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Message from Federal Co-Chair Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed



Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed Federal Co-Chair Southeast Crescent Regional Commission



I am honored to present the FY 2024 Annual Report for the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC).

As SCRC concludes its third year of operations, the measurable progress achieved in partnership with member states and local communities is apparent. FY 2024 marked a period of intentional growth, laying foundational investments, deepening engagement across the region, and aligning our work with the needs and priorities of the 51 million residents SCRC serves.

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) was authorized by Congress in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 and reauthorized in the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. Since the confirmation of its first Federal Co-Chair, the Commission has steadily transitioned from concept to action—serving as a vital resource for advancing economic resilience across the Southeast.

One of six active federal-state regional commissions, SCRC was created to confront the root causes of persistent poverty and support long-term, sustainable economic growth. The service area covers more than 210,000 square miles across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia and is home to more than 51 million residents and 428 counties or county-equivalents, of which 166 are designated as economically distressed.

In FY 2024, the Commission continued to implement its Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2027), with an emphasis on six region-identified goals:

- Investing in Critical Infrastructure
- Improving Health and Support Services, Access, and Outcomes
- 3 Strengthening Workforce Capacity
- 4 Fostering Entrepreneurial and Business Development Activities
- 5 Expanding Affordable Housing Stock and Access
- 6 Promoting Environmental Conservation, Preservation, and Access

To support these goals and align with the mission, SCRC launched its inaugural State Economic and Infrastructure Development (SEID) Grant Program in FY 2024. Marking the Commission's first direct investment into local and regional projects, these grants prioritized communities experiencing the greatest economic need, with at least half of all funding directed to distressed counties and a minimum of forty percent specifically allocated to infrastructure projects. Projects funded through SEID address urgent community needs that range from transportation and clean water infrastructure to workforce training and healthcare access. During FY 2024, SCRC approved \$19 million in grants to support 56 projects. The Commission anticipates these projects will result in the following outcomes: 72,657 households impacted, 1,383 businesses

supported, and 402 communities empowered.

Also in FY 2024, SCRC designed a \$6.5 million Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. This grant program provided support to Upson and Dougherty counties in Georgia, aiming to improve local food systems and childcare services as dual pillars of community well-being and economic vitality.

Another major milestone in FY 2024 was the continuation and expansion of the Crescent Care Collaborative (CCC), a Commission initiative to address the critical shortage of healthcare professionals in the Southeast Crescent region, particularly in rural areas. SCRC commissioned a region-wide health assessment to identify significant gaps and the greatest service needs. Then, SCRC worked in partnership with the U.S. Department of State to administer the I-1 Visa Waiver program in order to recruit and retain physicians to serve medically underserved areas throughout the region.By helping place qualified healthcare professionals in rural and distressed communities, SCRC improves health outcomes, increases access to care, and reduces gaps in essential health services.

In addition to advancing and expanding programs, SCRC has maintained partnerships with Governors' offices, Local Development Districts (LDDs), and traditional federal agencies, to facilitate targeted capacity-building programs that strengthen local readiness and amplify impact. These efforts have positioned the Commission as a trusted partner and catalyst for regional place-based development.

SCRC's FY 2024 Annual Report reflects the early progress of a Commission that is growing in capability and capacity, deepening its connection with the people and places it serves. We remain committed to fulfilling the intent of Congress and the promise of our mission—to create sustainable opportunities in communities, strengthen economic growth, and improve quality of life throughout the region.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building a stronger future for the Southeast Crescent region.

Regards,

Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed Federal Co-Chair

Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

About the Southeast Crescent **Regional Commission**

Mission:

To build thriving communities and strengthen economic growth across the Southeast Crescent region.



About the Southeast Crescent **Regional Commission**

Authorized by Congress in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, reauthorized in the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) was formally authorized under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 ("The Farm Bill"). Envisioned as a federal-state partnership dedicated to uplifting the rural South, SCRC began official operations in 2021 with a clear mission: build thriving communities and strengthen economic growth across the Southeast Crescent region.

The vast majority of SCRC-funded projects leverage additional support from local communities, governments, businesses, and other partner organizations, creating a multiplier effect that maximizes both impact and return on investment.

Geographic and Investment Overview

Encompassing 210,508 square miles across seven states, SCRC's footprint includes 428 counties, many of which face significant economic challenges. SCRC directs its efforts toward these distressed communities, driving local innovation and economic development through grants and strategic partnerships. Every dollar contributed by SCRC attracts additional public and private investment, underscoring the commission's role as a catalyst for lasting change.

The Uniqueness of the SCRC Region

From the sweeping vistas of the Florida Everglades to the rugged beauty of the Mississippi Palisades and from the saltwater marshes of South Carolina's Lowcountry to Alabama's picturesque Little River Canyon National Preserve, the Southeast Crescent region boasts beautifully natural landscapes and a culturally rich heritage.

Residents reflect a resilience and ingenuity shaped by centuries of tradition, making these communities both economically promising and uniquely challenging. Through targeted funding, capacity-building, and collaborative programs, SCRC fuels economic growth while preserving the distinctive legacy and natural beauty of the region.



Counties served across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina. South Carolina. and Virginia to address poverty and economic development





generated in matching grants and private investments in support of the SEID grant program in 2024

State Economic and Infrastructure Development 2024 (SEID) Grant Program at a Glance

With \$20 million available in 2024, 56 projects totaling \$18.54 million were funded, investing in communities, building capacity, creating jobs, and strengthening infrastructure across the Southeast.

The SEID Grant Program supports projects that revitalize and transform communities, spurring economic development in counties throughout Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Strategic Coordination

In addition to aligning with one or more of the SEID Grant Program goals, every project must reflect the priorities outlined in the member states' Economic Development Plans and Strategy Statements. This approach ensures that local needs guide resource allocation and drives exceptional return on investment (ROI).

250% Return on Investment

Direct SEID Grant funding: \$18.54 million

Leveraged matching grants and private investments:

Over \$47 million combined

ROI: Every dollar provided by SCRC catalyzes an additional \$2.50 from public and private partners, creating a multiplier effect that accelerates transformation in the Southeast's most economically distressed communities.

Funding Distribution

Each state's grant allocation is determined using a four-pronged formula based on:

Balance 25% of funds are distributed equally across the 6 states

Goals

- Invest in Critical Infrastructure
- Improve Access and Outcomes to Health and Support Services
- Strengthen Workforce Capacity
- Foster Entrepreneurial and Business Development Activities
- Expand Affordable Housing Stock and Access
- Promote Environmental Conservation, Preservation, and Access

Eligible Projects

The SEID Grant Program supports a wide range of economic development and community development priorities including, but not limited to, the following:

Business Development:

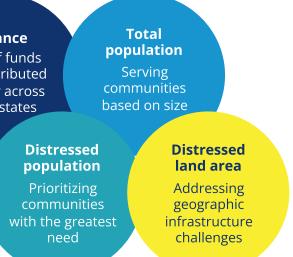
Entrepreneurial hubs, small business support programs, and access to capital

Housing & Community Revitalization:

Affordable housing projects, land development initiatives, and community renewal efforts

Public Services & Healthcare:

Investments in emergency healthcare facilities, medical equipment, and telemedicine



Workforce Training:

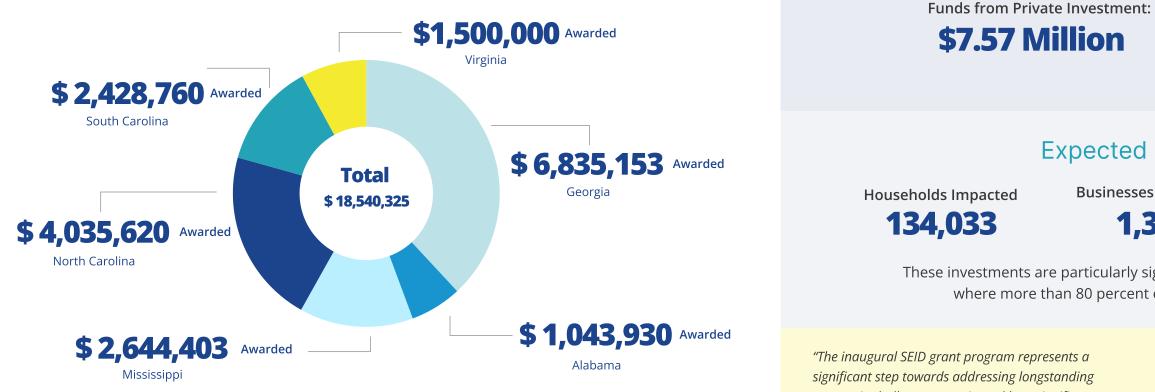
Programs designed to prepare workers for careers in high-growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, and technology

Critical Infrastructure:

Water and sewer systems, broadband connectivity, transportation upgrades, and stormwater management

SEID Grant 2024 Investments

The SEID Grant Program received an overwhelming response, with 363 entities submitting preapplications requesting \$119.2 million in funding. After a rigorous review process, 103 entities were invited to submit full applications, requesting more than \$36 million for their projects.



Florida opted out of the SEID Grant Program cycle so funding was re-allocated based on the Board-approved formula.

> With 363 pre-applications requesting \$119 million in funding, the demand for SEID grants far exceeded available resources. Future funding cycles will continue to prioritize infrastructure investment, economic resilience, and workforce opportunities to support long-term growth across the Southeast Crescent region.

These investments are particularly significant for distressed communities, where more than 80 percent of funding has been invested.

economic challenges experienced by a significant number of residents in the region."

Total funding awarded

\$18.54 Million

- Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed, SCRC Federal Co-Chair



Through our partnerships with state governments, economic development organizations, and community stakeholders, SCRC is maximizing the impact of these investments, ensuring that funding directly benefits the people and businesses that need it most.



Total projects funded



Project Matching Funds:



States served

Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia

Expected outcomes

Businesses Supported



Jobs Created



"These grants along the Southeast Crescent region" will update infrastructure, create jobs, and promote economic growth."

- Governor Roy Cooper, SCRC States' Co-Chair



SEID Grant Program Investments in Alabama

SCRC's strategic placement of **\$1.04 million** for four projects sparked an additional **\$2.21 million** in matching and private support, driving improvements in water infrastructure, workforce training, and small business services.



City of Brundidge: Sewer System Overhaul

Brundidge will receive \$500,000 in SEID funding to upgrade its aging sewer system, replacing mains on Nassau, Pine, and Lawson streets and overhauling the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The \$1.54M project, funded through SEID and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's Clean Water State Revolving Fund program (ADEM CWSRF), will improve services for 2,073 residents and 56 businesses while addressing public health concerns.

Town of Brantley: Rural Crisis Diversion Center

Brantley will receive \$155,000 to extend water and sewer services to the South Central Alabama Mental Health Rural Crisis Diversion Center, the first of its kind in rural Alabama. The \$809,875 project will provide 24/7 crisis intervention, create 65 jobs, and boost local economic growth.

OPAL Community Capital: Economic Growth in Low-Income Areas

OPAL Community Capital, a new Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), will receive \$226,664 to support economic initiatives in low-income Alabama communities. Over two years, it will engage eight communities, increase capital investments, and assist businesses through programs like the Community Growth Accelerator.

Troy University Arboretum: Enhancements

Troy University will receive \$162,266 to restore the Hickory Loop Nature Trail, build a wildlife viewing area, and install pedestrian bridges, improving accessibility and outdoor learning.

SCRC Investment \$1,043,930

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$1,997,764
Funds From Private Investment	\$216,264
Households Impacted	888
Residents Impacted	62
Businesses Supported	8
Jobs Created	888

SEID Grant Program Investments in Georgia

A catalytic **\$6.84 million** from SCRC leveraged more than **\$11.80 million** in added resources (including **\$10.43 million** in project match and **\$1.37 million** in private investment), powering 17 projects that broadened broadband connectivity, fortified workforce skills, and advanced agricultural innovations, impacting 94,543 households, 20,000 residents, 614 businesses, and generating 15 jobs in 60 distressed and 7 transitional counties.

SCRC Investment **\$ 6,835,153**

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$10,431,580
Funds From Private Investment	\$1,370,709
Households Impacted	94,543
Residents Impacted	20,000
Businesses Supported	614
Jobs Created	15



Georgia Tech Research Corporation: PIN Student Internship

George Tech Research will receive \$350,000 to implement the PIN Student Internship program, which connects civic-minded college students with innovation-driven organizations committed to making a positive public impact.

City of Sandersville: Tybee Community Drainage Improvements

The City of Sandersville will receive \$500,000 to improve stormwater infrastructure addressing flooding issues impacting livability and economic prospects. The project aims to enhance the resiliency of this historic neighborhood and foster economic growth through innovative drainage solutions.

Emanuel Medical Center: Emergency Process Improvement Collaborative (EPIC)

Emanuel Medical Center will receive \$600,000 to enhance emergency healthcare services to improve patient flow, upgrade equipment, and improve security measures. The EPIC project will address critical healthcare needs in a predominantly rural region.

Washington County Regional Medical Center: New MRI and Nurse Call System

The Washington County Regional Medical Center will receive \$263,240 to upgrade an MRI machine and Nurse Call System, to improve diagnostic capabilities and patient care in medically underserved communities in rural Georgia.

Dorminy Medical Center: Upgrade CT Machine

Dorminy Medical Center will receive \$498,612 to enhance healthcare services by upgrading its CT machine, addressing critical diagnostic needs and improving patient care in Ben Hill, Irwin, Turner, and Wilcox counties.

SEID Grant Program Investments in Georgia

Projects

Continued



Georgia Heirs Property Law Center, Inc.: Resolving and Preventing Heirs Property to Grow Georgia's Economy and **Workforce Housing Stock**

Georgia Heirs Property Law Center will receive \$600,000 to tackle the challenge of heir property issues impacting generational wealth and community stability. Includes legal services to safeguard property rights, title clearing, estate planning, and asset education.

Georgia Tech Research Corporation: Certified Economic Development Ready Communities

Georgia Tech Research Corporation will receive \$349,952 for the Certified Economic Development Ready Communities pilot serving Bulloch, Candler, Evans, Tattnall, Liberty, and Long counties, in order to develop a comprehensive housing strategy and provide resources, technical assistance, and planning tools to manage growth effectively while maintaining rural character.

City of Brooklet: Highway 80 Water Main Improvements

The City of Brooklet will receive \$600,000 to replace existing six-inch PVC water main with a 12-inch diameter PVC water main along Highway 80 that will enhance fire protection and support economic development, ensuring adequate water flow for industrial and residential use. This project is expected to create 15,000 jobs from new Hyundai plant, supporting economic growth and stability in Brooklet, Bryan, and Bulloch counties.

Chatham County: Enhancing EV Capacity

Chatham County will receive \$350,000 to conduct a countywide EV

infrastructure assessment and integration plan. The project aims to address the pressing need for EV charging infrastructure.

Glynn County Board of Commissioners: Housing Action Plan

The Glynn County Board of Commissioners will receive \$50,000 to develop a comprehensive Housing Action Plan focusing on the most distressed areas, targeting households earning 80% or less than median income, enhancing affordable housing options for 750 households and employees of local businesses.

City of Brunswick: New Town Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Area

The City of Brunswick will receive \$600,000 to address outdated stormwater infrastructure. The project will eliminate flooding, enable housing rehabilitation, and encourage economic development in the area.

Legacy Ventures DC Corp: The Bailey Street Redevelopment Project

Legacy Ventures DC Corp will receive \$500,000 for water, sewer, and road infrastructure needed for constructing 16 affordable homes in Waycross City. The project will foster job creation and empower residents via homeownership.

Jasper County: Community Food Bank

Jasper County will receive \$350,000 to construct a 4,165 sq. ft. Community Food Bank. The new facility will address increasing food insecurity, provide storage and distribution capabilities, and support up to 1,692 individuals and 1,000 low-to-moderate income households in Jasper County.

The City of Millen will receive \$538,349 to construct water main connecting existing wells to new Highway 25 Industrial Park to ensure adequate water supply for industry, business, and fire protection.

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission: NEGA Stem Connects

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission will receive \$350,000 to enhance workforce skills through experiential learning and a regional marketing campaign. The project aims to bridge the skills gap and promote careers in advanced manufacturing and STEM fields in the counties of Clarke, Newton, and Walton.

City of Fitzgerald: Assisting with Industry Expansion

The City of Fitzgerald will receive \$85,000 to facilitate infrastructure improvements to support Polar Beverages' growth. This project aims to provide a safe and efficient semi-truck set-down and staging area, ensuring continued economic prosperity for employed residents of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

Industrial Park

Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority will receive \$600,000 to support infrastructure improvements at the Georgia Highway 257 Rail Served Site. The project aims to attract new industry and workforce opportunities, driving economic prosperity.

City of Millen: Industrial Water Supply Improvements

Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority: Highway 257

SEID Grant Program Investments in Mississippi

SCRC's **\$2.64 million** leveraged **\$2 million** more, fueling 9 projects focused on infrastructure upgrades, small business incubators, and healthcare expansions, serving 16,996 households, 12,282 residents, 68 businesses, and creating 30 jobs across 8 distressed and 3 transitional counties.

SCRC Investment **\$2,644,403**

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$1,967,464
Funds From Private Investment	\$38,897
Households Impacted	16,996
Residents Impacted	12,282
Businesses Supported	68
Jobs Created	30



Nicholson Water & Sewer Association: Expansion and Upgrade for Economic Growth

The Nicholson Water & Sewer Association will receive \$446,888 to extend water and sewer infrastructure along the I-59 corridor, particularly on the east side of the interstate at Exit 1. This project aims to unlock economic potential and ensure growth for the City of Picayune and the Nicholson community by addressing critical infrastructure needs.

Clarke County: Infrastructure Improvements for Howard Industries

Howard Industries will receive \$500,000 for infrastructure improvements in Clarke County. This includes installing a turn-lane and signalization at their location along Highway 145 to address increased traffic and enhance safety. The project is expected to create 200-1,000 jobs, making Howard Industries the largest employer in the county.

City of Picayune: I-59/Sycamore Intersection Improvements and Frontage Road

Pearl River County will receive \$500,000 for the Sycamore Road Intersection and Frontage Road project in Picayune. This project aims to enhance transportation accessibility and safety by implementing designated turn lanes, a traffic signal, and a frontage road south of Sycamore Road.

Pearl River County: Poplarville/Pearl River County Airport Advancement Plan

Pearl River County will receive \$50,000 to develop a strategic advancement plan for the Poplarville/Pearl River County Airport. This plan aims to optimize the airport's economic potential and support regional growth by analyzing existing assets and opportunities.

SEID Grant Program Investments in Mississippi

Projects

Continued

University of Mississippi: Coastal Business Growth Accelerator (CBGA)

The University of Mississippi, through the Mississippi Small Business Development Center (MS-SBDC), will receive \$312,000 for a two-year initiative to support small businesses in the distressed counties of Stone, George, and Harrison, as well as the transitional counties of Pearl River, Hancock, and Jackson.

City of Moss Point: Sue Ellen Recreation Center Rehabilitation

The City of Moss Point will receive \$252,500 for the rehabilitation of the Sue Ellen Recreation Center. This project aims to enhance the quality of life for residents by providing a safe and constructive environment for children, teenagers, and adults through improved facilities and programs.

Town of Lake: Highway 489 Pump Station Rehabilitation

The Town of Lake will receive \$175,428 for the rehabilitation of the Highway 489 pump station. This project addresses critical wastewater treatment infrastructure needs, particularly benefiting low-income residents and nearby schools.

Wechsler Foundation: Saving Wechsler School, 1951 Addition

The City of Meridian will receive \$95,587 to renovate the 1951 addition of the Wechsler School. This project aims to preserve the historical site and create a community hub for educational and cultural activities.





SEID Grant Program Investments in North Carolina

A \$4.04 million commitment from SCRC unlocked \$3.21 **million** in private and matching funds, enabling 10 projects that boosted broadband access, modernized healthcare services, and improved workforce readiness, supporting 73 households, 5,433 residents, 46 businesses, and training 156 people in 13 distressed counties and 1 transitional county.

SCRC Investment \$4,035,620

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$3,089,285
Funds From Private Investment	\$125,000
Households Impacted	73
Residents Impacted	5,433
Businesses Supported	46



City of Henderson: Low-Pressure Pump Station

The City of Henderson will receive \$500,000 for the installation of a low-pressure pump station. This project aims to alleviate environmental health impacts, enhance residents' quality of life, and address housing stock shortages in the community by replacing problematic septic systems in the Main Sreet area.

City of Lumberton: LS#21 Resiliency Upgrade

The City of Lumberton will receive \$440,000 for the elevation and flood-proofing of the LS#21 sewer lift station. This project aims to prevent disruptions to sewer operations during flood events, mitigate the risk of untreated sewage entering the Lumber River, and support industrial and economic stability in the area.

Columbus County: Water System Rehabilitation

Columbus County will receive \$500,000 for upgrading the Riegelwood Subdivision's aging water distribution system. This project involves replacing Asbestos Cement (AC) water mains with PVC mains, upgrading infrastructure, and installing Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)-capable meters for 175 residential connections to ensure a safe and reliable source of clean drinking water.

Hyde County: Ponzer Water Tank Restoration and Resiliency

Hyde County will receive \$264,000 for the full restoration of the interior and exterior surfaces of the Ponzer Water Tank. This project aims to improve water access and safety in the area, especially considering the high organics content in the groundwater and the tank's exposure to a saltwater environment.

SEID Grant Program Investments in North Carolina

Projects

Continued

Laurinburg Maxton Airport Commission: Sewer Rehabilitation and Enhancement

The Laurinburg Maxton Airport Commission will receive \$500,000 for the rehabilitation and enhancement of the sewer collection system. This project aims to reduce inflow and infiltration, preserve wastewater treatment capacity, and support existing industries while attracting new businesses to stimulate job creation.

Lenoir Community College: Aviation Academy

Lenoir Community College (LCC) will receive \$285,480 in funding to expand its Aviation Center for Excellence (ACE) within the North Carolina Global TransPark (NCGTP). This project aims to meet the growing demand for skilled aviation mechanics in eastern North Carolina, providing training and certification programs that align with the needs of major employers like Draken International and Spirit AeroSystems.





"This is about real opportunities—not just for this community, but for young people across eastern North Carolina. Why not put aviation within reach? Why not put maintenance within reach?" — Congressman Don Davis (NC-01)

"This grant will allow us to offer a much-needed workforce training program that has never been available at the college. Students in our region will now have the opportunity to pursue aviation careers without leaving their local communities."

— Dr. Rusty Hunt, LCC President

Roanoke-Chowan Community College: Weld to Work Pipeline

Roanoke-Chowan Community College (R-CCC) will receive \$470,140 to launch the Weld to Work Pipeline project, targeting Hertford, Bertie, and Northampton Counties. This initiative aims to offer accessible and affordable short-term welding training to increase the number of skilled welders in the workforce. The project includes financial assistance to overcome transportation and tuition barriers and leverages community education centers to boost enrollment.

Town of Stoneville: Water System Improvements

The Town of Stoneville will receive \$500,000 to improve its water system infrastructure, benefiting a low-income residential area. This

project aims to address critical issues of low system pressure and improve public health outcomes by ensuring compliance with NC Public Water Supply standards. The improvements will enhance the quality of life for residents and support community development.

Town of Tabor City: Tabor City Business Incubator

The Town of Tabor City was awarded \$496,000 for the Tabor City Business Incubator project, aimed at revitalizing its Central Business District (CBD). This initiative will provide incubator space for start-up businesses, stimulate private investment, and create new job opportunities in the area. The project aligns with efforts to promote economic growth and support local entrepreneurship in Tabor City.

Frontier Warren: l Ecosystem

Frontier Warren will receive \$80,000 to expand its business incubator and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Warren County. This project, in partnership with Research Triangle Park (RTP) and the Town of Warrenton, aims to increase capacity and resources for local small businesses. It will offer specialized entrepreneurial education, networking opportunities, and mentorship to empower entrepreneurs and stimulate economic vitality in rural North Carolina.

Frontier Warren: Developing Frontier Warren's Entrepreneurial

SEID Grant Program Investments in South Carolina

SCRC's **\$2.43 million** mobilized **\$4.81 million** in further support, advancing 12 projects centered on water management, small business resources, and advanced manufacturing training. A total of 21,933 households and businesses were supported, resulting in 550 new jobs created, and 182 trained individuals across 15 distressed and 4 transitional counties.

SCRC Investment **\$2,428,760**

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$3,860,439
Funds From Private Investment	\$947,078
Households Impacted	21,933
Businesses Supported	599
Jobs Created	550



City of Abbeville: Harry's Plaza Redevelopment Project

The City of Abbeville will receive \$350,000 in funding to address pressing issues of housing shortage, low-median household income, and outdated infrastructure through the redevelopment of Harry's Plaza. The project focuses on downtown revitalization and enhancing the Historic Downtown District's tourism appeal. This initiative aims to create jobs, increase visitors, and improve local infrastructure, ultimately contributing to the city's growth and economic development.

Open Space Institute Land Trust Inc.: The Black River Initiative

The Open Space Institute Land Trust Inc. will receive \$500,000 to support trail building for the Inaugural Black River State Park (RMS-South) project. This initiative will enhance access to outdoor recreation and foster economic revitalization in Williamsburg County. The project will create approximately 3,710 linear feet of trail, featuring boardwalks, bridges, and overland paths, to provide inclusive access to the natural beauty of the Black River.

City of Myrtle Beach: Zoning Rewrite

The City of Myrtle Beach will receive \$150,000 to address deficiencies in its zoning ordinances, particularly regarding workforce housing. This project aims to update regulations to meet the evolving needs of its growing population, supporting accessible housing for essential workers.

Lowcountry Council of Governments: Varnville Gin Feasibility Study

The Lowcountry Council of Governments will receive \$93,600 to support reviewing the feasibility of revitalization for the historic Gin building in Varnville. The project aims to create a hub for economic and educational initiatives, including STEAM-focused learning, career training, and small business incubation, to stimulate local economic growth and community development.

SEID Grant Program Investments in South Carolina

Projects

Continued

Horry-Georgetown Technical College: HGTC Marine Technology Center

Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) was awarded \$200,000 to establish a Marine Technology Center on the HGTC Georgetown Campus. The center will offer programs in Boat Building Technology and Outboard Marine Technology, addressing workforce shortages in the boating industry and enhancing economic resilience in the region.

City of Orangeburg: Gateway to Orangeburg

The City of Orangeburg will receive \$350,000 to revitalize a parcel of land into a safe and inviting outdoor space. The project includes amenities such as a walking trail and a small amphitheater, aiming to enhance community well-being, promote sustainability, and stimulate local economic opportunities.

City of Dillon: Community Pavilion/Festival Market

The City of Dillon will receive \$200,000 to construct the Dillon Festival Market, a space for local entrepreneurs to sell goods and services. This project aims to revitalize the downtown area, provide access to fresh food, and enhance community gathering spaces, thereby boosting the local economy.

City of Johnsonville: Fire Hydrant Improvements

The City of Johnsonville will receive \$81,000 to install eight new fire hydrants, addressing critical issues in fire flow protection and water quality. This initiative aims to enhance firefighting capabilities and improve water quality for residents.



Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments: Town of Lynchburg Water System

The Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments was awarded \$261,018 to extend water service to areas south of Highway 76 in Lynchburg. This project addresses water outages and poor quality, facilitating future growth and economic development in the town.

Lowcountry Council of Governments: Town of Brunson Transit Shelter

The Lowcountry Council of Governments will receive \$62,892 to enhance transportation access in the Town of Brunson. The project involves installing a prefabricated transit shelter equipped with solar power, heating units, USB charging ports, and an emergency telephone, providing a safer waiting area for patrons and supporting local economic growth.

South Carolina Justice Navigators Network: Georgetown University Law Center

The South Carolina Justice Navigators Network was awarded \$75,000 to provide Legal First Aid training to community organizations supporting individuals facing housing instability, substance abuse, family crises, and other social issues. This initiative aims to enhance housing stability and access to healthcare for low-income residents in nine South Carolina counties.



SEID Grant Program Investments in Virginia

A **\$1.55 million** funding boost from SCRC spurred over **\$23 million** in additional investment, powering 4 projects that extended broadband, upgraded housing, and fortified small businesses, benefiting 67 households and 9 businesses, creating a projected 80 new jobs, and enhancing capacity in 5 distressed and 2 transitional counties.

SCRC Investment **\$1,552,459**

Additional Project Matching Funds	\$18,169,267
Funds From Private Investment	\$4,871,918
Households Impacted	67
Residents Impacted	480
Businesses Supported	9
Projected Jobs	80



Campbell County Economic Development Department: Seneca Commerce Park Grading JKL Sites Project

The Campbell County Economic Development Department will receive \$202,459 to address the challenges of attracting and retaining manufacturing businesses by enhancing the region's workforce and infrastructure. These improvements will enable Campbell County to attract new businesses and industries, support job creation, and stimulate the local economy.

Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (SCDHC): Emporia Rail Depot Townhomes

Supported by a \$350,000 SCRC award, the Emporia Rail Depot Townhomes project will address the urgent need for affordable housing in Emporia, where no new rental units have been built since 2003. The award will fund sidewalk and utility improvements as well as broadband expansion, underscoring the commitment to making Emporia a thriving and connected community. Located on a 4.4-acre cityowned lot in the Historic Downtown Belfield District, the development includes 52 affordable townhomes (42 three-bedroom units and 10 one-bedroom units, eight of which are handicap accessible), along with a 750-square-foot community center and a playground.

Industrial Development Authority of Brunswick County, Virginia: Brunswick County Produce Project

The Industrial Development Authority of Brunswick County will receive \$500,000 in funding for the Brunswick County Produce Processing (BCPP) Facility. The project aims to tackle the regional challenge of inadequate agricultural infrastructure that affects small and midsized farms. By providing essential processing and distribution facilities, the project will enable farmers to diversify

SEID Grant Program Investments in Virginia

Projects

Continued

and expand operations, enhancing profitability and growth. The BCPP will reduce the upfront costs of washing, cooling, packaging, and shipping produce, lowering market entry barriers and reducing risks to farmers.

The Maggie Walker Community Land Trust: Oak Grove Resilience -Building a Brighter Future Together

The Oak Grove Townhomes project, led by the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust (MWCLT) in partnership with Lynx Ventures, aims to address Richmond's severe affordable housing shortage by constructing 15 townhomes for low and moderate-income families. The funding will be used for the planning and construction of roads, traffic signage, sewer system implementation, and utilities.





Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program supports projects that improve and advance regional food systems and childcare services in Upson and Dougherty counties in Georgia



Goals

Improve food systems

- Reduce food insecurity
- Increase access to local foods
- Expand participation in food assistance programs
- Increase community-based food availability
- Improve health outcomes related to food security

Improve childcare systems

- Increase access to childcare services.
- Increase options for childcare services
- Lower the monthly costs for childcare services



Projects

Upson County

- The **Thomaston Downtown Farmer's Market** will receive \$900.000 to transform a vacant lot into a farmer's market hub with vendor space, public amenities, and streetscape improvements to boost local food access.
- to improve community health.

Dougherty County

- opportunities for agricultural businesses.
- **Project Ignite STEM** will receive \$400,000 to provide affordable childcare, STEM education, and after-school programs to improve literacy, math skills, and career readiness in Albany, GA.
- a commercial kitchen, providing students and families with nutrition education and workforce training in agribusiness.
- homeless children.

"The CANS Grant Program reflects our commitment to bridging resource gaps and creating lasting economic impact in distressed Georgia communities," said Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed, SCRC Federal Co-Chair. "We're focused on projects that directly address food insecurity, expand childcare access, and build resilient local economies."

• Alo Farms in Thomaston will receive \$1,460,000 to launch Roots to Rise, a hydroponic farm and community garden, integrating food security with "Food as Medicine" programs

• The **Mt. Zion Baptist Church Community** will receive \$300,000 to expand a food pantry and community outreach center to serve low-income families in food-insecure areas.

• The **Southwest Georgia Pecan Processing Project** will receive \$2,000,000 to develop a pecan processing facility, supporting small farmers, creating jobs, and expanding market

• The Commodore Convers College & Career Academy will receive \$500,000 to construct

• The **Oasis Project** will receive \$940,000 to establish three food distribution hubs with commercial kitchens and mobile food services to serve low-income families, seniors, and

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS Built for scale, Driven by results.

SCRC forms strategic alliances that strengthen local economies and deliver measurable outcomes in rural communities. Two key initiatives—the Crescent Care J-1 Visa Waiver Program and the Inaugural HBCU Tech Summit—demonstrate an approach that unites federal agencies, educational institutions, and private-sector leaders for lasting impact.

Scaling Partnerships for Economic Growth

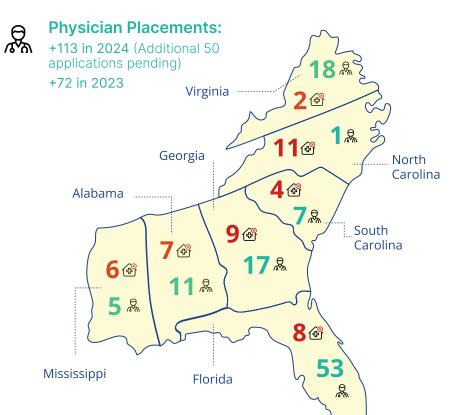
These initiatives illustrate a results-driven model that boosts healthcare capacity, amplifies educational opportunities, and enhances technological innovation. They foster an environment where community well-being and economic resilience flourish throughout the Southeast.



Crescent Care Collaborative – J-1 Visa Waiver Program

A partnership with the U.S. Department of State addresses critical healthcare gaps caused by 47 rural hospital closures since 2022. More than 113 physicians were placed in medically underserved areas in 2024, with over 50 additional applications pending. This effort expands access to essential services, reduces travel distances for patients, and lowers healthcare costs in distressed communities.

Image: Weight of the second second



Inaugural HBCU Tech Summit

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission is home to 38 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). SCRC Federal Co-Chair Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed partnered with Congressman Ro Khanna (CA-17) to co-host a gathering of prominent global technology leaders who shared insight and perspectives about career opportunities and the future of technology during the inaugural HBCU Tech Summit held at Claflin University.

Claflin University President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack, Rep. Khanna and Federal Co-chair Reed welcomed over 200 guests from across the country, including Congressmen James Clyburn (SC-6) and Jonathan Jackson (IL-1), several of the HBCU presidents, elected officials, students, state and local leaders, and non-profit organizations in the region.

Rep. Khanna, whose district includes California's Silicon Valley, is no stranger to HBCUs in South Carolina. Claflin President Warmack, Benedict President Artis, South Carolina State President Conyers, and Allen President McNealey have had or currently have ongoing partnerships with leading tech companies. Students and graduates from the four institutions have secured jobs, internships, and more than \$3.5 million in scholarships.

The Tech Summit featured presentations by executives from many of the tech industry's iconic brands – Microsoft, Google Cloud, Google, Dell Technologies, OpenAI, TalentSprint, and Apple. They were joined by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC), the U.S. Small Business Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development.

Discussions highlighted new pathways for economic growth, giving students, university officials, policymakers and tech industry leaders the opportunity to share ideas and solutions to address job creation, workforce development and challenges in the region. Expanded infrastructure, stronger career pipelines, and deeper corporate partnerships emerged as clear solutions for bridging the digital divide and accelerating job creation.



ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Congressional Hearing



Advancing Economic Growth in the Southeast Crescent Region

On September 18, 2024, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, reinforcing the need for sustained federal investment in regional economic development. Representing the Commission, Federal Co-Chair Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed highlighted the importance of long-term, place-based strategies that drive economic mobility, strengthen infrastructure, and expand opportunity throughout the Southeast Crescent region.

At the hearing, Dr. Reed emphasized that SCRC serves 51 million people across 428 counties, making it the largest active Regional Commission. As the region faces evolving economic challenges, SCRC recognizes that investment alone is not enough—it must be strategic, data-driven, and responsive to community needs.

Throughout these past two years of operation, SCRC has continued to deepen its understanding of regional economic conditions through extensive stakeholder engagement. A seven-state survey and direct input from local leaders helped shape the SCRC Five-Year Strategic Plan, ensuring that state and federal priorities align with the realities of the communities it serves.

As Dr. Reed emphasized in her testimony, SCRC's mission is clear: to move counties upward—from distressed to transitional, and from transitional to attainment. This requires sustained investment in infrastructure, housing, workforce development, and healthcare areas that are foundational to economic resilience.



Economic Designation Methodology

Defining Economic Distress in the Southeast Crescent Region

In accordance with 40 U.S.C. § 15702, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) annually evaluates the economic status of counties within its jurisdiction to ensure targeted investments and resource allocation. This classification system allows SCRC to direct funding toward the most economically challenged areas, ensuring that support reaches communities with the greatest need for development and revitalization.



Economic Designation Categories

SCRC assigns counties and specific geographic areas into categories based on their levels of economic distress, unemployment, and income levels.

Distressed Counties

Counties with the most severe and persistent economic distress, characterized by high poverty, unemployment, or outmigration rates. These counties receive priority funding for economic recovery efforts.

Transitional Counties

Counties that remain economically challenged or have recently experienced economic downturns. These areas are targeted for economic revitalization and job creation initiatives.

Attainment Counties

Counties that do **not** meet the criteria for distressed or transitional classification. These counties demonstrate economic stability but may still require targeted support in specific sectors.

Isolated Areas of Distress – High-poverty, high-unemployment communities within attainment counties that face economic hardship despite being located in an otherwise stable county. These areas qualify for specific SCRC funding opportunities to address localized economic challenges.

Methodology: Measuring Economic Distress

SCRC uses an index-based county classification system to assess and monitor economic conditions across the region. This system uses a national economic ranking index, comparing each county's economic indicators against national averages.

Key Indicators SCRC evaluates counties based on a three-factor composite index:			
1 Three-Year Average Unemployment Rate – A measure of long-term labor	2 Per Capita Market Income – Reflects earnings and wealth distribution within	3 Poverty Rate – A critical indicator of financial hardship and access to	
market stability and economic opportunity	a county's population	economic resources	

Each county's economic performance across these three key indicators is ranked nationally. Higher index values indicate higher levels of distress, determining how counties and specific areas within them are classified for funding eligibility and priority investment.

ATTAINMENT COUNTIES Highest 25% of U.S. Counties

Ranked Index Values of U.S. Counties

Middle 50% of U.S. Counties

DISTRESSED COUNTIES

FY 2024 SCRC County and County Equivalents by Economic Designation

	167 SCRC FY24 Distressed Counties and County Equivalents	172 SCRC FY24 Transitional Counties and County Equivalents	89 SCI and
Alabama	(2) Covington and Geneva.	(10) Autauga, Coffee, Crenshaw, Dale, Henry, Houston, Lee, Mobile, Montgomery, and Pike.	(1) Baldwin.
Florida	(21) Bradford, Calhoun, Citrus, DeSoto, Dixie, Gadsen, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Holmes, Jackson, Lafayette, Liberty, Madison, Okeechobee, Putnam, Taylor, Union, and Washington.	(31) Alachua, Baker, Bay, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Columbia, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Miami-Dade, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Polk, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, and Volusia.	(15) Clay, Collier, Indian Riv Beach, Pinellas, Santa I and Walton.
Georgia	(73) Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Brantley, Brooks, Bulloch, Burke, Calhoun, Charlton, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crisp, Decatur, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Emanuel, Evans, Grady, Hancock, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Lanier, Laurens, Macon, McDuffie, Meriwether, Mitchell, Montgomery, Peach, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Screven, Seminole, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Tattnall, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Toombs, Treutlen, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Ware, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Wheeler, Wilcox, Wilkinson, and Worth.	(36) Butts, Camden, Candler, Chatham, Chattahoochee, Crawford, DeKalb, Echols, Glascock, Glynn, Henry, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Liberty, Lincoln, Long, Lowndes, Marion, McIntosh, Miller, Monroe, Muscogee, Newton, Oglethorpe, Pierce, Pulaski, Putnam, Rockdale, Schley, Thomas, Tift, Troup, Walton, and Wilkes.	(13) Bryan, Cobb, Columbia Harris, Lee, Morgan, Oc
Mississippi	(13) Clarke, Forrest, George, Greene, Jones, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Perry, Scott, Stone, and Wayne.	(5) Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, and Pearl River.	(0)

SCRC FY24 **Attainment Counties** and County Equivalents

River, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Palm ata Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Wakulla,

ibia, Coweta, Effingham, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, , Oconee, and Pike.

FY 2024 SCRC County and County Equivalents by <u>Economic Designation</u> (CONTINUED)

	167 SCRC FY24 Distressed Counties and County Equivalents	172 SCRC FY24 Transitional Counties and County Equivalents	89 SCRC and Co
North Carolina	(25) Anson, Bertie, Bladen, Caswell, Columbus, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Lenoir, Martin, Northampton, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Vance, Warren, Washington, and Wilson.	(32) Alamance, Beaufort, Brunswick, Chowan, Craven, Davidson, Duplin, Durham, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Granville, Guilford, Harnett, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Randolph, Rowan, Stanley, and Wayne.	(12) Cabarrus, Camden, Carte Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Oran
South Carolina	(18) Abbeville, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Fairfield, Hampton, Laurens, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg.	(17) Aiken, Berkeley, Calhoun, Darlington, Dorchester, Edgefield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Lancaster, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter.	(4) Beaufort, Charleston, Lexing
Virginia	(15) Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Colonial Heights City, Danville City, Dinwiddie, Emporia City, Greensville, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Petersburg City, Pittsylvania, Portsmouth City, Prince Edward, and Sussex.	(41) Accomack, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Campbell, Caroline, Charles City, Cumberland, Essex, Franklin City, Franklin, Greene, Halifax, Hampton City, Harrisonburg City, Hopewell City, King and Queen, Lancaster, Louisa, Lunenburg, Lynchburg City, Nelson, Newport News City, Norfolk City, Northampton, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince George, Richmond City, Richmond, Roanoke City, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Southampton, Staunton City, Surry, Warren, Waynesboro City, and Westmoreland.	(44) Albemarle, Alexandria City, Chesapeake City, Chesterfie Falls Church City, Fauquier, Gloucester, Goochland, Hat King George, King William Manassas Park City, Mathew Powhatan, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Suffor

SCRC FY24 **Attainment Counties** and County Equivalents

Carteret, Chatham, Currituck, Dare, Iredell, g, Orange, Union, and Wake.

n, Lexington, and York.

Albemarle, Alexandria City, Arlington, Bedford, Charlottesville City, Chesapeake City, Chesterfield, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax City, Fairfax, Falls Church City, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Frederick, Fredericksburg City, Gloucester, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, King George, King William, Loudoun, Madison, Manassas City, Manassas Park City, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Poquoson City, Powhatan, Prince William, Rappahannock, Roanoke, Salem City, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Suffolk City, Virginia Beach City, Williamsburg City, Winchester City, and York.

Isolated Areas of Distress Methodology

In accordance with 40 U.S.C. § 15702, the SCRC will designates as isolated areas of distress, areas located in counties designated as attainment counties that have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration.

Methodology

To be classified as an isolated area of distress, a census tract located within an attainment county must meet two of the three conditions below:

Census tracts at or above the U.S. median poverty rate of 12.6%

Census tracts with a Median Household Income below \$50,086

(less than 67% of the U.S. Median Household Income)



Census tracts designated as a **Historically** Disadvantaged Community.

Data used in the methodology are sourced from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates and the U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) Historically Disadvantaged Communities classification that utilizes principles of the Justice40 Initiative.



level of disadvantage of communities:

Transportation Access

Communities with longer, costlier and poor walkability. Higher transp

Health Disadvantage

Communities with higher rates of lack of health insurance. Older pop

Environmental Disadv

Areas with high air pollution, older hou traffic congestion. Increased risk for air

Economic Disadvantag

Populations facing poverty, unemp homeownership, and high housing educational attainment.

Resilience Disadvanta

Communities at greater risk from r hurricanes, wildfires, and extreme

Equity Disadvantage

Areas with high populations of nor isolation, limiting access to resource

US DOT used the six categories below to assess the overall

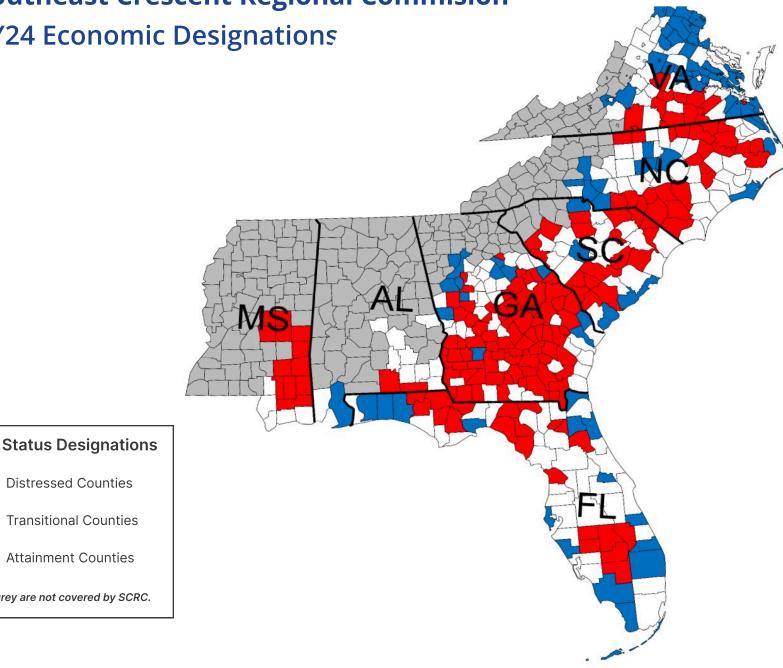
s Disadvantage commutes, limited vehicle access, portation costs relative to income.	
adverse health outcomes, disability, and pulations and higher disability rates.	
/antage using with lead-based paint, and proximity to ir toxins and respiratory issues.	
ge ployment, income inequality, low g costs relative to income. Lower	I
i ge natural disasters, including flooding, e weather events.	
n-English speakers or those in linguistic ces and opportunities.	



Southeast Crescent Regional Commision FY24 Economic Designations

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.





Economic Status Designations

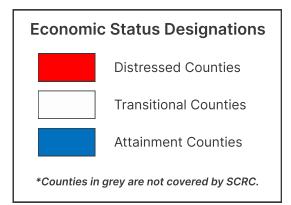


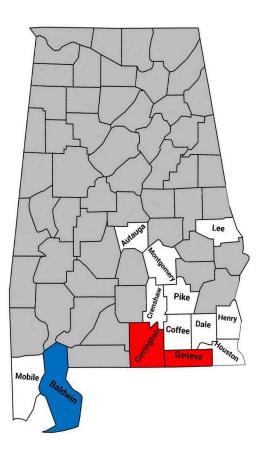
Transitional Counties Attainment Counties

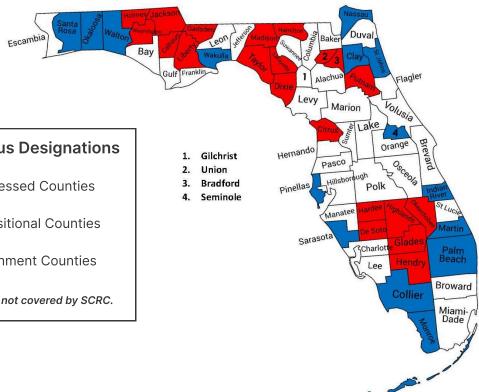
*Counties in grey are not covered by SCRC.

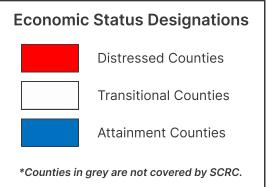
FY24 Economic Status Designations

Alabama







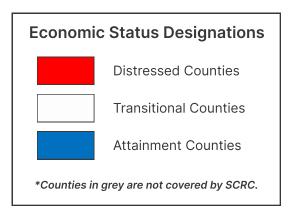




Florida

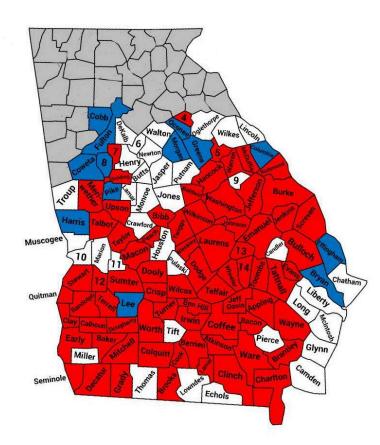
FY24 Economic Status Designations

Georgia

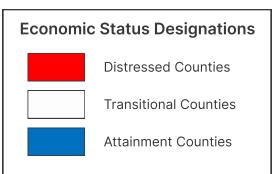


4. Clarke	8. Fayette
5. Taliaferro	9. Glascock
6. Rockdale	10. Chattahoochee
7. Clayton	11. Schley
	12. Webster
	13. Treutlen

14. Montgomery



Mississippi



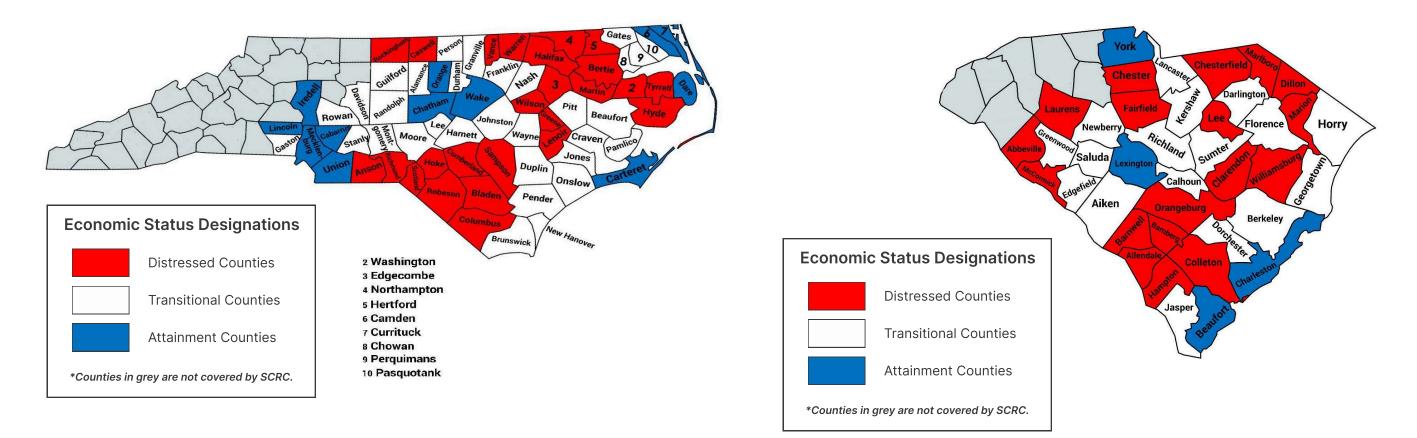
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FY24 Economic Status Designations

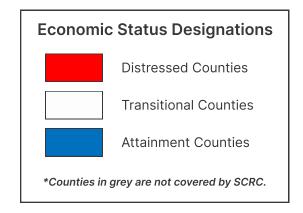
North Carolina



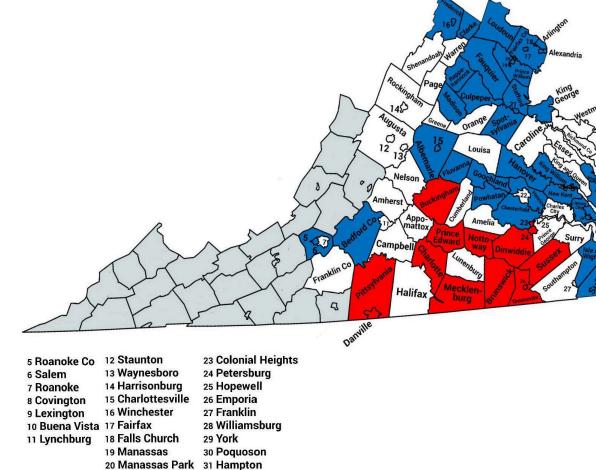


South Carolina

FY24 Economic Status Designations



Virginia



21 Fredericksburg 32 Newport News

33 Portsmouth

22 Richmond



