

2020

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Performance Report



Submitted by

**The Northwest Alabama Council  
of Local Governments**

**December 2020**

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## Introduction

The Annual Comprehensive Economic Developments Strategy (CEDS) report serves as an update of activities within the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG). This update shows recent trends observed between the issuance of NACOLG’s 2018-2022 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS), and the present time. Areas discussed include demographic trends, plans and activities, meetings attended, participation in committees, large-scale projects, and major accomplishments.

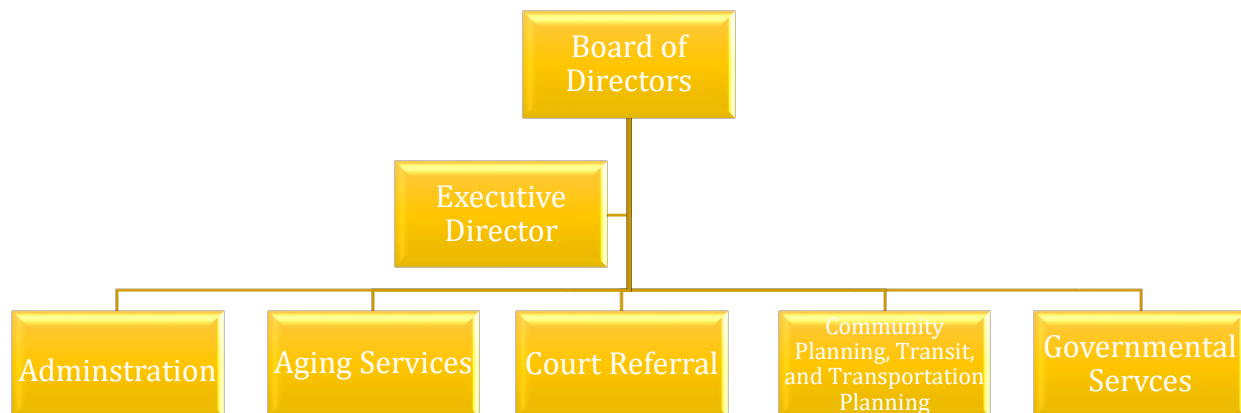
Due to COVID-19, unemployment had risen 4-6% across the state, however with the region’s focus on workforce assistance, efforts have allowed businesses to strengthen health safety protocols and begin reemployment. For PY 2020, 15 economically driven grants and 69 loans have been secured, creating and/or retaining a total of 343 jobs within the region.

Although the annual report encompasses activities which occurred across the state, much of the data presented consists of the following counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, and Winston.

## Vision

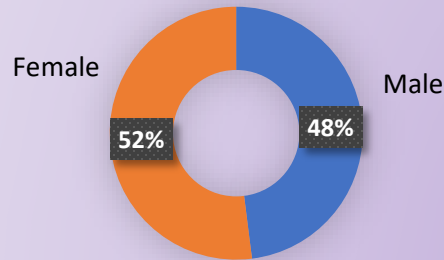
Northwest Alabama is a prosperous, family-friendly region defined by its strong, nationally, and globally competitive economy, and high quality of life.

### NACOLG Organizational Structure

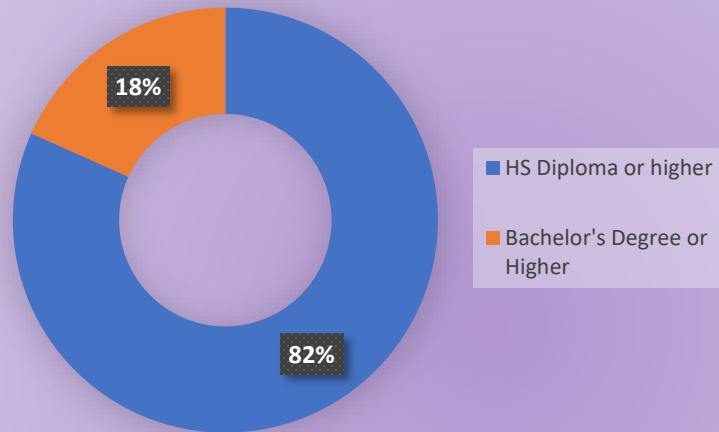


# Demographic Trends: Colbert County

## Gender



## Education- Age 25+



## Economic

Median Household Income  
\$45,477

Per Capita Income  
\$23,675

1 Adult Living Wage  
\$11.00/hr.

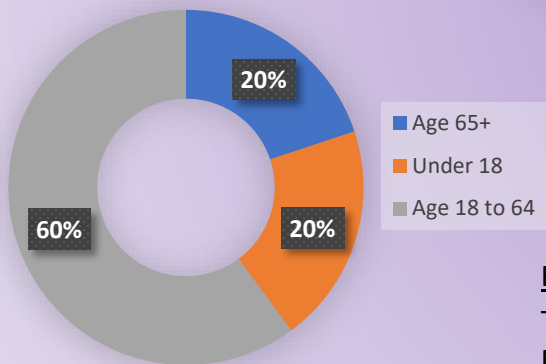
% Below the Poverty Line  
15.4%

Unemployment Rate  
5.5%



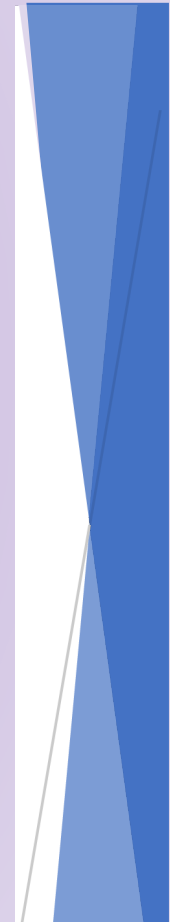
Housing Units  
26,371

## Population: 54,762



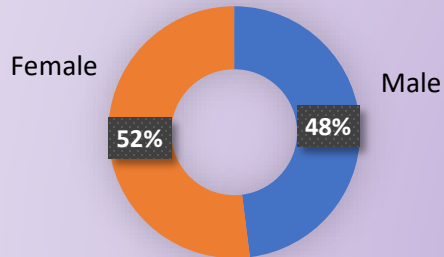
## Employment Sectors

Total employer establishments: 1,229  
 Estimated Total Employment: 22,159  
 Largest employment industry: Auto Manufacturing  
 Largest employer: North Alabama Lighting

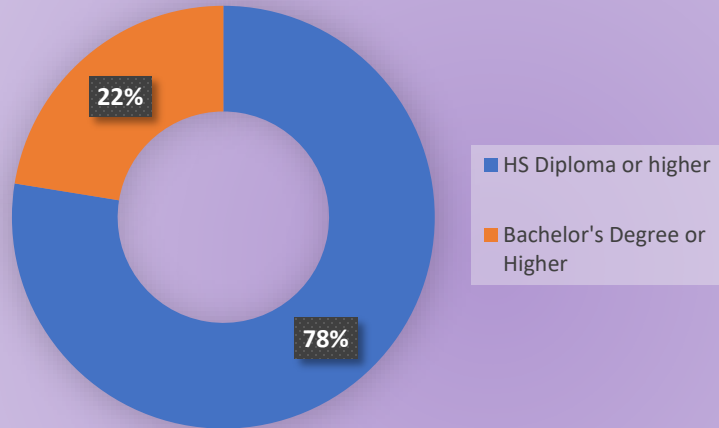


# Demographic Trends: Lauderdale County

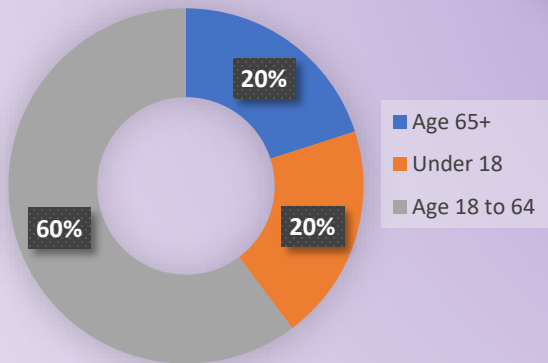
## Gender



## Education- Age 25+



Population: 92,387



## Employment Sector

Total employer establishments: 2,031  
 Estimated Total Employment: 25,540  
 Largest employment industry: Healthcare  
 Largest employer: North Alabama Medical Center

## Economic

Median Household Income  
 \$44,888

Per Capita Income  
 \$25,80

1 Adult Living Wage  
 \$11.00/hr.

% Below the Poverty Line  
 13.7%

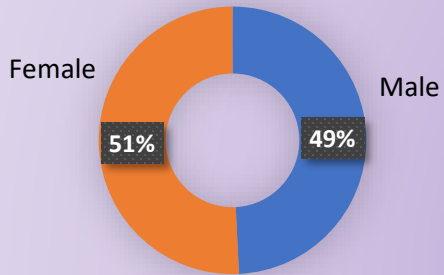
Unemployment Rate  
 4.4%



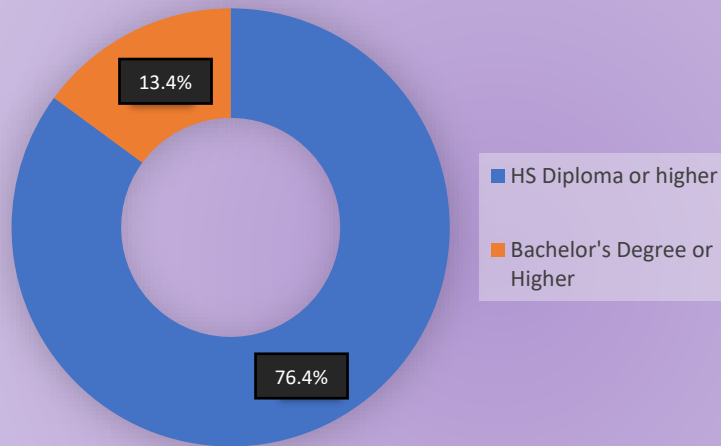
Housing Units  
 45,463

# Demographic Trends: Franklin County

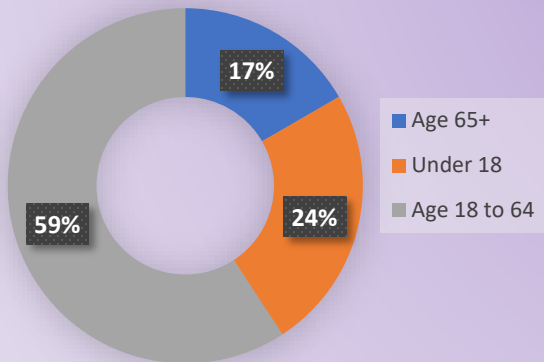
## Gender



## Education- Age 25+



Population: 31,363



## Employment Sector

Total employer establishments: 523  
 Estimated Total Employment: 9,627  
 Largest employment industry: Poultry Processing  
 Largest employer: Pilgrim's and Tiffin Motorhomes


## Economic

Median Household Income  
**\$39,501**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,314**

1 Adult Living Wage  
**10.72/hr.**

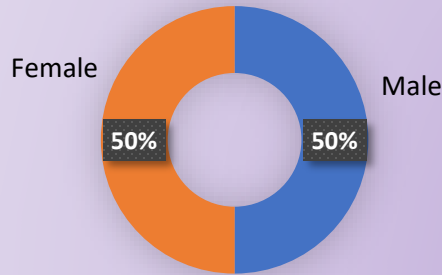
% Below the Poverty Line  
**20.5 %**

Unemployment Rate   
**3.2 %**

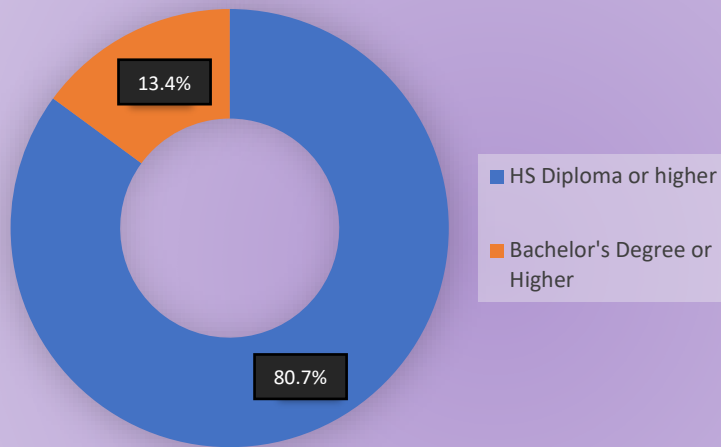
Housing Units  
**14,229**

# Demographic Trends: Marion County

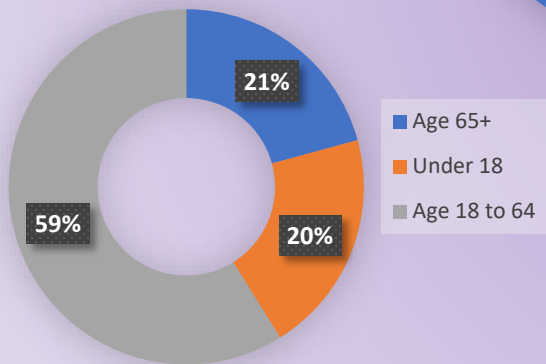
## Gender



## Education- Age 25+



Population: 29,763



## Employment Sector

Total employer establishments: 531

Total Employment: 7,625

Largest employment industry: Cabinet Doors

Largest employer: Door Components LLC/ Kith Kitchens

## Economic

Median Household Income  
\$35,719

Per Capita Income  
\$21,835

1 Adult Living Wage

\$10.52

% Below the Poverty Line  
19.3 %

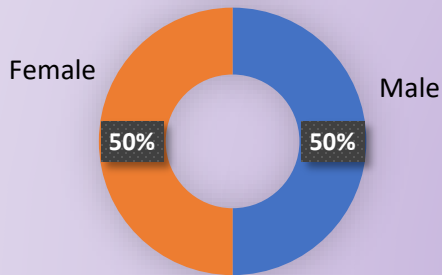
Unemployment Rate  
4.2 %



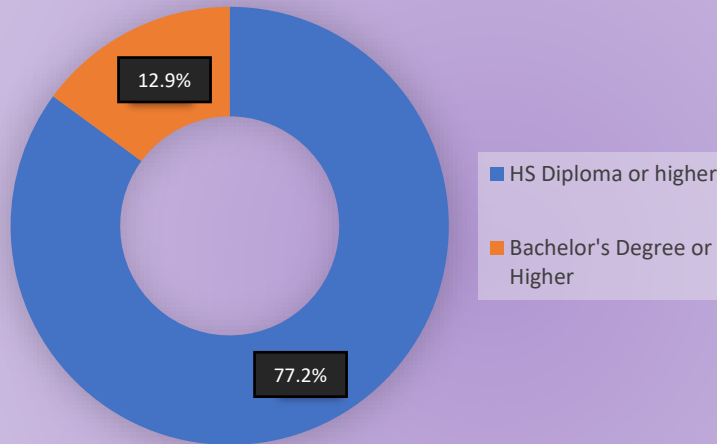
Housing Units  
14,939

# Demographic Trends: Winston County

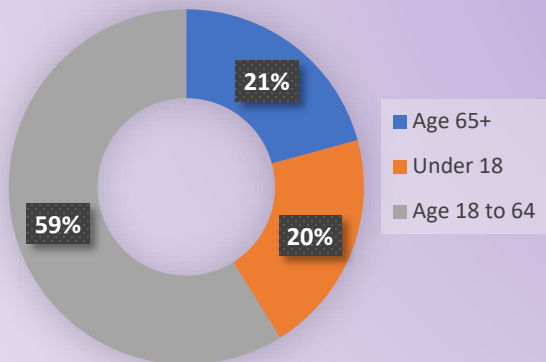
## Gender



## Education- Age 25+



Population: 23,660



## Employment Sector

Total employer establishments: 448  
 Total Employment: 6,368  
 Largest employment industry: Cabinets  
 Largest employer: Kith Kitchens

## Economic

Median Household Income  
**\$35,362**

Per Capita Income  
**\$20,580**

1 Adult Living Wage  
**\$10.52**

% Below the Poverty Line  
**21.3 %**

Unemployment Rate  
**4.0 %**



Housing Units  
**13,747**



As a result of COVID-19, The Northwest Alabama region experienced an increase in unemployment, with 4%-6% unemployment rates occurring across The State. As an effort to combat this gap, several initiatives were put into place to reduce the economic deficit while still meeting the goals set out by the CEDS strategy.

## Metrics

**Goal 1:** *Economic Resilience- lead community preparedness, planning and risk assessment actions in the region; support economic diversification, business services, and workforce development initiatives that prepare the region's economy to withstand natural and man-made disasters.*

- Provided mapping services to the agency and partnering municipalities for various programs.
- The City of Muscle Shoals submitted a FY 2020 ARC Application and received \$50,000 in funding with \$50,000 in local matching funds to conduct a drainage study with the hopes of overcoming flooding issues.
- The City of Muscle Shoals submitted a FY 2020 EDA Disaster Supplemental Funding Application and received \$1,627,209.60 million in state funding with \$406,802.40 in local matching funds to install additional drainage systems which will connect to an existing retention pond.
- The City of Sheffield submitted a FY 2020 FEMA flood study application. The application received \$133,875 with a local match of \$44,625 to assess the drainage system within the City of Sheffield and promote hazard mitigation policies that would reduce the risk to people and property.

**Goal 2:** *Business and Industry Support and Recruitment- provide resources to support new and existing businesses and industries.*

- NACOLG issued 48 RLF loans for a total of \$ 1,007,000 to area businesses committed to creating or retaining 343 jobs.
- NACOLG currently manages a total of 21 RLF loans with a total value of \$ 2,272,875.

- Eight partnering agencies employed 390 home attendants at an average wage of \$8.25/per hour (approx. \$5.8 million in annual wages).
- Provided approximately \$306,567 in wages annually to 39 low-income Seniors, providing a like in savings to local government and non- profit agencies
- Two Industrial Access grants (100% State funded) were awarded in FY 2020 for a total of \$714,900. The City of Muscle Shoals obtained \$381,900 in funding for Project XYZ. The Town of Double Springs obtained \$333,000 in funding for Great Southern Enterprises.

**Goal 3:** *Infrastructure and Community Services- support the development and redevelopment of sustainable infrastructure and investments in community services to create attractive, safe communities that sustain and support local and regional economies.*

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) initiated two phases (such as, utility work and construction) for a total of \$1,430,344 (\$1,144,275 Federal and \$286,069 Local).
- The Lauderdale County Commission submitted and was awarded a FY 2020 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant. This is a capacity-adding project located on US-72 (Florence Boulevard) between Indian Springs Road and Harris Drive in the City of Florence. Project cost: \$19,850,000 (75% Build Grant \$14,880,000 and 25% State Funds \$4,970,000).
- NACOLG submitted applications of behalf of the Towns of Rogersville and Brilliant for the Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) Annual Grant Program. The Town of Rogersville received \$150,000 for resurfacing 10 sites within the town limits. The Town of Brilliant received \$250,000 for resurfacing 9 sites within the town limits.
- The Town of St. Florian submitted an FY 2020 REBUILD Transportation grant. This is a capacity-adding project located on US-72 (Florence Boulevard) between Indian Springs Road and Harris Drive in the City of Florence. Project cost: \$19,850,000 (80% Build Grant \$15,880,000 and 20% Local Funds \$3,970,000).
- City of Haleyville secured \$607,361 in CDBG and local funding to conduct water, sewer, street, and drainage improvements.
- City of Tuscumbia secured \$403,332 in CDBG and local funding to provide housing demolition assistance throughout the city.
- City of Sheffield secured \$231,598 in CDBG and local funding to provide housing demolition assistance throughout the city.

- City of Red Bay secured \$547,000 in CDBG and local funding to provide sewer improvements within the city.
- City of Winfield secured \$506,968.56 in CDBG and local funding to provide drainage and paving improvements for its residents.
- The Town of Vina secured \$350,650 in CDBG and local funding to conduct water improvements throughout the town.
- The Colbert County Commission secured \$207,876 in CDBG and local funding to conduct drainage and paving improvements.
- The Town of Hackleburg secured \$421,536 in CDBG and local funding to do street improvements within the town.
- The Lauderdale County Commission secured \$223,069 in CDBG and local funding to assist with redeveloping the County's Greenhill Community Center.
- The City of Hamilton secured \$963,755 in CDBG and local funding to do sewer, street, and drainage improvements within the city.
- The Town of Leighton secured \$369,105 in CDBG and local funding to provide necessary water improvements throughout the town.

**Goal 4:** *Education and Workforce Development- support local and regional efforts to improve the quality of education and workforce development necessary to economic development success throughout the region.*

- The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program provided transportation to low-income workers for job searches and commutes providing 14,341 trips.
- The Northwest Alabama Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center submitted a FY 2020 ARC application requesting equipment to allow expansion of their vocational training program and obtain equipment to adhere to CDC health guidelines.

**Goal 5:** *Community Capacity Building and Planning- provide support for local and regional coordination, planning, and capacity building including leadership development, capital and land use planning, and hazard mitigation plans.*

- Acted as a regional repository of U.S. Census data; this provides technical assistance to member governments and regional partners.
- NACOLG provided contract routes for other service agencies. The total number of trips for PY 2020 was 68,817.

- The Colbert County Commission and the City of Sheffield applied for an FY 2020 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant. This is a Multi-Modal Transportation project located in Colbert County. The Colbert County Commission, the City of Sheffield, and NACOLG were seeking funds to produce a corridor study and design for roadway approaches and a bridge structure over the Norfolk Southern Railroad.
- The Croy Engineering firm, in cooperation with the City of Florence, the University of North Alabama, and NACOLG produced the Pine Street Corridor Study. The emphasis of this corridor study was to focus on pedestrian safety and facilities along North Pine Street from Dr. Hicks Boulevard to Jackson Road.
- Submitted the seven county Northwest Alabama Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan which is an effort to evaluate and identify all-natural hazards which may affect the region and presents mitigation strategies to address the hazards identified.

## Opportunity Zones

Of the 158 opportunity zones located within the state of Alabama, The Northwest section of the state has the following areas designated as opportunity zones:

- Colbert County (Tract 010330202.00); Population within zone: 1,927; Labor Force: 795; Highest Employing Industry: Manufacturing
- Franklin County (Tract 010599737); Population within zone: 6,235; Labor Force: 2,218; Highest Employing Industry: Manufacturing
- Lauderdale County 1 (Tract 010770101); Population within zone: 1,886; Labor Force: 729; Highest Employing Industry: Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
- Lauderdale County 2 (Tract 010770109); Population within zone: 7,060; Labor Force: 3,525; Highest Employing Industry: Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
- Marion County 1 (Tract 010939644); Population within zone: 4,727; Labor Force: 1,894; Highest Employing Industry: Manufacturing
- Marion County 2 (Tract 010939645); Population within zone: 2,323; Labor Force: 1,050; Highest Employing Industry: Manufacturing
- Winston County (Tract 011339657); Population within zone: 4,100; Labor Force: 1,843; Highest Employing Industry: Manufacturing

## Disaster Resiliency

NACOLG received \$920,000 EDA CARES Act Revolving Loan Funds. The funds are designated to alleviate economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These loans, which vary between 2%-6% in interest rates, are disseminated on a first-come, first-served basis. Loans are used for improvements such as equipment, working capital, and or building renovations. Allocations are as follows:

- 20,000 - \$200,000 for Small Businesses
- \$10,000 - \$100,000 for Non-Profits

Since the July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 award date, the NACOLG Revolving Loan Fund's Loan Administration Committee has approved three EDA CARES Act totaling \$176,000, creating or retain 26 jobs.

NACOLG received \$400,000 in EDA CARES Act funding to develop resiliency planning initiatives within the region. NACOLG has partnered with various development authorities, chambers of commerce, and industrial boards across the five regions of northwest Alabama to identify economic vulnerabilities within the respective counties. Surveys to capture information on challenges and limitation have been administered to business owners and data collection is currently ongoing.

## Accomplishments

As stated, NACOLG's contribution to Region 1's economic advancement has been largely focused on the capacity building of businesses and provision of municipal infrastructure. Apart from achieving the targeted goals, NACOLG has been instrumental in other areas of service which has caused a positive economic impact not only for the region, but the state:

- NACOLG saved the State of Alabama over \$35 million in cost of client care in the five-county region.
- NACOLG provided approximately \$5.93 in services for each \$1 expended.
- For every dollar spent, NACOLG's activities generated \$9.51 in revenue for the State.
- For every dollar spent, NACOLG's activities generated \$120.86 in revenue locally.