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Appalachian Council of Governments

FY 2023 Work Program

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Introduction

The Mission Statement of the Appalachian Council of Governments is to assist the local governments of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties, and such other organizations as may be decided by the Board, through providing relevant approaches to local and regional needs in economic development, social planning and development, and public administration.

The baseline mission of ACOG is to enhance the lives of the residents of the six-county South Carolina Appalachian region. Since its formation in 1965, the way the COG has carried out its mission has changed and evolved. While services to local governments remains a core mission of the agency, the impact of the agency is quite broad. In terms of budget and staff size, ACOG's largest program area is Aging Services. Over the years, activities of the Grant Services program have often been of greatest interest to local governments. Public funding is a continuing challenge at all levels of government with demands for services expanding. In response, Government and Planning Services are becoming increasingly sought after components of ACOG's services. The Economic Development Services program has a direct impact on the people and entities served by the agency through the support of economic development activities in the region in addition to supporting other related projects in our communities. While the agency's primary focus is to serve the public sector, it is understood that private sector success is critical to the prosperity of the region and the well-being of its citizens. Of course, promoting strong government enhances private sector success. In addition, the agency's workforce development and entrepreneurial loan services provide direct impact to businesses that invest in the region.

Expectations and needs of clients and stakeholders continue to evolve. Councils of Governments must be flexible to adapt to these changing conditions. The constant question is "how do we apply our core mission to the changing environment?" It is a challenge to maintain excellence in existing areas of service while exploring new opportunities. The extent to which ACOG meets this challenge will determine its success, as well as its relevance, in the future.

The Appalachian Council of Governments FY 2023 Work Program is focused on accomplishing our historic mission while meeting the needs of the future. Services to local governments, services in support of economic development, and services to people remain our focus. Regionalism also remains at the core of the COG's mission. However, it is not regionalism simply for regionalism's sake. Rather, it is the promotion of regional efforts that target areas of common challenges and regional solutions that create the best outcomes for everyone involved that ACOG's efforts are focused on.

Aging Services

Overall Mission

The overall mission of the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is to assist seniors, their caregivers and those with disabilities by maintaining their dignity and independence in their homes and communities. The AAA serves as the designated regional lead agency for the development of a comprehensive, coordinated and cost effective home and community based service system. Through contracting with local service providers, services are provided for group dining, home delivered meals, in-home services, transportation, and others. Services for the Family Caregiver, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Information and Assistance, and Benefits Counseling programs are provided directly by the AAA.

Program Area: Family Caregiver

Purpose

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) is designed to reduce the stress of caregivers in order for them to continue to provide quality care in the home. The program assists those who are providing care to; a person(s) 60 years or older who is unable to do at least two (2) activities of daily living without significant assistance- or has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or one of its related diseases by offering support, identifying needs, and procuring services.

Seniors Raising Children (SRC) is another component of the FCSP. The program assists grandparents 55 years and older raising grandchildren ages 0-18 years who live with them full-time and are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Assistance may be financial in nature providing reimbursement for school supplies, fees, and clothing. Respite care is offered through participation in summer camps or programs of the caregiver's choice.

Activities

Family Caregiver Advocates provide the following to all Caregivers including the Seniors Raising Children Program:

- Information, referral and assistance to identified services
- Optional counseling that promotes problem solving and decision making
- Limited short-term financial help for those eligible:
  - Respite care for both FCSP and SRC.
  - Supplemental supplies such as safety equipment/hardware, incontinent supplies, and nutritional supplements.
  - School supplies/clothes/fees/some incontinent supplies.

Outcomes/Results

- Caregivers and their families are provided with current resources available to them based on an in-depth intake process which may include:
  - Resource guides
  - Applications
  - Program descriptions and brochures
  - Advanced directives
  - Common documents including durable power of attorney and wills.

Through respite care services, the caregivers are afforded the opportunity to receive a needed psychological/ emotional/ physical break from the responsibility involved with daily care provided by an agency, adult day care, individual, or agency solely of their choice.

Changes from Past Year

The Family Caregiver Support Program is now fully staffed with four advocates. The fourth Family Caregiver Advocate position was added in FY22 and the focus is on attending outreach events, conducting training sessions for clients, and working individually with caregivers in their homes to improve their situation.

Program Area: Ombudsman

Purpose

The Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program investigates complaints made by or on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities.

Ombudsman staff advocate for residents by providing mediations and consultations, as needed. Special trainings are offered and provided per request for facility staff on Residents Rights, the laws regarding Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation, and Dealing with Difficult Behaviors. Community presentations are provided to help educate those in the community about the Ombudsman Program. In addition, information about Advance Directives is provided.

Ombudsman staff provides friendly visits to facilities to monitor and ensure residents have access to an Ombudsman.

Activities

- Unannounced on-site visits are made to facilities for conducting investigations.
- Continuous efforts are made to ensure timely and responsive access to the services of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. The large volume of cases received requires staff to prioritize cases based on the severity of the complaint. The most serious cases of abuse and neglect are given top priority.
- Friendly visits to facilities are completed by staff and trained volunteers.
- Ongoing community education and training are offered to educate staff on various issues.

Outcomes/Results

- Providing a resource for residents, families, agencies, and any other interested parties to obtain information and assistance will help resolve problems with long term care facilities.

- Promoting public awareness of factors related to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation will result in increased reporting.

- The Friendly Visitor Program will continue to grow as new volunteers are consistently entering the program when experienced volunteers retire. This will prevent service gaps in the participating facilities.

Changes from Past Year

- Ombudsmen are again visiting the sites/residents in person, full time and no longer limited by COVID-19 protocols limiting visitation.

- The Friendly Visitor Program has returned to a normal schedule of conducting friendly visits and continues to recruit and train new volunteers so as to increase friendly visits.

- The Ombudsman Department is fully staffed with eight Ombudsman after limited staffing in the previous year due to staff turnover.

Program Area: Information & Assistance/Benefits Counseling

Purpose

This program provides personal assistance in a "one-stop-shop" environment to older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers. All pertinent aspects of the individual's situation are reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made to meet their needs. An evaluation is made of: financial resources, age, diagnoses, current insurance coverage, activities of daily living, transportation, family supports, rent/mortgage, nutrition, advance directive/legal needs, and physical/mental well-being. All of these factors assist in determining qualifications for obtaining assistance to their request.

Activities

- Link older adults, caregivers, and disabled adults with needed services.

- Provide information and assistance to consumers unable to access other channels and who prefer locally based services.

- Increase targeted outreach to identify and enroll consumers in eligible benefit programs.

- Develop working partnerships with individuals, groups, and organizations that can assist in identifying resources and expand outreach efforts.

- Educate consumers on methods to prevent Medicare waste, fraud,, and abuse.

- Provide up-to-date information on Medicare, supplements and health insurance to older adults, caregivers and disabled adults.

- Provide information on Medicare Prescription programs, Medicare Advantage Plans, Healthy Connections PRIME, Healthcare Marketplace, and Prescription Assistance Programs.

- Train and recruit volunteers.

Outcomes/Results

- Consumers will be able to understand and access services in their local community.
- Increase in the number of beneficiaries contacting the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging (AAAA) for assistance.
- Provide consistent, accurate, up-to-date information available through the AAAA website at www.scacog.org.
- Increase in the number of new and regular visitors to the AAAA website (www.scacog.org).
- Developing additional partnerships will expand outreach efforts.

Changes from Past Year

- Call volume continues to increase as result of the COVID19 pandemic, the COVID19 vaccination efforts, and the growth in the aged population
- A third full-time Information and Referral Specialist was hired in 2021 to replace the part time position previously in place.

Program Area: Nutrition

The Nutrition Program provides congregate meal dining and home delivered meals to 28 sites located in the region. The purpose of this program is to provide a nutritious meal to those over age 60 and at nutritional risk. The dining sites also provide socialization and activities to reduce isolation. In addition to a noon-time meal, programs and activities are planned such as structured fitness and exercise classes, day trips and outings to local points of interest, educational programming, games, computer classes, music and dance, language classes, arts and crafts and other creative programs.

Activities

Home delivered meals benefit seniors age 60 and over who are:

- Ill and incapacitated.
- Unable to leave home unassisted except for medical/other essential appointments.
- Incapacitated.
- Unable to purchase and/or prepare food.
- Without anyone in the home who is available to prepare a meal on a daily basis.
- A spouse of any age in the home an eligible senior.

Outcomes/Results

- The expected outcomes of this program are to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote increased socialization for older individuals, promote the health and well-being of older adults, and delay adverse health conditions through access to nutrition, disease prevention, and health promotion services.

Changes from the Past Year

All dining sites closed on March 16, 2020, due to the COVID19 pandemic. The majority of dining sites have reopened in all counties in the region. Attendance has gradually increased at centers as pandemic fears and restrictions have relaxed. Senior Action of Greenville relocated to their new, main site that was developed during the pandemic on East North Street, Greenville and has seen increased attendance across programs and positive reviews of their new congregate dining offerings.

Program Area: Home & Community Based Services

These supportive services enable seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible. The services provided in this region include:

- Transportation
- Chore/housekeeping (Level 1)
- Homemaker with some personal care (Level 2)
- Legal Assistance

- Respite Care
- Evidence Based Health Programs
- Minor Home Repair

Transportation includes rides to doctors' offices, grocery stores, pharmacies, senior centers meals sites and other critical daily activities. Personal Care, Homemaking and Chore services provide assistance to seniors that are unable to perform (ADLs) Activities of Daily Living (such as eating, dressing, bathing) or (IADLs) Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (such as shopping, housework). Legal Assistance provides support for determining client's rights, benefits, and entitlements.

Changes from Last Year

- The Home & Community Based Services program will maintain the same level of service in the coming year without any expected programmatic changes.

Grant Services

Overall Mission

The Grant Services Department provides resources to assist local governments and their agencies, focusing on a wide range of community and economic development related projects that contribute to ensuring a strong economically viable region.

Program Area: Economic and Community Development

Purpose

The Grant Services staff assists local and state economic and community development officials and service providers with project planning, project development, and grant writing. Our staff serves as consultant, liaison, problem solver, and project manager to make certain the project is feasible and contributes to a healthy, safe, and sustainable community.

Activities

Determine Community Needs – Research, analyze, and compile documentation on community development needs, including obstacles to community competitiveness.

- Identify citizens and organizations that provide assistance, guidance, and input on community needs.
- Solicit input from the broad community and conduct outreach.
- Prioritize needs.
- Prepare needs assessment documents.

Project Identification – Evaluate Priority Needs

- Determine the most appropriate project to achieve the desired outcome.
- Identify a project based on needs assessment.
- Review any existing plans relevant to a potential project.
- Determine project feasibility and eligibility.
- Seek collaborative partners.

Determine Funding Source - Our objective is to match the needs of the community to the grant funding available to maximize opportunities and resources.

Discuss the potential project with funding agencies and obtain technical assistance from:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program/SC Department of Commerce
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)/US Department of Commerce
- USDA Rural Development (RD)
- State Department of Commerce/Coordinating Council for Economic Development

- State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
- US Department of Homeland Security/FEMA
- SC Rural Infrastructure Authority

Project Development – Compile the documentation needed to establish project needs and outcomes.

- Identify the project service area and beneficiaries.
- Obtain supporting documentation for distressed community conditions and infrastructure needs.
- Determine how the project will work.
- Analyze project design and feasibility issues.
- Develop cost estimates and budgets.
- Prepare the project proposal addressing selection criteria.

Outcomes/Results

The outcomes of these efforts include construction of new, or upgrade of existing, infrastructure including water lines, water storage tanks, sewer lines, storm drainage, and streets. Other outcomes include the construction of new workforce training facilities, community centers, parks and recreation facilities, and health clinics. The results of these activities include a healthier or cleaner environment, an increased quality of life for the citizens of the region, a better prepared workforce, and new job creation.

Program Area: Project Management

Purpose

Project management can be a very complicated and time consuming aspect of federal and state grant programs. The Grant Services staff provides project management to local governments to assure efficient management, project accountability, and conformance with federal and state regulations.

Activities

Program Start Up Requirements – The completion and execution of documents and agreements required before receiving grant funds.

- Execution of Grant Award and Agreement.
- Technical assistance meeting to establish roles and responsibilities.

Environmental Review – The process is to analyze the effect the project will have on the people and the natural environmental components within the project area.

- Classify the activity and conduct the appropriate level of review.
- Provide project description and supporting documentation to required agencies.
- Document compliance with federal laws and authorities.
- Prepare notice allowing for public comment period.
- Submit Environmental Review Record for approval.

Financial Management – Effective financial management is the key to grant management.

- Provide guidance on a financial accounting system that meets federal and state requirements.
- Review invoices to ensure the costs are allowable.
- Monitor expenditures and maintain project budget.
- Prepare budget revisions.
- Prepare requests for reimbursement.
- Document local fund expenditures.
- Compile documents needed for financial monitoring.
- Notification of audit requirements.

Procurement and Contracting – The primary purpose of the procurement procedures is to assure free and open competition is achieved.

- Ensure federal and state requirements are followed.
- Assist in the preparation of requests for proposals, invitations to bid and bidding/contract documents.
- Attend bid openings.
- Submit contract documents for approval.

Construction Management and Labor Standards – The overall planning, coordination, and control of a project from inception to completion.

- Attend pre-construction and construction progress meetings.
- Monitor project scope and accomplishments.
- Determine eligible costs and monitor total costs within budget.
- Process change orders.
- Ensure compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act, Davis-Bacon Act, and Copeland Anti-Kickback Act.

Real Property Acquisition – Any property needed for project implementation such as fee simple title, easements necessary, long-term leases, and right-of-ways.

- Notification to property owners of the interest in acquiring property and informing them of their rights in compliance of the Uniform and Relocation Act.
- Procurement of appraisal services.
- Guidance on purchase offer/negotiations.

Reporting – Monitoring tools representing accountability in grant activities.

- Implementation schedule
- Quarterly report
- Contract and subcontract activity
- Annual accomplishments reports
- Section 3 reports
- Project amendments
- Grant extensions and adjustments
- Close out report

Outcomes/Results

Proper project administration insures grantee compliance with state and federal regulations. Non-compliance could lead to grantee repayment of all or a portion of improperly spent funds. Additionally, future funding decisions are often linked to previous compliance with grant rules and regulations.

Changes from Last Year

Grant Services will add a Senior Project Manager position in FY 2023.

Economic Development Services

Overall Mission

The mission of Economic Development Services (EDS) is to support regional economic development through professional planning, grant support, mapping, and database-driven technical services for communities in the Upstate of South Carolina. The EDS staff provides research services and products to facilitate the competitive growth and development of the Upstate.
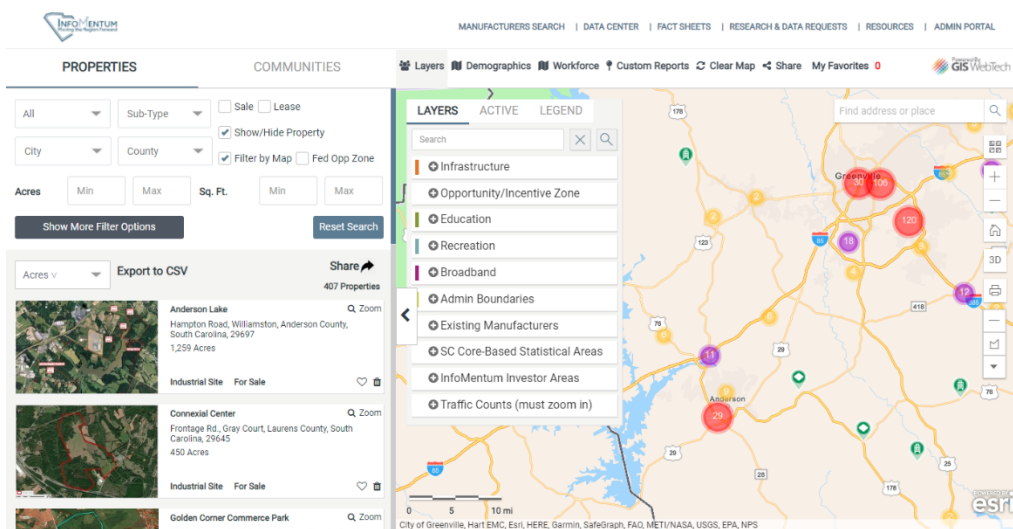
Program Area: InfoMentum Suite of Services

Purpose

The InfoMentum suite of services provides GIS-based research tools, robust market data, and an online industrial and office property database that assist economic developers' efforts to attract industry and create jobs. InfoMentum is integrated into the economic development activities of its investors, including county economic development organizations, the Upstate SC Alliance, neighboring Councils of Government, and utilities. A board of program investors, the Economic Development Information Systems (EDIS) Partnership, provides direction for and oversight of the InfoMentum program.

Services

InfoMentum Online — This web application is available exclusively to InfoMentum investors to help meet their recruitment, marketing, research, and planning needs. With its ability to generate a large variety of demographic and economic reports, investors use this tool to evaluate market conditions within a specific radius or drive-time distance from any point they select on the map. Multiple data layers are also available (traffic counts, surrounding manufacturers, nearby colleges/universities, etc.) to enable the creation of informative maps that can be printed or exported for use in documents and presentations.

In FY 2022, the InfoMentum Online tool migrated to Guru, a new platform developed by GIS WebTech. This new application is similar to previous versions of InfoMentum Online, but has new tools including 3-D visualizations and a more streamlined user experience. The GIS WebTech team is responsible for
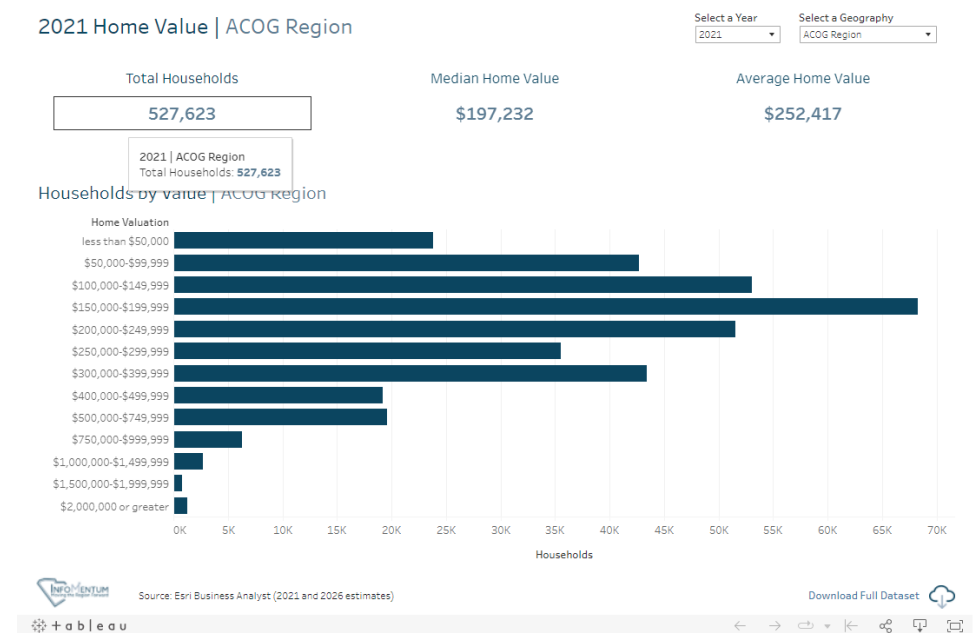
maintaining the technical aspects of Guru and the property feed from SC Commerce, while EDS staff continues to develop and maintain multiple map layers available within the application.

InfoMentum Investor-Branded Property Search Websites — Powered by InfoMentum's central industrial property database, customized property search websites can be embedded in the websites of economic development organizations (EDOs) who invest in InfoMentum. Current EDOs who utilize the investor-branded property search websites include:

- Alliance Pickens
- Anderson County Economic Development Office
- Cherokee County Development Board
- City of Anderson Economic Development Dept.
- City of Mauldin Economic Development Dept.

- Greenville Area Development Corporation
- Oconee Economic Alliance
- Spartanburg Economic Futures Group
- Upstate SC Alliance

These sites help each organization market their available industrial sites and buildings and provide visitors with the ability to download not only a property's informational flyer, but also a geographic drive-time report that details the surrounding demographic and market conditions.

Data Center — Now in its third year, the Regional Data Center is an interactive, comprehensive, socioeconomic database for Upstate SC built using the Tableau data visualization software platform. This tool enables users to manipulate charts, graphs, and tables on the fly and provides a centralized location for many frequently used data sets. These visualizations are exportable as graphics for utilization in documents and presentations or as tables to enable more detailed analysis. Free to the public, the Data Center is linked to the ACOG website (www.scacog.org) and used by economic developers, planners, and researchers throughout the region.

Fact Sheets — InfoMentum provides data-rich, 4-page fact sheets for the 10 counties of the upstate and 2-page fact sheets for the 43 municipalities of the ACOG region. Updated annually, the fact sheets provide a snapshot of current market and demographic conditions throughout the Upstate.

User Group Meetings and Training — The EDS team offers hands-on technical assistance and regular training opportunities to help users of InfoMentum Online develop the skills needed to maximize their utilization of the application. User Group Meetings are typically held 4-6 times per year, depending upon the needs of the group as whole. Individual training sessions and technical assistance are also available by request throughout the year.

Program Marketing — In FY 2023, the EDS team will conduct personal appointments, capitalize on public speaking engagements, and execute written marketing efforts (print, website, and social media) to identify and secure new investors.

Economic Development Information Systems (EDIS) Partnership — The EDIS Partnership is the governing board for the InfoMentum program. Consisting of county governments, businesses, schools, utilities, and other investors the EDIS Partnership Board has oversight responsibilities for work program, budget, and policy development.

Special Projects — Throughout the year, EDS staff will work on unique projects for investors and other agencies and organizations as requested.

Outcomes/Results

EDS staff will:

- Continue working with InfoMentum investors to integrate custom data centers into their websites in order to provide each economic development organization with a unique, interactive research tool for prospects, site selectors, and researchers.
- Market the InfoMentum suite of services to potential public and private sector users.
- Work with GIS WebTech staff to integrate new tools into the InfoMentum Guru web application and ensure timely and accurate transfer of site and building data from SC Department of Commerce to InfoMentum Guru and each economic development organization property search site.
- Develop new data sets and visualizations for the Regional Data Center and customized data centers as requested.
- Provide innovative analytical tools for the public, economic developers, planners, and researchers.
- Support the EDIS Partnership Board and InfoMentum User Group by hosting meetings and providing staff support as needed.

Changes from Last Year

In FY 2021, the EDS team developed a COVID-19 data center dedicated to tracking economic indicators that enabled researchers to analyze the impacts of the pandemic as the data were made available. As the economic impacts of the pandemic continue to resolve, it is anticipated that the COVID-19 data center will be phased out in FY 2023, with any remaining relevant data visualizations moved to the Regional Data Center.

Program Area: Economic Development Planning

Purpose

Economic Development Services offers a variety of local and regional economic development planning assistance. This is necessary not only to help guide and coordinate economic development efforts in the Upstate, but also to increase the region's competitiveness for federal economic development grant funding from key partner agencies such as the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the US Economic Development Administration (EDA). Economic development planning services undertaken by the EDS staff include development of the regional comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), local community market analysis, and other planning and research initiatives as requested.

Activities

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) — The CEDS document provides a roadmap of economic development throughout the ACOG region. In order for economic development projects to be eligible and competitive for Economic Development Administration grant funding, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the project is consistent with the goals of the CEDS. The current CEDS, *2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the SC Appalachian Region*, was written and submitted to the US EDA in the fall of 2017. In FY 2023, staff will complete a re-write of the CEDS which will include an expanded Economic Resilience section that will cover pandemic recovery and response strategies. The new CEDS will be submitted to the EDA upon approval by the ACOG Board of Directors in late 2022.

2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the SC Appalachian Region

2021 Annual Performance Report

Prepared by the Appalachian Council of Governments for Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analysis — The EDS staff will continue to offer GIS services to support communities and organizations, which has been identified as a need in the region. In addition, EDS staff will provide GIS support for ACOG projects, related grant applications, planning efforts, special studies, and analysis needs.

Special Economic Development Planning Projects — Staff will continue to provide planning assistance to communities in areas such as neighborhood revitalization, business retention and expansion analysis, and other specialized areas, as requested. In FY 2023, the procurement of IMPLAN software will enable EDS staff to provide economic impact analyses for economic development and grant projects.

Outcomes/Results

- The 2023-2027 CEDS will be completed and submitted in December 2022.
- GIS analysis and special economic development planning projects will continue to be performed upon request in FY 2023.

Changes from Last Year

Economic impact analysis studies will be added to the list of services provided by the Economic Development Services team.

Program Area: Grant Support

Purpose

The EDS team is regularly involved in grant applications produced by ACOG. This grant support comes in three categories: (1) technology grant applications that support the InfoMentum suite of services, (2) collaboration with the ACOG Grant Services Division on economic development grant applications, and (3) GIS support for grant applications produced by the Grant Services Division.

Activities

- **Collaboration with the Grant Services Division** — EDS staff will continue to provide support for economic development grant applications, particularly when the application narrative requires a CEDS reference or data that is more easily produced by the EDS team. In addition, the EDS staff will collaborate with Grant Services to seek grant support for InfoMentum projects when opportunities arise.
- **GIS Support** — EDS staff will continue to provide map-making and geographic analysis services to the Grant Services to support applications to the US Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, and other entities.

Outcomes/Results

- Successful collaboration with the Grant Division on economic development grant applications as demonstrated by multiple grant awards in FY 2023.

Changes from Last Year

Additional federal grant funding is being made available through various agencies in an attempt to position communities to better respond to the economic downturn that has resulted from COVID-19. EDS staff anticipates assisting with a higher volume of grant applications as a result.

Planning Services

Overall Mission

The overall mission of the Planning Services Program is to support activities that promote prosperity and orderly development of the South Carolina Appalachian region. The primary focus of the program is facilitating planning efforts of local governments and public service providers around issues related to economic development, growth management, natural resource management, transportation, and infrastructure and service provision. In addition, the staff provides a wide range of technical assistance to local governments on planning administration and other growth management related issues that support the overall objective of the Planning Services Program.

Program Area: Transportation Planning

Purpose

Regional growth and development continue to increase pressure on the region's transportation network. Coordinated planning among the state and local governments is increasingly important to address the increased pressures on infrastructure. Disjointed planning areas, multiple funding sources, and limited overall funding make coordination a challenge at times. The ACOG works with SCDOT and other planning agencies to help promote efforts and projects that will improve traffic conditions and safety in the rural and urban areas in the region. Activities range from identification of projects eligible for federal and state programming to working with SCDOT to support transportation modeling efforts. The goal of this program is to provide the technical tools to assess trends in land use and transportation and provide technical assistance to local governments and state partners as they identify strategic projects that improve the transportation system.

Activities

Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Study Implementation– ACOG wrapped up the Upstate's first Freight Mobility Study in the fall of 2021. The study examined trends in the flow of trade through South Carolina with a focus on impacts of increased freight movements on major trade corridors, secondary trade corridors, and local communities. The plan's recommendations consisted of projects, policies, and programs that address inefficiencies in the freight network. ACOG's role will now shift to implementing the plan's recommendations through ACOG's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and regional partnerships. ACOG will continue to have a dialog with our partners in Georgia (Atlanta Regional Commission) and North Carolina (Centralina Council of Governments – Charlotte) to assess large-scale regional grant opportunities along the I-85 corridor.

Appalachian Long Range Transportation Plan – The ACOG's current LRTP was adopted in 2016. It established regional transportation goals and identified projects for consideration for funding through the rural guide shares allocated to the Appalachian Region. The Plan assesses long term transportation needs in the non-urban areas and identifies key projects that will improve the safety and efficiency of the rural

transportation system. Staff will be updating the LRTP with a planned completion during the beginning of FY 2023. The LRTP will consist of several local and regional corridor studies that ACOG will manage.

Appalachian Regional Travel Demand Model Program – ACOG, in a partnership with SCDOT and Upstate MPOs, assumed responsibility for maintaining the Appalachian Regional Travel Demand Model at the beginning of 2019. This project has allowed ACOG to support the MPOs with their Long Range Plan update processes. This also allowed staff to help coordinate transportation planning efforts for the region moving forward across planning agency boundaries. In addition, it enables ACOG staff to work with regional agencies to improve the accuracy of the information used as inputs in the model. This improves model accuracy which makes for a better predictive tool when assessing the impacts of highway improvements. The model also creates the potential for ACOG staff to help with small area transportation studies for local communities. The ACOG model is due for an update in FY 2023; as is SCDOT's statewide travel model. ACOG is working with SCDOT to coordinate both updates at the same time. We believe partnering with the statewide update will reduce cost and improve the travel model analysis tools such as travel surveys and activity-based modeling.

Rural Transportation Planning and Coordination – ACOG works with a wide range of stakeholders on transportation issues throughout the region in support of SC Department of Transportation Planning efforts. Our partnership with SCDOT has evolved recently as we have become more involved in project development and coordination with local governments. Planning Services staff has improved communications between SDCOT staff and stakeholders in the region when identifying solutions to transportation challenges. The improved coordination has helped with projects such as implementing a new Performance Measure Planning System to facilitating local input into project development and design processes. Staff will continue this work with local governments and SCDOT to help identify projects that promote more efficient and safer transportation systems in critical areas that improve communities.

Outcomes/Results

- Begin to implement the recommendations from the Regional Freight Mobility Study.
- Complete the update of the Appalachian Rural LRTP during FY 2023.
- Work with SCDOT and MPO partners to update the Appalachian Regional Travel Demand Model.
- Begin the US 29 Corridor study in Anderson County to assess both land use and transportation challenges along the corridor from I-85 to the City of Anderson.
- Maintain public copies of STIP, DOT Plans, and DOT project announcements and attend regular DOT/ACOG/MPO partnering meetings.
- Serve on or coordinate with Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS), Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS), and the Anderson Area Transportation Study (ANATS).
- Support communities' efforts to secure funding for transportation projects through facilitation of meetings with state and federal agencies and preparation of applications for funding.
- Oversee the application process for 5310 transit funds and prioritize projects for SCDOT funding.
- Administer and manage the transportation program by coordinating transportation planning activities; budgeting and managing transportation planning funds; sponsoring and conducting meetings including providing support to policy and advisory committees; and coordinating and working with other agencies and organizations involved in planning, programming and implementing transportation projects.

Changes from Last Year

- Staff will shift focus from completing the Appalachian Freight Mobility Study to identifying opportunities to implement strategies and projects identified in the final plan.
- Staff will begin updating the Appalachian Regional Travel Model in FY 2023.

Program Area: Community Planning/Development

Purpose

Working with communities to promote growth while preserving their character and quality of life is a core goal of the Planning Department. Planning Services staff provide a range of services for communities from goal setting, strategic planning, and ordinance development to planning administration services. Planning Services also monitors regional planning issues, provides technical assistance, and coordinates with other regional partners to promote quality development of the region. Planning Services staff will participate in regional planning initiatives and assist planning efforts in the region as appropriate.

Activities

Anderson HOME Consortium – The Anderson HOME Consortium is a partnership of Anderson County, the City of Anderson, and the City of Belton. The Consortium receives HOME funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to support housing rehabilitation efforts. Planning Services staff provides support services for the Consortium's grant administration and housing rehabilitation activities.

Community Development Needs Assessments – Needs Assessments are required for communities to apply for Community Development Block Grants through the SC Department of Commerce. Planning Services staff work with the Grant Department to identify potential CDBG applicants and develop needs assessments to support applications for CDBG application periods during the year.

Local Planning Services – The Planning Services Department provides a variety of services to local governments, from plan development to meeting facilitation. Staff is currently providing assistance on plan and regulation updates for several communities. We will also respond to requests for information on issues from simple technical assistance to contractual projects for plan or ordinance development.

Planning Administration Services – Planning Services staff assists communities in the Upstate with ongoing planning and zoning administrative services on a contractual basis. Planning Services staff currently provide the City of Pickens, Liberty, and Central with Zoning Administration services.

Planning Awareness and Education – Planning Services staff provides continuing planning education for local planning officials and topic-specific training as requested by local governments. Staff will continue to provide this training across the region to satisfy state requirements for local planning commission and board of appeals members to receive training through a state-certified program.

Outcomes/Results

- Work with the Anderson HOME Consortium - prepare the Annual Action Plan and CAPER report; oversee administrative activities for the Consortium; and provide housing rehabilitation project oversight for Anderson County and the City of Belton.

- Begin or complete work with communities to update local plans and ordinances, including the update of Comprehensive Plans for the Towns of Reidville, Campobello, Cowpens, and Wellford, as well as the development of new zoning and land development regulations for the Town of Reidville.

- Complete the SC Highway 11 Corridor study for Pickens County and any accompanying assistance needed to implement recommendations. Staff will assist county staff with crafting a set of regulatory recommendations for county officials to consider.

- Develop the West Queen Street Neighborhood Plan for the Town of Pendleton. The plan will identify potential investments for the neighborhood to assist with crime prevention, revitalization, and property maintenance that will support a fall 2022 CDBG neighborhood revitalization grant.

- Provide planning administration services for the Cities of Pickens, Liberty, and the Town of Central.

- Provide technical assistance as requested by local governments.

- Provide continuing planning education programs and planning orientation sessions during FY 2023 for planning commissions, board of appeals, and board of architectural review members.

- Participate in regional planning groups addressing concerns of local city and county governments.

- Develop the Land Use Modeling program via CommunityViz as a tool to better forecast future growth for our communities.

Changes from Last Year

- ACOG added a Regional Planner in FY 2022. He will assist the team with local planning efforts, including updates to comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances.

- Added planning administration services for the Town of Central.

- Added on-call agreement with the Town of Lyman for general planning council.

- Added on-call agreement with the City of Landrum to assist in the review of Flexible Review District development proposals.

Program Area: Natural Resource Planning

Purpose

Proper growth management and natural resource planning will facilitate continued growth and development in the region by ensuring infrastructure and services are available in a timely manner. Focus in this area is primarily on regional coordination of wastewater treatment services. Management principles are developed to utilize natural and man-made resources in a manner that provides for the greatest benefit to citizens, while ensuring that resources will be preserved into the future.

Activities

Appalachian Regional Water Quality Management Plan – The goal of the Regional Water Quality Management Plan is to ensure there is adequate wastewater treatment capacity in the region to meet growth and economic development related demands for a twenty-year period. Planning Services continues work to review existing basin plans and update them as needed to reflect needed changes to the current goals and strategies laid out in the Regional Water Quality Management Plan. Staff has completed significant updates to the Tyger and Enoree Basin Plan elements of the plan in recent years. Staff will begin an effort to review the current plan through the 208 Committee during FY 2023.

Outcomes/Results

- 208 Conformance Review Process – ongoing permit review.
- Administer the 208 Water Quality Plan.
- Provide technical assistance to communities as they address sewer issues.

Changes from Last Year

Basin planning efforts by several agencies in the region will help set a path for accommodating growth in our region. In the coming year, staff will work to update the plan to incorporate these efforts into the Appalachian 208 Plan. Coordination of long range sewer plans between sewer service agencies is an ongoing effort that will continue to ensure efficient expansion of sewer service to support development without harming the environment or character of the region.

Government Services

Overall Mission

The mission of the Government Services Program is to provide informative, practical services to the local governments in the upstate region that aim to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of administrative and elected officials so they can better serve their communities.

Program Area: Training Coordination

Purpose

Effective governance is only as successful as the leaders that are guiding it. Elected officials and staff must be adequately trained and up-to-date regarding modern methods and means of conducting city/county government. From initial appointment to many years thereafter, it is critical that individuals making decisions are well-versed in all areas of government administration.

Activities

- Sexual Harassment Education
- ICMA Effective Supervisory Practices
- ICMA Certificate in Management Series
- Dealing with Problem Employees
- Customer Service, Time Management, Communications

Outcomes/Results

Helping foster more knowledgeable administrative staff and elected officials through providing classes and training sessions as needed for communities and special purpose district staff and council members.

Program Area: Personnel Services

Purpose

Many local governments do not employ a human resource director, and rely heavily on ACOG to assist with issues such as personnel policies, FMLA, and FLSA. The program provides technical, legal and pragmatic information and solutions to our local governments.

Activities

- Policy and Procedure Manuals
- Employee Handbooks
- FMLA/FLSA Training
- Employee Evaluations and Forms
- Conduct staffing searches for administrators and other key staff members

Outcomes/Results

- Provide guidance on policy and procedures to help reduce the risk of litigation for communities resulting from human resource conflicts or disputes.

- Provide assistance to communities with hiring processes including recruitment, candidate review, and assisting with interview/selection process.

Program Area: Governmental Support

Purpose

Provide technical assistance and legal information to all appointed and elected officials.

Activities

- Interim Administration Services
- Budgeting Assistance
- Council orientations and retreats
- Organizational Plans

- Guidance on Home Rule Issues
- Seminars for Elected Officials
- FOIA
- A-Tax, H-Tax, LOST

Outcomes/Results

Providing support and technical assistance to communities to ensure administrative and elected officials are informed and knowledgeable about current issues. This includes:

- Providing ongoing consultation with new administrators
- Providing interim administrative services during staffing searches
- Providing technical assistance with preparation of budgets
- Communicating COVID-19 related guidance on proper policies, state and national requirements, and American Recovery Act provisions related to local governments
- Continuing to engage with elected officials and City/County Administrators to discuss needs and challenges in their communities and looking for opportunities to assist with meeting those challenges where appropriate.

Changes from Last Year

Government Services has been very active on a wide range of issues during the past year as operations in our region have returned to normalcy. There has been an increased need for interim administrator services as well as staffing searches as local governments have brought services back online. Staff anticipates this level of need will continue along with an increased need for guidance on new funding opportunities and administrative tasks associated with funding sources. ACOG will continue to work as a centralized source of information and assistance for local administrators and staff moving forward to meet the ongoing needs of our communities.

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