

Harry M. Lightsey III
Chairman



Bonnie Ammons
Executive Director

South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

FACT SHEET

S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority

Creating water solutions. Improving communities statewide.

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About the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority

The S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) is a state agency that was established in 2012 to assist communities with financing for qualified infrastructure projects for water and wastewater systems as well as stormwater drainage facilities. Although RIA initially offered grants for projects in rural and distressed counties, the programs were expanded to make grant and loan assistance available statewide.

Purpose

The S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) collaborates with communities statewide by making critical investments in drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater infrastructure, ensuring that communities are able to strengthen the utilities that support public health, protect the environment and promote economic opportunities across the state.

The success of communities is vitally important to quality of life in South Carolina. One way to build stronger communities is to invest in infrastructure that is capable of supporting homes, schools and businesses. Such investments will help maintain the quality of life for residents and open the door to new economic opportunities. By providing grant and loan financing options, as well as training, technical assistance and funding coordination, RIA efforts are designed to build local capacity and position communities for success.

Agency Leadership

Bonnie Ammons, Executive Director

S.C. Secretary of Commerce, Harry M. Lightsey III, RIA Board Chairman

Agency Structure

RIA is governed by a seven-member board of directors, including the S.C. Secretary of Commerce, who serves as chairman. The board develops an annual grant program strategy that guides the grant programs and funding to be made available and the process for selecting qualified projects to receive grant assistance from the RIA. The executive director reports to the board and manages a team of qualified professionals, including staff for grant and loan administration.

View the agency's full board and staff here: <https://ria.sc.gov/about/our-team/>

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Core Services

In addition to a variety of initiatives, RIA provides two ways to finance infrastructure improvements for water and wastewater systems as well as stormwater drainage facilities in South Carolina: grants and loan financing.

Entities Served

Local governments, special purpose and public service districts as well as public works commissions may apply for grant or loan funding. Local governments may also apply for grant funding on behalf of not-for-profit water and sewer companies that serve the local government. For-profit water and sewer utilities are not eligible for RIA grant or loan funding.

Current Focus

While RIA continues to further its current initiatives and provide ongoing services, a primary area of focus for the agency in fiscal year 2022-2023 is the administration of the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP). SCIIP is a major one-time initiative to improve water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure throughout the state using \$1.486 billion in federal funds allocated by the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. SCIIP offers a unique opportunity to make long-term capital improvements that will strengthen critical services to residents and businesses across the state, create more resilient communities and build the capacity to support future opportunities for growth and economic development.

Recent Initiatives

Prior to administering the one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding in fiscal year 2022-2023 via its South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP), RIA had directed more than \$953 million in grants (2013-2022) and loans (2016-2022) to improve facilities and services across South Carolina for safe drinking water, sanitary sewer and storm resilience projects.

In 2021-2022, RIA undertook several new initiatives, including the following:

- Continued its focus on utility viability, planning and technical assistance for small and rural utilities, with an emphasis on regional solutions.
- Worked with other infrastructure funders to coordinate funding opportunities and strengthen processes to alleviate funding gaps.
- Coordinated with the S.C. Department of Commerce to make infrastructure investments in areas that will or have the potential to create economic impact.

Agency Stats for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

- 81 projects supported water, sewer and storm drainage upgrades.
- \$111 million in grants and loans were disbursed.
- 31 counties benefited from grants and loans.
- 131,000 customers are slated to benefit, a record high for grants.

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- 596 jobs created via RIA's economic infrastructure grants, which create opportunities for companies to commit to new job creation and capital investment.
- 113 grant applications received, the most in a single year.
- \$519 million in capital investments.

Mailing Address

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