



**SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS**

ABOUT US

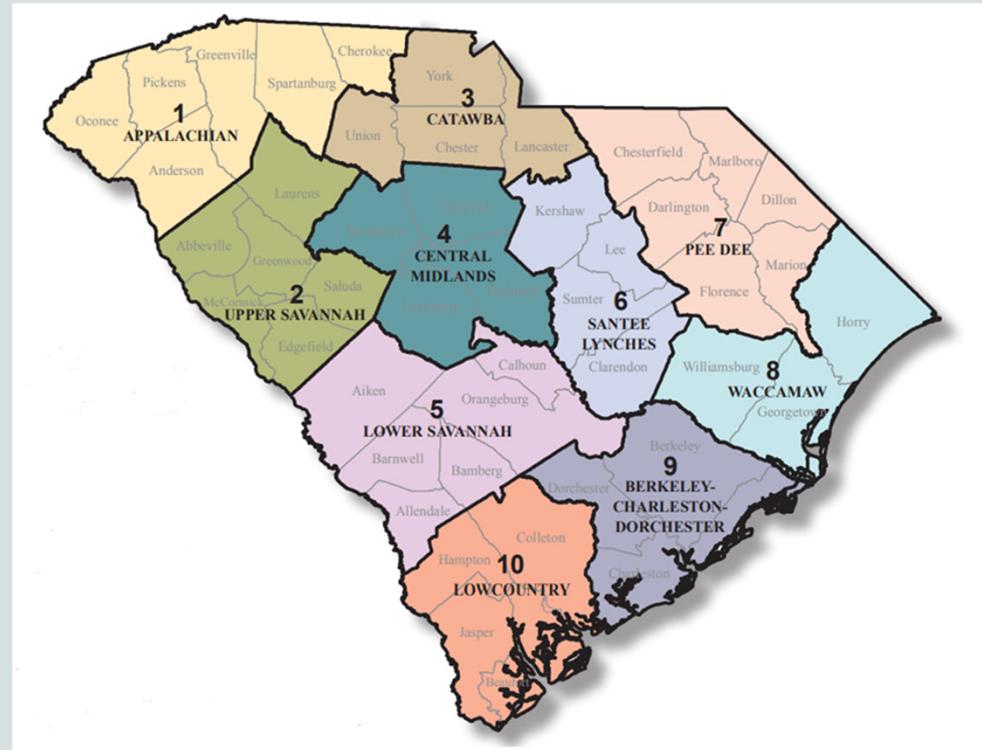
We are a network of 10 Councils of Governments (COGs) working to positively influence quality of life and economic development in South Carolina.

Created by state statute in 1967 following the federal Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, COGs were incorporated into the SC Constitution by referendum in 1971. SC COGs are governed by board of local officials, legislators, and community leaders

Councils of Governments are partnerships of – and provide resources to – the local counties, cities, and towns in their regions. In addition to local and regional partnerships, COGs partner with numerous federal and state agencies, obtaining and administering grants for a variety of community-based programs and economic development initiatives.

South Carolina Councils of Governments (SC COGs) know and understand our communities, so we are better able to provide creative solutions to their unique challenges.

We do this by functioning as a valuable extension of county and local governments, serving as a resource for technical assistance, securing state and federal dollars to address critical issues for our communities, and by advocating at a state and national level for economic and quality of life improvements for our state.



What We Do

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SC COGs play a vital role in ensuring that our workforce, our small business leaders and manufacturers, and our communities have the tools, training and financial support needed to become and remain economically competitive. We work with local governments to develop and implement strategies that will result in the creation of jobs and capital investment. COGs routinely utilize the financial resources of the Economic Development Administration to improve basic infrastructure to accommodate the needs of new or expanding industry.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING



Each of the 10 COGs manages rural transportation planning, and four of the 10 serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for urban transportation planning within their region. Working with transportation policy committees, COG Boards recommend and prioritize transportation projects in coordination with the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT). COGs long-range transportation plans for each region and providing feedback and input regarding transportation and transit priorities.

SERVING OUR AGING POPULATION



Seven of the 10 SC COGs are designated as their region's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), working with the South Carolina Department on Aging to deliver services like home-delivered and congregate meals, in-home care, transportation, health promotion and Medicare counseling, legal services and advocacy with long-term care providers, and a valuable network of care for some of South Carolina's most vulnerable population.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



SC COGs play a vital role in ensuring that our workforce, our small business leaders and manufacturers, and our communities have the tools, training and financial support needed to become and remain economically competitive. We offer comprehensive services designed to increase employment, retain jobs, and develop occupational skills for unemployed and underemployed South Carolinians of all ages and backgrounds.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The COGs and the South Carolina Department of Commerce have had a long-standing relationship with the state's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The COGs help with project and application development, ranking, and grant administration at the local level. This is a beneficial service for smaller communities that do not have the internal capacity to prepare applications and administer grants. The COGs have also assisted the South Carolina Department of Commerce with statewide water and sewer mapping and provided databases on industrial sites and buildings and quality of life attributes. The 10 COGs are partnering with the federal Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, and two COGs are partnering with the Appalachian Regional Commission, in order to facilitate the establishment of sustainable communities and the strengthening of economic growth through the use of their programs.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



State and federal grants obtained through COGs are used for a range of critical needs – infrastructure, community revitalization, downtown development, housing construction and rehabilitation, public safety, recreation, social services, education, historic preservation, energy conservation and environmental protection. As facilitators, the COGs help develop projects, prepare applications, act as advocates, serve as liaisons with funding agencies and often administer the project funds after grants are awarded.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING



SC COGs may work with local governments to complete comprehensive plans, update zoning ordinances, complete capital improvement plans and assist with planning-related services. SC COGs routinely provide Census and statistical data to agencies, organizations and individuals within their regions and beyond. In addition, most COGs maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) that offers computer mapping services, data research, and analysis to help guide local land use policies for cities and counties. GIS mapping can give local governments insight into what their area will look like if present growth trends continue – a key component in planning for the future.

WATER QUALITY



Six of the SC COGs are charged by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (DES) with creating and maintaining regional water quality management plans. As such, the COGs review all applications requesting sewer discharge permits. These reviews, done to ensure compliance with the regional water quality plan, are necessary before DES will issue permits for new or expanded business, industry or residential development.

BUSINESS LOANS



Many South Carolina businesses benefit from COG Revolving Loan Funds which provide loans for business expansion and new job creation. Many COGs also facilitate small business lending through one or more additional loan programs sponsored by the Small Business Administration or other federal or state agencies. These programs represent an important source of capital. Generally, these loans are made in partnership with banks and other private lenders when conventional loan terms may undermine the feasibility of the project.

South Carolina Councils of Governments

– BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS:

Increase recurring funding from \$1,556,253 to \$2,000,000

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS:

None

CAPITAL REQUESTS:

None

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RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION NAME:

South Carolina Councils of Governments (COGs)

PRIORITY NUMBER:

1

TITLE:

Increase in recurring funding for the South Carolina Councils of Governments to adjust for increased general costs.

AMOUNT:

Increase of \$443,747 in recurring funding.

NEW POSITIONS:

While no new positions are created, the increase in funding will allow existing unfilled positions to be filled due to more competitive salaries.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST:

Inflation, along with specific hyper-competitive position types (ex., planners, grant accountants)

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS:

All Council of Governments are required to have an annual audit. Additionally, specific programs are monitored by State and Federal partners for compliance.

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The 10 South Carolina Councils of Governments

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Over the last four years, a 16% inflation rate has impacted COGs, as it has for all other agencies. General expenses and operating costs have increased significantly. Hiring of staff has become a major concern. The market for planning and finance roles is niche, highly competitive, and has outpaced inflation.

The ten South Carolina COGs have consistently delivered a significant annual return on the local and state dollars they receive. They can, as a matter of course, access funds not otherwise available to local jurisdictions. They regularly work with State and Federal agencies to support their missions.

Additional recurring funds will enable COGs to operate with reasonable staffing, resulting in more successful funding efforts.

2024 - 2025

impact report



We are a network of 10 Councils of Governments working to positively influence quality of life and economic development in South Carolina.

South Carolina Councils of Governments (SC COGs) navigate state and national policy issues, advocate on behalf of multiple regions, and leverage successes to build a grander story for our state. We are proud to offer this impact report to highlight the results we've generated and opportunities secured for the residents of South Carolina.

economic & community development

federal & state grants

On behalf of our local governments, SC COGs pursue competitive grants for infrastructure and community revitalization projects. More than half of the grants secured are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Others include SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants.

323 grants were secured, administered, and managed, totaling more than **\$312 million**.

access to capital

SC COGs are able to leverage valuable financial resources in the form of loans and private capital through federal partners like the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

SC COGs' lending programs have loaned more than **\$131 million**, creating **4,908 jobs**.

SC COGs' have also leveraged nearly **\$240 million** in private capital.

workforce training

Working with a variety of federal and state funding partners, SC COGs operate SC Works Centers to provide much needed workforce training throughout our state.

151,751 job seekers served through **38** SC Works offices.

WIOA clients, including youth, displaced workers and adults totaled **3,760**.

serving our aging population

Seven of the 10 SC COGs are designated as their region's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), working with the SC Department on Aging to deliver services like in-home care, transportation, legal services and more to the aging population throughout South Carolina.

74,199 clients were impacted by SC COGs' aging programs.

1,299,690 meals were served (in-home and at congregate meal sites) to a total of **13,912** seniors.



serving local governments

SC COGs work to benefit all of South Carolina by functioning as an extension of county and local governments, serving as a resource for technical assistance, and securing state and federal dollars to address critical issues for our communities. Support ranges from facilitating council retreats and training staff to providing governmental assistance in budgeting and human resources.

planning assistance

In fiscal year 2024, SC COGs assisted city and county governments in meeting statutory planning requirements for their jurisdictions and in filling gaps within staffing and management of services. SC COGs completed comprehensive plans, updated zoning documents, and assisted with large scale GIS projects.

150 planning projects

26 comprehensive plans



transportation planning & projects

Each COG engages in transportation planning. All manage rural transportation planning, and four of the 10 serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for urban transportation planning. Working with transportation policy committees, COG Boards recommend and prioritize transportation projects in coordination with the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT).

SC COGs completed **48** transportation plans.

