



**FISCAL YEAR 2022
BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS



BOARD OF GOVERNORS



Federal Co-Chairman

Appointment Currently Vacant



Alternate Federal Co-Chairman

Appointment Currently Vacant



MISSOURI
Governor Mike Parson

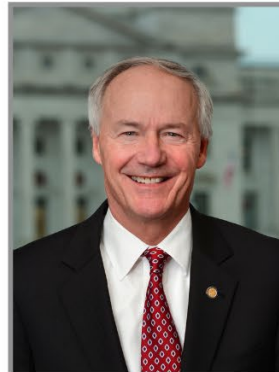
Designee: Luke Holtzschneider

2021 States' Co-Chairman



ALABAMA
Governor Kay Ivey

Designee: Kenneth Boswell
Alternate: Crystal Talley



ARKANSAS
Governor Asa Hutchinson

Designee: Clint O'Neal
Alternate: Ateca Foreman



ILLINOIS
Governor J. B. Pritzker

Designee: Brandi Bradley



KENTUCKY
Governor Andy Beshear

Designee: Dennis Keene



LOUISIANA
Governor John Bel Edwards

Designee: Leslie Durham



MISSISSIPPI
Governor Tate Reeves

Designee: Anne Hall Brashier



TENNESSEE
Governor Bill Lee

Designee: Brooxie Carlton
Alternate: Brian Kelsey

SECTION 1: BUDGET SCENARIO



FY 2022 BUDGET

Delta Regional Authority			
Budget Scenario			
FY 2022			
			FY 2022
			Potential
		FY 2022	Spend Budget
	FY 2021	Potential	Over (Under)
	Approved	Spend	FY 2021
<u>Source</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Approved Budget</u>
Federal Appropriations	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 30,100,000	100,000
State Assessments	1,175,741	1,181,847	6,106
RCAP (USDA Grant)	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
EDA (PWEAA Grant)	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
Total Federal and State Appropriations	\$ 37,175,741	\$ 37,281,847	\$ 106,106
<u>(Uses) & Investments</u>			
State Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)	12,731,105	12,820,693	89,588
Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)	15,000,000	15,000,000	-
Local Development Districts Technical Assistance	554,000	554,000	-
RCAP Grants	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
EDA Grants	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
Administration	2,890,636	2,907,154	16,518
Total Federal Appropriations	\$ 37,175,741	\$ 37,281,847	\$ 106,106
Administration			
<u>Object Class</u>			
Federal Salaries	\$ 331,272	\$ 334,585	\$3,313
Federal Benefits	99,382	100,375	\$993
Federal Other – Leases, rent, supplies, etc.	78,500	78,500	
DRA Salaries	939,600	948,996	\$9,396
DRA Benefits	272,729	284,698	\$11,969
Travel - Federal Staff	30,000	30,000	
Travel - Non-Federal Staff	165,000	165,000	
Professional/Contractual Services	645,000	645,000	
Communications and Outreach	60,000	60,000	
Professional Development	15,000	15,000	
Leases, supplies and materials, printing, graphics	229,153	220,000	(\$9,153)
Equipment	25,000	25,000	
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,890,636	\$ 2,907,154	\$16,518

FISCAL YEAR 2022 POTENTIAL BUDGET SCENARIO

Introduction

This narrative is presented as justification to the attached FY2022 Potential Budget Spend Plan. Participating states within the DRA service area pay 50% of DRA's administrative costs, less federal employee expenses (the Office of the Federal Co-Chairman is funded 100% by the Federal Government). This presentation details the full budget including state assessments and federal appropriations. The USDA and EDA grants for programs to DRA are estimates based on prior year appropriations.

Source and (Uses) of Appropriations

The attached budget table indicates the source and (uses) of DRA's federal appropriations and a detailed presentation of its expenditures as follows:

- FY2021 Approved Budget;
- FY2022 Potential Spend Budget Based on Full Authorized Budget; and
- Comparison of FY2022 Potential Spend Budget to FY2021 Approved Budget.

Format and Content

DRA's administrative budget presentation on the attached table is presented in three sections:

1. "Source – Federal Appropriations and State Assessments;"
2. "Uses-Investments" of the appropriations; and
3. "Administration" – administrative expenses classified at the major object class level.

Explanation of Use of Federal Appropriation

The Uses section describes how the federal appropriations will be expended as follows:

- The States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) allocation and administrative costs will be increased/decreased by \$89,588 and \$16,518, respectively. DRA also allocates funds to provide technical assistance \$554,000 for 252 counties/parishes to Local Development Districts (LDDs), with no increase.
- The Community Infrastructure Fund would be held constant at \$15,000,000.
- DRA is also hopeful that its partnerships with USDA (RCAP) and EDA (PWEAA) will remain constant in FY2022 with \$3,000,000 per program. Projects awarded funding from these 2 funding streams must follow respective agency guidelines and be approved by the respective agencies.

Administration

Administrative funds necessary to administer the program are presented below:

Federal Salaries, Benefits, & Travel

The Office of the Federal Co-Chairman (FCC) maintained two positions consisting of the Federal Co-Chairman and the Alternate Federal Co-Chairman. DRA has no control over these expenses.

Salaries	\$334,585
Benefits at 30%	100,375
Other Rent/Supplies	78,500
Travel	30,000
Total Federal Salaries, Benefits & Travel	<u><u>\$543,460</u></u>

DRA Salaries—Non-Federal Staff

Non-federal salaries represent 12 positions. DRA left the administrative salary costs constant from FY 2021 to FY 2022, with the exception of a cola increase.

Total Salaries—Non-Federal Staff	\$ 948,996
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DRA Fringe Benefits—Non-Federal Staff

The effective fringe benefit rate is 30 percent of salaries representing mandated and voluntary salary-related expenditures as follows:

- FICA – (Social Security) at 6.2% of salaries up to \$127,200;
- Medicare – at 1.45% of salaries (no max);
- SUTA – State Unemployment Tax 3.06% of the first \$12,000 of salary per employee;
- Non-elective retirement 11.7% of total salary; and
- Elective retirement (401k) effective rate of 3.2% of employees' voluntary contribution (maximum match of 5%).

Social Security	\$59,818
Medicare	13,990
State Unemployment	5,508
Medical/Health	66,370
Retirement	139,012
Total Fringe Benefits	<u><u>\$284,698</u></u>

Travel—Non-Federal

Travel includes mileage and/or fuel, rental vehicles, hotels, airfare, meals & incidentals, taxis, parking fees, etc., consisting primarily of trips to small rural towns, communities, and counties/parishes without access to major modes of public transportation (i.e., air/rail) throughout 200,000 square miles, 252 counties/parishes, and over 500 cities/towns in the eight-state region. DRA's service area presents logistical challenges that often necessitates multiple modes of travel (i.e., air and vehicle travel).

Other staff travel (Airfare, hotels, per diem, mileage)	\$165,000
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Professional Services

Professional services include costs for specialists that provide a specific skillset not available with existing staff or temporary help.

Total Professional Services	\$645,000
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Communications & Outreach

Communications and outreach efforts includes costs for advertising, signs, job announcement postings, and community outreach.

Total Communications & Outreach	\$60,000
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Professional Development

Staff development/training includes costs for training closely aligned with the basic responsibilities and mission of the agency including, but not limited to, program-specific education, management development, and leadership training.

Total Staff Development/Training	\$15,000
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Leases, supplies and materials, printing, graphics

Printing and publications include costs for printing research publications and others such as Today's Delta and Year-in-Review. This also includes leases for DRA offices.

Total Leases, supplies and materials, printing, graphics	\$220,000
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Equipment

Equipment such as computers, file cabinets, furniture, and supplies.

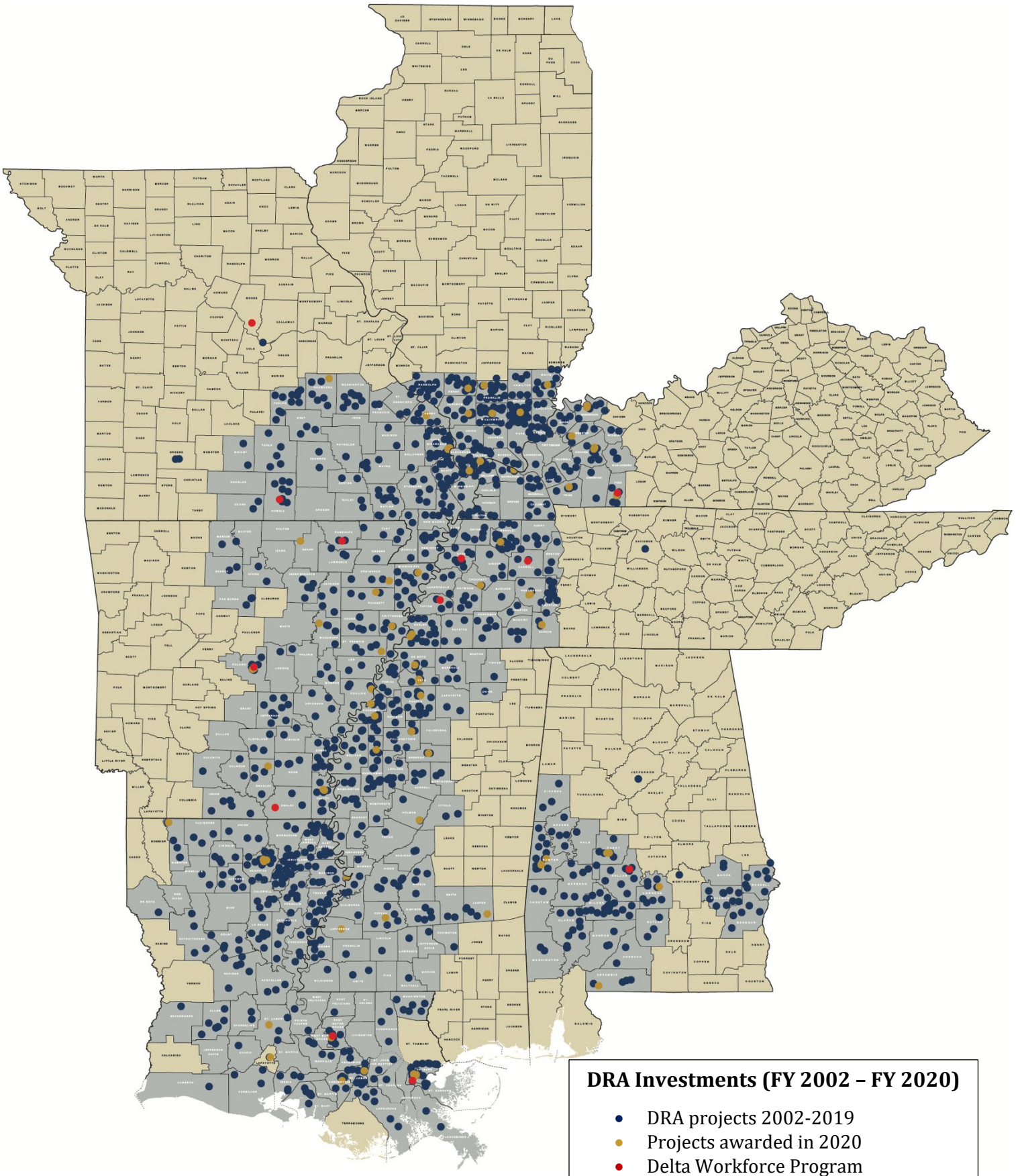
Total Equipment	\$25,000
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Total Administrative Budget	\$2,907,154
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SECTION 2: DRA INVESTMENT PROGRAMS



DRA INVESTMENT PROJECTS (FY2002 to FY2020)



STATES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)

FY 2022 Budget: \$12,820,693

Program Briefing:

The States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) is the Delta Regional Authority's primary investment program. Since 2002, DRA has invested over \$211 million of its own appropriation leveraging more than \$4.5 billion in other public and private sector dollars. These investments have helped to create and retain more than 60,000 jobs, train more than 53,700 individuals, and provide more than 400,000 families with access to improved water and sewer services. SEDAP investments make a substantial and solid impact in each of the eight states represented in the Delta Region.

DRA works in concert with the Local Development Districts in the region to deliver SEDAP and other DRA funding programs. DRA staff recommends project eligibility and priority ranking to the Federal Co-Chairman, and the chairman makes final determination of those projects. During the funding cycle, project selections are completed at the end of the cycle.

These SEDAP investments are subject to Federal Priority Eligibility Criteria, (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 90.201), and **must** help to improve:

- Basic public infrastructure;
- Transportation infrastructure;
- Business development, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship; and
- Workforce development.

In fact, at least 50 percent of SEDAP investments are required to be transportation and basic public infrastructure projects. Additionally, at least 75 percent of all SEDAP investments must be made in counties and parishes that are deemed to be distressed.

Local Development District Technical Assistance Support

FY2022 Budget: \$554,000

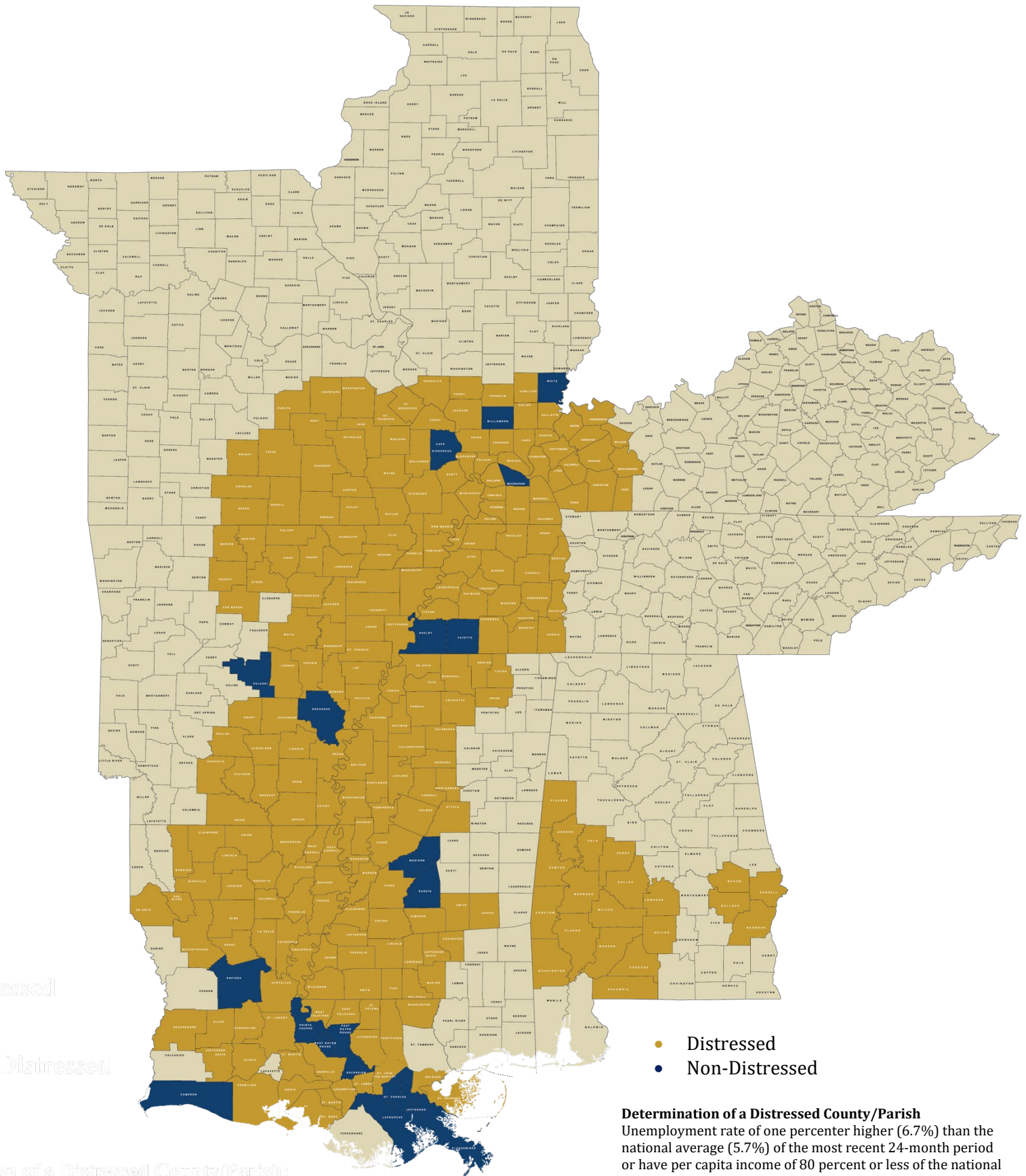
Program Briefing:

DRA works closely with our local development districts to administer SEDAP funding and to manage SEDAP projects. LDD staff review and certify that each project is legitimate and meets the parameters of the DRA program. Ultimately, DRA makes the final determination of eligibility for projects; however, LDDs will also acknowledge their role and responsibility as project managers for each project and ensure each project is implemented and regulations adhered to in a timely manner. In the event an application is deemed ineligible by DRA, the LDD also serves as the local economic development agency that should also be knowledgeable of other state and federal funding sources. Applicants are encouraged to work closely with the LDD in identifying the best available resources for the project.

To compensate the LDDs for the administrative work performed, project administrative fees will be paid from the awarded funds. The formula for determining project

administration fees is five percent (5%) of the first \$100,000 and one percent (1%) of all dollars in excess of \$100,000. By example, a \$200,000 award would include \$6,000 in LDD project administration fees, thereby making \$194,000 available for the award.

FY 2021 DISTRESSED COUNTIES AND PARISHES



ressed

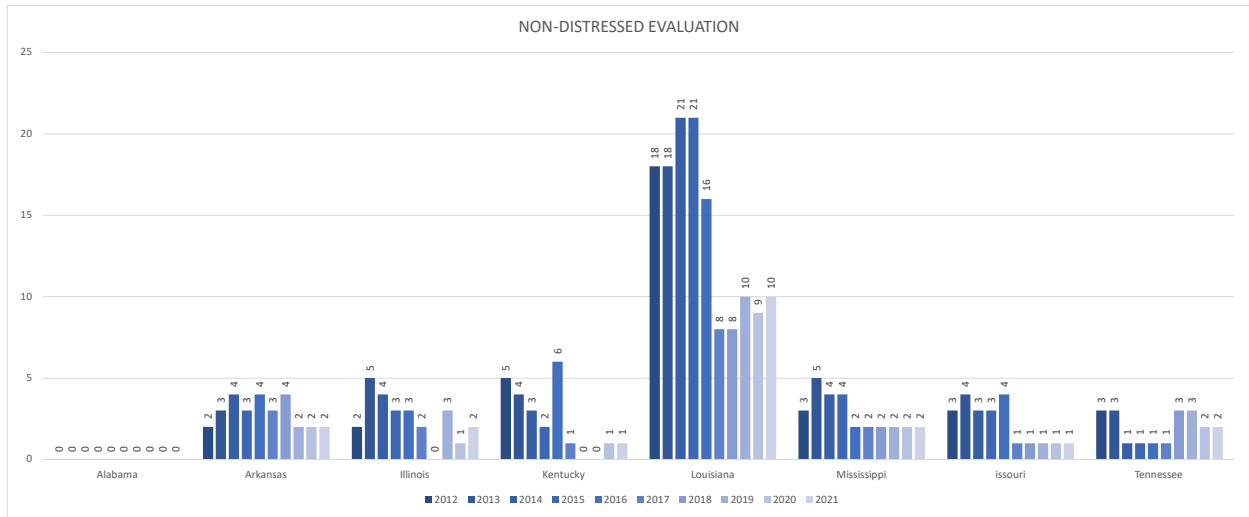
Distressed

on of a Distressed County/Parish:

Fiscal Year 2021 State Allocation Formula and Model

Distressed/Non-Distressed Counties and Parishes

Non-distressed county data over the past ten years reveals a trend for each state. In total, DRA non-distressed areas have shown a small but steady increase since 2013 but have remained relatively constant over the last 4 years. The most recent evaluation for fiscal year 2021 indicates the number of non-distressed areas are fluctuating slightly; at 18 in FY 2017 and FY 2018, 21 in FY 2019, and 20 in FY20 and FY21. These indicators point to the weakness of the economy in the Delta Region. Half of the DRA states have remained somewhat constant over time and the other half have experienced this decline in non-distressed areas, as indicated in the table below.



Each year, the realities highlighted by this data will influence the formula used to 1) allocate SEDAP dollars to the states and 2) calculate the state assessment dues. As a reminder, the formula used by the DRA and approved annually by the Governors of each state, since DRA's inception, have included the following factors and factor percentages:

Factor	Factor Percentage
Equity Factor (divided equally among eight states)	50%
Population Factor (DRA counties/parishes only)	10%
Distressed Population (DRA counties/parishes only)	20%
Distressed County Area (DRA counties/parishes only)	20%

The model included factors using 2020 Distressed Counties data (based on 2018 Per Capita Income from the Bureau of Economic analysis and the average from November 2017 to October 2019 National Unemployment Rate) to determine each State's allocated percent of the total budgeted for SEDAP.

Program Changes from Previous Year:

DRA is continuously looking to find ways to improve upon the programming and investments it makes. Building off the success of the previous year, DRA implemented a more robust technical assistance training for every Local Development District in the DRA service area. To be eligible to submit projects for SEDAP funding, the LDD must have been through this training that highlights how to submit successful projects for consideration. Additionally, DRA undertook the task of updating its SEDAP manual that is used by LDDs in submitting projects. The manual is accessible online at www.dra.gov.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND PUBLIC WORKS & ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) **FY2022 Budget: \$15,000,000**

Program Briefing:

DRA launched the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) to invest an additional \$15 million in flood control, basic public infrastructure, and local transportation improvements that provide local and regional value to Delta communities. CIF provides an opportunity for DRA to make even more investments into local infrastructure projects that directly impact economic development prospects and immediate community needs. DRA was able to absorb the additional dollars of CIF without additional administration dollars needed to provide technical assistance, project review and implementation.

EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) **FY2022 Budget: \$3,000,000**

Program Briefing:

As a part of the Fiscal Years 2016 - 2021 appropriations process, Congress directed the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce to make \$3 million of its "Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance" (PWEAA) program available to the Delta Regional Authority.

The Senate Appropriations Committee based this appropriation policy on its findings that it:

- Supports EDA's past collaborations with DRA; and
- Encourages EDA to create additional opportunities that leverage and partner with DRA to better assist distressed communities in the eight-state Delta Region.

The Committee specifically named the PWEAA to fund DRA-related projects, as this EDA fund is used to:

"Advance economic growth by assisting communities and regions experiencing chronic high unemployment and low per capita income to create an environment that fosters innovation, promotes entrepreneurship, and attracts increased private capital investment."

DRA has numerous objective measures supporting the need for such assistance.

Upon passage and toward those ends, the leadership of both agencies collaborated to provide streamlined processes and structures to this new partnership that would ensure the fiscal and programmatic integrity of this program.

SECTION 3: REGIONAL PROGRAMS



REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Rural Communities Advancement Program (RCAP) **FY2022 Budget: \$3,000,000**

Program Briefing:

Beginning in 2003, Congress designated a set aside of funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) – Rural Communities Advancement Program (RCAP) for grants to the Delta Regional Authority adherent to the same policies and guidelines of RCAP under USDA-RD. There are several programs under USDA's RCAP, all of which are eligible for DRA funding. To date, DRA has invested in two types of RCAP projects under the following USDA programs:

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)*: This program is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities. Eligible applicants are rural public entities including, but not limited to, towns, communities, state agencies, authorities, nonprofit corporations, institutions of higher education, federally recognized tribes, rural cooperatives (if organized as a private nonprofit corporation). RBDG funds must be used for projects benefitting rural areas or towns outside the urbanized periphery of any city with a population of 50,000 or more.

**Formerly considered two separate programs: Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) and Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG).*

Community Facility Grants: This program provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses. Eligible applicants include public bodies, community-based non-profit corporations, and federally recognized tribes. Funds must be used in rural areas with no more than 20,000 residents.

Since 2003, DRA has successfully applied for more than \$41 million in RCAP funding, which has supported over 300 projects throughout the Mississippi River Delta region. Each year, DRA allocates the majority of RCAP funding for agency programs and region-wide projects determined by the Federal Co-Chairman. Examples of projects funded in the past include: The Delta Leadership Institute and Local Foods, Local Places.

Additionally, DRA allocates the remaining RCAP funds towards projects submitted to DRA by USDA-RD State Directors from each of the eight states. For example, in FY 2018, DRA has allocated \$40,000 per USDA-RD State Director to fund eligible projects in accordance with RCAP guidelines.

Delta Leadership Institute (DLI)
FY 2022 Budget: \$700,000 (RCAP)

Program Briefing:

The Delta Leadership Institute serves to build leadership skills among Delta residents and foster collaboration with partners in the public and private sectors to improve the economic and social viability of the Delta as well as the overall quality of life in the Delta Region. Currently, DLI is a body of fellows and alumni leaders who have participated in the year-long Executive Academy program. They focus daily on improving the decisions made by community leaders across the Delta. The creation of the Executive Academy and later the Delta Leadership Network was and is to create well-informed community leaders who understand local and regional issues.

Over the course of the Executive Academy academic year, participants attend six sessions and engage in training, case study discussion, and on-the-ground field studies of priority issue areas including workforce training and education, small business and entrepreneurship, transportation and basic public infrastructure, healthcare, and policy and governance. Upon graduation, these fellows become members of the Delta Leadership Network where they engage community leaders both within their state and across the Delta. DLI has graduated 16 classes and with approximately 510 alumni, the DLN commits time, talent, service, and often, financial resources to various initiatives across the region, having become a powerful voice for the region as well as DRA.

Workforce Opportunity in Rural Communities (WORC) Training Program
FY2022 Budget: (\$425,000) to be used for technical assistance.

Program Briefing:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, administered by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), is designed to grow a ready workforce and advance economic opportunities, particularly for local areas impacted by economic change and for individuals with barriers to employment. The FY 2020 DOL Appropriations Act, further described in the Senate Report, made \$30,000,000 available to provide enhanced dislocated worker training to promote economic recovery in the Appalachian and Delta regions, particularly for projects for dislocated workers hard hit by industrial downsizing and closures. The FY 2021 DOL Appropriations Act also includes \$35,000,000 in funds for the same effort. To address the specific challenges facing these regions, ETA, with the support and expertise of DRA, will use the authority to fund Dislocated Worker Demonstration projects to award WORC grants to successful applicants within the 252 counties and parishes that make up the DRA footprint.

DRA's efforts will complement the U.S. Department of Labor's WORC initiative in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state Delta Region. DRA seeks to work closely with the Board of Governors and their Designees and Alternates to support each state's high-growth industries by identifying workforce development needs, sector partnerships, and high priority projects. DRA will collaborate with ETA by informing eligible entities of the funding opportunity; implement pre-application technical assistance through a series of

regional workshops; design and deliver post-award technical assistance; and engage subject matter experts to support applicants and grantees.

Delta Workforce Program (DWP)
FY2022 Budget: \$1,500,000 (RCAP \$1.5M)

Program Briefing:

DRA has developed a Registered Apprenticeship and Job Training Pilot Program which is called the Delta Workforce Program (DWP) to be used to compliment the Workforce Opportunities in Rural Communities training program. The DWP is a workforce training program designed for smaller more targeted training programs for specific needs of local or regional business and industry. The DWP will help develop certified apprenticeship programs for new entrants to the labor market as well as others needing enhanced skills.

Ultimately, DRA's Delta Workforce Program will complement the U.S. Department of Labor's workforce development efforts in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state Delta Region. DRA seeks to work closely with the Board of Governors and their Designees and Alternates to support each state's high-growth industries by identifying workforce development needs, sector partnerships, and high priority projects. DRA will develop and implement the Registered Apprenticeship and Job Training Programs in four phases as follows: Phase I – Request for Team Applications, Phase II – Regional Workshops, Phase III – Grant Program, and Phase IV – Technical Assistance.

Rural Community Development Program
FY2022 Budget: \$750,000 (RCAP)

Program Briefing:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than half a million new small businesses are launched each year in the United States, representing nearly 1.4 million new jobs annually. In fact, nearly 30 million small businesses across the country employ more than 57 million workers and drive nearly half of our national GDP. Despite the significance of small businesses and entrepreneurship to our nation's economy, the COVID-19 pandemic has strained our small businesses and entrepreneurs. Many distressed communities, particularly in the Mississippi River Delta region, have been economically devastated by increased business closures, lack of access to capital, and the unknown of what the post pandemic environment will mean to local businesses.

The Mississippi River Delta region's most significant opportunities for economic growth and revitalization are based in the creation of jobs, expansion of businesses, and development of local entrepreneurial economies. To address these economic challenges and build on the region's opportunities for growth, DRA proposes to implement a \$750,000 Rural Community Development (RCD) Program to support underserved areas by investing in small business and entrepreneurial development, access to broadband and the digital economy, and advanced workforce training to help rural communities thrive in today's global economy. DRA will develop and implement the RCD Program in three phases as

follows: Phase I – Regional Workshops, Phase II – Grant Program, and Phase III – Technical Assistance.

Delta Regional Community Health Systems Development Technical Assistance Program

FY 2021 Budget: \$12,000,000 (HRSA) FY2022 Budget: TBD

Program Briefing:

In FY 2017, the Delta Regional Authority, in collaboration with the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), launched the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development – Technical Assistance Program. The purpose of this program is to enhance health care delivery in the Delta Region through intensive technical assistance to providers in select rural communities, including critical access hospitals, small rural hospitals, rural health clinics and other healthcare organizations.

In-depth and long-term technical assistance to a select number of identified communities in the Delta Region will be provided for, but not limited to, the following:

- Improving hospital or clinic financial operations;
- Implementing quality improvement activities to promote the development of an evidence- based culture leading to improved health outcomes;
- Increasing use of telehealth to address gaps in clinical service delivery and improve access to care;
- Enhancing coordination of care;
- Strengthening the local health care system to improve population health;
- Providing social services to address broader socio-economic challenges faced by patients (e.g., housing, childcare, energy assistance, access to healthy food, elderly support services, job training, etc.);
- Ensuring access to and availability of emergency medical services (EMS);
- Identifying workforce recruitment and retention resources targeted to rural communities; and
- Other areas to be determined in consultation with HRSA and DRA.

Since December 2017, HRSA and DRA have selected 31 hospitals to participate in the technical assistance program. HRSA and DRA foresee an additional 3 to 5 hospitals assuming the FY2022 appropriation level holds steady.

Innovative Readiness Training (IRT)
FY2022 Budget: \$10,000

Program Briefing:

Throughout eleven years of partnership, the Delta Regional Authority, and the Department of Defense (DoD) have collaborated to bring the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program to the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions. IRT medical missions deliver quality medical care, provided by licensed medical professionals serving in our reserve forces, to residents of rural communities that otherwise have little to no access to quality health care. All of these services are provided at no cost to the community and patients. IRT clinics operate for a temporary time frame (i.e., typically 10-14 days) during which patients can receive general medical, dental, and optical care for themselves and their family members, all of which are high-demand health care needs in the Delta. No proof of identification, income, residency or insurance is required.

Each mission provides medical services including, but not limited to, general medical, dental and optical care. Services are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis with each location providing services that benefit those in the communities that are underserved and in need of medical attention. The expectation is that each mission will provide care to between 4,000 and 5,000 patients in the region. So far, in ten years of partnership, DRA and DoD are proud to have delivered free medical care to more than 85,000 patients in Delta communities. DRA anticipates spending approximately \$10,000 in supporting these missions through technical assistance to communities, marketing of upcoming missions, and critical mission specific supplies.

APPENDIX



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN III

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA), an independent federal agency that works to promote economic and community development in the Delta Region, adopted its third Regional Development Plan (RDP III) in April of 2016 as an assessment of, and a response to, the region's myriad opportunities, assets, and challenges. In collaboration with stakeholders and community leaders across the region, through a series of facilitated listening sessions and virtual webinars, this plan serves to update the agency's Regional Development Plan II (RDP II), originally adopted in 2008. The RDP III sets forth revised goals that will drive the DRA's work over the next five years, building on the successes of many of the DRA's existing programs and setting new goals for the future.

VISION

The Delta Region is a place where people and businesses have access to economic opportunities in vibrant, sustainable, and resilient communities.

MISSION

The Delta Regional Authority will advance its communities through the practical application of innovative ideas and strategies that foster inclusive communities, strengthen regional collaboration and capacity, achieve sustained, long-term economic development, and produce meaningful opportunities for all Delta people.

MANAGEMENT GOAL

Maintain organizational excellence and efficiency, invest in professional development, encourage innovation, and continue to be an effective steward of public funds.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Collaboration

The DRA will continue to serve as a facilitator of regional collaboration, leveraging diverse resources, aligning public and private interests, and strengthening local and regional partnerships.

2. Innovation

The DRA will encourage the utilization of innovative economic development strategies and place-based programs to address the region's challenges, build resilient communities, and turn opportunities into action.

3. Leadership

The DRA will support the development and preparedness of local leaders to implement existing models of success and to engage broadly across regional, national, and global networks.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1. IMPROVED WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS

Advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.

Access to a skilled workforce is a crucial factor affecting the ability of businesses to succeed in today's economy, thus employers are notably drawn to locations with concentrations of skilled workers. As national demographic trends project a decline in the working-age population over the coming decades, employers will increasingly have difficulties finding skilled workers. Thus, one of the most urgent priorities for communities across the country is to develop a pipeline of talented workers to support the growth of existing and future employers. This is especially true for communities in the Delta Region as they compete for businesses, jobs, and economic opportunities.

GOAL 2. STRENGTHENED INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthen the Delta's physical, digital, and capital connections to the global economy.

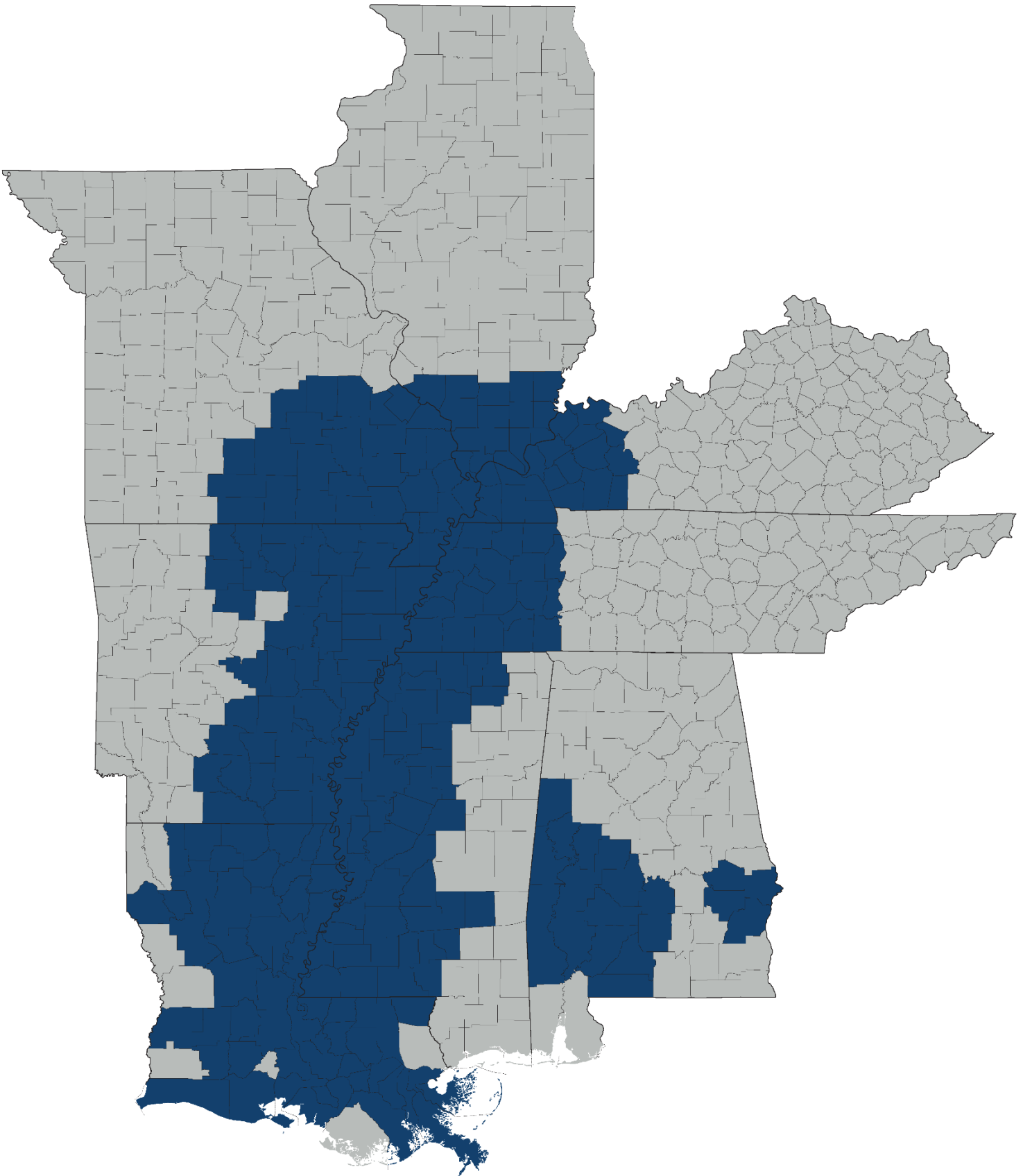
High-functioning transportation networks and basic infrastructure (e.g., water, wastewater, electricity, and natural gas, and affordable broadband internet) are essential for the long-term success of resilient regional economies. While it will be important to maintain the Delta Region's existing infrastructure, there are also opportunities to make strategic investments in transportation and broadband infrastructure that will boost the region's economic potential. It is also necessary for communities to have the appropriate real estate options and financing available to attract new businesses and take advantage of the economic development opportunities available to them.

GOAL 3. INCREASED COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Facilitate local capacity building within Delta communities, organizations, and businesses.

Strong local leadership in Delta communities is a prerequisite for the capacity building that will yield long-term economic prosperity for the region's businesses and residents. Competitive and resilient communities are able to attract new jobs and investment and keep those jobs thanks in large part to their high level of engagement from community and business leaders. The development of a robust entrepreneurial environment is also important to the long-term success of the region. Entrepreneurs, innovative companies, creative workers, and technology are key elements of the regional economy. Finally, the quality of place in Delta communities has a major influence on their potential for economic development, providing an attractive environment that appeals to young professionals.

DRA SERVICE AREA





Regional Headquarters

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Washington, DC Office

444 North Capitol St NW, Suite 365 | Washington, DC 20001
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