our many partners. Below are some of our service levels year to date by county.

CAREER SERVICES ACTIVE (7/1/23 to 2/23/24)					Job Seekers Services Jan 24
COUNTY	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth	Post Employment Follow-up	
Abbeville	8	4	2	Working to breakout by County	17
Edgefield	13	0	4		23
Greenwood	50	2	4		663
Laurens	18	4	6		265
McCormick	4	0	0		4
Newberry	19	1	6		42
Saluda	12	1	1		20
TOTALS	124	12	23		
		159		162	1034