The Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) offers creative regional solutions to the four counties and twenty-one cities and towns within Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. Guided by a thirty-member board of directors appointed by the participating local governments, LCOG partners with local governments, human service agencies and local nonprofits to leverage the best resources possible in order to serve the people who need us most.

As a result, we are a stronger region that strives to have
- a healthy aging population;
- an educated and well trained workforce;
- incentives to help small businesses thrive and grow;
- safe, affordable housing; and,
- planning resources that connect our land, transportation, environmental, and economic assets.

The Lowcountry Council of Governments is a member of the South Carolina Councils of Governments, a network of 10 regional councils of governments working to positively affect quality of life and economic development in South Carolina. sccogs.org
DEAR CITIZENS:

It is our pleasure to present the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Report for the Lowcountry Council of Governments. Inside the report you will find outstanding program highlights, impressive statistics and heartwarming success stories, from our four primary program areas: Aging & Disability Resources, Community & Economic Development, Planning & Transportation and Workforce Development.

This year also marks our 50th Anniversary! Since 1969, LCOG has provided a venue for analyzing issues, resolving problems, and sharing solutions among the local governments in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties. Over the years, we’ve served as convener, collaborator, and consultant. For half a century, we have served our communities and improved the quality of life in our region.

Last year, we implemented a new public relations strategy in order to better inform our stakeholders and the broader public of our services and successes. We updated our brand and expanded our marketing platform with a variety of communication tactics including media releases, social media accounts, flyers, brochures, E-newsletters, and an annual report.

Since our inception, our mission has remained. We strive to improve the lives of Lowcountry citizens, serve as a resource to our region, and connect the Lowcountry with state and federal programs. This mission has been our guiding light for 50 years, and we look forward to what the next 50 will bring.

We are proud to serve the citizens of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties, and the 21 municipalities, providing creative regional solutions in a rapidly changing environment. We thank them and our Board of Directors, committees, and staff for their commitment to making the Lowcountry a great place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Robert “Bobby” Bonds, Board Chair
Lowcountry Council of Governments
Board of Directors

Sabrena P Graham, Executive Director
Lowcountry Council of Governments
The Hampton County Fire Department (HCFD), which serves as the fire protection service provider for all municipalities in the county, struggled to meet the fire service needs in Furman and Yemassee due to the age and condition of the fire trucks. LCOG was able to help Hampton County identify the fire protection service area of Furman and Yemassee as eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, alleviating a potential burden on taxpayers. Hampton County was able to purchase new fire trucks and address equipment upgrades. This project directly benefited 3,518 Hampton County residents of which 66% are of low- to moderate-income.
8 SC CDBGs
(Community Development Block Grants)
totaling: $3,055,530

Completed 1 neighborhood plan in partnership with the Planning Department

Awarded 1 RIA
(Rural Infrastructure Authority) grant for $500,000

Awarded 2 EDA
(Economic Development Administration) grants totalling $3,554,000

Awarded 2 MASC
(Municipal Association of South Carolina) grants totalling $50,000

27 Active CDBG Projects $12,274,780
10 Active HOME Projects $319,291
2 Active EDA Projects $3,554,000
2 Active RIA Projects $1,000,000
2 Active MASC Project $50,000

• SC Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee - Barbara Johnson
• 2017-2018 SC Community Development Association Board of Directors - Barbara Johnson
• Environmental Compliance Training - Barbara Johnson and Kimberly Mullinax

• Lowcountry Regional Development Corporation – Lowcountry Council of Governments Board of Directors Executive Committee
• Civil Rights Committee – Rhonda Davis, Karen Anderson, Mike Butler, Charmaine Concepcion, and Sherry Smith
• Lowcountry Regional Housing Advisory Committee – Gerald Dawson (Beaufort), Doug Mixson (Colleton), Pete Hagood (Hampton), Andrew Fulghum (Jasper), and Joey Malphrus (Jasper)
For the past two decades, the Lowcountry has been one of the fastest growing regions in South Carolina. Along with population and economic growth comes increased demand for public services and infrastructure, such as roads, sewer, and affordable housing. Our Planning & Transportation Department helps member governments prepare for what’s next, while supporting the development of thriving communities.

We facilitate a variety of transportation, land use, economic development, and environmental planning projects. Additionally, we monitor local and regional trends and offer statistical analyses and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping. Our member governments rely on our extensive experience navigating state and federal programs, which in turn strengthens the region as a whole.

**Sewer certifications in our region**

- Projects: 65
- Housing Units: 2,432
- Commercial and Industrial: 11
- Institutional: 7

**Transportation projects**[1]

- Miles of roads, bridges and highway projects: 273 miles
- Dollar amount of construction: $326,268,800

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Small Urban Area Transit Study Highlights
Community and Workforce Needs

With more than 60,000 people living in and around Bluffton and Hilton Head Island, this particular area is designated as a Small Urban Area with its own unique transportation needs. Home to some of the region’s most valuable employment and education opportunities, it became important to assess how we were moving residents, visitors, and employees across this growing region.

Working with the Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority and Palmetto Breeze transit providers, our Transportation planning team was able to conduct a Small Urban Area Transit Study that outlines a new network of circulator bus routes within Bluffton and Hilton Head Island, a connector route between the two towns, and an option for flexible routes that could change depending on rider demand. The second phase of transit planning will result in economically viable new services that will link residents and visitors to the area’s major employers, shopping areas, health care services, recreational and tourist attractions, and educational facilities.

The Small Urban Area Transit Study brought “the community together to express things that perhaps we in the transit world had no idea was a need.”

- Mary Lou Franzoni
  Executive Director, Palmetto Breeze
Courtney Ginn was a single mother working as a part-time cashier at a grocery store, barely able to make ends meet. With a dream of becoming a Registered Nurse, Courtney entered the WIOA program in April 2017. She received several services through the WIOA program, including guidance in building a resume, assistance in paying for books, uniforms, tools and equipment, and help with Workkeys and career assessments.

"I wanted to make a better life for my child, but I needed financial support. The WIOA staff was supportive and encouraging along the way. I am very thankful that I had this program and the staff to help me achieve my dream of becoming a registered nurse" - Courtney Ginn, R.N.

By working with WIOA staff, Courtney was able to graduate from the RN program at Orangeburg-Colhoun Technical College in May 2019. Courtney is currently employed at the Allendale County Hospital as a Registered Nurse. She plans to further her education in the medical field in hopes that one day she will be able to assist her daughter in doing the same.

$322,585 provided in aid to 373 clients in the four-county region

**Occupational Skills Training**

- $273,788 125 Participants
  - Manufacturing: 21, $80,295
  - Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics: 27, $126,850
  - Health Care: 33, $64,045
  - Technology: 19, $2,598

**On the Job Training**

- $34,545
  - 16 Adults/Dislocated Workers, 2 Youth

**Work Based Learning**

- $14,252
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

9 GED Attainments (8 Youth, 1 Adult)

$43,565 spent on Supportive Services

Transportation: $13,895
Books, Supplies, Uniforms, Tools, Fees: $27,900
Childcare: $1,770

$21,000 Technology grant awarded

$36,000 in Incumbent Worker Training grants for 3 Lowcountry employers

$41,140 in On the Job Training (OJT) contracts for 10 businesses

$14,252 spent on Youth 18-24 Work Experience contracts for 4 Businesses

28 Workforce, Education, Economic Development Summit attendees

Implemented VOS Greeter (electronic intake system) in all SCWorks Centers

$149,000 Transportation grant successfully completed and sustained
Like so many of us, Lorene “Kizzy” Phillips, saw the opportunity to order something she needed simply by calling a 1-800 number. Unfortunately, she got more than the back brace she ordered. In addition to receiving several different Durable Medical Equipment (DME) items from different companies, Kizzy’s Medicare number had been compromised. Additionally, Kizzy’s secondary insurance informed her that the additional items would not be covered.

Lowcountry Area Agency on Aging (AAA) caseworker, Dieesha, stepped in and helped facilitate returning the unnecessary items, receiving reimbursement, and initiating investigations with Medicare and Tricare, the secondary insurance company. Additionally, Kizzy now has a new Medicare number and no longer has to worry about whether her insurance will stop paying for services.

“I truly believe if I had not met Dieesha, I may have had a break-down. I was so worried and at a loss for the steps I needed to take to get back on track.”

- Lorene “Kizzy” Phillips

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- **1,791 comprehensive assessments** conducted
- **5,900 contacts served for Resource Referrals**
- **685+ Medicare clients provided insurance counseling**
- **$330,827 expended for an estimated 295 family caregivers**
- **Over $32,500 saved for Medicare beneficiaries** during 2018 Open Enrollment Periods.
FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

“I’m not sure what I would have done without this service. For me it was a great stress reliever not having to worry so much about my husband while I was trying to care for myself at the same time. I will forever be grateful to LCOG and the wonderful people who helped me.”

- Joan Taylor speaking about the positive impact she and her husband, Ed, have felt as a result of the program. Joan is undergoing cancer treatment while also caring for her husband who suffers from Alzheimer’s. The Taylors have received home-delivered meals, personal care services, respite, and supplemental services from multiple aging programs.

3,929 hours of In-Home care services provided to 54 seniors

$9,506 provided in legal fees for 56 seniors

2,530 residents served in 39 long term care facilities by the Ombudsman Program

126,541 home delivered meals served

45,985 congregate/group dining meals served
Deloris and Demaris are two sisters who are fiercely independent, yet also severely impacted by health issues. They live together in Hampton County and have managed over the years to make it work. In 2018, they could no longer meet their healthcare needs or live without assistance in their home. It became necessary to adapt the home. The results were tremendous for their safety and their care.

Installation of a wheelchair ramp allowed Deloris to attend medical appointments previously missed simply because she was unable to leave the house without “lift assistance” from an emergency responder. Placing grab bars, elevating the toilet, and installing transfer shower benches and handheld shower heads in their home has now improved their quality of life and ability to care for themselves in a way that they have not been able to for many years.

With a safe home, improved mobility, and access to health care, these resilient sisters are able to live more independently - in their own home.

$33,040 spent on home repair services for 58 people in need
Two years after South Carolina’s first Council of Governments was formed in 1967, the “Lowcountry Regional Planning Commission” was created. In November 1970, Nathaniel Stroud “Buddy” Thompson was invited to serve as the first executive director, and within a year, the name was changed to Lowcountry Council of Governments. Under Buddy’s leadership of 23 years, LCOG provided cooperative planning, coordination, and technical assistance to the local governments of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. Since Buddy’s tenure, LCOG has had two executive directors.

In 1993, Chris Bickley stepped into the role of executive director where he would lead the organization for 22 years. New programs and staff were added, as well as an office renovation and building addition.

Sabrena Graham took the helm in 2015 and is focused on communicating the value of LCOG as a source for creative solutions to local and regional issues.
Philip Cromer
Gerald Dawson
Executive Committee
Brian Flewelling
Treasurer
Herbert Glaze
William D. Harkins
Mary Beth Heyward
Chris Hervochon
Mark Lawson
Judge Joseph McDomick
Paul Sommerville
Dan Wood
Esther Black
Bobby Bonds, Chair
Joe Flowers
Tommy Mann

Crawford Moore
Phillip Taylor, Sr.
Gene Whetsell
Executive Committee
Mayor Tim Grimsley
Pete Hagood, Vice Chair
Ronald Mixson
Pete Mixson
Buddy Phillips
Executive Committee
Charles Savino
Mayor Nat Shaffer
J.L. Goodwin
John Carroll, Secretary
Tom Johnson
Executive Committee
Mayor Joey Malphrus
Dr. Gwen Smith

Sabrena Graham, Executive Director
Michelle Grimes, Board Clerk
2018-2019 FINANCIALS

**REVENUES**

$6,166,319
- Federal ................................... $4,551,926
- State ..................................... 694,586
- Local ..................................... 734,563
- Dues ....................................... 185,244

**EXPENDITURES**

$6,108,897
- Aging ...................................... $3,060,328
- Community & Economic Development .... 931,957
- Planning .................................. 566,152
- Workforce ................................ 1,443,049
- Administration ......................... 107,411