



LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

A N N U A L R E P O R T

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*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](http://sccogs.org)*

# A N N U A L R E P O R T 2 0 2 0 - 2 0 2 1



**BEAUFORT  
COUNTY**



**COLLETON  
COUNTY**



**HAMPTON  
COUNTY**



**JASPER  
COUNTY**



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
- planning resources that connect our land, transportation, environmental, and economic assets



## DEAR LOWCOUNTRY,

We are excited to present the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This report speaks to the resiliency and success of the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) in uncertain times. LCOG was forced to adjust how we do business. We had to adopt new approaches to obtaining and serving the citizens and local governments, due to COVID-19 quarantine mandates. While we hope we are approaching the end of the pandemic, the economy is still months, if not years away from being restored to “a new” normal. We use the term new normal because we’re convinced things will never be the same as early 2020.

LCOG continues to grow and add value to the region while external conditions rapidly change. We seize every opportunity presented us to help sustain our local governments and citizens from seeking COVID-19 relief funds for our governments to in-home vaccinations for our homebound seniors. This report provides details in statistics and success stories of the great work performed throughout the region by each program: Aging, Workforce Development, Planning & Transportation, and Community & Economic Development. It also includes a special section on work performed in direct response to COVID-19.

The experiences and lessons learned from COVID-19 were not all bad. There is a shift in the culture and leadership style of the organization that is contributing to the success. We’re proud to incorporate a strong sense of caring and commitment to our employee’s well-being during this time, as they too face personal struggles and loss due to COVID-19. While our mission to serve the citizens and local governments in the region remains the same, the pandemic has driven us to change our problem-solving strategies, methods of operation, and use of technology sooner than we otherwise would have. That’s a good thing.

We are proud to serve the citizens of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties, and the 21 municipalities therein. As Board Chairman & Executive Director, we would like to sincerely thank the Board of Directors, various committees and LCOG staff for their enduring devotion and commitment to making the Lowcountry region more resilient during adverse time. The Lowcountry remains a great place to live and work.

**Brian Flewelling**, *Board Chairman*  
Lowcountry Council of Governments  
Board of Directors

**Sabrena P. Graham**, *Executive Director*  
Lowcountry Council of Governments

# COVID-19 I M P A C T



## LOWCOUNTRY AREA AGENCY ON AGING



**No waitlist**  
for meal services



**170,412**  
meals to **704** new  
clients and non-clients



**\$119,116**  
went to providing  
PPE, hand sanitizer,  
disinfectant, wipes,  
and bleach to regional  
Councils on Aging

## HOMEBOUND VACCINATION PILOT PROGRAM



Seniors who couldn't get to a vaccine  
site were vaccinated in their homes



**Hampton** and **Jasper** Counties selected  
for Pilot program



**70** homebound individuals received vaccines

*Seniors vaccinated in the Lowcountry Region:*

Age	55-64		65 & up		Total
	F	M	F	M	
Beaufort	10,596	7,933	23,497	19,392	61,418
Colleton	1,900	1,553	3,466	2,631	9,550
Hampton	968	774	1,675	1,251	4,668
Jasper	1,468	1,112	2,440	1,922	6,942



**82,578**

seniors are vaccinated in the Lowcountry





## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



*Alternate job fairs:*  
Drive-thru, open-air, virtual



*Weekly on-site hiring events at the Beaufort/Jasper and Colleton SC Works Centers:*

**81** workforce hiring events held  
and **203** jobseekers served

## PLANNING



Dr. Maleena Parkey, LCOG's Senior Planner, prepared the weekly "Lowcountry COVID-19 Report," which presented data for the COVID-19 cases in the Lowcountry region dating back to March 6, 2020.

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**\$400,000** Economic Development Administration CARES Planning Grant for capacity building



Overhauling the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to include a more detailed disaster resiliency component and a pandemic recovery component



Hired George Crosby as an Economic Recovery and Resiliency Specialist



Assisted municipalities and counties with applying for COVID-19-related funding

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## CDBG FUNDING:

# Demolition Grants Create Green Spaces

LCOG administered two demolition grants in Colleton County, which helped lower the cost of the projects so they didn't fall on taxpayers. The two grants saved the County nearly \$400,000.

The Old High School Football Stadium Demolition project in downtown Walterboro provides a safe, green space for residents to use. As part of the project, concrete and metal bleachers, concession stands, ticket booths, fencing, goal posts, and lighting were demolished. The area was turned into a fenced-in grassy field with a mulched perimeter and lighting was installed to shine on the open area. The green space will be used for community functions.

The Floyd Buckner Building Demolition, also in downtown Walterboro, was the result of extreme tornado damage in April 2020. Currently, it is being grassed to be an open space and Colleton County Council is considering various options for the best use of the space.





## ACTIVE PROJECTS

**34** CDBG - \$17,640,032

**9** HOME - \$304,630

**8** EDA - \$25,557,072

**2** RD (Rural development) - \$1,340,519

**1** RIA (Rural infrastructure authority) - \$500,000

**1** FEMA - \$109,500

## HOME CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Gerald Dawson**, Beaufort County

**Pete Hagood**, Hampton County

**Danny Lucas**, Jasper County

**Phillip Taylor**, Colleton County

## FY 20/21 EDA AWARDS

On July 15, 2020, the Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded a \$3.4 million grant to the Town of Ridgeland to make water and wastewater infrastructure improvements needed to protect businesses from future floods. The EDA grant will be matched with \$847,000 in local investments. Ridgeland's water and wastewater systems needed critical improvements after the substantial flooding caused by Hurricane Florence. The enhancements to the systems will help businesses remain operational after flood events.

On May 6, 2021, the EDA awarded a \$525,000 CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant to Lowcountry Regional Water System in Hampton, SC to update and improve its wastewater sewer system to support business expansion and bolster the region's ability to withstand future economic disruptions. This EDA grant, to be matched with \$250,000 in state funds, is projected to create 50 jobs, retain 125 jobs, and generate \$2 million in private investment.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Awarded **11 CDBGs** (*Community Development Block Grants*) totaling **\$8,770,163**

Awarded **1 FEMA** (*Federal Emergency Management Agency*) **grant** totaling **\$109,500**

Awarded **3 EDA** (*Economic Development Administration*) **grants** totaling **\$4,313,000**



Added **George Crosby** as an Economic Recovery and Resiliency Specialist. In this role, George is responsible for completing activities in relation to the Economic Development Administration's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) program grant. He has the responsibility of developing plans and strategies to help local governments, businesses, and other stakeholder organizations respond to and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

# PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION



ROAD  
WORK

## BY THE NUMBERS:

**208** Certifications



Projects: **63**  
Housing Units: **2,479**  
Commercial and Industrial projects: **16**

## Transportation Projects



Miles of roads, bridges, and  
highway projects: **115,700**  
Dollar amount of construction:  
**\$649,902,702**

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Department staff served as panelists for the following:
  - American Planning Association's Federal Planning Division Workshop
  - Marine Corps' NAVFAC Community Plans and Liaison Office Training Workshop
- Christian Dammel completed the SCDOT-hosted MPO/COG Academy Workshop training for Bike and Pedestrian Safety in the new Statewide Complete Streets Directive 28.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Approved by FEMA
- Lowcountry Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice
- 2020 The People and the Economy Report
- Weekly Lowcountry COVID-19 Reports
- Adoption of the 2021-2027 Transportation Improvement Programs for Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) and LCOG
- Adoption of the two-year Unified Work Plan and Program for LATS and LCOG
- Groundbreaking for US 17 widening





## 2020 LOWCOUNTRY **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The 2020 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is an update of the 2015 Beaufort County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the 2015 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which includes Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. The result is “the first fully multi-jurisdictional plan for all the counties in the Lowcountry region” approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a period of five years, effective June 28, 2021 to June 27, 2026.

The plan profiles the most common natural hazards, identifies the social vulnerability of populations at greatest risk from the effects of natural hazards, and identifies the mitigation actions to save lives and to prevent major property damage and other losses caused by natural disasters in the Lowcountry region. As a result, the plan enhances community resilience by helping the community prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.

## HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

**Pamela Cobb**  
*Disaster Recovery  
Coordinator, Beaufort County*

**Shari Mendrick**  
*Floodplain Administrator,  
Town of Hilton Head Island*

**David Greene**  
*Deputy Chief/Emergency  
Manager, Fire Rescue, Colleton  
County*

**Iris Hill**  
*Town Administrator, Town of  
Edisto Beach*

**Susan Peebles**  
*Emergency Management  
Director, Hampton County*

**Russell Wells**  
*Emergency Services Interim  
Deputy Director, Jasper  
County*

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## US 17 Widening

After many years of planning, the long-awaited US 17 widening project is under construction. This project is a true example of regional coordination and collaboration with both the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) and the Lowcountry Council of Governments pooling more than \$60 million in designated regional funding along with SCDOT Safety funds to fully fund the project. The project will widen US 17 from SC 315 to the Georgia state line from two lanes to four. The design includes a grass median, striped bike lane on the shoulder, and intersection improvements at SC 315 and US 17 with a new traffic signal. Construction began in late February and is scheduled to be completed in September 2025.

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## WIOA OJT PARTICIPANT: **Faye Ruth**

In March 2021, Faye Ruth enrolled in the WIOA program as a dislocated worker. After 27 uninterrupted years in the workforce, she was laid off from a local manufacturing plant that was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tony Pollen, LCOG's Business Services Coordinator, introduced Faye to the WIOA On-The-Job Training Program and connected her to job opportunities in the area. Tony submitted her resume, and Faye was hired as an assistant plant manager position at Carolina Textile Care in Early Branch. Faye said, "I am truly grateful for Tony's assistance in placing me with Carolina Textile Care because I am not one to sit at home. It is very rewarding to do my job well."



## WIOA OJT PARTICIPANT: **Amy Whitlock**

In September 2019, Amy Whitlock, a single mother of two, had recently moved to Hampton, SC, and desired a career change. Amy co-enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to earn an Industrial Forklift Certification, having developed a passion for manufacturing. Under the career guidance of Shelia Bovain, Amy received resume assistance, interview preparation, financial literacy training, and job readiness coaching. In September 2020, she earned her forklift certification and began working at LeCreuset as a forklift driver in December 2020. In May 2021, she was promoted to a full-time supervisor position with benefits.





WIOA OJT EMPLOYER AND  
TRAINING PROVIDER:

## Freedom Air

Freedom Air Heating and Air Conditioning, a Veteran-owned HVAC company for more than 20 years in Hampton, SC, provides a wide range of heating and air solutions to businesses and residents across the Lowcountry Region. The organization participated in the Work Experience and On-The-Job Training (OJT) programs and trained six clients as HVAC Technicians for 1,400 successful hours, which led to full-time employment in FY20.

“Working with Tony Pollen and the LCOG OJT program has helped us reach individuals who see value in the opportunity and has given us the necessary resources to get them job-ready and equipped. Tony has been a key partner in bridging that gap, and we are incredibly grateful for the partnership and all the help that was given to us to sustain the business that we all love!”

- **James Anderson, Owner of Freedom Air**

Freedom Air saved thousands of dollars on its training budget bottom line by utilizing the Workforce training programs and has committed to using the programs to create a pathway for individuals interested in HVAC.



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## BY THE NUMBERS :

- Integrated Business Services Team served **339** employers with a combined total of **1,032** services based on employer needs
- **\$265,563** spent on training clients
- **82** in-person hiring events from Nov. 20, 2020 - June 30, 2021
- **238** attendees despite COVID-19
- Participated in statewide virtual hiring event for the hospitality industry
- WIOA served **251** clients during the height of the pandemic
- **\$56,535** spent on **18** youth who participated in Work Experience with an average of **500** hours of on-site training

## Occupational Skills Training: **\$192,655**



**101** clients completed occupational skills (classroom) training during COVID-19

27 manufacturing: **\$71,570**  
42 transportation, distribution, and logistics (CDL) - **\$93,750**  
31 healthcare - **\$24,727**  
1 technology - **\$2,598**

## Supportive Services: **\$23,849**



Transportation - **\$9,030**  
Other (books, supplies, uniforms, tools, and fees) - **\$14,810**





## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**\$16,473** in On-the-Job (OJT) contracts for 4 employers

**\$89,000** Continuous Improvement Grant for Technology and PPE supplies for One-Stop Centers

Added **state-of-the-art, 65-inch smart boards** for video conferencing, workshops, and orientations at all SC Works offices.

COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grant totaling **\$100,000** for Participant Training services.

**\$172,000** in Restoration Grants



## Professional Development

As a special project to further improve accessibility, the Disability and Accessibility Committee of the LCOG Workforce Development Board partnered with South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation and Walton Options to conduct a virtual training on “Engaging the Untapped Workforce.” The training was presented to increase employment outcomes for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD), specifically.

# AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE



## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS :

### SCDOT 5310 Funding

The AAA acquired SCDOT (5310) funding for a fifth year on behalf of three of four counties to help with the purchase of transportation services. By securing this SCDOT funding for transportation services, the Lowcountry AAA can leverage Title III-B funds to help provide additional Title III-B services to seniors across the region and give contracted providers the opportunity to expand existing routes and/or create new routes. The amount awarded for FY 20/21 was \$187,500 (with match).

### Medicare Savings Cost Tracker

Over \$33,400 saved for beneficiaries during the 2020 Open Enrollment Period. Overall savings for the year were \$58,987.

### ICARE/SHIP Programs

Established new ways to engage the community through the pandemic:

- Preventive care newsletters were created and included word puzzles. All recipients that returned a completed puzzle via mail or email received a gift.
- 65th birthday parties were conducted via Zoom.
- COVID-19 scam flyers were created and distributed at Fresh Express Marts and community outreach events.

### Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program developed an activity book for nursing home and rehabilitation center residents that included activities such as word searches, crossword puzzles, sudoku, and exercises. Every resident at each facility received one. (Funding was provided by CARES Act Funding (June 04, 2020 – September 30, 2021).



## I&R/A

In FY 20/21, AAA partnered with Helping Hands, Deep Well, and St. Francis Center to bring together the services and resources to aid Lowcountry seniors in removing health and safety hazards in their homes. We provided essential supplies to our partners not to exceed our budget allowance. In return, our partners provided labor, and when necessary, they provided further supplies that exceeded our budget.

### *Partnership Accomplishments:*

- Deep Well
  - 1 septic tank repair
- Helping Hand
  - 1 walk-in shower installation
  - 25 ramps built
- St. Francis Center
  - 1 ramp built
  - 1 water heater installation
  - 1 flooring repair
  - 1 porch built

## Nutrition

The AAA Nutrition Program is serving 8% of the entire senior population of the Lowcountry. Due to COVID-19, all nutrition program providers were closed to the public for the majority of the fiscal year. In June 2021, Jasper & Hampton County Councils on Aging reopened their congregate sites. Also, The AAA offered the Annual Provider Training to all contracted providers as a virtual conference: Deconstructing the Mindset of Yesteryear's Senior Center.

## Veterans' Lawn Care Pilot Program

33 veterans received up to \$250 each in lawn care service.

## Outreach

During the challenging times of COVID-19, LCOG AAA managed to participate in 24 outreach events throughout the region.

## Older Americans Month

This year, our department celebrated Older Americans Month by hosting a Virtual Trivia Day for our region. This enjoyable experience brought together our staff and seniors in the community for lots of laughs, fun, and even opportunities to learn. The winner of the trivia received a grand prize, and all participants were mailed a gift from the AAA.

## SC THRIVE

The Lowcountry AAA continues to support our region by assisting our aging population with completing community long-term care applications. This year, 10 applications were submitted by the LCOG-AAA.

## Family Caregivers Support Program

"Teatime for Caregivers," a virtual support group with 25 participants registered, successfully met every month during the past year. Despite not ever meeting in person, we were able to prepare and deliver care packages for the Tea Time for CG support group participants.

# AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1,919** comprehensive assessments conducted

**5,805** contacts provided resource referrals

**758** Medicare clients provided with insurance counseling

**\$328,851** expended for **311** family caregivers

**\$149,253** in-home repair and safety services for **196** people in need

**14,715** hours of in-home care services provided to **110** seniors

**\$9,708** provided in legal fees for **48** seniors

**3,052** residents served in **74** long-term care facilities by the Ombudsman Program

**165,518** home-delivered meals

**3,053** congregate/group dining meals served

**6,778** COVID-19 non-client meals

Provided lawn care assistance to **33** veterans



## TESTIMONIALS

### Nathaniel Jones

Nathaniel Jones lived in a dwelling that endangered his safety. Despite encouragement from his family to consider other options, he was determined to stay in his home. Mr. Jones contacted The St. Francis Center at St. Francis Church to assist with repairs to his home. The Center then reached out to LCOG AAA for additional help. We were able to supply a water heater and refrigerator, and the Center was able to make repairs to the floors so the refrigerator and water heater could be supplied to the home. The Center continues to work on the house to make it a safe space for Mr. Jones.



### Leonardo Youmans

LCOG assisted Leonardo Youmans with helping care for his ailing parents by providing grants to help pay for caregivers, maintain their home, purchase food, and pay bills. “LCOG’s presence in our lives really helps alleviate stress and offers encouraging support that we can count on.”-Leonardo Youmans

Through the Family Caregiver Support Program, Mr. Youmans received 24 hours of in-home caregiver services per month and an Alzheimer’s and Disease-Related Dementia grant helped to purchase a robotic cat to provide companionship.

**“Because of LCOG’s involvement, I have a sense that someone really cares about my family’s situation and is there to help me carry the load.”**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Beaufort County:**

Philip Cromer  
Gerald Dawson  
Brian Flewelling, Chair  
Herbert Glaze  
Tamara Becker  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Chris Hervocho  
Mark Lawson  
Judge Joseph McDomick  
D. Paul Sommerville  
Dan Wood, Exec Committee

### **Colleton County:**

Esther Black, Exec Committee  
Greg T. Pryor  
Joe Flowers, M.D.  
Tommy Mann  
Crawford Moore  
Phillip Taylor, Sr., Treasurer  
Gene Whetsell  
Mayor Tim Grimsley

### **Hampton County:**

Pete Hagood  
Ronald Mixson  
Travis "Pete" Mixson  
Buddy Phillips, Exec Committee  
Charles Savino, Secretary  
Mayor Nat Shaffer  
J.L. Goodwin

### **Jasper County:**

John Carroll, Vice Chair  
Barbara Clark, Exec Committee  
Danny Lucas  
Chris DuBose  
Dr. Gwen Johnson Smith

Sabrina Graham,  
*Executive Director*  
Kira Fuller, *Board Clerk*



# FINANCE REPORT

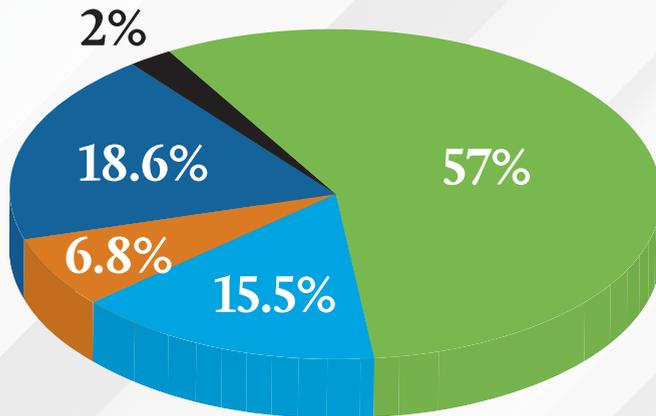
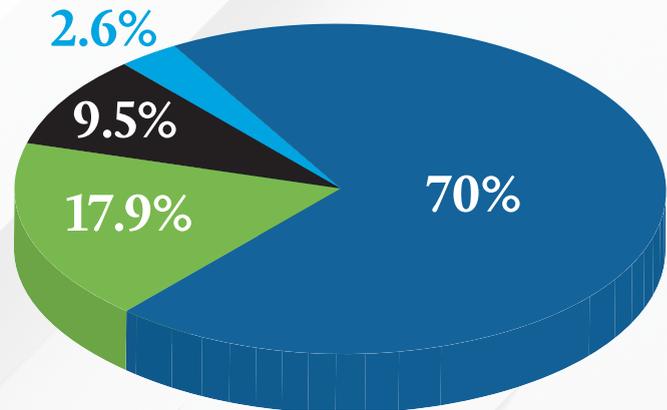
Year ended June 30, 2021



## REVENUES :

Federal .....	4,915,808
State .....	1,259,907
Local .....	664,842
Dues .....	185,244

Total..... **\$7,025,801**



## EXPENDITURES

Aging .....	3,961,413
Community & Economic Development .....	1,076,642
Planning .....	474,239
Workforce .....	1,295,747
Administration .....	142,430

Total..... **\$6,950,471**

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LOWCOUNTRYCOG.ORG



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COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS