



Work Program | FY 2020

Appalachian Council of Governments

FY 2020 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 Grants 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 2020 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 AAA (Area Agency on Aging) is to assist seniors, their caregivers and those with disabilities by maintaining their dignity and independence in their homes and communities. The AAA is the designated regional lead agency for the development of a comprehensive, coordinated and cost effective home and community based service system. The AAA contracts with local service providers to provide services such as group dining, home delivered meals, in-home services and transportation. The AAA provides direct service for the Family Caregiver, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Information and Assistance and Benefits Counseling programs.

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 is 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
- Options counseling that promotes problem solving and decision making
- Provide 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 Advocates allocated over \$800,000 in vouchers throughout the six county region. Funding in the FCSP increased over \$200,000 from the year before.

Program Area: Ombudsman

Purpose

The Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program investigates complaints made by or on behalf of residents in skilled nursing facilities, residential/assisted living facilities and hospice homes.

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. Because of the number of cases received, the cases are given priority as to action taken (the most serious cases of abuse and neglect are given top priority).
- Friendly visits to facilities are completed by staff and trained volunteers.
- Quarterly monitoring visits to those residents living in facilities who are in the Greenville County Probate Court system.
- Ongoing community education and training to educate staff on various issues.

Outcomes/Results

- Residents, families, agencies and any other interested parties contact the Ombudsman Program for information and assistance to resolve problems with long term care facilities.
- Public awareness of factors related to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation will result in increased reporting.
- The Friendly Visitor Program will continue to grow, so that new volunteers are always entering the program as experienced volunteers retire from service. This will prevent service gaps in the participating facilities.

Changes from Past Year

- The pilot program adding one full-time Ombudsman to cover all DDSN and mental health facilities is now permanent.
- The Friendly Visitor Program will continue to increase the amount of volunteers, thereby increasing the number of Friendly Visits made by the program.

Program Area: Information & Assistance/Benefits Counseling

Purpose

This service 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 the number of beneficiaries contacting the ADRC (Aging and Disability Center) for assistance.
- Consistent, accurate, up-to-date information will be available in all areas of the ADRC website at www.scacog.org.
- The number of new and regular visitors to the ADRC website (www.scacog.org) will increase annually.
- Additional partnerships will expand outreach efforts.

Changes from Past Year

- A new position was created to coordinate homecare services. The ACOG Choice Program allows clients to choose from a list of providers who will perform services in their household.

Program Area: Nutrition

This service provides congregate meal dining and home delivered meals within Appalachia to 24 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;
- Due to disability;
- Unable to purchase and/or prepare food; and,
- Without anyone in the home who is available to prepare a meal on a daily basis.
- A spouse of any age in the home can also qualify to receive a meal.

Outcomes/Results

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

Changes from the Past Year

In the past 12 months, group dining served 90,828 meals to 2,204 diners region wide. In addition to a hot noon meal, as examples, activities include:

- physical fitness (arthritis exercise program, line and ballroom dancing, water exercises)
- games (Wii bowling, cards, board, pool, etc.)
- special days observances (holidays, birthdays)
- crafts
- outings to purchase vegetables, fruits, etc.
- field trips to museums, movie theaters, botanical gardens
- gardening (flowers and/or vegetables)
- picnics and recreational outings
- computer classes
- involvement from community groups
- informative speakers
- cooking demonstrations
- educational opportunities

In the same time period, 58,486 frozen home delivered meals were provided to 653 clients; 136,487 hot home delivered meals were provided to 1,637 clients; and 7,415 shelf-stable meals were provided to 1,417 clients in the region, along with informational materials on available services such as shots to prevent flu and shingles; nutrition information; and awareness of other available benefits.

Program Area: Home & Community Based Services

These supportive services enable seniors to remain in their home 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 doctor's office, 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 is for assistance on rights, benefits and entitlements.

Changes from Last Year

- ACOG Choice Program will be in effect in Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties for homemaker services. Clients will select from a list of several homecare providers who will serve in their household.

Grant Services

Overall Mission

The Grants 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 economical viable region.

Program Area: Economic and Community Development

Purpose

The Grants 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 can provide assistance, guidance, and input on community needs.
- Solicit input from broad community and conduct outreach.
- Prioritize needs.
- Prepare needs assessment document.

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 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 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 documentation needed to establish project needs, sustainability and measurable outcomes.

- Identify 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 project proposal addressing selection criteria.

Outcomes/Results

The outcomes of these efforts include the construction of new, or the 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 Grants 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 heart of 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 the 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 | • Section 3 Reports |
| • Quarterly Report | • Project Amendments |
| • Contract and Subcontract Activity | • Grant Extensions and Adjustments |
| • Annual Accomplishments Reports | • Close Out Report |

Outcomes/Results

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

Changes from Last Year

Grant Services will remain consistent throughout the course of FY 2020.

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 South Carolina Upstate. The EDS staff provides services and information 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 property database that assist economic developers' efforts to attract industry and create jobs. InfoMentum is integrated into the economic development activities and websites of its investors, neighboring Councils of Government, utilities, non-profits, university programs, and the Upstate South Carolina Alliance. 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 tool is a password-protected, private web application 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. Many data layers are also available (traffic counts, surrounding manufacturers, nearby colleges/universities, etc.) to enable the creation of informative maps – printable or exportable.

Beginning in FY 2020, the InfoMentum Online tool will migrate to a new platform developed by GIS WebTech called Recruit Professional. This new application will maintain the InfoMentum brand identity to provide continuity for users, but will have an updated look and feel. In addition, current capabilities within InfoMentum Online will be maintained while new capabilities are added as the technology evolves. The GIS WebTech team will be responsible for maintaining the technical aspects of Recruit Professional and the property feed from SC Commerce, while EDS staff will continue to develop and maintain the 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
- Cherokee County
- City of Anderson Economic Development Dept.
- City of Mauldin Economic Development Dept.
- Greenville Area Development Corporation

- Greenwood Partnership Alliance
- 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 — This tool is an interactive, comprehensive, socio-economic database for Upstate SC that was launched in March 2019. Built using the Tableau software platform, the Data Center allows users to manipulate charts, graphs, and tables on the fly. In addition, data tables are available for download 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 and 2-page fact sheets for the 62 municipalities of the Upstate. Updated annually, the fact sheets provide a snapshot of current market and demographic conditions throughout the region.

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 in the ACOG Boardroom on the fourth Tuesday of every other month at 9:30 a.m. Training and technical assistance is also available by request throughout the year.

Program Marketing — In FY 2020, the EDS team will continue to conduct personal appointments, capitalize on public speaking engagements, and execute written marketing efforts (print, website, and social media) in order 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 works on unique projects for investors and other agencies and organizations. Projects for the upcoming FY 2020 work plan include:

- **Blue Ridge Rural Water Mapping Tool** – The InfoMentum server houses Blue Ridge Water data (lines, service dates, etc.). Blue Ridge technicians are able to access this data from their mobile devices while in the field so that they can gather real time information and increase efficiency. InfoMentum primarily plays a hosting role.

Outcomes/Results

EDS staff will:

- Work with InfoMentum investors to integrate custom data centers into their websites 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 the SC Department of Commerce (DOC) staff and GIS WebTech staff to coordinate the transfer of data on available sites and buildings collected by DOC into the InfoMentum Online program.
- Develop new data sets and visualizations for the Data Center.
- 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 planning for FY 2019, we anticipated adding a GIS position to the EDS staff. However, during the course of the year, we found a more cost-effective solution to InfoMentum's GIS staffing needs by partnering with the GIS WebTech firm. While our partnership will not enable EDS to have a dedicated GIS professional on staff, it will allow existing staff to focus more time on projects such as industrial site analysis, local planning analysis, and other community mapping projects that are seen as needed services in the region.

Program Area: Economic Development Planning

Purpose

Economic Development Services offers a variety of local and regional economic development planning assistance. This is necessary to not only to help guide and coordinate economic development efforts in the SC 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 economic development throughout the ACOG region. In order for economic development projects to be eligible and competitive for federal 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 and the first update was provided in late 2018. For FY 2020, staff will work complete the 2019 annual progress report for submission in December.

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

Special Economic Development Planning Projects — The EDS team 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.

Outcomes/Results

- The annual progress report for the 2018-2022 CEDS will be completed and submitted in December 2019.
- GIS analysis and special economic development planning projects will continue to be performed upon request in FY 2020.

Changes from Last Year

Throughout FY 2020, EDS staff will identify new and/or expanded GIS offerings and begin to market them to communities and organizations in the region.

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 Grants Services Division on economic development grant applications, and (3) GIS support for grant applications produced by the Grants Division.

Activities

- **Collaboration with the Grants Services Division** — EDS staff will continue to provide support on 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 Grants 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 Grants Division to support applications to the US Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, and other entities.

Outcomes/Results

- Successful collaboration with the Grants Division on economic development grant applications as demonstrated by multiple grant awards in FY 2020.

Changes from Last Year

Grant support services will remain consistent as new projects arise throughout the course of FY 2020.

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

With continued growth and development, pressure on the region's transportation network is increasing. Coordinated planning among the state and local governments is becoming increasingly important due to disjointed planning areas, multiple funding sources, and limited overall funding. The ACOG works to help identify and promote projects within the rural areas of the region that improve traffic conditions and safety. 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 – As the Upstate Region of South Carolina continues to grow, its economy becomes more diverse and impacts land use and transportation throughout the Upstate. In an effort to understand the present and future impacts that increased trade flowing through South Carolina will have on the transportation infrastructure, the ACOG has secured funding through the MPO's and SCDOT to develop the region's first Freight Mobility Study. The study will focus on impacts of increased freight movements on major trade corridors, secondary trade corridors, and local communities. It will help identify opportunities to improve efficiency in goods movement and assist local, regional and state leadership in prioritizing future investment in transportation infrastructure.

Appalachian Long Range Transportation Plan – The ACOG's latest Long Range Transportation Plan 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 efficiency of the transportation system and enhance the safety of the community. The ACOG LRTP will be due for an update in 2021. While completion of the task will likely not occur within this fiscal year, preliminary work will commence to prepare for the full update.

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 will allow ACOG to be at the center of transportation planning efforts for the region moving forward as we will support all the MPOs in their Long Range Plan update processes. ACOG staff can work with local jurisdictions to identify problem areas in the model, more accurately assess and validate socioeconomic data at the TAZ level, and provide a tool for ACOG and MPO partners to analyze alternative highway improvements in the region. SCDOT will continue to maintain and renew the TransCAD license and will provide on-call modeling assistance through the DOT's on-call modeling consultant. It will also allow ACOG staff to work with regional agencies to improve the accuracy of the information used as inputs in the model to make it an improved predictive tool for those planning efforts as well. In addition, this will create the potential for ACOG staff to help with small area transportation studies for local communities in the future as the model is developed. Overall this allow ACOG to play a key role for regional transportation planning efforts moving forward.

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. Significant turnover in SCDOT staff has created some challenges but also has provided an opportunity to build better working partnerships moving forward. The first step of this has resulted in successful implementation a new Performance Measure Planning System that will help guide infrastructure spending at DOT. In addition, Planning Services staff is working better with SCDOT staff to connect them with stakeholders from the rural and urban areas of the region to identify solutions to transportation challenges. Staff will continue to work with local governments and SCDOT to help identify projects that promote more efficient an safer transportation systems in critical areas that improve communities.

Outcomes/Results

- Begin Regional Freight Mobility Study process for the Appalachian Region in Fall 2019.
- Prepare for Appalachian Rural LRTP Update Process to begin in 2020.
- Work with Appalachian Regional Transportation Model and MPO partners to establish goals and expectations for future model updates and development.
- 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 application process for 5310 transit funds and prioritize projects for SCDOT funding.

Changes from Last Year

- The Planning Services staff will begin Freight Mobility Study process in fall of 2019 with expectation of an 18 month planning period supported by a consultant.
- Transportation Planner will begin developing work plan for ongoing maintenance of Appalachian Transportation Model and working with MPO partners on meeting setting expectations for partnership moving forward.
- Staff will begin outlining process for updating the Appalachian Rural LRTP.

Program Area: Community Planning/Development

Purpose

Assisting communities to promote continued growth while providing a high quality of life is a core goal of the Planning Department. Planning Services staff works with communities on specialized tasks that they are not prepared to staff. Services include facilitation of goal setting, strategic planning, land use planning, community involvement processes, and service planning. Planning Services also monitors regional planning issues, provides information, and coordinates strategies as appropriate. 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, City of Anderson, and 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 Grants 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, Landrum, Lyman Inman, and Anderson County. Moving forward, staff will begin working with Reidville on an update of their Land Development Regulations in the coming year. 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 secured a contract with the City of Pickens to provide Zoning Administration services for the coming year. ACOG staff is also in negotiations with the Town of Lyman to provide GIS services for their planning needs.

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

Outcomes/Results

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

- Complete work with communities to update local plans and ordinances, including the update of Comprehensive Plans for the Town of Lyman, City of Inman, and the City of Anderson, as well as the development of new zoning and land development regulations for the Towns of Reidville and Landrum.
- Begin work with Anderson County to update their Zoning and Land Development Regulations.
- Provide on-going planning administration for City of Pickens.
- Provide technical assistance as requested by local governments.
- Provide 8-10 continuing planning education programs and 2-4 planning orientation sessions during FY 2020 for planning commissions, board of appeals, and board of architectural review members.
- Participate in regional planning groups addressing regional concerns of local city and county governments.

Changes from Last Year

- An increase in requests for Comprehensive Plan updates and Zoning Administration will continue to shift the department's focus and time towards local planning efforts. We also anticipate adding 2-3 additional local community projects as well.

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. In addition, planning serves to develop and implement a vision for the region that results from the wide variety of interests and needs that are present in the Upstate. 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 Regional Water Quality Management Plan's goal 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. In addition, planning efforts in the ReWa service areas have begun through the update of their Upstate Roundtable Plan. This plan originally completed in 1994 was the basis for much of the Saluda, Reedy, and Enoree Basin elements of the 208 Plan. Staff is participating in this update process and the results of this effort will inform updates to each of those basin plans when complete.

Outcomes/Results

- Participate in the Upstate Roundtable Plan update process and work to incorporate appropriate goals and policies into 208 basin plan updates for the Saluda, Reedy and Enoree basins.
- 208 Conformance Review Process – ongoing permit review.
- Provide technical assistance to communities as they address sewer issues.

Changes from Last Year

Participation in Upstate Roundtable Plan will be an important effort for informing updates to 208 basin plans in the future. In addition, expanding outreach efforts in the Savannah Basins to promote coordination of long range sewer plans between sewer service agencies is an ongoing effort that will be continued to hopefully ensure efficient expansion of sewer occurs in appropriate areas of the communities and supports development without harming the environment or character of the region.

Government Services

Overall Mission

The Government Services Program's mission 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

More knowledgeable administrative staff and elected officials.

Program Area: Personnel Services

Purpose

Many local governments are not blessed with 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
- Staffing Searches

Outcomes/Results

To improve a community's human resource procedures and reduce the cities' and counties' risk of litigation resulting from human resource conflicts or disputes.

Program Area: Governmental Support

Purpose

Provide technical 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 has included serving as an interim administrator for the Town of Inman in the past year, conducting several staffing searches for administrators and other key staff members, helping with preparation of budgets, and utility operations analysis. Staff will continue to engage with elected officials and City/County Administrators to discuss needs and challenges in their communities and look for opportunities to assist with meeting those challenges where appropriate.

Changes from Last Year

The transition following the departure of Donna Kazia as Government Services Director at the end of 2016 led to an extended period the agency was not able to provide these services to the standard we expected. In July of 2018 we were able to bring on a staff member, Trey Eubanks, with 20 years of city administration experience which has in turn made this service a strength of our agency once again. Mr. Eubanks has quickly engaged with several communities in the region and embraced his role to build a solid reputation quickly as a go to person in the region. We anticipate that as Mr. Eubanks becomes more familiar with the region he will only continue to grow in his role with the COG and become a significant asset to the agency and region.