

Harry M. Lightsey III
Chairman



Bonnie Ammons
Executive Director

South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

For Immediate Release
April 24, 2023

\$1.369 billion in ARPA funding awarded to over 200 communities across South Carolina

Grants via RIA will support water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects across all 46 counties

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) today announced it has awarded \$1.369 billion in grant funding to communities across the state to assist with improvements for clean drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater resilience. The funds, made via the award of 216 grants to local governments and public water and sewer utilities across South Carolina, are expected to modernize and upgrade critical facilities that will have far-reaching impacts for years to come. These projects will benefit communities in every county in the state. View the list of awardees on the [RIA website](#).

"The vital infrastructure improvements these funds will deliver across South Carolina will be a game changer," said Governor Henry McMaster. "The availability of critical services not only improves the immediate quality of life for our citizens, but it also makes our state more attractive for impactful and sustained economic development."

"Today, we are making a huge difference by investing in our future," noted RIA Executive Director Bonnie Ammons. "The funds awarded throughout the state will go a long way in addressing the sustainability of water and sewer systems for the long term. In many cases, these funds will transform communities."

The S.C. Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP) was created by RIA as a major, one-time initiative designed to have a transformative impact on water, wastewater and stormwater systems in small and disadvantaged communities as well as larger, growing communities using federal funds allocated by the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

"This is a generational opportunity to continue our efforts in setting the stage for economic development," said S.C. Secretary of Commerce and RIA Board Chairman Harry M. Lightsey, III. "The funds awarded today will directly support projects that will help make critical infrastructure improvements to support existing businesses and prepare all parts of South Carolina for future growth."

The funding offers a unique opportunity to make long-term capital improvements that will strengthen critical services to residents and businesses, create more resilient communities and build the capacity to support future opportunities for growth and economic development. Projects selected by RIA's board of directors are designed to address a range of needs that will protect public health and the environment and build capacity for the future.

Priorities for project selection included regional solutions involving multiple utilities, protection of public health and water quality, resilience and storm protection, modernization of aging infrastructure, capacity development

Harry M. Lightsey III
Chairman



Bonnie Ammons
Executive Director

South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

and economic opportunities. Recipients of the funds will be able to get started on their projects in the next couple of months, with a deadline to spend all funds by Dec. 31, 2026.

The types of projects that have been awarded range from storm drainage facilities that will protect residents and property from future storm damage and erosion, to upgrades of facilities that provide clean drinking water such as wells, storage tanks, treatment facilities and distribution lines, as well as the collection and treatment of sanitary sewer to protect the environment. A number of the SCIIP projects will address system capacity to create economic opportunities in the future. Eligible entities included units of local government, special purpose districts, commissions of public works, joint municipal organizations and nonprofit water systems.

Except for those requesting grants for planning, all recipients were required to provide matching funds for the grant request. Applicants that serve fewer than 30,000 people, or are located in a county designated as Tier III or IV by the S.C. Department of Revenue, had a 15% match requirement. Large utilities, serving more than 30,000, were required to provide a 25% match requirement. In all, these SCIIP awards will leverage an additional \$900 million in matching funds — local and other dollars committed to implement these projects. Furthermore, state grant funds that are annually allocated to RIA were also used as leverage for SCIIP projects in small and disadvantaged areas. In FY23, \$15.2 million in state funds were awarded to carry out 37 SCIIP funded projects in these areas.

Over 300 applications totaling more than \$2 billion were submitted. 70% of all applications were funded, including at least one project in every county.

For more information and a press kit, visit ria.sc.gov/sciip/

Additional Remarks

Leaders across South Carolina have indicated that this commitment of funds will meet immediate needs while preparing community infrastructure for the future.

"The funds awarded today will have a remarkable impact that will benefit residential and business customers by providing access to safe drinking water and improving sanitary sewer systems statewide. These funds will help address economic inequalities in our communities."

- South Carolina Senator Michael W. Gambrell, Vice Chairman, RIA Board of Directors

"These federal dollars are making transformative changes in cities and towns across the state through infrastructure improvements and replacements. These changes improve the quality of life for residents, visitors and business owners, while also attracting business and economic development opportunities."

- Municipal Association of South Carolina Executive Director Todd Glover

"Brand new water infrastructure projects — especially systems that ensure stormwater resilience — enable our counties to remain competitive at a time when manufacturers are looking to locate in the Southeast. These

Harry M. Lightsey III
Chairman



Bonnie Ammons
Executive Director

South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

funds put communities in the position to do the work that needs to be done now, which is a wise investment for the future of our residents and businesses."

- South Carolina Association of Counties Executive Director Timothy Winslow

"Funding of these projects is particularly timely considering the current state of the economy. Rural and disadvantaged communities will be able to undertake capital projects that otherwise would take years to fund — and have them completed without shifting significant costs to its customers."

- South Carolina Rural Water Association Executive Director Jill Miller

"These funds are truly groundbreaking, as they will allow utilities across the state to complete projects that protect public health and the environment, which will have a significant positive impact in a shorter time period."

- South Carolina Water Associations Executive Director David Baize

About the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

The South Carolina 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. RIA has awarded more than \$953 million in grants (2013-2022) and loans (2016-2022). Although RIA initially offered grants for projects in rural and distressed counties, the programs were expanded to make grant and loan assistance available statewide. Chaired by the South Carolina Secretary of Commerce, the RIA's board of directors includes six members representing distressed and/or least developed counties. Learn more about the RIA at www.ria.sc.gov.

###