Bridging the Gap

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Contents

Fiscal Year 2024 in Figures

132
GRANT APPLICATIONS

19
LOAN APPLICATIONS

109
PROJECTS FUNDED

43
COUNTIES IMPACTED

60%
OF GRANT FUNDS TO RURAL & DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

$270M
GRANTS AND LOANS

$91M
LEVERAGED BY GRANTS

> *The transformative impact of SCIIP and state grant projects in the Upstate (and statewide) is a testament to RIA's commitment to rural utilities. RIA staff sets the bar for efficiency and clarity among funding partners.*
>
> — PROJECT ENGINEER
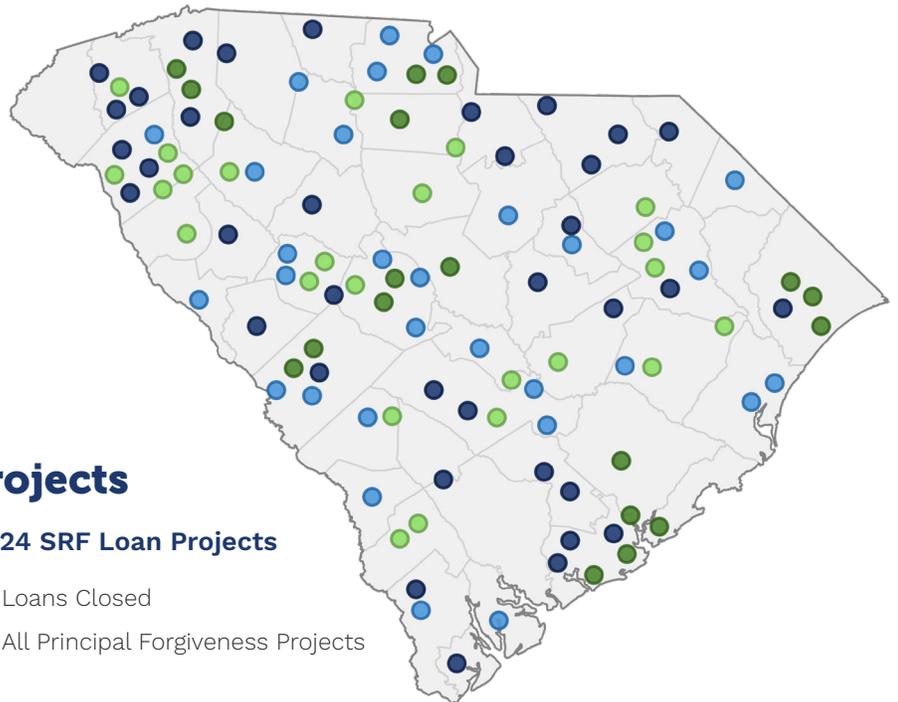
FY24 Grant & Loan Projects

FY24 Grants: Round 1 and 2

● Round 1 Grantees
● Round 2 Grantees

FY24 SRF Loan Projects

● Loans Closed
● All Principal Forgiveness Projects

Bridging the Gaps

Water infrastructure is essential to the quality of life and economic success of our state. Yet, studies have shown that infrastructure needs far outweigh the resources available to modernize and improve this key component. The South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) was created by the General Assembly to address such funding shortfalls. Using targeted investments and strong partnerships, the agency supports communities in protecting public health and the environment, strengthening local sustainability and building capacity for economic opportunities.

Bonnie Ammons

Utilizing state appropriations, $44 million in grants was invested in 66 local water, wastewater and stormwater projects this year. For every $1 of RIA funding, $2 of local and other resources was committed for construction and other project costs, maximizing the impact of state funding. For larger projects, the State Revolving Fund loan programs provided more than $200 million in low-cost loans for 19 projects. This record-breaking year brings total loan financing to over $1 billion since the program was moved to RIA in FY16.

The agency has dedicated additional staff resources to continue our commitment to customer service and accountability while managing 380 construction and planning projects. Many of these projects were funded by the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program. The funds have all been obligated ahead of the federal deadline, and projects are underway. RIA has worked with other state and federal agencies to expedite permitting and has provided training and tools to facilitate approval of construction and other project contracts.

Providing technical assistance and training, particularly for small and disadvantaged communities, builds local capacity to complete these critical infrastructure projects and addresses long-term viability concerns. This year, RIA has partnered with state and non-profit water technical assistance providers to create the South Carolina Viability Assistance Network. This group meets regularly to identify gaps in services and find workable solutions, including regional partnerships.

RIA plays a critical role in helping communities bridge the infrastructure gap between where they are and where they want to be. Through strategic investments in water, sewer and storm drainage infrastructure, RIA not only addresses critical needs that require immediate attention but also builds the capacity to create economic prosperity and transformational impact in the future.

Bonnie Ammons

State Grant Programs

RIA makes competitive grant awards twice a year from its state allocations for water, wastewater and stormwater projects through three programs of assistance: Basic Infrastructure, Economic Infrastructure and Infrastructure Planning. Local governments, special purpose and public service districts or public works commissions are eligible to apply.

RIA funds are used for construction costs while grantees pay for all non-construction costs. Additionally, projects located in Tier I and II counties, as designated by the South Carolina Department of Revenue, also provide 25% of the project construction costs. This contribution of other funds allows each project to have greater impact.

Basic Infrastructure

The **Basic Infrastructure** program is designed to assist communities in bringing systems into compliance with environmental quality standards, protecting public health from environmental concerns, or improving the capacity and viability of existing infrastructure. Projects are considered based on the relative needs and impacts on the program's priorities.

Basic Infrastructure Priorities:

1. Regional solutions
2. Regulatory issues affecting water quality, public health and the environment
3. Other health and environmental issues, including storm protection
4. Updating aging infrastructure to ensure quality services

Economic Infrastructure

The **Economic Infrastructure** program is designed to help build local infrastructure capacity to support economic development activities that will lead to the creation or retention of jobs and boost opportunities for economic impact within communities.

Economic Infrastructure Priorities:

1. Job creation and private investment
2. Capacity to serve existing and new businesses
3. Publicly owned industrial sites
4. Other publicly owned properties

Infrastructure Planning

The **Infrastructure Planning** program is designed to support planning for long-term viability which often impacts small and disadvantaged communities.

Infrastructure Planning Priorities:

1. Study of regional solutions
2. Assessment of infrastructure conditions and compliance issues
3. Evaluation of technical, operational and financial capacity

Project management and accountability are important components of RIA's responsibilities. Once grant awards are made, RIA assigns a grant manager to work with each grantee, providing technical assistance and helping solve problems. RIA grant staff conduct quarterly project status reviews to ensure projects are carried out on schedule, in budget and in compliance with program requirements.

Regional Wastewater Solution

Town of Carlisle

Basic Infrastructure Grant

The Town of Carlisle is a low-income community that provides water and wastewater services to fewer than 200 residences and businesses. The town faces significant challenges in trying to operate and maintain the utility system. It had always sent wastewater to a treatment plant owned and operated by a local industry. When the industrial plant was sold to a new company that no longer intended to treat wastewater, the town needed to find a new treatment solution very quickly. With collaboration and funding from Union County and several state agencies, an agreement was reached to construct a line to send Carlisle's wastewater to the nearby City of Union, which had long provided informal assistance with water and wastewater issues. The City of Union carried out the construction and now owns and operates the line and related pump station. As a condition of RIA's grant, the town participated in a comprehensive study of its water and wastewater systems, including identification of other possible regional solutions.

$2 Million
AWARDED

$5.7 Million
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

192
CUSTOMERS SERVED

State Revolving Fund
Community Development Block Grant
OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

FY24 Grant Types by Dollars Awarded

Basic Infrastructure **78%** ●

Economic Infrastructure **13%** ●

Infrastructure Planning **9%** ●

State Grants Awarded in FY24

This year, **132 application requests** for water, wastewater and stormwater projects were considered by RIA's Board of Directors. Funding was approved for **66 projects** and **60% of the funds** went to projects in economically disadvantaged areas.

$44,218,841
AWARDED

Grant Priorities by Dollars Awarded

31%
Aging Infrastructure

26%
Health & Environmental Issues

6%
Regional Partnerships

9%
Planning

28%
Capacity & Economic Development
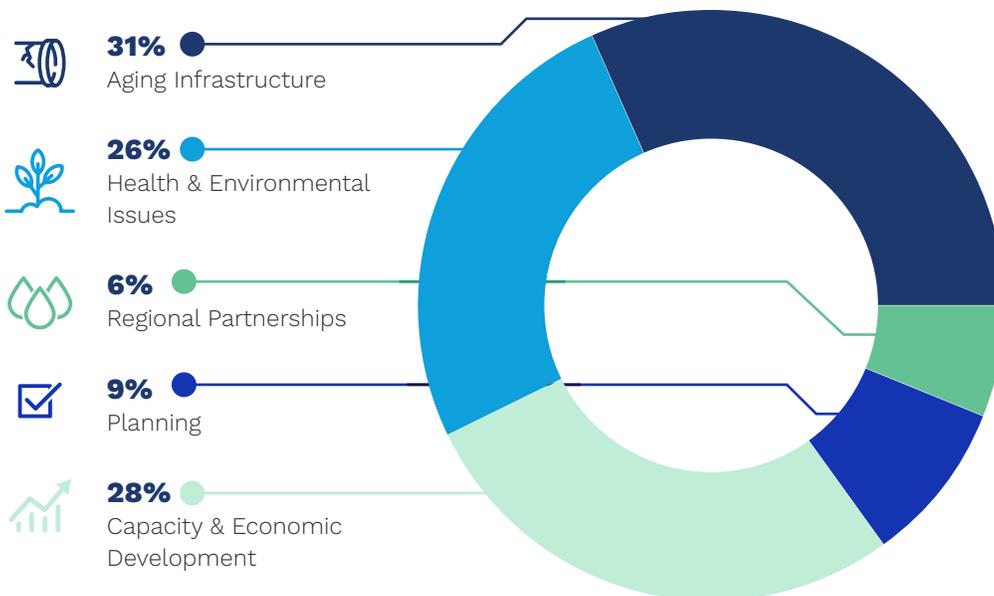
132
APPLICATION REQUESTS CONSIDERED

66
PROJECTS

60%
OF FUNDS TO DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Grant Recipients

Grantee	Award
Allendale County	$225,000
Batesburg-Leesville, Town of	$1,000,000
Beaufort County	$187,500
Beech Island Rural Community Water and Sewer District	$1,000,000
Bennettsville, City of	$150,000
Big Creek Water and Sewage District	$1,000,000
Bishopville, City of	$250,000
Bishopville, City of	$1,000,000
Broad Creek Public Service District	$250,000
Broadway Water and Sewerage District	$525,275
Calhoun County	$450,000
Camden, City of	$561,000
Cayce, City of	$1,000,000
Central, Town of	$1,000,000
Charleston Water System	$250,000
Chesterfield County/Chesterfield County Rural Water Company	$720,185
Chesterfield, Town of	$907,021
Dillon County/Trico Water Company	$1,000,000
Easley Combined Utilities	$600,000
Edgefield County Water & Sewer Authority	$1,000,000
Elko, Town of	$969,281
Florence, City of	$1,000,000
Gaffney, City of	$250,000
Gaston Rural Community Water District	$273,000
Greeleyville, Town of	$1,000,000
Greenville, City of	$1,000,000
Greenwood, City of	$250,000
Hammond Water District	$850,558
Holly Hill, Town of	$999,970
Homeland Park Water and Sewer District	$936,704
Horry County/Bucksport Water System	$1,000,000
Kershaw, Town of	$1,000,000
Lake City, City of	$1,000,000
Lancaster, City of	$1,000,000
Laurens County Water & Sewer Commission	$128,000
Lexington County	$390,000
Lodge, Town of	$1,000,000

Grantee	Award
McCormick County	$237,800
Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict	$1,000,000
New Ellenton Commission of Public Works	$568,070
New Ellenton, City of	$1,000,000
Newberry County Water and Sewer Authority	$771,375
North Charleston, City of	$102,750
North Charleston, City of	$654,939
Orangeburg County	$250,000
Orangeburg, City of	$1,000,000
Pacolet, Town of	$28,250
Pageland, Town of	$250,000
Pamplico, Town of	$289,799
Pawleys Island, Town of	$150,000
Pickens County/Dacusville-Cedar Rock Water Company	$1,000,000
Port Royal, Town of	$250,000
Ravenel, Town of	$1,000,000
Ridgeland, Town of	$1,000,000
Rural Community Water District of Georgetown County	$250,000
Saluda County	$325,000
Saluda County Water and Sewer Authority	$1,000,000
Santee, Town of	$479,864
Seabrook Island Utility Commission	$1,000,000
Startex-Jackson-Wellford-Duncan Water District	$1,000,000
Sumter, City of	$250,000
Tega Cay, City of	$1,000,000
Turbeville, Town of/Barrineau Public Utilities Company	$1,000,000
Union County/Santuck Hebron Water Company	$1,000,000
York County	$1,000,000
York, City of	$187,500
66 projects	**$44,168,841**
Adjustment to Existing Grant	
Liberty, City of	$50,000
Total Awarded	**$44,218,841**

South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program

SCIIP

South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program

The General Assembly approved $1.4 billion of the American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated to the state for infrastructure investments in water, wastewater and stormwater projects designed to have transformational impacts. This "once-in-a-generation" infusion of federal funds was used to create the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP). In FY23, RIA awarded $1.469 billion to 219 SCIIP projects across the state, meeting the federal deadline for obligation of 100% of the funds and making it the largest grant program the agency has ever administered. These projects are addressing unique needs identified by communities in every county. This year, all 219 projects have fulfilled the initial grant conditions, and most are nearing completion of the design phase or moving into construction. RIA staff work closely with each grantee to keep projects on track to meet the federal expenditure deadline in December 2026.

SCIIP PROGRESS IN FY24

219
PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

109
FINAL CONTRACTS REVIEWED

123
PAYMENTS PROCESSED

ALMOST
$50M
DISBURSED

COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS

Up to $10 million for priority investments in water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure for large and small communities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Up to $50 million for projects designated by the South Carolina Secretary of Commerce as significant to economic development.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS GRANTS

Up to $10 million for projects that promote long-term viability through partnerships.

VIABILITY PLANNING GRANTS

Up to $1 million for projects that help very small systems plan for future investments.

Pendleton-Clemson Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

Town of Pendleton

SCIIP Community Impact Grant

The Town of Pendleton owns and operates the Pendleton-Clemson Wastewater Treatment Plant and shares capacity with the City of Clemson and Anderson County. These entities are pursuing a regional solution to address sewer improvement and expansion needs. Unprecedented recent growth has increased the demand for sewer treatment and the plant has surpassed its maximum capacity of 2 million gallons per day (MGD). To accommodate current needs as well as the robust development in the surrounding area, the Town of Pendleton developed a partnership agreement with the adjacent jurisdictions of the City of Clemson and Anderson County. This partnership involves a cost sharing approach to expand the plant's capacity from 2 MGD to 5 MGD. The entire project is anticipated to cost about $61 million and will be completed by summer 2026.

$10 Million
TOTAL AWARDED

$61 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

20,000
CUSTOMERS SERVED

Regional Connection to Finished Water Supply

Town of Batesburg-Leesville

SCIIP Regional Solutions Grant

The Town of Batesburg-Leesville is using SCIIP funds to build over five miles of water main and a booster pump station that connects to Lexington County's Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission. This collaboration is designed to provide a new and more reliable source of water for the town to accommodate both current and future needs. It will address long-standing issues with the Town's water supply and storage, which were cited by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services. Construction kicked off in early 2024 and is expected to continue for approximately two years. The project is under budget and on track for timely completion.

$10 Million
TOTAL AWARDED

$18 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

2,957
CUSTOMERS SERVED

State Revolving Fund
OTHER FUNDING SOURCE

Bull Creek Surface Water Treatment Plant Expansion

Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority

SCIIP Community Impact Grant

The Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority (GSWSA) provides water and sewer services to portions of Horry and Marion counties. GSWSA owns and operates two Surface Water Treatment Plants (SWTPs) in Horry County: Bull Creek SWTP and Myrtle Beach SWTP. Water demand has increased dramatically in the past decade, and the Bull Creek SWTP is rapidly approaching its current capacity of 45 million gallons per day (MGD). The GSWSA service area has seen tremendous growth over its recent history and that is expected to continue in the future, increasing pressure on the utility's treatment plants and distribution system. This is compounded by large swings in demand due to tourism and farming irrigation in the summer. SCIIP funded a grant to assist with the expansion of the Bull Creek SWTP from 45 MGD to 60 MGD, which will allow GSWSA to meet community needs now and in the future. The project is currently in progress and will also include modifications to the existing raw water intake. The entire project is expected to cost around $45 million and be completed by March 2026.

$10 Million
TOTAL AWARDED

$45 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

115,000
CUSTOMERS SERVED

State Revolving Fund
OTHER FUNDING SOURCE

King Street Pump Station

City of Charleston

SCIIP Community Impact Grant

The SCIIP Community Impact project involves constructing a stormwater storage feature, pump station, outfall pipe system, and backup generator to mitigate chronic flooding risks at the intersection of King and Huger Streets in downtown Charleston. This intersection is ranked as one of the most flood-prone areas in Charleston County according to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Currently, it floods during 1-year storm events and is closed on average for five days each year. Upon completion, the intersection will remain passable during 25-year storm events, with standing water duration reduced significantly.

$10 Million
TOTAL AWARDED

$20 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

2,070
CUSTOMERS SERVED

Water and Sewer Viability Planning

Town of Ware Shoals

SCIIP Viability Planning Grant

The Town of Ware Shoals provides water and sewer service to a disadvantaged area. The infrastructure was first installed by a textile mill in the 1940s to serve the surrounding villages. The system has expanded since then, and the town now provides wastewater treatment to several other nearby utilities. However, it does not have access to many basic tools needed to successfully maintain and operate the system, including detailed maps. The SCIIP project will assess and map the current infrastructure and create an Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan. These documents will assist the town in making the informed decisions necessary to maintain a viable utility and continue to reliably provide critical services to its customers. The project kicked off in early 2024 and is on schedule to be completed by spring 2025.

$600K
TOTAL AWARDED

1,510
CUSTOMERS SERVED

Live Oak Industrial Park Water Service Improvements

City of Sumter

SCIIP Economic Development Grant

This water infrastructure project was designated by the South Carolina Department of Commerce as significant to economic development efforts. SCIIP funds will be used to improve the City of Sumter's capacity to meet increased water needs for commercial and industrial customers located in the Live Oak Industrial Park and ensure quality water services for the 4,700 nearby residences. Several of the industrial customers consume large amounts of water and operate around the clock. In the event of an unexpected water plant issue, the existing storage can be quickly drained, leaving both commercial and residential customers without reliable water service. Improvements will include construction of a 1 million gallon elevated water tank, installation of a new ground water well, and extension of a 16-inch raw water line to ensure uninterrupted service to existing industries. Construction of the water tank began in spring 2024 and design is nearly complete on the additional portions of the project.

$11.4 Million
TOTAL AWARDED

$12.6 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

4,940
CUSTOMERS SERVED

Loan Programs

Low cost loans for water, wastewater and stormwater projects are provided through the State Revolving Funds (SRF) loan programs. Program income from loan repayments and fees is supplemented by annual federal funds provided through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which requires the state to provide a 20% match. RIA jointly administers these programs with the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (DES). RIA staff manage all financial aspects, including setting loan policies, conducting credit reviews, issuing loan agreements and handling payments. DES is responsible for prioritizing and managing projects as well as ensuring compliance with EPA requirements.

$203 Million
LOANS CLOSED

2.1%
STANDARD INTEREST RATE

$120 Million
DISBURSED

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, was approved in FY22. This federal legislation provided resources for various types of infrastructure investments, and the SRF programs have received additional funding for water infrastructure projects. This funding coupled with low interest rates have resulted in a record year of loan closings, the highest in the program's history. These projects are designed to modernize and improve services while helping to keep costs lower for customers.

SOUTH CAROLINA
SRF
STATE REVOLVING FUND

Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities

Much of the increased federal funding available through the SRF program is dedicated to addressing lead service lines and emerging contaminants in drinking water, such as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). A portion of the EPA funding is set aside for all principal forgiveness (APF) loans, which do not have to be repaid if certain conditions are met. These loans primarily benefit small and disadvantaged communities. In FY24, the SRF programs committed over **$22.7 million** in APF loan funds.

Recipient	Amount
Aiken, City of	$27,000,000
Aiken, City of	$3,000,000
Berkeley County	$2,500,000
Chester Metropolitan District	$9,000,000
East Richland Public Service District	$5,394,559
Fountain Inn, City of	$1,337,883
Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority	$24,612,000
Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority	$8,500,000
Greenville Water	$30,000,000
James Island Public Service District	$4,485,303
James Island Public Service District	$1,076,000
Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission	$12,541,962
Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission	$2,594,327
Mount Pleasant Waterworks	$10,246,087
Myrtle Beach, City of	$612,600
Renewable Water Resources	$30,576,358
Rock Hill, City of	$10,555,846
Rock Hill, City of	$7,438,798
Seabrook Island, Town of	$12,094,870
Total: 19 Projects	**$203,566,593**

CASE STUDY

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

Town of Summerville

State Revolving Funds Loan

In 2023, the Town of Summerville Commissioners of Public Works received a clean water SRF loan and an RIA state grant to improve its biosolids dewatering process. The project allows the utility to comply with current and anticipated biosolid restrictions and regulations and addresses increasing operational cost associated with the sludge disposal process. Construction includes much needed upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant's three existing digesters and the installation of both a new belt press and three new solar dryers to provide enhanced dewatering capabilities. The project will reduce the volume of material sent to the landfill. The utility contributed $5 million toward the project, which is nearing completion. The wastewater treatment plant handles approximately 6 million gallons of wastewater per day.

$14 Million
SRF LOAN AMOUNT

$19.7 Million
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

20,655
CUSTOMERS SERVED

RIA State Grant
OTHER FUNDING SOURCE

Viability Assistance
and Agency Partnerships

Bridging Gaps to Enhance Customer Service

In the past year, RIA continued providing a high level of customer assistance and fostering collaboration among multiple agencies to carry out infrastructure improvements across the state. Our commitment to enhancing customer service has been reflected in efforts to connect with customers and build strong partnerships to deliver targeted assistance.

KEY INITIATIVES

Utilizing technology to inform

Streamlining procedures

Proactive outreach

Comprehensive training

Enhanced services through partnerships

Customer Outreach

RIA launched and sustained several outreach initiatives including posting online instructional videos covering various grant management topics, which grantees can access at their convenience. RIA conducted multiple webinars throughout the year, attracting a total of 616 participants for both the grant and loan programs. In addition, grant staff engaged with over 200 individuals to discuss potential grant projects and provide application guidance. Finally, staff attended or presented program information at several conferences and local or regional meetings for water and wastewater professionals. These efforts significantly improved customers' awareness of RIA programs and requirements, thereby heightening the agency's visibility across the industry.

Strength in Partnerships

Viability Assistance Network

As recommended in the South Carolina Water Utility Assessment & Viability Strategy (2022), a South Carolina Viability Assistance Network (VAN) was established this year. The VAN comprises government agencies and non-profit organizations that provide technical assistance to drinking water and wastewater utilities. The VAN facilitates the exchange of ideas and coordinates access to the assistance utilities need to attain or maintain viability. To date, four VAN meetings have been held, and the group has published a technical assistance resources summary that can be found on the RIA website at ria.sc.gov/utility-viability/technical-assistance.

Infrastructure Funders Coordinating Committee

RIA continues its bimonthly meetings with the Infrastructure Funders Coordinating Committee (IFCC). The IFCC, made up of public infrastructure funding agencies, convenes to exchange information about funding activities, address challenges and identify solutions to infrastructure needs. A resource summary can be found on the RIA website at ria.sc.gov/resources/funding-partners.

Permitting Partners

RIA coordinated with several agencies - the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Carolina Department of Environmental Service's Bureaus of Water and Coastal Management - to ensure that permit applications for the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program are reviewed and permitted in a timely manner to keep projects on track to meet the federal deadlines.

South Carolina Department of Commerce

RIA partners with S.C. Commerce to identify and coordinate opportunities to fund or assist with infrastructure projects that support economic development. As a small and mission-focused agency, RIA also contracts with S.C. Commerce to provide some administrative support services.

Customer Feedback

RIA actively seeks feedback to continually improve its services. Customers receive surveys after attending agency training sessions, and these responses are used to update and refine content and delivery. At this year's South Carolina Environmental Conference, RIA participated in a session designed to gather input and suggestions about agency programs and ways to enhance services.

Most importantly, RIA grant managers communicate regularly with customers. These informal interactions provide the real-time input needed to solve problems and tailor services to individual communities.

Funding Impacts

GRANTS (FY13-24)

770
GRANTS

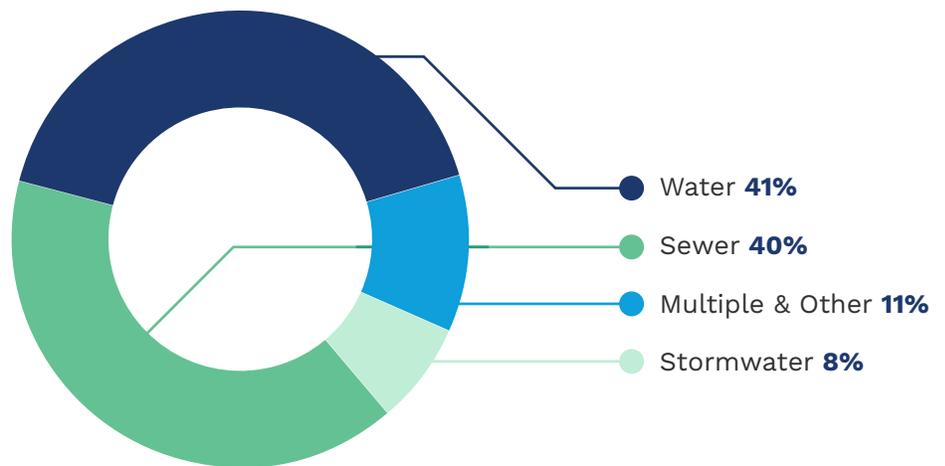## $1.7 Billion
AWARDED

LOANS (FY16-24)

140
LOANS

Over $1 Billion
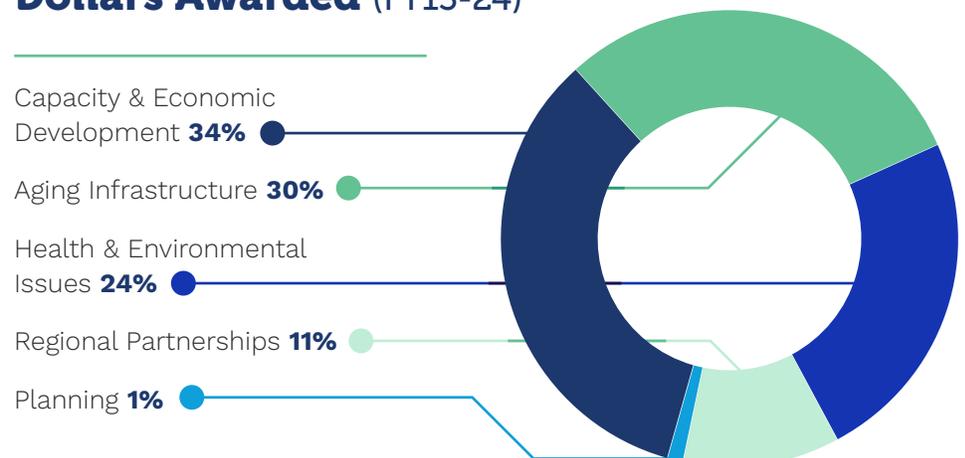LOANS CLOSED

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS (FY13-24)

11,514
PROPOSED JOBS

$4.3 Billion
PROPOSED CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Grant Project Types by Dollars Awarded (FY13-24)

- Water **41%**
- Sewer **40%**
- Multiple & Other **11%**
- Stormwater **8%**

Grant Priorities by Dollars Awarded (FY13-24)

Capacity & Economic Development **34%**

Aging Infrastructure **30%**

Health & Environmental Issues **24%**

Regional Partnerships **11%**

Planning **1%**

Vision

All South Carolina communities have the infrastructure necessary to protect public health and the environment as well as lay the groundwork for economic success.

Mission

To provide resources for strategic investments that will strengthen and modernize critical community infrastructure.

Performance Agreements

Most RIA economic infrastructure projects expand capacity and prepare communities for opportunities that result in new jobs and investment. Fewer than one-third of economic infrastructure projects are directly tied to job creation, which may require a performance agreement with an employer. The performance agreement includes a job creation commitment typically within a five-year period.
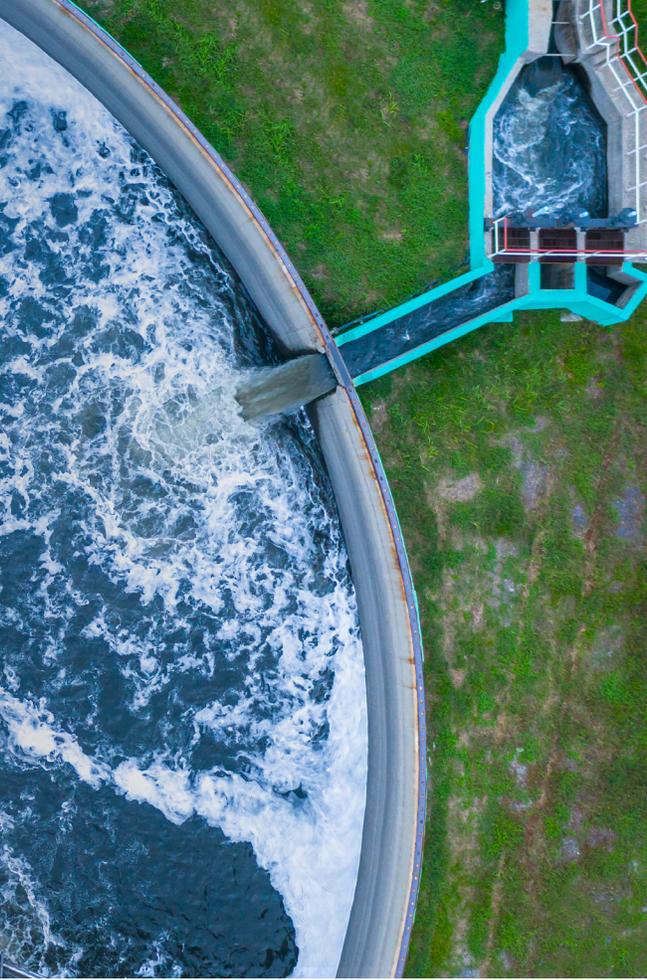
	Closed	In Process
Performance Agreements	21	14*
Jobs: Proposed	2,675	2,103
Jobs: Actual to Date	3,700	1,148
Other Public Benefit	4	—

This includes one agreement that is not in compliance. RIA has received partial repayment of the grant funds disbursed, and the grant will be closed once full repayment is received.