



# 2018 – 2022 Southern Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Annual Update • December 2020

Atkinson - Bacon - Ben Hill - Berrien  
Brantley - Brooks - Charlton - Clinch - Coffee  
Cook - Echols - Irwin - Lanier - Lowndes  
Pierce - Tift - Turner - Ware Counties



**sgrc**  
SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION  
Waycross - Valdosta

# Southern Georgia CEDS Annual Update • December 2020

The 2020 Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update for the Southern Georgia Economic Development District (EDD) is provided to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) under EDA Investment Number ED19ATL3020014. This update covers the activity period from October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, and during that time the SGRC EDD has been devastated by the Coronavirus both physically and economically. To date, 19,436 people in the SGRC region have been diagnosed with COVID-19, of which 534 have died. The global pandemic has levied a hard blow to Southern Georgia and its economy. The negative effects of the pandemic include, but are not limited to: business closures, a reduction in sales tax revenue, struggling rural hospitals losing even more income, students with limited broadband experiencing educational gaps because they were unable to participate in online education, hospitality industry decimated, and mass layoffs throughout the region.

## **Current Economic Conditions in the Region**

Since the onset of COVID-19, unemployment has skyrocketed. In fact, the unemployment rate in the SGRC EDD in February was a mere 3.8%. Fast forward to April, and the EDD's average unemployment had more than doubled to 9.5%, with one-third of the counties in the region having double digit unemployment. In May, the unemployment rate decreased by 3%, but was still significantly higher than it was pre-pandemic – a trend that holds true even now, months into the pandemic. In September, the SGRC EDD's average unemployment rate was 5.2%, with Turner County having the highest rate of 8.1%.

### *Regional Unemployment Figures (September 2020):*

Average unemployment rate = 4.9%

Highest unemployment rate = Turner County, 8.1%

Second Highest unemployment rate = Ben Hill County, 6.3%

Lowest unemployment rate = Atkinson County, 3.4%

Although it appears to have a low unemployment rate compared to the region, Atkinson County's 30.0% poverty rate indicates a sluggish labor force participation rate with many people having given up looking for a job. Overall, when the regional average unemployment rate of 4.9% is compared to the 26.9% average poverty rate of the region, it becomes apparent that although many may be employed, they are woefully underemployed.

All of the SGRC's eighteen counties are considered to be areas of persistent poverty (more than 20% of a county's population lives below the poverty threshold). Although the SGRC EDD's overall poverty rate increased slightly over last year's, eight of the region's counties saw decreases in their poverty rates.

### *Regional Poverty Figures:*

Average poverty rate = 26.9%

Highest poverty rate = Clinch County, 39.2%

Lowest poverty rate = Pierce County, 21.7%

*(Continued on next page.)*

According to STATS America Economic Distress Criteria Statistical Report, the per capita money income (PCMI) of the SGRC region is 64.08% of the national average. Nine counties in the region have PCMIs of less than 60% of the national average, an increase of three counties since last year's CEDS Update. Clinch County has the lowest PCMI at 50.7%.

*Regional Income Figures:*

Average median household income = \$37,095

Lowest median household income = Clinch County, \$25,236

Highest median household income = Pierce County, \$44,167

Average per capita income = \$19,932

Lowest per capita income = Clinch County, \$16,538

Highest per capita income = Brooks County, \$23,421

According to the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the average per capita income in the region is a mere \$19,932. This dismal number is in stark contrast to the United States' PCI of \$32,621 and Georgia's PCI of \$29,523. A further indication of economic distress is the region's average median household income (MHI) which is significantly less than that of the State and US. The average MHI in the region is just \$37,095, while the State of Georgia's is \$18,584 higher at \$55,679 and the US's \$60,293 MHI is \$23,198 more.

While some growth has been experienced within the region, persistent poverty, underemployment, and unemployment continue to plague the area. As a performance-based plan, the District's CEDS plays a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting the private investment that creates jobs. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The economies of the SGRC region have become more diversified over the past twenty years; however, this diversity did not make the region immune to economic disruptions. The District has suffered from the long-lasting, ill-effects of numerous industry and business closures that occurred during the Great Recession and resulted in economic distress and persistent unemployment. Additional economic harm was levied on the region in the Fall of 2018 when Hurricane Michael blew through this area leaving broad swaths of damage in its wake and taking millions of dollars from the economy. Eleven of the EDD's 18 counties were included in the November 15, 2018, federal disaster declaration.

The economic injury to the struggling SGRC region as a result of the coronavirus is substantial, and the Southern Georgia EDD is committed to assisting local governments, businesses, and stakeholders with their economic recovery. The SGRC EDD has received a CARES Act Supplemental Award of \$400,000. These funds will be utilized to conduct short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to develop and implement a pandemic recovery and resiliency economic development plan, consistent with the SGRC's approved CEDS.

*(Continued on next page.)*

### **Southern Georgia EDD Activities**

During the period covered by this update, the staff of the SGRC EDD received notification from the EDA Atlanta Regional Office that the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce's EDA Public Works application was approved. The SGRC EDD has been carrying out project implementation activities for the EDA-funded Valdosta/Lowndes Business Incubator. Completion of this project will result in a fully functioning business incubator that will have a total annual economic impact of \$9.7 million, supporting 81 jobs in the Valdosta MSA.

The EDD staff took part in planning meetings for over a dozen economic development projects throughout the District. When these projects come to fruition, all will result in private investment and jobs creation in the SGRC EDD. Previous project planning meetings culminated in the receipt of infrastructure funding for two economic development projects, resulting in the creation of 231 jobs and \$136.5 million in capital investment in the SGRC EDD. Furthermore, SGRC EDD staff submitted two applications for funding for economic development projects in Bacon County and the 4-county area of the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Authority (SGRDA), both of which were funded. The Bacon County project will result in the creation of 34 new jobs and a \$1.8 million capital investment. The SGRDA project is a capacity building project that will construct a much needed rail spur in the Pierce County Industrial Park. Both of these projects will generate economic opportunities in the SGRC EDD.

The Southern Georgia EDD Lending Division participated in 181 loan projects – lending a total of \$16.2 million, of which \$9.4 million were CARES ACT PPP loans. These loans leveraged \$12 million in private investment and created/retained 1301 jobs.

### **Conclusion**

Although the District is experiencing economic improvements in several areas, Southern Georgia must still find ways to reverse negative trends, to withstand economic shifts, and to move the region forward through regional initiatives aimed at fostering economic development – implementation of the CEDS will play a vital role in achieving this. Enacting the CEDS Action Plan will positively move the needle on the regional economy in the areas of jobs, wages, tax revenue, and private investment, and will have a strong positive impact on sustainable regional economic growth and diversification.

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# VISION

*The Communities Of The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Will Encourage And Support Quality Education And Economic Development That Fosters The Growth Of Local Employment And Business Opportunities, Without Detracting From The Region's Rural Lifestyle And Small Town Character.*



## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS A CEDS?

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The SGRC CEDS will analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, and the investment priorities and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, this CEDS will play a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting private investment that creates jobs. The SGRC CEDS is a regionally-owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with regional public and private sector participation. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The organization responsible for the development of this CEDS is the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC). As recipient of EDA Planning Investment funds (Investment #048306740), the SGRC serves as a designated Economic Development District (EDD). The SGRC's planning district includes the eighteen county governments of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Cook, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware, and the 45 municipal governments within those counties.

The SGRC is a multi-jurisdictional planning agency whose membership includes public officials, private individuals, post-secondary education representatives, workforce development representatives, economic development professionals, and other stakeholders throughout the region. The SGRC provides technical, planning, community and economic development assistance, and aging and workforce development services to the Southern Georgia region. The governing authority, or "Council," of the Regional Commission functions as the District Council in administering the District's EDA programs.

This CEDS plan follows the new guidelines released by the US Economic Development Administration in February 2015. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan developed by city and county elected officials, as well as a diverse group of economic, community and workforce development professionals. The following forms the basis for the SGRC CEDS:

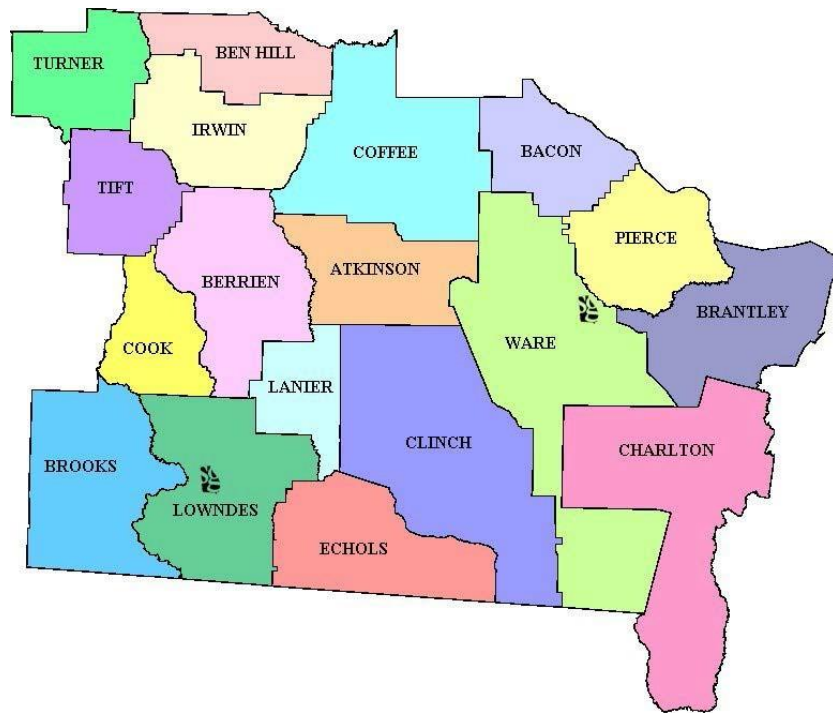
1. Summary Background of economic conditions in the region;
2. SWOT Analysis to identify regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats;
3. Action Plan based on the feedback from local economic, community, and workforce development professionals;
4. Evaluation Framework to identify and monitor successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.eda.gov/ceds/files/CEDS-Content-Guidelines-full.pdf?utm\\_source=EDA+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=363d120db5-Innovate\\_EDA\\_February\\_20152\\_5\\_2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_68e7c83ba4-363d120db5-391738129](http://www.eda.gov/ceds/files/CEDS-Content-Guidelines-full.pdf?utm_source=EDA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=363d120db5-Innovate_EDA_February_20152_5_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_68e7c83ba4-363d120db5-391738129)



## OUR REGION

The Southern Georgia region includes Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.



## SUMMARY BACKGROUND

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is an economic development planning district located in southern Georgia. The vast region covers South Central to Southeast Georgia. Agriculture, commercial timber production, and other rural development initiatives are all cornerstones of the Southern Georgia economy. However, the evidence of manufacturing is seen throughout the region and has helped to raise the per capita income, jobs creation and retention, and capital investments in some areas of the region.

Valdosta, the major city and county seat of Lowndes, County, is the only designated Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) located in the District. The counties of Lowndes, Brooks, Echols, and Lanier are associated with the MSA. Valdosta has a growing manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution base. It is also home to Moody Air Force Base and Valdosta State University.

The City of Douglas (including Coffee County), the City of Fitzgerald (including Ben Hill County), the City of Tifton (including Tift County), and the City of Waycross (including Pierce and Ware Counties) are defined as Micropolitan Statistical Areas. Micropolitan cities do not have the economic or political importance of large cities, but are nevertheless significant centers of population and production, drawing workers and shoppers from a wide local area. One county, Brantley, is associated with the Brunswick MSA, located outside the SGRC District.

The District has three additional retail trade centers other than Valdosta, including Tifton, Douglas, and Waycross. Southern Georgia has several four-lane transportation arteries and is connected directly to one interstate highway system (I-75) on the western side of the region.



## ENVIRONMENT

The SGRC pays special consideration to the environment when planning for future growth patterns. The characteristics of the natural environment including soils, topography, climate, water supply, and wildlife habitats are essential information in defining the region's attributes and possible shortcomings. Through a regional emphasis and understanding of the environment, SGRC staff, including an Environmental Planner and a Historic Preservation Planner, assists in maintaining a higher quality of life and protecting the Southern Georgia region's future for residents of the District.

The region's climate is classified as mild, ranging from almost perfect to hot and sultry. The region experiences all four seasons; however, winter is fairly short and relatively mild. Spring and autumn are very pleasant, and summer can reach high temperatures with a very high heat index.

Most of the Southern Georgia region's consumer water comes from underground aquifers, which are porous underground rock layers containing water. The main aquifer beneath the region is the Floridan aquifer. The aquifer serves as the water supply watershed for all of the region's municipal water systems as well as many agricultural irrigation systems.

## ECONOMY

In order for the Southern Georgia region to thrive economically, it must strive to be a community that excels economically while offering good quality of life to its residents. This high quality of life is supported through critical infrastructure that businesses need to succeed.

Supporting the economy is a system of infrastructure that provides the critical services necessary for the well being of residents, the success of businesses and the safety of communities.

The ability to build and maintain these systems is costly and resource intensive. Many of the region's rural communities are in desperate need of improvement. Broadband internet access is also limited in smaller communities, which hinders economic development in many areas.

As the following analysis will show, the lack of critical infrastructure proves to be a challenge for the region's economic success. The region continues to work to improve the critical infrastructure and resources available to developing businesses. This balance of infrastructure and economic development will bring new businesses to the area and ensure economic resiliency for the region.

## TOURISM

The 18-county region has a wide variety of attractions and tourist destinations reflecting its great natural and agricultural heritage, as well as the fun loving and adventurous spirit of the local residents. In addition to the two National Wildlife Refuges (Okefenokee and Banks Lake), there are six state parks and natural preserves located within the region (Stephen C. Foster, General Coffee, Reed Bingham, Laura S. Walker, Jefferson Davis Memorial, and Broxton Rocks). Sporting and amusement adventures can be held at South Georgia Motorsports Park in Cook County, and Wild Adventures Theme Park in southern Lowndes County.

Throughout the year, communities within the region hold annual fairs and festivals which draw people from far and wide. For example, Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald hold the annual Wild Chicken Festival celebrating the wild chickens which have made the City famous, Waycross celebrates the heritage and culture of the Okefenokee Swamp during the Swampfest event, Lanier County and the City of Lakeland hold a Flatlanders Frolic Arts and Crafts show, and the City of Hahira in Lowndes County holds their annual Honeybee Festival. These resources and events have a profound impact on the economics of local communities.





## WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

The Southern Georgia Region's workforce is experiencing a shift. Historically, the region's major industries were agriculture and forestry. However, in recent decades, in keeping with national trends, the region has shifted from a production economy to a service economy. Although the majority of the region's land area is still used for agriculture and forestry, more jobs are now in service-providing industries than in goods-producing industries.

For many of the occupations projected to show the greatest growth in the coming years, advanced degrees and specialized training are not required. For example, fast food workers, laborers, customer service representatives, and cashiers typically require only a brief training period and do not require higher-level qualifications. However, some of the occupations that are expected to experience growth in the region in the near future do require advanced degrees and/or specialized training, for example: elementary school teachers (100 projected annual openings), registered nurses (90 projected annual openings), and middle school teachers (70 projected annual openings).

1: Georgia Dept. of Labor Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Projections Unit

The five occupations projected to have the most annual openings do not typically require a high school diploma. Several of the occupations projected to have the highest level of relative growth (percent change) during the same timeframe require a higher level of education. However, the total number of openings in these occupations is projected to be low. <sup>1</sup>

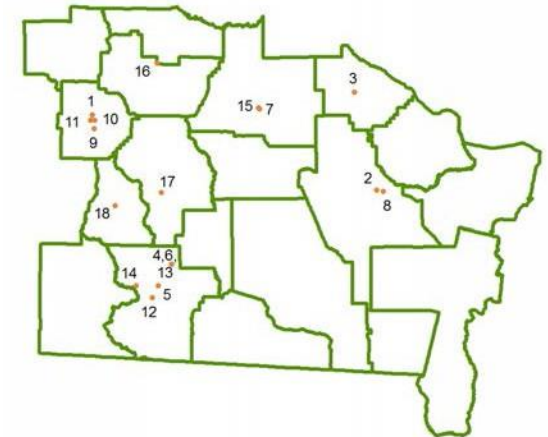
Given the shift in demand, the Southern Georgia Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) has been working with the local educational institutions to ensure individuals have access to a variety of in-demand training programs to meet the specific needs of industries in the region. The strong partnerships have set the stage for future progress. These pathways are one way in which partners are working with all ages to further develop a strong workforce for the emerging students through curriculum in advanced technologies, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and soft skills.

The Southern Georgia Area WDB envisions the local one-stop workforce development system as the mechanism to promote, encourage, and coordinate the development of a well-trained labor force with skills to not only meet the needs of the

area's current employers, but also to attract new business and industry to the area. It is crucial to continued economic resilience and prosperity that the region continues to develop a diverse set of industry sectors that provide living wage jobs.

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The presence of these colleges and universities draws education industry businesses and retail and service companies into the area to serve the needs of student populations.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College              | 9. Southern Regional Tech Tifton Campus |
| 2. Coastal Pines Tech                                | 10. Troy University Tifton Campus       |
| 3. Coastal Pines Tech Alma Campus                    | 11. University of Georgia Tifton Campus |
| 4. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Moody Campus | 12. Valdosta State University           |
| 5. Georgia Military College                          | 13. Webster University Moody Campus     |
| 6. Park University Moody Campus                      | 14. Wiregrass Tech                      |
| 7. South Georgia State College                       | 15. Wiregrass Tech Douglas Campus       |
| 8. South Georgia State College Waycross Campus       | 16. Wiregrass Tech Fitzgerald Campus    |
|  | 17. Wiregrass Tech Nashville Campus     |
|  | 18. Wiregrass Tech Sparks Campus        |

# SWOT ANALYSIS

In May, June, and July of 2017, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission conducted an analysis of the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – also known as a SWOT analysis. The analysis identifies what stakeholders in the Southern Georgia Region believe to be important in each category. The results from this process formed the foundation for the region's Economic Development Strategy Update.

The SWOT analysis feedback came from Economic Development Professionals, the Workforce Development Board, the Regional Commission Council, and other community members. The results of the SWOT are on the following pages. The respondents also ranked regional service priorities (figure on page 10).





# State of the Regional Economy, Clusters, Partners for Economic Development, & Global Competitiveness

- Public/private collaboration
- Transportation corridors
- Natural Resources
- Food Processing Industry
- Multiple Grad Sites
- Energy Availability and Cost
- Timber Industry
- Agriculture/Agribusiness
- Value Added Ag
- Diversity of Industry
- Tourism - Authentic Story
- Existing Manufacturing
- Available Raw Product
- Climate
- Low State Income Tax
- Land Availability for New Growth
- Proximity to Florida

S

Strengths

- Tourism/Agri-Tourism
- Lack of Funding for Economic Development
- Underdeveloped Industrial Parks
- Lack of funding for Industrial Parks
- Revitalization of Downtown
- OneGeorgia Competitiveness
- Lack of Marketing Grad Sites
- Not Using Available Resources

W

Weaknesses

- Value Added Ag Growth
- Build Agri-Business Supply Channels
- Downtown Revitalization
- Tax Credits/State Rural Incentives
- Emerging Crop Development
- Develop Tourism
- Joint Tax Credits Apply to Tourism Products
- GDED Assist Tourism Development
- Market Business Environment to Florida
- Shift From Brick and Mortar to Web Based Activities
- Film Industry
- Growth of Minority-Owned Small Business
- Aid in Tax Revenue
- Incentives for Businesses that Provide Transportation
- Natural Resources
- Eco-Tourism
- High-School Industrial Education
- Tax Credits/Business Incentives for Local Entrepreneurs
- Bringing Global Opportunities

O

Opportunities

- Ignoring Community Weaknesses
- Internet Sales Depleting Local Retail
- National Economy
- Closure/Relocation of Businesses
- Poor City/County Relationships
- Rising Cost of Healthcare
- Threats to Rural Healthcare
- Volatility of Travel Market/ Tourism
- Lack of Jobs for College Graduates
- Problem with Rate of Poverty
- Overuse/Non Protection of Natural Resources
- Trickle Down Entitlements
- Unfunded State and Federal Mandates

T

Threats



## Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure Assets and Broadband

- Transportation Corridors
- Proximity to I-95, I-75, I-10, North Florida Ports, Major Markets, and Regional Airports
- Great Architectural Bones in Downtown Areas
- Rails
- Georgia Ports

S

Strengths

- Lack of Capacity in Rails
- Resistance of Rail Lines to Allow for Growth
- Lack of Reliable Broadband and Cell Service
- Aging and Deteriorating Water & Sewer Infrastructure

W

Weaknesses

- Use Satilla and Alapaha Rivers to Incorporate More Boat Ramps
- Electric Membership Cooperatives - Incentives for Broadband
- Development of Small Cells for Broadband Service
- Water and Sewer Upgrades
- Extension of Gas Services
- Upgrades to Local Meeting Venues in Need of Repair
- Additional Commercial Airlines

O

Opportunities

- Lack of Reliable Broadband and Cell Service
- Rural Hospital Struggles
- 4-Laning Highways Bypass Small Towns Causing More Economic Loss

T

Threats



## Education and Workforce Development

- Loyal Workforce
- Strong Network of Technical Colleges
- Quickstart for New Industries
- Cohesiveness Between Technical Colleges and Service Providers
- Seamless Education between K12, Technical Colleges, and Universities
- Targeted Training, Demand Occupations
- Readily Available Knowledge of WIOA Program
- Collaboration between WIOA, Technical College, Economic Development Authority, Industry, and Business
- Southern Georgia Regional Commission Knowledge
- Clusters and Pathways
- STEM and STEAM
- Good Blend of Service Providers

# S

Strengths

- Politics
- Turf Guarding
- Skill Set of New Generation of Workers Entering the Workforce
- Mismatch of Skills Needed and Skills Available in Existing Workforce
- Lack of Quality Workforce to Attract New Business
- Lack of Culture of Collaboration
- Quickstart for Existing Businesses
- Low Wages
- Large Section of Population Not Entering Workforce
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Lack of Awareness of Terms of Financial Aid
- 2GA - Atlanta vs. Rest of the State
- Failure to ID Kids Who Qualify for Intervention Programs
- Motivation to Become Trained
- High School Drop Outs
- Failure to Pass Drug Tests

# W

Weaknesses

- Marketing of Technical Colleges
- New Strategies for Economic Dev.
- Prepare Workforce to Assume High Skill Jobs
- Hope Career Grant
- Drop Out Prevention
- Increase Collaboration on Trade Based Curriculum in Schools
- Attract More Tech Jobs
- Diversify Job Opportunities
- High School Industrial Education
- Early Childhood Ed. and Learning Centers
- Development of More College and Career Academies
- Apprenticeships, Internships, and Mentor Relations with Industries
- Great Promise Partnership
- Resources with Tech Colleges
- Market Local Jobs in Schools - Incentivize Educated to Stay Local
- Offer More Professional Degrees
- Quality of Life for Different Age Groups/Family

# O

Opportunities

- Low Wages
- Lack of Quality Workforce to Attract New Businesses
- Manufacturing automation replacing jobs
- Funding budget cuts
- Failure to Understand What the Economy of the Future Will Require Regarding Skills in the Workforce
- Presidential Threat to Eliminate EDA and WIOA
- Workforce Emigration

# T

Threats



## Population and Housing

- Retiree Attraction
- Housing Diversity

**S**  
Strengths

- Losing Population
- Aging Population
- Losing Educated and Retaining High-School Drop-Outs
- Lack of Rural Healthcare Affordability
- Decline in Housing Stock
- Low Average Wage, High Housing Cost
- Lack of Large Population Centers Relative to Other Areas

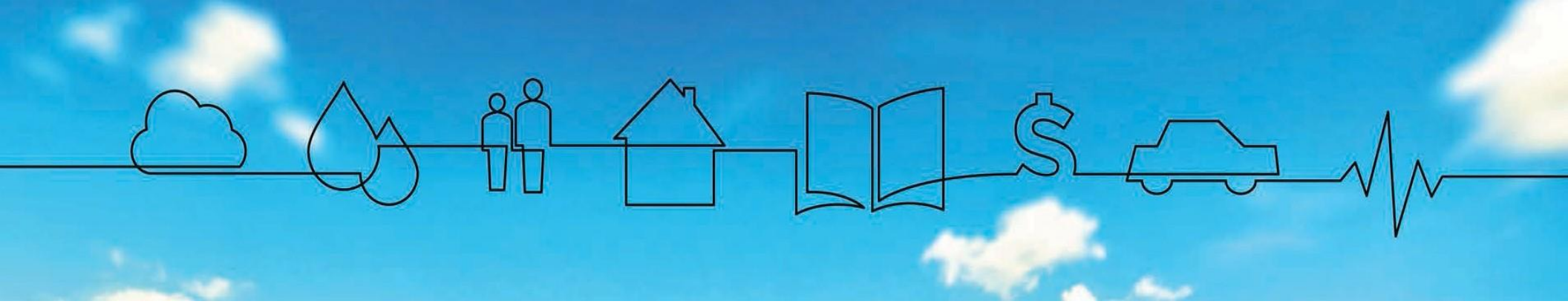
**W**  
Weaknesses

- Creating Functional / Unique Neighborhoods and Living Spaces (Maximize Experience While Minimizing Space)
- Work, Play, Live Neighborhood Spaces for Moody AFB
- Rehabilitation of Dilapidated Housing Close to Downtown Areas (Utilize Funding Available)
- Expand Code Enforcement, Especially in Downtown Areas
- Implement Consistent Zoning
- Educating Students at an Early Age About Local Workforce Opportunities

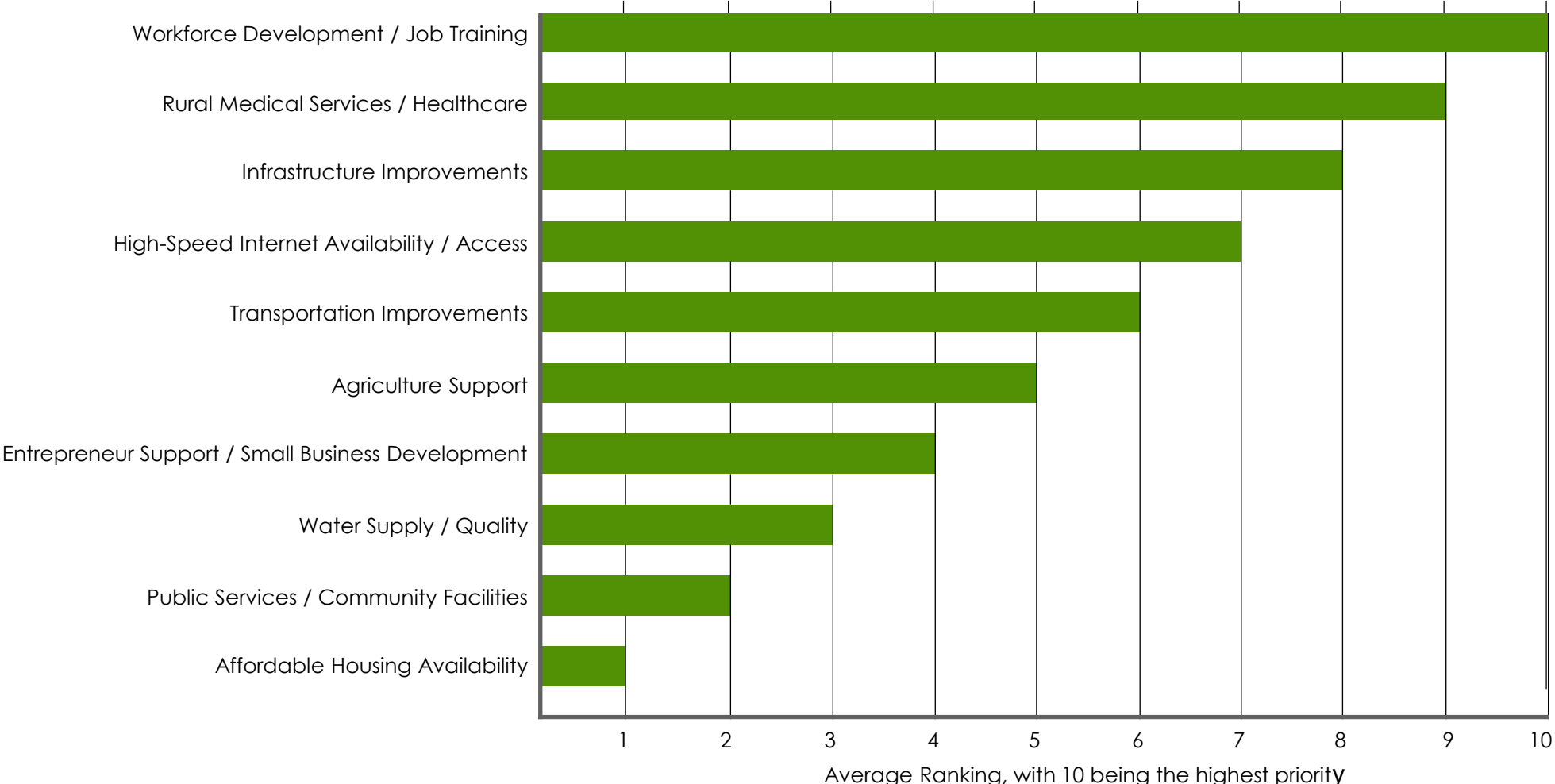
**O**  
Opportunities

- Conversion of Usable Agricultural Property into Subdivision
- Emigration of Educated Young Adults

**T**  
Threats



# REGIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES



# REGIONAL FACTS

Southern Georgia, Region 11

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>  
**406,586** Minority **29.6%**

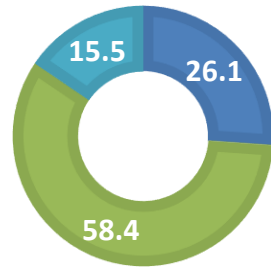
2018 Estimate  
**411,171** Average Median Age **38.2**

Male **49.9%** Age 65+ **59,152**

Female **50.1%** Under 18 **99,593**



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19 ■ 20-64 ■ 65+

## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Moody Air Force Base
2. Valdosta State University
3. Memorial Satilla Health
4. Pilgrim's Pride Corporation
5. Coffee Regional Medical Center

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$85,055**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.5%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**5.5%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**148,248**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**8.0%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$37,095**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,932**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,737**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**26.9%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
 Region—**16.9%**  
 Georgia—**12.5%**  
 National—**11.5%**

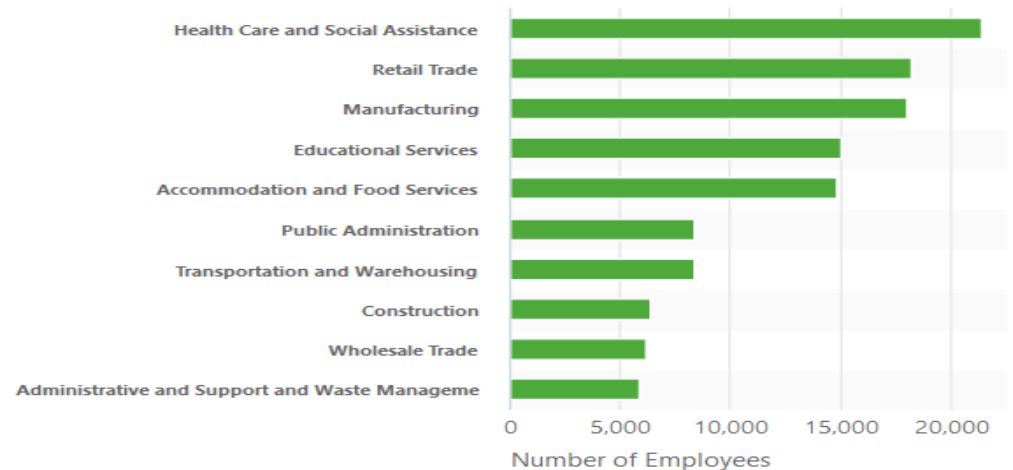


## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in the Southern Georgia Workforce Development Area for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020.

### Industry Employment Distribution



● Number of Establishments ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
 2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
 3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
 4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
 5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer



# ATKINSON COUNTY

County Seat: Pearson  
Founded in 1917



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

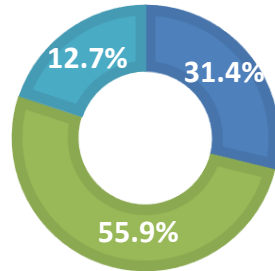
2010 Census <sup>1</sup>    Minority  
**8,375**            **27.8%**

2018 Estimate    Median Age  
**8,265**            **35.5**

Male              Age 65+  
**50.9%**          **1,053**

Female            Under 18  
**49.1%**          **2,264**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS

1. South Georgia Cargo
2. Deep South
3. Freedom South LLC
4. Dollar General
5. Circle K

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$60,100**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.1%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**9.2%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**2,785**

% of Housing Units with  
No Vehicle Available  
**7.9%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$34,877**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,565**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,318**

% of People Below  
Poverty Level  
**30.0%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Atkinson—**15.8%**  
Georgia—**12.5%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Atkinson County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020.



### Industry Employment Distribution

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# BACON COUNTY

County Seat: Alma  
Founded in 1917

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**11,096**            **19.2%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**11,228**            **37.0**

Male                  Age 65+  
**49.6%**            **1,700**

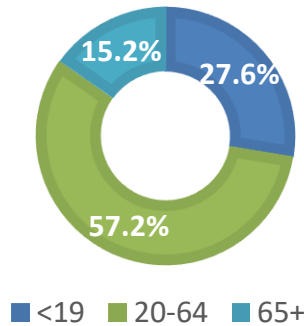
Female                Under 18  
**50.4%**            **2,869**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Bacon County Hospital & Health System
2. Twin Oaks Convalescent Center
3. D.L. Lee & Sons
4. Satilla REMC
5. Boatwright Wrecker Services Inc

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$73,000**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.7%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**7.0%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**3,966**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**5.1%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$36,964**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,634**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$23,046**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**27.2%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Bacon—**16.8%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Bacon County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020.



● Number of Establishments ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# BEN HILL COUNTY

County Seat: Fitzgerald  
Founded in 1906



## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**17,634**            **39.5%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**17,154**            **39.7**

Male                  Age 65+  
**46.9%**            **2,781**

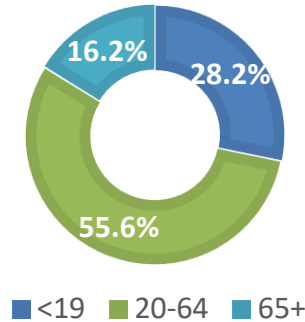
Female                Under 18  
**53.1%**            **4,345**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



### LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Walmart SuperCenter
2. Southern Veneer Products
3. Covered Wagon Trails
4. Wiregrass Georgia Technical College
5. Department of Human Services



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$80,100**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.1%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**1.6%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**6,569**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**15.8%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$32,705**

Per Capita Income  
**\$17,563**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,318**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**31.6 %**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Ben Hill—**19.7%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Ben Hill County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# BERRIEN COUNTY

County Seat: Nashville  
Founded in 1856



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$85,300**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.7%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**4.4%**

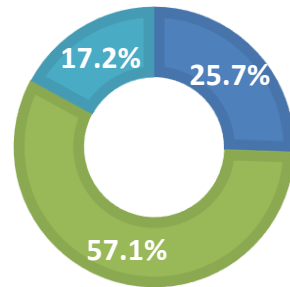
Occupied Housing Units  
**7,322**

% of Units with No Vehicle  
Available  
**10.0%**

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>	Minority
<b>19,286</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
2018 Estimate	Median Age
<b>19,025</b>	<b>39.7</b>
Male	Age 65+
<b>48.9%</b>	<b>3,269</b>
Female	Under 18
<b>51.1%</b>	<b>4,601</b>

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19 ■ 20-64 ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. D&D Farms
2. Harvey's Supermarket
3. Berrien Primary School
4. B H Electronics, Inc
5. South Georgia Medical Center Berrien Campus

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$37,163**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,611**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,318**

% of People Below  
Poverty Level  
**26.3%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Berrien—**17.2%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**

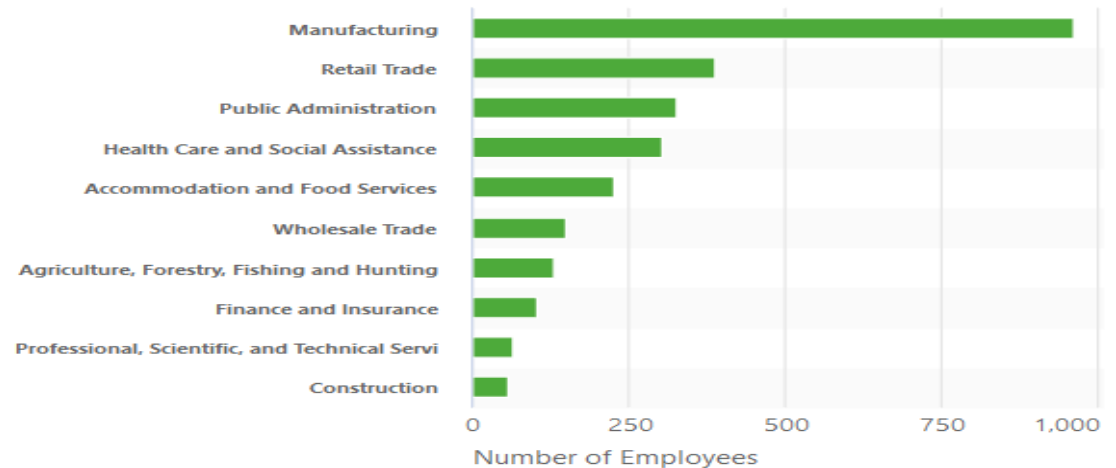


## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Berrien County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments ● Number of Employees

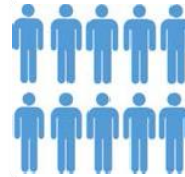
1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# BRANTLEY COUNTY

County Seat: Nahunta  
Founded in 1920



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



0.81%

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

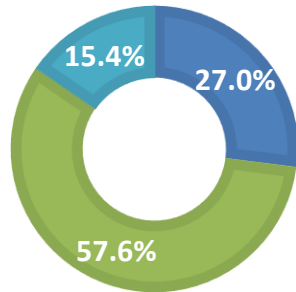
2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**18,411**              **6.3%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**18,561**              **40.9**

Male                  Age 65+  
**49.0%**              **2,853**

Female                Under 18  
**51.0%**              **4,482**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Cal-Maine Foods, Inc
2. H&S Car Carriers
3. Okefenokee Rural EMC
4. Hoboken Elementary School
5. Bay View Nursing Home

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$68,200**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.8%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**4.0%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**6,564**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**3.7%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$37,031**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,904**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$24,190**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**24.1%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Brantley—**16.5%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



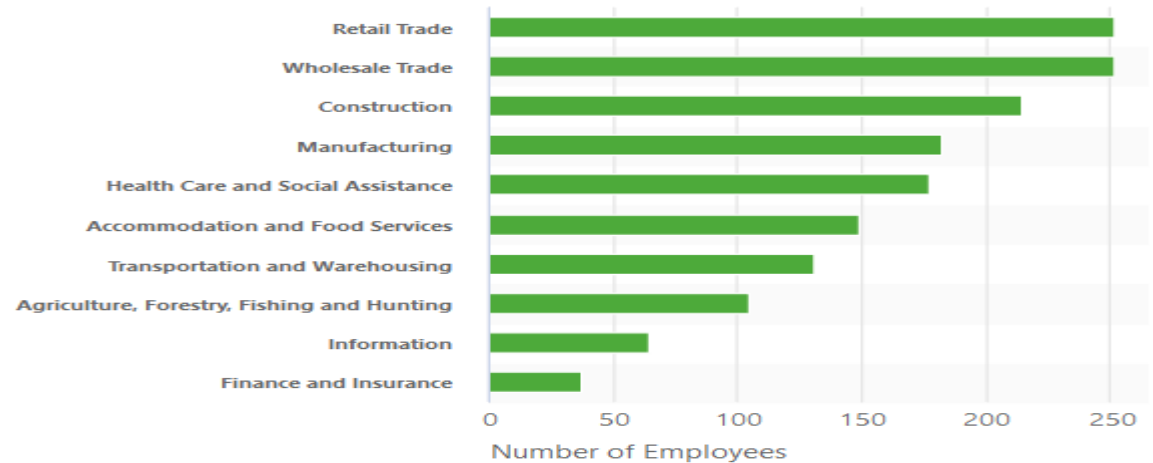
## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Brantley County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# BROOKS COUNTY

County Seat: Quitman  
Founded in 1858

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**16,243**            **38.4%**

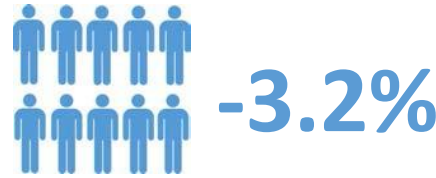
2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**15,622**            **43.0**

Male                  Age 65+  
**48.7%**            **2,979**

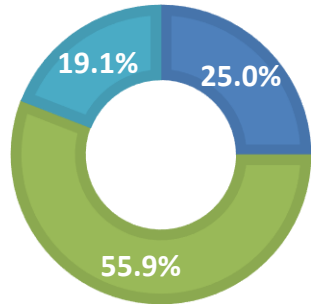
Female                Under 18  
**51.3%**            **3,423**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Presbyterian Home
2. Crown Healthcare Laundry Svc
3. BCT Gin Co
4. Langboard OSB
5. Fellowship Home at Brookside

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$96,900**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.3%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**9.8%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**6,350**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**6.3%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$34,322**

Per Capita Income  
**\$23,421**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,817**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**27.0%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Brooks—**16.7%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



## Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Brooks County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020

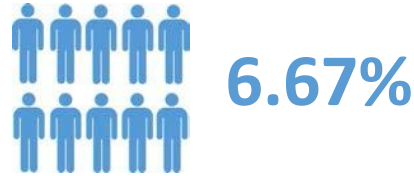
1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# CHARLTON COUNTY

County Seat: Folkston  
Founded in 1854



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

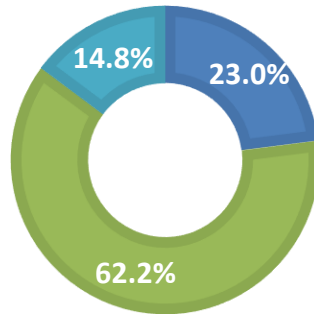
2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**12,171**              **33.1%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**12,983**              **41.7**

Male                  Age 65+  
**57.9%**              **1,927**

Female                Under 18  
**42.1%**              **2,475**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. D Ray James Correctional Facility
2. AJM Packaging Corp
3. Folkston Park Rehab & Nursing
4. Bethune Middle School
5. Folkston Elementary School

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$82,600**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.3%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**8.1%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**3,559**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**9.2%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$40,283**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,341**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,692**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**24.4%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Charlton—**16.7%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



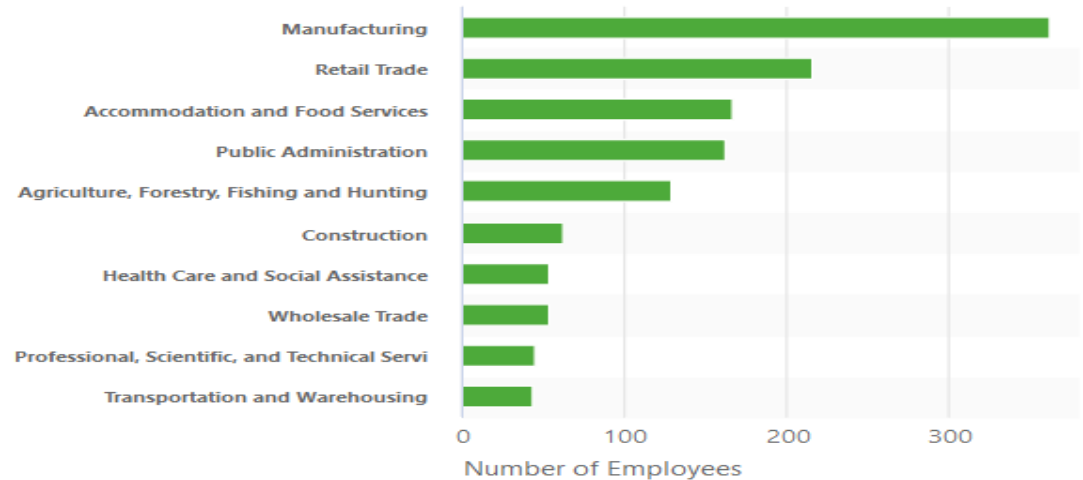
## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Charlton County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# CLINCH COUNTY

County Seat: Homerville  
Founded in 1850

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**6,798**                      **33.0%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**6,743**                      **37.7**

Male                      Age 65+  
**50.8%**                      **1,023**

Female                      Under 18  
**49.2%**                      **1,810**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$57,100**

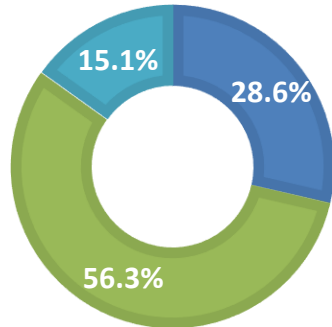
Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.6%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**8.6%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**2,502**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**8.5%**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Mauser Small Packaging
2. Lee Container Corp
3. Clinch County Primary School
4. Clinch Memorial Hospital
5. Dupont Yard, Inc.

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$25,236**

Per Capita Income  
**\$16,538**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,692**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**39.2%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Clinch—**20.5%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Clinch County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer



# COFFEE COUNTY

County Seat: Douglas  
Founded in 1854

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**42,356**            **32.0%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**42,961**            **36.2**

Male                  Age 65+  
**51.4%**            **5,728**

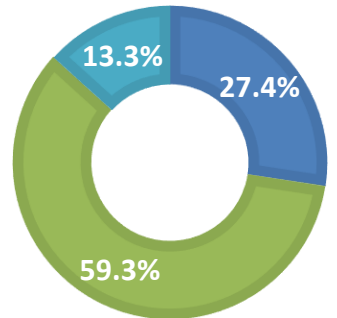
Female                Under 18  
**48.6%**            **10,550**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Pilgrim's Pride Corp
2. Coffee Regional Medical Center
3. PCC Airfoils, Inc.
4. Walmart Supercenter
5. Coffee Correctional Facility

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$92,600**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.0%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**3.6%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**14,298**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**9.4%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$38,266**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,709**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$23,212**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**22.3%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Coffee—**16.0%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



## Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Coffee County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# COOK COUNTY

County Seat: Adel  
Founded in 1918

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**17,212**            **31.0%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**17,184**            **37.4**

Male                  Age 65+  
**48.6%**            **2,665**

Female                Under 18  
**51.4%**            **4,445**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$88,100**

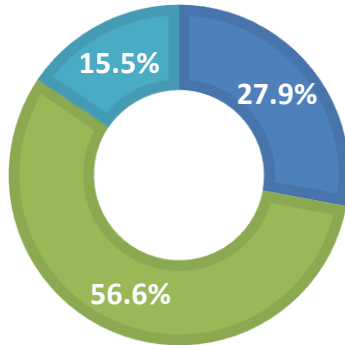
Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.5%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**4.4%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**6,233**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**8.3%**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Walmart Supercenter
2. Williams Investment Co.
3. Adel Public Works Department
4. Southwell Medical Center
5. Vulcan Steel

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$38,408**

Per Capita Income  
**\$19,778**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,692**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**24.0%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Cook—**16.2%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Cook County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# ECHOLS COUNTY

County Seat: Statenville  
Founded in 1858

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**4,034**                    **22.2%**

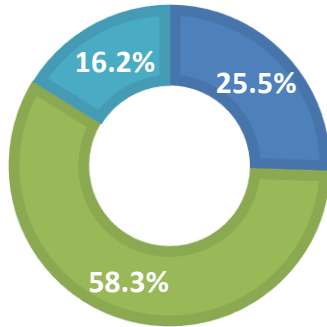
2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**3,994**                    **40.9**

Male                    Age 65+  
**49.4%**                    **646**

Female                Under 18  
**50.6%**                    **861**



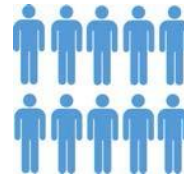
## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



**-0.99%**



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Generation Farms
2. Echols County Schools
3. Coggins Farm and Produce
4. Coggins Farm Supply
5. Little River Produce

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$58,900**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.2%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**8.9%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**1,559**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**2.6%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$34,447**

Per Capita Income  
**\$22,883**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,817**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**26.8%**

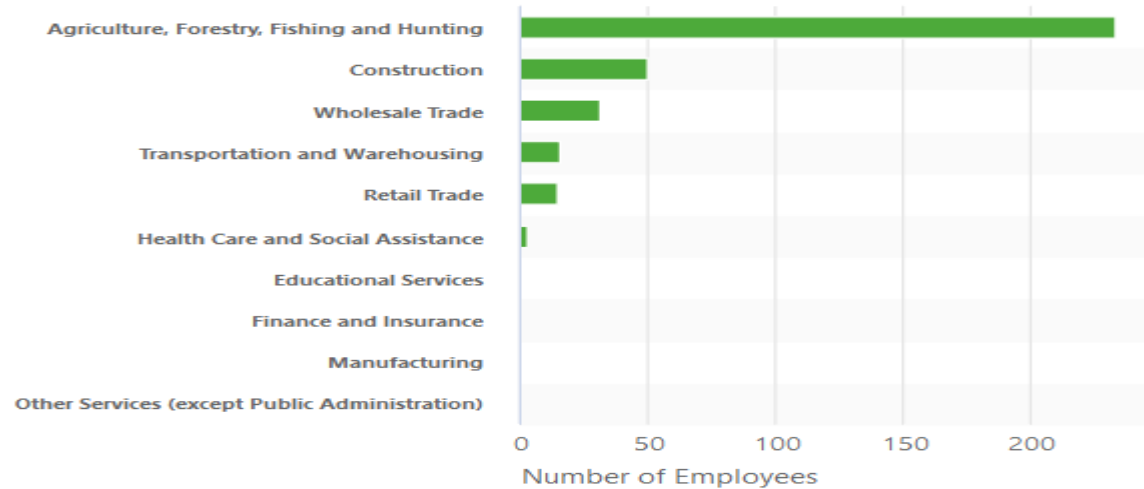
Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Echols—**14.9%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

**Industry Employment Distribution**  
This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Echols County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# IRWIN COUNTY

County Seat: Ocilla  
Founded in 1818

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**9,538**                      **31.8%**

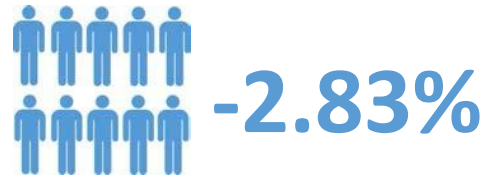
2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**9,268**                      **39.9**

Male                      Age 65+  
**51.3%**                      **1,728**

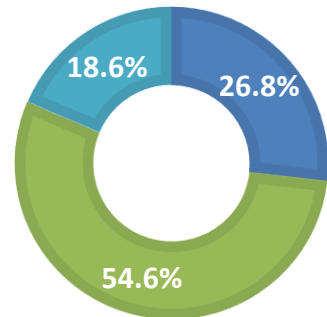
Female                      Under 18  
**48.7%**                      **2,010**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



### LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Irwin County Hospital
2. Irwin County Elementary School
3. Forrest River Inc. - Cargo Division
4. Irwin County Commission
5. Heritage Healthcare at Oseloa

### HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

---

Median Home Value  
**\$74,300**

---

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.7%**

---

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**0.0%**

---

Occupied Housing Units  
**3,291**

---

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**8.0%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$32,339**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,406**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,692**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**26.5%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Irwin—**18.4%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**

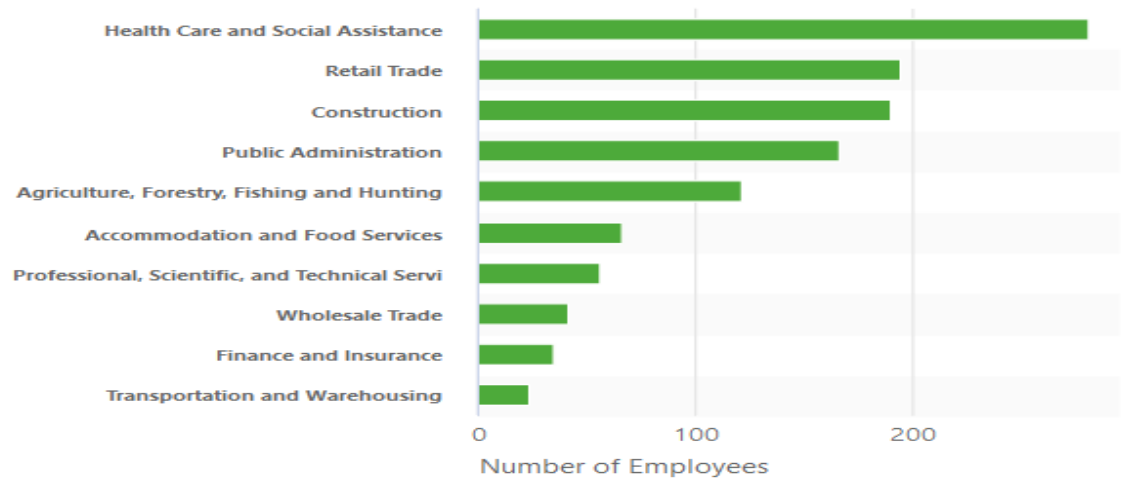


## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison

### Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Irwin County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# LANIER COUNTY

County Seat: Lakeland  
Founded in 1920

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**10,078**            **26.0%**

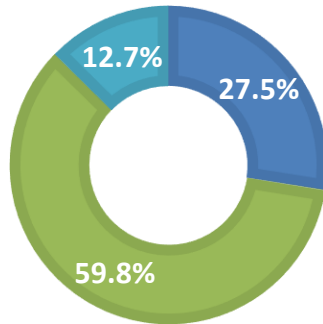
2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**10,366**            **35.4**

Male                  Age 65+  
**50.0%**            **1,319**

Female                Under 18  
**50.0%**            **2,642**



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Affinity Building Systems
2. Lakeland Villa Convalescent Center
3. FMB Bancshares, Inc.
4. Lanier Elementary School
5. Georgia Department of Corrections

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$105,000**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**1.2%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**11.5%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**3,724**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**9.2%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$39,104**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,800**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,817**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**23.8%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Lanier—**16.3%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**

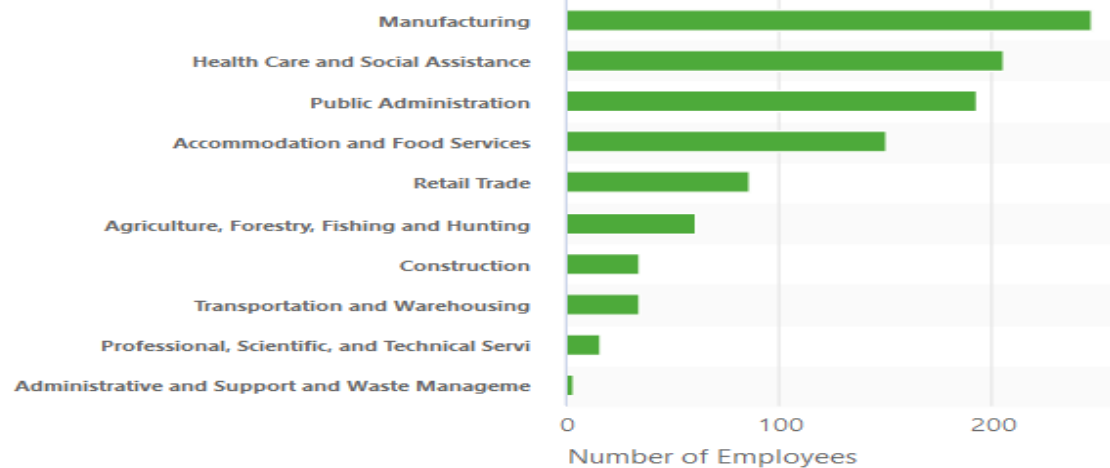


## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

Employee Comparison

## Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Lanier County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

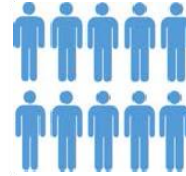
1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# LOWNDES COUNTY

County Seat: Valdosta  
Founded in 1825



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



**4.90%**

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

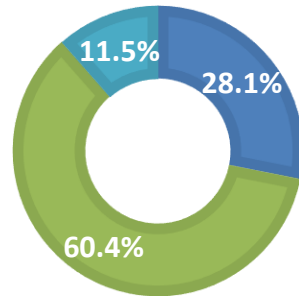
2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**109,233**      **42.2%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**114,582**      **30.2**

Male      Age 65+  
**48.8%**      **13,198**

Female      Under 18  
**51.2%**      **27,452**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Moody Air Force Base
2. Valdosta State University
3. Home Depot Rapid Deployment
4. Wild Adventures Theme Park
5. Walmart Supercenter



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$135,100**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**3.5%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**9.8%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**40,472**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**7.8%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$41,390**

Per Capita Income  
**\$23,077**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,817**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**25.2%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Lowndes—**15.7%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



Number of Employees

● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

## Industry Employment Distribution

This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Lowndes County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# PIERCE COUNTY

County Seat: Blackshear  
Founded in 1857

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**18,758**              **14.4%**

2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**19,164**              **39.4**

Male                  Age 65+  
**50.3%**              **3,174**

Female                Under 18  
**49.7%**              **4,816**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$98,800**

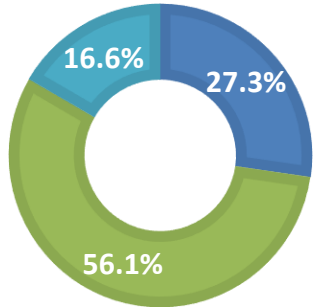
Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.3%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**2.4%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**7,072**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**4.4%**

## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+

## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Stewart Distribution Wholesale
2. Blackshear Elementary
3. Thom's Transport Co
4. Pierce County Nursing Home
5. Mac 44 Forestry LLC

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$44,167**

Per Capita Income  
**\$22,236**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$23,212**

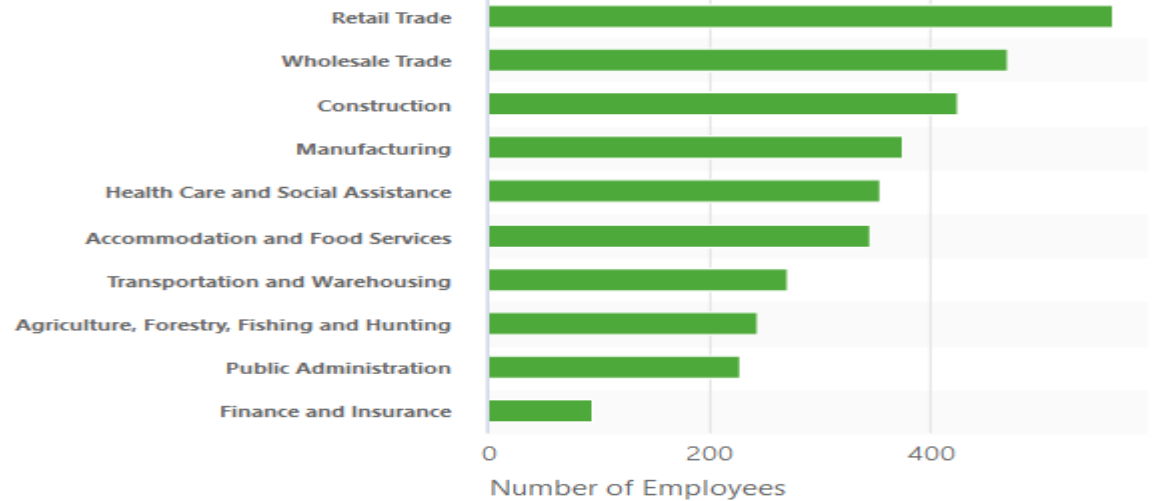
% of People Below Poverty Level  
**21.7%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Pierce—**14.6%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



**Industry Employment Distribution**  
This section shows the industries with the highest number of employees in Pierce County, GA for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2020

1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# TIFT COUNTY

County Seat: Tifton  
Founded in 1905

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>      Minority  
**40,118**              **35.2%**

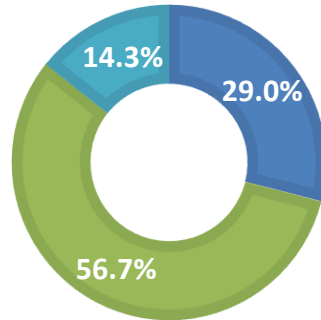
2018 Estimate      Median Age  
**40,510**              **35.5**

Male                  Age 65+  
**48.2%**              **5,778**

Female                Under 18  
**51.8%**              **10,067**



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19   ■ 20-64   ■ 65+



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Target Distribution Center
2. Lewis Taylor Farms, Inc.
3. Wal-Mart Supercenter
4. Heatcraft Refrigeration Products
5. Coastal Plain Experiment Station

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



● Number of Establishments   ● Number of Employees

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$118,900**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**0.6%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**0.0%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**15,058**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**11.6%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$42,790**

Per Capita Income  
**\$22,072**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,609**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**24.7%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Tift—**15.7%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer



# TURNER COUNTY

County Seat: Ashburn  
Founded in 1905

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>  
**8,930**

2018 Estimate  
**7,962**

Male  
**48.3%**

Female  
**51.7%**

Minority  
**45.1%**

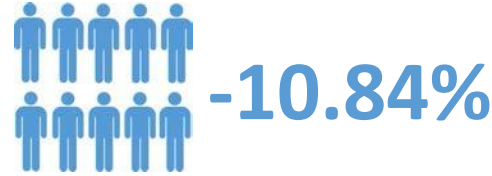
Median Age  
**38.8**

Age 65+  
**1,436**

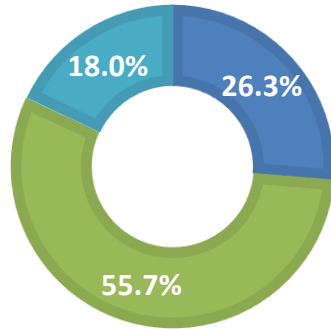
Under 18  
**1,935**



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19 ■ 20-64 ■ 65+



## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Golden Peanut & Tree Nuts
2. Piggly Wiggly
3. Turner County Elementary School
4. Ufp Ashburn
5. Pruitt Health

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$74,000**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**5.0%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**2.1%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**3,023**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**7.6%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$38,341**

Per Capita Income  
**\$18,787**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$22,692**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**35.3%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Turner—**19.9%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

● Number of Establishments ● Number of Employees

# WARE COUNTY

County Seat: Waycross  
Founded in 1824

## POPULATION <sup>2</sup>

2010 Census <sup>1</sup>  
**36,312**

2018 Estimate  
**35,599**

Male  
**49.9%**

Female  
**50.1%**

Minority  
**35.4%**

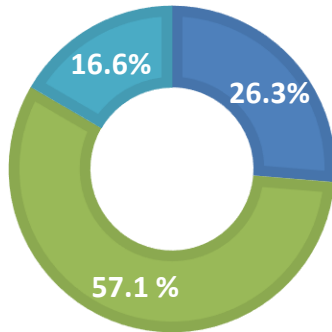
Median Age  
**38.4**

Age 65+  
**5,895**

Under 18  
**8,546**



## TOTAL POPULATION %



■ <19 ■ 20-64 ■ 65+



## POPULATION PERCENTAGE DECREASE 2010-2018 <sup>1</sup>

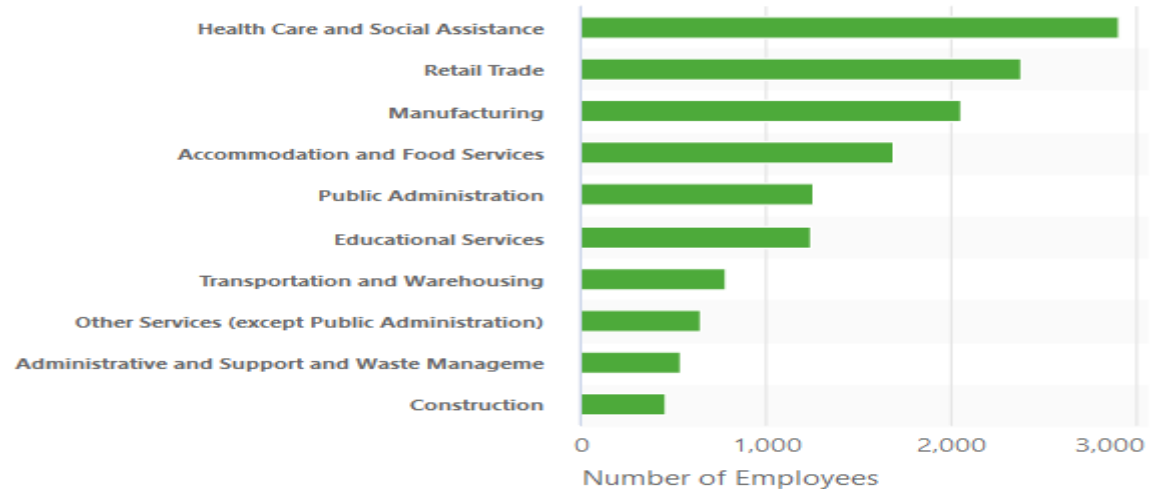


## LARGEST EMPLOYERS <sup>5</sup>

1. Memorial Satilla Health
2. Walmart Supercenter
3. Ware State Prison
4. Mall at Waycross
5. Baptist Village Retirement Community

## LARGEST INDUSTRIES <sup>5</sup>

### Employee Comparison



● Number of Establishments ● Number of Employees

## HOUSING <sup>2</sup>

Median Home Value  
**\$82,000**

Homeowner Vacancy Rate  
**2.9%**

Rental Vacancy Rate  
**3.3%**

Occupied Housing Units  
**13,901**

% of Units with No Vehicle Available  
**8.4%**

## ECONOMIC <sup>2</sup>

Median Household Income  
**\$39,887**

Per Capita Income  
**\$20,457**

Per Capita Living Wage <sup>3</sup>  
**\$21,320**

% of People Below Poverty Level  
**23.7%**

Food Insecurity Rate <sup>4</sup>  
Ware—**16.2%**  
Georgia—**15.8%**  
National—**11.5%**



1. US Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer



## ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The economies of the SGRC region have become more diversified over the past twenty years; however, this diversity did not make the region immune to the national recession. The District has suffered from the ill-effects of numerous industry and business closures that occurred during the recession and resulted in lingering economic distress and persistent unemployment. The economic base for the south-central area of the region is generated from within the south-central area and north-central Florida. The southeastern economic base is generated from within the southeast area, the Georgia coastal area, and northeast Florida.

Southern Georgia is finding ways to reverse negative trends and to move the region forward through regional initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable economic development. Goals for economic development are being integrated with land use and transportation goals and coordinated with the concerns related to natural resources, preservation of the water quality, agriculture, and connectivity in the region.

Barriers to economic prosperity in Southern Georgia are numerous. One of many barriers continues to be the lack of adequate funding to fully serve the planning and economic development needs of this extremely large and distressed region.

Given the challenges that the Southern Georgia region continues to face, economic resilience is crucial. Regional economic prosperity is linked to the area's ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from disruptions to its economic base. According to the Economic Development Administration, in order to develop economic resilience, regions should focus on both steady – state and responsive initiatives with the following two-pronged approach <sup>1</sup>:

- 1. Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region (**steady-state**), and*
- 2. Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (**responsive**).*

The Southern Georgia region has narrowed its focus to the following initiatives, developed from the two-pronged approach:

<sup>1</sup>. <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>

### **Steady-State Initiatives:**

- Engaging in comprehensive planning efforts that involve extensive participation from the community to define and implement a collective vision for resilience
- Undertaking initiatives to broaden the industrial base by identifying emerging clusters that build on the region's unique SWOT
- Constructing and developing a resilient workforce that adapts to a shifting economy
- Maintaining geographic information systems (GIS) that link with business establishment data bases to track regional and local "churns"

### **Responsive Initiatives:**

- Conducting pre-disaster recovery planning to define key responsibilities and actions
- Establishing regular communication of business community needs and issues through the SGRC Economic Development Professionals Advisory Committee
- Establishing strong leadership succession plans
- Further developing broadband through the use of small cells for reliable communication



A goal of this CEDS is to identify where investment can be made to further diversify the region's economic base. Creating local businesses and industries will result in stronger local economies and therefore, economically resilient regions. Through the CEDS Strategy Committee and the SWOT Analysis, four target sectors for growth were identified to support regional economic resilience:

1. *State of Regional Economy, Clusters, Partners & Resources for Economic Development, and Global Competitiveness*
2. *Transportation, Community Facilities/Infrastructure Assets, and Broadband*
3. *Education and Workforce Development*
4. *Population and Housing*

These four target sectors formed the foundation for many development decisions made during the CEDS planning process.

## REGIONAL CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Locating and analyzing the region's economic clusters was crucial to developing the target sectors, and, therefore, the region's CEDS. The wide array of economic clusters in the 18-county Southern Georgia EDD region illustrates the diversity of the district's economy, and a critical component of the region's economic resilience. Currently, there are 15 strongly traded clusters<sup>1</sup> in Southern Georgia.

**Distribution and eCommerce** is the most dominant regional traded cluster, employing nearly 8,500 people in the region. Subclusters making up this regional cluster include warehousing/storage, wholesale of electrical and electronic goods, wholesale of apparel and accessories, and others.

**Wood Products** is the second most dominate cluster, employing just over 2,300 people in the region. Subclusters making up this region cluster include wood processing, wood components/products, and prefabricated wood buildings.

Of the region's 18 counties, the majority have numerous clusters making up their local economies.

The cluster analysis identifies areas of potential development and expansion within the four target sectors that will enhance economic resilience and growth in the Southern Georgia region.



1. Source: <http://clustermapping.us>

# STRATEGIC TARGET SECTORS



State of Regional Economy, Clusters, Partners & Resources for Economic Development, and Global Competitiveness

---



Transportation, Community Facilities / Infrastructure Assets, and Broadband

---



Education and Workforce Development

---



Population and Housing

# ACTION PLAN

The Southern Georgia Regional CEDS, based primarily on community input, examines the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in order to identify regional priorities and needs.

From this analysis, the CEDS Committee set forth goals and objectives to be achieved by solving the economic problems of the region. All strategic projects, programs, and activities identified in the CEDS will work to fulfill the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. The goals represent broad, primary regional expectations.

The CEDS Strategy Committee developed four goals from the Strategic Target Sectors for the CEDS:

**Goal 1:** Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.

**Goal 2:** Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.

**Goal 3:** Facilitate growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.

**Goal 4:** Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population and to attract new members to our community.



State of Regional  
Economy, Clusters,  
Partners and  
Resources for  
Economic  
Development and  
Global  
Competitiveness

# Goal 1



*Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.*

The region covers 18 counties from the coastal region to west of I-75 and from the Florida border to north of Ashburn. While the Region has a strong agricultural foundation, four distinct regional economies exist grouped around the larger retail centers Valdosta, county seat of Lowndes County, also part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the region; Waycross with its ties to the coastal region; Douglas; and Tifton. Southern Georgia is also well known for its abundant and accessible natural resources including the Okefenokee Swamp, agricultural lands, timber and water supply.

If prudently and conservatively managed, these resources will increasingly serve as economic attractors for many years to come, even as other regions experience declines in the quality and quantity of those resources. The Region as a whole should also invest in providing ample start-up opportunities for the graduates from the Region's universities and technical colleges. This would serve to retain this very skilled workforce in the area, thereby stimulating the economy further through secondary and tertiary effects.





## GOAL 1: Strategies and Objectives

### *Coordinate economic development initiatives with a variety of economic development entities.*

- Promote coordination among all economic development entities in the region.
- Promote region-wide export data study.
- Promote coordination between the local governments and area businesses and agencies to identify ways to attract and retain more young, workforce age population to the region.

### *Coordinate local, state, and federal economic development planning and implementation.*

- Facilitate ongoing economic development programs that result in improvements in the regional tax base and jobs.
- Provide adequate transportation systems to meet the needs of existing and new businesses and industries including a connection of all counties to interstate highways with four-lane roads.

### *Promote regional collaboration for even stronger networks between 18 counties.*

- Strengthen and expand existing entrepreneurial support networks in rural areas.
- Promote business and entrepreneur learning opportunities.
- Focus on ways to encourage and facilitate regional tourism.

### *Support Economic Innovation*

- Market the region as a location of choice for companies' headquarters in target industries.
- Improve access to capital for all types of businesses.
- Identify ways to help traditional manufacturers to repurpose assets and adopt advanced technologies.

## METRICS

- Revenue growth for key industries
- Number of businesses and entrepreneurs receiving services from community colleges and workforce development programs
- Number of new entrepreneurs/businesses
- Volume of small business lending and private investment



Transportation,  
Community  
Facilities,  
Infrastructure  
Assets, and  
Broadband

# Goal 2



*Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.*

Existing and future transportation infrastructure has a great impact on the region's and individual communities' growth and development, including potential for economic development, land use practices, and quality of life for residents.

The region needs to work with its communities in seeking to enhance the transportation infrastructure by constructing missing connections, improving safety, prioritizing projects to promote economic development, and also by providing for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure which will serve to enhance quality of life for residents and to provide for tourism opportunities and connections.

Water and sewer infrastructure are important services offered throughout the region, primarily in the incorporated areas, often acting as an engine to neighborhood rehabilitation or economic development. Many jurisdictions are faced with aged and outdated infrastructure, systems at or near capacity, and the need for expansion of water and sewer lines to meet increasing demand in services. Limited funds force postponement of all except the most urgent projects.

Broadband internet access is another important service becoming increasingly prevalent to economic development in the region. As business and industry progress and modernize, communities depend on reliable broadband internet access to develop, attract, retain and expand their economies. It also allows local businesses to compete in national and global markets, a possibility previously challenging and even unattainable for rural communities. Broadband has also become absolutely crucial to the progression of schools and essential in educating the future workforce. Broadband even plays an important role in healthcare, allowing critical access for rural medical facilities.

For the benefit of the region as a whole, future major infrastructure projects should be coordinated locally and regionally to efficiently provide services and properly direct future growth while minimizing impacts on the environment.





## GOAL 2: Strategies and Objectives

*Ensure that the region's transportation systems are intact to facilitate growth.*

- Encourage local governments to review their comprehensive plans, study growth patterns, and plan growth according to transportation attributes.
- Encourage local governments to establish transportation systems.
- Encourage local governments to implement the Southern Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian plan.

*Improve broadband access in rural communities.*

- Identify areas where High Speed Internet & Broadband are needed.
- Identify locations where additional bandwidth is needed.
- Develop small cells in communities without reliable broadband access.
- Provide incentives for broadband; i.e. Electric Membership Cooperatives.

*Ensure public facilities are adequate to accommodate existing and future growth.*

- Strive to provide industrial parks/properties with all the necessary infrastructure and transportation links to attract new and expanding businesses and industries to the area.
- Assess availability of speculatively built buildings and other buildings.
- Provide availability of adequate financing and/or financial incentives to attract new and expanding businesses and industries to the region.

*Facilitate upgrades and improvements to water and sewer infrastructure.*

- Continue to monitor grant opportunities and inform local communities about upcoming deadlines and assist local governments in the grant preparation and application process.
- Coordinate local government infrastructure capital improvement plans with available funding opportunities.
- Research and make available various state and federal grants and loan programs that can be utilized for local and regional infrastructure development.

### METRICS

- Volume of water and sewer capacity
- Number of grants funded for local infrastructure improvements
- Number of new businesses and industries recruited to the region
- Number of communities with broadband access

## Education and Workforce Development

# Goal 3



*Facilitate growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.*

Workforce development through education and training is a critical need for economic development in Southern Georgia. Statistics show that a high poverty, low diversity region can turn away both potential employers and a potential workforce. Low literacy and educational attainment can cripple the attempts at industry diversification towards high skill/high wage job growth. If higher paying industries are to be recruited to the region, then higher skilled employees must be trained and made available. Education and training are recognized as critical needs.

Fortunately, there are a number of regionally significant programs available that are making a difference in the lives of educated and/or untrained workers in the region, and the CEDS Committee has recognized several opportunities for growth and development of the workforce.

In an effort to utilize available programs and resources, the region will market Technical Colleges and Workforce Development Programs in the area and the resources they have available. Programs such as the Hope Career Grant and Great Promise Partnership give students options, but many of them are unaware of the resources available.

Connecting students with resources will help to develop a competent workforce, and also incentivize the younger generation to stay local by recognizing the opportunities available to them.

Through the analysis of the economy and recognizing clusters of industry, the region can continue to develop a beneficial and productive workforce. In order for the economy to thrive, it is critical that a skilled, prepared, diverse workforce accommodates the needs of the region.





## GOAL 3: Strategies and Objectives

*Develop a well trained professional, technical, and skilled workforce capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.*

- Improve educational attainment by reducing high school drop-out rates
- Market Workforce Development Programs that enable youth and adults to pursue higher education opportunities.

*Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.*

- Encourage private/public partnerships between counties, cities, local businesses, and schools for the development of work programs and career education programs such as career academies for young adults.
- Support educational institutions to provide learning/skill development opportunities.

*Launch Workforce initiatives to align training and educational opportunities to target industries for critical, in-demand occupations.*

- Facilitate the incorporation of applied economics, soft skills, and work ethics in the middle and high school classrooms to prepare students with job ready knowledge.
- Inventory statewide and local K-12 and community college programs that serve targeted industries.
- Collaborate with Workforce Development Board and partners to

address workforce skill development at all ages - primary, secondary, adult, and senior - with a special focus on upgrading skills of the under-skilled population.

*Improve efforts to prepare workers for available jobs.*

- Work closely with business and industry to ensure that the system is not only producing workers to meet its immediate needs, but making adjustments in anticipation of future needs and technological changes.
- Work closely with core partners and other agencies to move individuals from the labor market to further education and training in order to advance in their careers and upgrade their contributions to the workplace.
- Provide support services to adults, youth, and dislocated workers during the pursuit of education and training.

### METRICS

- Number of jobs created/retained after implementation of the CEDS
- Number of industry recognized certificates issued for specific training programs
- Number of students in career and technical education programs that are linked to in-demand jobs
- Number of workers trained, placed, or otherwise impacted by workforce sector initiatives

# Population and Housing

## Goal 4



*Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population, and to attract new members to our community.*

Understanding population/demographic trends in the region forms the basis for assessing and formulating policies and projects in economic development, land use, and community facilities and services, infrastructure and housing. While some areas in the region have experienced population growth, specifically a rise in senior population, the younger generation tends to leave the area after high school and college to pursue higher education and higher paying jobs.

Creating greater diversity in the population will contribute to a greater diversity in the workforce skills and cultural backgrounds which can contribute to a more well-rounded society with a higher quality of life for all. Therefore, local jurisdictions and the Regional Commission can expand their efforts for the region to appeal to all ages. One way to accomplish this is through creating an inviting sense of place through rural housing renewal.

A community specific and region-wide effort should be undertaken to provide an adequate and diverse supply of quality housing stock in the region to serve the existing and future workforce. This will assist to sustain and improve the economy by attracting and retaining prospective employers.

Various age groups and cultures require distinct needs for housing, medical services, recreation and transportation. A current housing inventory not only allows a community to determine its housing needs, but also to assess the adequacy of their current housing stock in regards to age and condition, number and types, owner or renter occupied, costs and commuting distance. When a community supplies quality housing for its workforce, it also provides a valuable marketing tool for recruitment of new employers.





## GOAL 4: Strategies and Objectives

### *Revitalize downtowns throughout the region.*

- Provide technical assistance to help jurisdictions become Main Street Communities.
- Collaborate to develop county-wide historic preservation plans.
- Encourage local governments to inventory their historic and cultural resources in the area.
- Promote downtown areas for tourism and recreation.
- Increase Code Enforcement in communities surrounding downtown areas.

### *Facilitate vibrant, attractive communities.*

- Create welcoming, functional neighborhoods with "work, play, live" atmospheres to invite younger families to the region.
- Rehabilitate dilapidated housing throughout the region.
- Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.
- Work with local governments to develop ordinances for manufactured home usage and placement.

### *Develop strategies for creating and sustaining a diverse population.*

- Seek additional funding streams to address senior population program sustainability.
- Expand evidence based programs to help seniors live healthier and more independent lives.
- Market "unique" aspects of community to attract younger population.
- Implement Economic Development and Workforce CEDS goals to attract younger population.

### *Raise awareness about the importance of local planning in ensuring connections between transportation, housing, services, and job centers to create healthier, safer communities.*

- Facilitate collaboration and communication among partners for investments in housing and public services.
- Continue to utilize Southern Georgia Regional Commission services for transportation, housing, and land use planning.

## METRICS

- Number of Main Street Communities
- Number of Code Enforcement violations issued
- Resources available to aging population
- Population demographics
- Number of grants awarded for housing rehabilitation



## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is the Implementation schedule for the CEDS. The performance measures for each goal are referenced with responsible entities and within an estimated timeframe for completion.

Goal	Performance Measures	Responsible Entity	Timeframe Short (1-3 years) Mid (3-5 years) Long (5+ years) Ongoing
<b>Goal 1: State of Regional Economy, Clusters, Partners and Resources for Economic Development, and Global Competitiveness</b>			
	Region-wide export data study	SGRC, Chambers, Economic Dev Authorities	Short
	Organize regional entrepreneurial networking sessions	WDB, Chambers	Short
	Complete target sector reports	SGRC, Chambers, Industrial & Economic Dev Authorities	Short
	Develop a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local farms	Chambers, Industrial & Economic Dev Authorities	Mid
	Develop county/region-wide tourism plan	SGRC, Chambers	Long
	Expand ag business and agri-tourism through value-added ag product businesses, locally made and locally grown	Chambers, Economic Development Authorities, Local Governments	Long
<b>Goal 2: Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure Assets, and Broadband</b>			
	Identify areas where internet and broadband is needed	SGRC, Local Governments	Short
	Identify areas where bandwidth is needed	SGRC, Local Governments	Short
	Develop Small Cells	Local Governments, Service Providers	Long
	Provide incentives for broadband	Local Governments, State	Long
	Monitor grant opportunities for infrastructure improvements	SGRC	Ongoing
	Market proximity to major ports	Industrial/Dev Authorities	Ongoing
	Continue to evaluate transportation and make critical improvements	SGRC, Local Governments	Ongoing
	Assess industrial parks/properties	Industrial/Dev Authorities	Short



Goal	Performance Measures	Responsible Entity	Timeframe Short (1-3 years) Mid (3-5 years) Long (5+ years) Ongoing
<b>Goal 3: Education and Workforce Development</b>			
	Reduce High School drop-out rates	SGRC Region	Ongoing
	Inventory statewide and local K-12 and community college programs that serve targeted industries	WDB, SGRC	Mid
	Advertise services available through and promote continued utilization of skills centers through the Workforce Investment Opportunity Program and Labor Department	WDB	Ongoing
	Create a Youth Entrepreneurship program to train and encourage area youth to start new businesses as a career option	SGRC Region, Chamber	Mid
	Advertise Technical College and Workforce Development resources	Technical Colleges, Workforce Development Board	Ongoing
<b>Goal 4: Population and Housing</b>			
	Continue to foster and support the rehabilitation/reconstruction of affordable housing	Local Governments	Ongoing
	Develop a plan to attract more middle to high-end housing units to attract the workforce commuters in this area	Economic Development Authorities, Chambers, Local Governments	Mid
	Increase Code Enforcement	Local Governments	Mid
	Implement the HOME/CHIP rehab programs	Local Governments, SGRC	Short
	Develop local loan pool from banks for housing assistance/repair/ or demolition	SGRC Region	Long
	Main Street Organization and Promotions committee continue coordinating a variety of events to market downtown	Main Street Communities	Short
	Seek additional funding streams to address senior population program sustainability	SGRC, Economic Development Authorities, Local Governments	Mid



# Appendix

# SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL

County Representative	Municipal Representative	Private Sector Representative	
Atkinson	Lace Futch	Robert Johnson	Janice McKinnon
Bacon	Andy Hutto	Larry Taylor	Lisa Coley
Ben Hill	Steve Taylor	Jim Puckett	Jason Dunn
Berrien	Ronnie Gaskins	Taylor Scarbrough	Lisa Smart
Brantley	Skipper Harris	Barbara Maefield	Vacant
Brooks	James Maxwell	Nancy Dennard	Zurich Deshazior
Charlton	James Everett	Lee Gowen	Vacant
Clinch	Roger Metts	Willie Hardee, Jr.	Vacant
Coffee	Johnny Wayne Jowers	Robert Moore	Adam Smith
Cook	Jeff Lane	Buddy Duke	Derry Bennett
Echols	Kenneth Petty	N/A	Cheryl Garner
Irwin	Joey Whitley	Matt Seale	Mona Paulk
Lanier	Dennis Fender	Bill Darsey	John Fitton
Lowndes	Joyce Evans	Vivian Miller-Cody	Anthony Payton
Pierce	Neal Bennett	Kevin Grissom	Andy Brannen
Tift	Grady Thompson	Julie Smith	Brian Marlowe
Turner	Nick Denham	Sandra Lumpkin	Vacant
Ware	Vacant	Michael-Angelo James	Barbara King
Governor's Office	Norman "Bo" Lovein III	Lt. Governor's Office	Keith Stone
	Guy Daughtrey		
	Jonathan Jones	Speaker's Office	Vacant

## Local Workforce Development Board Member List

Member Name	Title	Entity	Board Category
Frank Bannamon	Recruiter/Retention Specialist	McKinney Medical Center, Inc.	Business Representative
Chris Beckham	Executive Director	Legacy Village of Tifton	Business Representative
Seaborn (Wally) Bell	President/CEO	Composite Research, Inc.	Business Representative
Keith Bryant	Owner	Fastech Graphics	Business Representative
Tom Clark	CEO	Georgia Printco	Business Representative
Elton Dixon	President	Enay Coaching, LLC	Business Representative
Jonathan Gray	Complex Manager	Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.	Business Representative
Sean Panizzi	Branch Manager	Teamtemps Personal Staffing, Inc.	Business Representative
Courtney Taylor	Human Resources Manager	Optima Chemical Group	Business Representative
Jennifer Rowland	Human Resources Manager	Satilla EMC	Business Representative
Traci Steed	VP of Operations	Southeast Pipe	Business Representative
Darlene Tait	Human Resources Supervisor	AJM Packaging	Business Representative
Katrena Felder	Executive Director of Adult Education	Coastal Pines Technical College	Education & Training
Shanon McConico	Dean of Student Affairs	Wiregrass Georgia Technical College	Education & Training
Leigh Wallace	Executive VP & VP of Student Affairs	Southern Regional Technical College	Education & Training
Grady Burrell	Assistant Business Agent	International Brotherhood of Teamsters	Workforce
Myrtice Edwards	Program Coordinator	Telamon Corporation	Workforce
Melvin Johnson	Director	Lee Street Resource Center	Workforce
Ben Lott	Business Representative	International Union of Painters & Allied Trades	Workforce
Kevin Ellis	Executive Director	Alma/Bacon County Development Authority	Government & Economic Dev.
Jennifer Gillard	Rehabilitation Unit Manager	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Government & Economic Dev.
Curtis Griffin	Deputy Director	Waycross/Blackshear Housing Authority	Government & Economic Dev.
Jamon Williams	Regional Project Manager	Georgia Department of Economic Development	Government & Economic Dev.

## Southern Georgia EDD Regional Data

County	Poverty Rate			Median Household Income			Per Capita Income			Unemployment**	
	2020*	2015	2010	2020*	2015	2010	2020*	2015	2010	#	%
Atkinson	30.0	29.9	28.0	\$ 34,877	\$ 30,403	\$ 33,834	\$ 18,565	\$ 16,228	\$ 15,456	140	3.4
Bacon	27.2	20.4	16.5	\$ 36,964	\$ 37,698	\$ 31,429	\$ 19,634	\$ 18,109	\$ 17,110	188	4.1
Ben Hill	31.6	36.2	26.9	\$ 32,705	\$ 30,643	\$ 30,134	\$ 17,563	\$ 15,497	\$ 15,529	329	6.3
Berrien	26.3	25.3	23.1	\$ 37,297	\$ 31,812	\$ 32,202	\$ 18,611	\$ 16,660	\$ 16,049	347	4.9
Brantley	24.1	20.9	21.4	\$ 37,031	\$ 36,301	\$ 37,343	\$ 18,904	\$ 16,774	\$ 18,905	331	5.2
Brooks	27.0	27.8	17.0	\$ 34,322	\$ 31,686	\$ 41,309	\$ 23,421	\$ 19,473	\$ 20,346	350	5.2
Charlton	24.4	18.0	19.8	\$ 40,283	\$ 41,059	\$ 40,850	\$ 19,341	\$ 17,586	\$ 16,652	162	3.6
Clinch	39.2	34.6	25.7	\$ 25,236	\$ 29,125	\$ 31,963	\$ 16,538	\$ 18,256	\$ 16,709	105	4.4
Coffee	22.3	26.0	21.3	\$ 38,266	\$ 34,523	\$ 35,202	\$ 19,709	\$ 16,796	\$ 16,664	1,013	5.5
Cook	24.0	25.1	23.3	\$ 38,408	\$ 34,230	\$ 31,390	\$ 19,778	\$ 18,858	\$ 16,528	373	4.7
Echols	26.8	30.1	32.1	\$ 34,447	\$ 32,667	\$ 32,390	\$ 22,883	\$ 17,350	\$ 14,201	66	3.6
Irwin	26.5	22.3	25.4	\$ 32,339	\$ 36,729	\$ 38,376	\$ 18,406	\$ 18,614	\$ 16,561	162	5.0
Lanier	23.8	30.6	20.4	\$ 39,104	\$ 36,904	\$ 37,522	\$ 18,800	\$ 16,860	\$ 16,894	167	4.6
Lowndes	25.2	25.3	21.6	\$ 41,390	\$ 37,248	\$ 39,096	\$ 23,077	\$ 19,353	\$ 20,041	2,907	5.7
Pierce	21.7	20.0	15.4	\$ 44,167	\$ 41,685	\$ 37,062	\$ 22,236	\$ 21,601	\$ 18,283	343	4.2
Tift	24.7	27.7	22.8	\$ 42,790	\$ 34,830	\$ 36,847	\$ 22,072	\$ 19,560	\$ 18,394	989	5.0
Turner	35.3	24.8	25.4	\$ 38,341	\$ 29,763	\$ 30,763	\$ 18,787	\$ 17,215	\$ 15,973	248	8.1
Ware	23.7	26.2	20.5	\$ 39,887	\$ 35,247	\$ 35,517	\$ 20,457	\$ 18,341	\$ 18,295	757	5.1
<b>Avg Total</b>	26.9	26.2	22.6	\$ 37,095	\$ 34,586	\$ 35,179	\$ 19,932	\$ 17,952	\$ 17,444	8,977	4.9
<b>Difference</b>	+ 10.9	+ 7.7	+ 6.9	\$ - 18,584	\$-14,756	\$-14,168	\$ - 9,591	\$ -7,475	\$ - 7,690		1.4
<b>State Total</b>	16.0	18.5	15.7	\$ 55,679	\$ 49,342	\$ 49,347	\$ 29,523	\$ 25,427	\$ 25,134	309,503	6.3
<b>Difference</b>	+ 12.8	+10.6	+ 8.8	\$ - 23,198	\$-18,896	\$-16,735	\$ -12,689	\$-10,603	\$ - 9,890		2.8
<b>US Total</b>	14.1	15.6	13.8	\$ 60,293	\$ 53,482	\$ 51,914	\$ 32,621	\$ 28,555	\$ 27,334	12,277,000	7.7

\*2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimate

\*\*GDOL, Sept. 2020

Table 1. Industry Projections for Multiple Industries in Southern Georgia Workforce Investment Area in 2012-2022

Industry	Industry Code	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Total 2012-2022 Employment Change	Annual Avg. Percent Change	Total Percent Change
Total. All Industries	000000	146,010	164,850	18,840	1.22%	12.90%
Accommodation and Food Services	72	13,210	13,880	670	0.50%	5.08%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	56	6,230	9,060	2,830	3.81%	45.36%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	11	5,140	4,070	-1,070	-2.31%	-20.85%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	71	1,180	1,450	270	2.08%	22.85%
Construction	23	4,720	6,190	1,470	2.75%	31.20%
Educational Services	61	14,920	18,960	4,040	2.43%	27.10%
Finance and Insurance	52	3,050	3,420	370	1.15%	12.09%
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	18,960	24,260	5,300	2.50%	27.95%
Information	51	1,970	2,010	40	0.20%	2.03%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	55	830	870	40	0.50%	5.07%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	21	50	40	-10	-2.11%	-19.23%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	81	4,560	5,080	520	1.09%	11.46%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	54	2,850	3,970	1,120	3.37%	39.29%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	53	1,260	1,610	350	2.43%	27.14%
Utilities	22	580	600	20	0.36%	3.62%
Wholesale Trade	42	4,620	5,710	1,090	2.14%	23.57%

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Projections Unit

Table 2. Occupations by Projected Growth

The table below shows the occupations with the highest estimated annual openings in Southern Georgia Workforce Investment Area, Georgia for the 2012 - 2022 time period.

Occupation	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	2012- 2022 Annual Percent Change	Estimated Annual Openings	Total 2012- 2022 Employment Change
Combined Food Preparation and Servino Workers Includina Fast Food	5,030	5,670	1.2	250	640
Laborers and Freight, Stock,and Material Movers, Hand	3,030	3,630	1.8	150	600
Customer Service Reoresentatives	1 980	2 560	2.6	110	580
Elementary SchoolTeachers, Except Special Educaton	1,810	2,370	2.7	100	560
Team Assemblers	2,500	2,950	1.7	90	450
Registered Nurses	2,740	3,170	1.5	90	430
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,260	1,660	2.8	70	400
Nursing Assistants	2,210	2,590	1.6	80	380
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,610	2,980	1.3	80	370
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technicaland Scientific Products	1,550	1,910	2.1	70	360
Office Clerks General	3 120	3 470	1.1	110	350
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,490	1,840	2.1	70	350
General and Operations Managers	1,960	2,300	1.6	70	340
Construction Laborers	1 420	1 760	2.2	70	340
Childcare Workers	1,310	1,640	2.3	70	330
Retail Salespersons	5,510	5,830	0.6	220	320
Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,260	1,580	2.3	60	320
Teacher Assistants	1 190	1 470	2.1	60	280
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,590	1,870	1.6	60	280
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,790	2,050	1.4	60	260
Correctional Officers and Jailers	2,010	2,230	1.0	80	220
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	2,070	2,140	0.3	70	70
Cashiers	4 470	4 520	0.1	200	50
Waiters and Waitresses	2,250	2,280	0.1	110	30
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	2,040	1,590	-2.5	60	-450

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Projections Unit

## Educational Attainment of Workforce 25 years & older 2010 Census 2018 ACS 5-year est., Table S1501

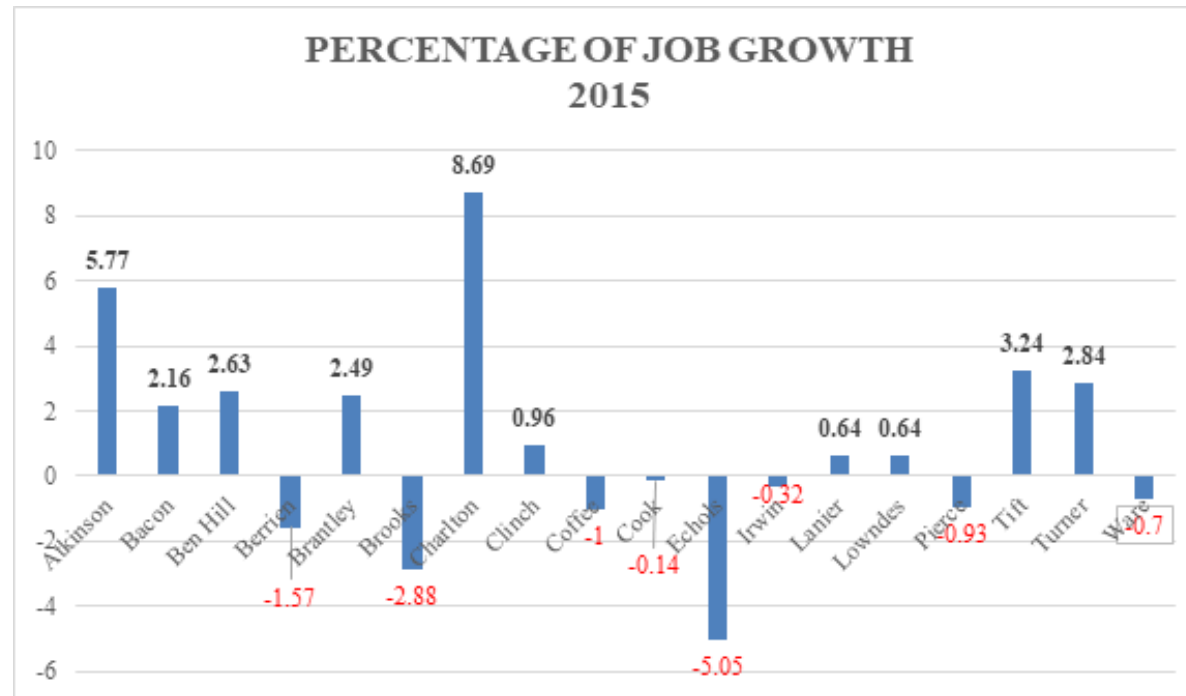
County	Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, no diploma	High School Graduate, GED or equivalent	Some College, no degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	Total
Atkinson	787	828	2,109	657	330	268	251	5,230
Bacon	398	974	3,112	1,599	597	439	310	7,429
Ben Hill	614	1,363	5,044	2,046	963	843	527	11,400
Berrien	726	2,138	5,526	2,146	973	1,004	537	13,050
Brantley	625	885	5,842	2,151	1,004	557	468	12,532
Brooks	663	1,249	4,223	2,308	967	1,165	521	11,096
Charlton	1,045	1,372	3,532	1,480	658	415	538	9,040
Clinch	447	865	1,428	981	277	277	223	4,498
Coffee	2,017	4,294	10,771	5,088	2,054	2,137	1,546	27,907
Cook	723	1,538	3,879	2,247	1,130	1,092	660	11,269
Echols	328	479	1,081	523	171	166	84	2,832
Irwin	252	890	2,518	951	706	564	325	6,206
Lanier	479	930	2,439	1,214	652	740	378	6,832
Lowndes	2,699	7,302	20,161	14,289	5,616	9,972	7,213	67,252
Pierce	577	1,542	5,718	2,509	1,091	836	714	12,987
Tift	1,320	3,385	8,886	4,849	3,093	2,298	1,959	25,790
Turner	241	725	2,216	959	656	395	290	5,482
Ware	1,115	3,012	9,879	4,757	2,058	2,022	1,336	24,179

## Employment Comparison– Georgia Trend April 2017

County	Rank in Region 2015	Year 2015 Employment	Rank in Region 2017	Year 2017 Employment	Rank in State 2014	Rank in State 2015	Rank in State 2017	% Average Annual Growth 2011-2017
Lowndes	1	48,169	1	49,612	17	17	17	1.39
Tift	2	18,685	2	19,596	37	37	38	1.49
Coffee	4	15,691	3	16,933	41	42	42	2.66
Ware	3	14,589	4	15,186	45	45	45	0.95
Ben Hill	5	5,549	5	5,336	86	87	88	-1.15
Bacon	6	4,180	6	4,412	99	98	97	4.49
Pierce	7	3,915	7	4,126	101	99	99	2.29
Cook	8	3,909	8	4,072	98	100	100	0.66
Berrien	9	3,412	9	3,195	104	104	109	-2.64
Brooks	10	3,018	10	2,900	111	111	114	-1.66
Clinch	11	2,483	11	2,509	121	119	118	0.42
Atkinson	15	1,953	12	2,414	130	128	119	9.85
Brantley	12	2,125	13	2,241	124	124	124	1.68
Turner	13	2,109	14	2,137	127	125	127	0.33
Charlton	14	2,005	15	1,974	126	127	128	-1.34
Irwin	16	1,769	16	1,711	129	130	134	-2.79
Lanier	17	1,580	17	1,648	137	137	136	3.56
Echols	18	755	18	692	150	152	152	-2.01
Fulton				842,267	1	1	1	2.72
Taliaferro				191	159	159	159	3.23
State Total				4,370,882	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.54

Source: US Census Bureau



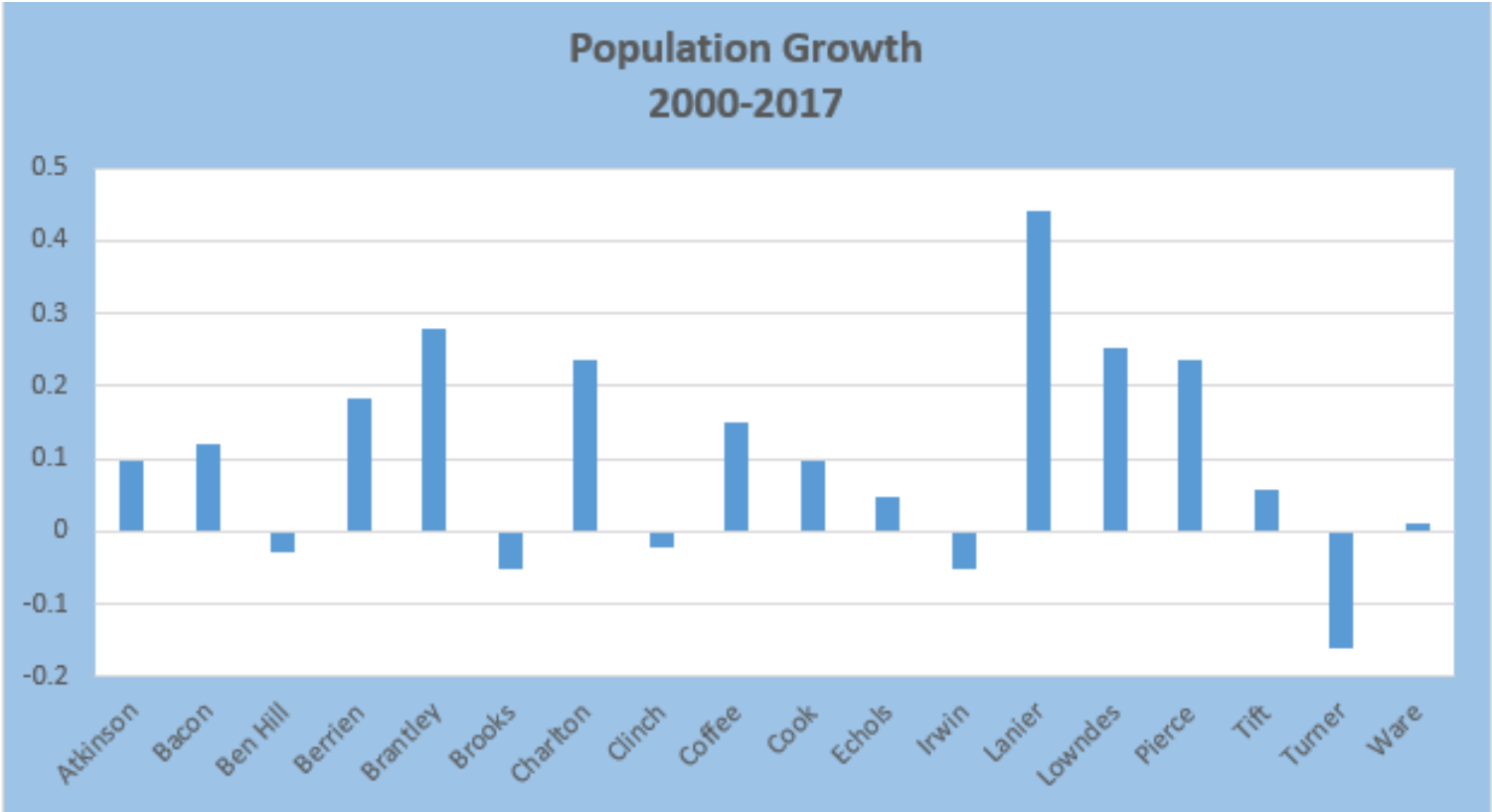


#### Employment Comparison

- Eight of the eighteen counties experienced a loss of employment for the period 2011 – 2015.
- Six of the eighteen experienced a loss in 2017. Ten counties gained employment; Lanier (3.56), Bacon (4.49), Atkinson (9.85), Pierce (0.95), Brantley (1.68), Cook (9.85), Lowndes (1.39), Tift (1.49), Ware (0.95), and Turner (0.33). *(As seen on previous page)*
- Of the eight counties that lost employment, five had a larger loss percentage than that of the State of Georgia.

*Source: SGRC Regional Plan Update*

# Population Change from 2000-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Lowndes, Pierce, Bacon, Cook, and Brantley Counties have had the highest population growth. The most population loss has been in Turner and Charlton Counties. Overall, the regional population is quite steady.

# Identification of Community and Private Sector Partners

The following is a listing of initially identified Community and Private Sector Partners:

## Local Governments:

*Atkinson County*  
*City of Pearson*  
*City of Willacoochee*  
*Bacon County*  
*City of Alma*  
*Ben Hill County*  
*City of Fitzgerald*  
*Berrien County*  
*City of Alapaha*  
*City of Enigma*  
*City of Nashville*  
*City of Ray City*  
*Brantley County*  
*City of Hoboken*  
*City of Nahunta*  
*Brooks County*  
*City of Barwick*  
*City of Morven*  
*City of Pavo*  
*City of Quitman*  
*Charlton County*

*City of Folkston*  
*City of Homeland*  
*Clinch County*  
*City of Argyle*  
*City of Dupont*  
*City of Fargo*  
*City of Homerville*  
*Coffee County*  
*City of Ambrose*  
*City of Broxton*  
*City of Douglas*  
*City of Nicholls*  
*Cook County*  
*City of Adel*  
*City of Cecil*  
*City of Lenox*  
*City of Sparks*  
*Echols County*  
*Irwin County*  
*City of Ocilla*  
*Lanier County*  
*City of Lakeland*

*Lowndes County*  
*City of Dasher*  
*City of Hahira*  
*City of Lake Park*  
*City of Remerton*  
*City of Valdosta*  
*Pierce County City*  
*of Blackshear City*  
*of Patterson City*  
*of Offerman Tift*  
*County*  
*City of Omega*  
*City of Tifton*  
*City of Ty Ty*  
*Turner County*  
*City of Ashburn*  
*City of Rebecca*  
*City of Sycamore*  
*Ware County*  
*City of Waycross*

## Other Stakeholders:

*Workforce Investment Boards*  
*Airport Authorities*  
*Boards of Education*  
*Business Owners*  
*Chambers of Commerce*  
*Private Citizens Councils on Aging*  
*Development Authorities*  
*EMA/EMS*  
*Fire Departments*  
*Historic Preservation Boards*  
*Hospitals/Medical Centers*  
*Housing Authorities*  
*Main Street Organizations*  
*Moody Air Force Base Police*  
*Departments Southern Georgia*  
*Regional Commission*  
*State and Federal Agencies*  
*Universities/Colleges*  
*Valdosta/Lowndes MPO*

# Identification of Participation Techniques – Part I

We will and/or have employed the following participation techniques to involve the communities and private sector partners in the CEDS in order to create awareness of the plan and to gather a broad range of input into the development of the plan, and then continue participation for the implementation and evaluation of the plan. Some of the participation techniques are more intended to disseminate information, others to solicit input and participation.

## Informational Techniques:

### *CEDS Update & Implementation Webpage*

This webpage will be part of the Regional Commission website where all the information regarding the CEDS update and subsequent implementation activities will be displayed. The webpage will provide information on all meetings, PDF draft documents and will also include contact information for staff to provide more information, clarifications or details upon request.

### *Facebook Information Sharing Page*

The Facebook page “Southern Georgia Regional Commission Information Center” will serve as an information clearing house to distribute information on meetings, progress, and provide opportunity for comments, especially for those stakeholders that are not able to attend meetings.

### *E-mail*

E-mails will be utilized to notify and invite stakeholders to workshops, meetings and other events.

# Identification of Participation Techniques – Part II

## Participation Techniques:

### *Work Sessions*

Work sessions with stakeholders provide input and feedback on the identification and assessment of the economic development problems and opportunities, and the implementation program including the goals and objectives, plans of action, and the performance standards proposed by staff.

### *Surveys*

A short survey solicited input from Stakeholders on issues and opportunities and performance standards. The survey was distributed by e-mail and made available during various stakeholder meetings.

### *Quarterly CEDS Implementation Meeting*

A regularly scheduled quarterly meeting will be held to discuss the implementation of the CEDS with the stakeholders and partners and to evaluate the status of activities, initiatives and investment priorities.

### *Webpage and Facebook Page*

Both the webpage and Facebook page will not only provide information but are also geared towards providing comments, engaging in discussion, and contacting staff.

# Additional Evaluation Framework

The following are the additional performance measures that will be used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS. These performance measures are: the number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS, the number and types of investments that will be undertaken in the region, the number of jobs retained in the region, the amount of private sector investments in the region after the implementation of the CEDS, and the changes in the economic environment of the region.

1. Number of jobs created/retained and private investment made after implementation of the CEDS.
  - Quarterly reporting from regional ED Pros (Chamber of Commerce's, Better Hometown and MainStreet Programs, and Development Authorities) on jobs creation/retention and private investment in their local communities.
  - Quarterly updates from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Loan Program division on new private investment in the region.
  - Local businesses/industries in region advertise successful growth and job retention through PSA's, newspaper, local television and radio.
  - Compare Census statistics
  - Evaluate tax digest; increase/decrease
  - Evaluate sales tax; increase/decrease
  - Increase/decrease in business licenses
  - Governors listing of imminent business/industry closures
2. Number and types of public investment undertaken in the region.
  - Semi-annual reporting from the Regional Commission, Local Governments, and the Workforce Development Board on new investments in region.
3. Changes in the economic environment of the region.
  - Local governments, ED Pros, and the Workforce Development Board report major changes to the region's economic environment to the Regional Commission.



*Special thanks to Michael Rivera with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission for contributing several of the beautiful images featured in this CEDS.*