



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**CREATING JOBS. BUILDING COMMUNITIES. IMPROVING LIVES.**

ALABAMA | ARKANSAS | ILLINOIS | KENTUCKY | LOUISIANA | MISSISSIPPI | MISSOURI | TENNESSEE

---

[DRA.GOV](https://dra.gov)







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About this publication	1
DRA Leadership	2
Background	3
Critical Infrastructure	5
Community Infrastructure Fund	5
States' Economic Development Assistance Program	5
FY 2024 Investments	7
State Investment Impact	9
Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance	13
Human Infrastructure	15
Delta Workforce Grant Program	15
Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities	17
Delta Doctors	18
Delta Region Community Health Systems Program	19
Innovative Readiness Training	20
Delta Leadership Institute	21
Capacity Building	22
Accountability and Operational Excellence	23



# ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) presents its 2024 Annual Report, which serves as the agency’s annual report to the U.S. Congress. This publication highlights DRA’s strategic investments and priority programs in 2024. You will find details about the many programs and initiatives DRA supported in 2024.

The federal programs and region-wide initiatives included in this report are part of DRA’s mission to help create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of the 10 million residents in the 255 counties and parishes of the eight-state DRA region.

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Key investments in each state that support basic public infrastructure and transportation infrastructure to rural residents; provide quality workforce training and education for job seekers; and improve opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to grow and thrive in the DRA region
- Strategic programs and initiatives and region-wide initiatives that are increasing workforce competitiveness and community capacity, such as the Delta Workforce Grant Program and the Strategic Planning Program
- Agency efforts to invest in targeted economic and community development projects driven by outcomes and supported by public-private partnerships that are essential for DRA communities to compete in the modern economy



# DRA LEADERSHIP

Dr. Corey Wiggins  
Federal Co-Chair

Governor Andy Beshear  
States' Co-Chair

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS, DESIGNEES AND ALTERNATES

### ALABAMA

Governor Kay Ivey  
Designee - Kenneth Boswell  
Alternate - Crystal Talley

### ARKANSAS

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Designee - Clint O'Neal  
Alternate - Amy Williams

### ILLINOIS

Governor JB Pritzker  
Designee - Brandi Bradley  
Alternate - Lynne Chambers

### KENTUCKY

Governor Andy Beshear,  
2024 States' Co-Chair  
Designee - Matt Sawyers

### LOUISIANA

Governor Jeff Landry  
Designee - R. Kyle Ardoin

### MISSISSIPPI

Governor Tate Reeves  
Designee - Sam Andrew

### MISSOURI

Governor Michael Parson  
Designee - Lesley Rone  
Alternate - Robert Knodell

### TENNESSEE

Governor Bill Lee  
Designee - Brooxie Carlton



# BACKGROUND

DRA was established in 2000 as a formal framework for joint federal-state collaboration to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River and Alabama Black Belt regions. To fulfill this purpose, DRA invests in projects supporting transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, workforce training, and business development. DRA's region encompasses 255 counties and parishes in parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.

DRA's enabling legislation dictates that at least 75% of DRA's funds must be invested in economically distressed counties and parishes and isolated areas within non-distressed counties and parishes. In addition, half of DRA's funds must support transportation infrastructure and basic public infrastructure.





# CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) investments strengthen the economic viability of our Delta communities. In FY 2024, DRA invested more than \$38 million in 37 projects to address flood control, basic public infrastructure, and local transportation infrastructure improvements that enhance local and regional economies throughout the DRA region. These investments are expected to create or retain nearly 2,000 jobs, train over 1,100 individuals, and affect more than 78,000 families.

## STATES’ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The States’ Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) is DRA’s primary investment program. In FY 2024, DRA invested more than \$19 million in 49 projects that will improve water and sewer systems, boost business development, enhance infrastructure, and support job training in communities throughout the Delta region. These investments were matched by \$34.6 million and will attract an additional \$6.5 in private investments. These investments are expected to create or retain over 2,250 jobs, train over 830 individuals, and affect more than 38,500 families.





# FY 2024 INVESTMENTS

## 86 TOTAL CIF AND SEDAP PROJECTS

DRA Investment	Project Investment	Private Investment
\$57,814,359	\$85,766,126	\$77,048,500

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Jobs Created & Retained	Individuals Trained	Families Affected
4,182	1,977	116,684



STATE  
INVESTMENT  
IMPACT





# STATE INVESTMENT IMPACT

## ALABAMA STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

5 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$1,741,597  
Project Investment: \$185,000  
Private Investment: \$4,000,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

39 Jobs Created & Retained  
2 Individuals Trained  
1,058 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

7 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$4,554,161  
Project Investment: \$233,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

209 Jobs Created & Retained  
2,604 Families Affected

## ARKANSAS STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

8 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$5,063,282  
Project Investment: \$3,518,116  
Private Investment: \$2,000,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

837 Jobs Created & Retained  
219 Individuals Trained  
741 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

4 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$5,527,579  
Project Investment: \$17,024,369  
Private Investment: \$500,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

105 Jobs Created & Retained  
6,799 Families Affected

## ILLINOIS STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

3 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$1,501,750  
Project Investment: \$5,373,093  
Private Investment: \$20,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

10 Jobs Created & Retained  
2,077 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

5 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$4,284,127  
Project Investment: \$2,196,291

### Anticipated Outcomes

24 Jobs Created & Retained  
50,536 Families Affected

## KENTUCKY STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

6 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$1,971,143  
Project Investment: \$4,869,114

### Anticipated Outcomes

352 Jobs Created & Retained  
270 Individuals Trained  
10,644 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

3 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$6,522,460  
Project Investment: \$15,547,570

### Anticipated Outcomes

6,665 Families Affected





# STATE INVESTMENT IMPACT

## LOUISIANA STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

11 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$4,085,107  
Project Investment: \$9,522,999  
Private Investment: \$500,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

950 Jobs Created & Retained  
4 Individuals Trained  
18,032 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

7 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$5,982,104  
Project Investment: \$11,070,095  
Private Investment: \$28,500

### Anticipated Outcomes

971 Jobs Created & Retained  
892 Individuals Trained  
3,344 Families Affected

## MISSISSIPPI STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

8 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$2,621,537  
Project Investment: \$1,627,825

### Anticipated Outcomes

200 Individuals Trained  
2,161 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

6 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$5,130,338  
Project Investment: \$1,639,455  
Private Investment: \$1,000,000

### Anticipated Outcomes

248 Jobs Created & Retained  
4,619 Families Affected

## MISSOURI STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

6 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$1,502,250  
Project Investment: \$9,302,255

### Anticipated Outcomes

12 Jobs Created & Retained  
120 Individuals Trained  
3,744 Families Affected

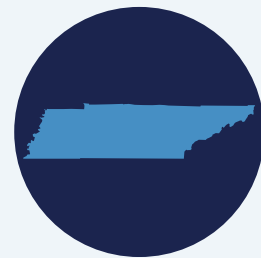
### FY 2024 CIF Investments

2 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$2,492,458  
Project Investment: \$473,600

### Anticipated Outcomes

140 Jobs Created & Retained  
3,290 Families Affected

## TENNESSEE STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



### FY 2024 SEDAP Investments

2 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$768,477  
Project Investment: \$166,687

### Anticipated Outcomes

51 Jobs Created & Retained  
20 Individuals Trained  
70 Families Affected

### FY 2024 CIF Investments

3 Total DRA Projects  
DRA Investment: \$4,020,988  
Project Investment: \$2,986,658  
Private Investment: \$69,999

### Anticipated Outcomes

234 Jobs Created & Retained  
250 Individuals Trained  
300 Families Affected





# PUBLIC WORKS AND ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

The Economic Development Administration (EDA), an agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce, made \$4.3 million of its FY 2024 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) program funding available to DRA. This program supports rural communities by investing in projects that leverage existing regional assets and the implementation of community development strategies that advance economic prosperity in distressed regions.

In 2024, three projects were approved by EDA for funding:

**\$661,700**

Wallace Community College  
Dothan, Alabama

**\$1,500,000**

Go Forward Pine Bluff  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

**\$2,206,934**

Higher Purpose Co.  
Clarksdale, Mississippi



# HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE

## DELTA WORKFORCE GRANT PROGRAM

The Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWP) targets federal resources toward communities in the DRA region that have been particularly hit hard by industrial downsizing, business closures, and job losses as a result of the public health and economic crisis. DWP supports projects and initiatives that create a more vibrant economic future for the region by expanding job training and re-employment opportunities; aligning workforce and economic development strategies; creating sustainable talent pipelines; establishing or enhancing locally and regionally significant public-private partnerships; and supporting enhanced workforce productivity through investments in innovative programming.

DRA awarded 23 DWP projects in all eight states, totaling more than \$10 million. As a result of this investment, more than 2,000 individuals and 600 communities are projected to receive industry-driven skills training for high-demand jobs in their communities. See the snapshot to the right:



### ALABAMA

Alabama State University  
\$187,909

Reid State Technical College  
\$449,985

Tuskegee University  
\$450,000

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas Rural Health Partnership  
\$450,000

Arkansas State Mountain Home  
\$450,000

Ozarka College  
\$437,133

Shorter College  
\$440,000

### ILLINOIS

Southern Illinois Community Foundation  
\$450,000

### KENTUCKY

Family Scholar House  
\$438,829

Green River Area Development District  
\$450,000

### LOUISIANA

Greater New Orleans Development Foundation  
\$450,000

Louisiana Christian University  
\$448,217

New Orleans Pipe Trades  
\$450,000

Workforce Development Board SDA-83  
\$450,000

### MISSISSIPPI

Boys & Girls Club of Central Mississippi  
\$450,000

Delta Compass  
\$450,000

Dream Innovations  
\$450,000

Metro Booming Training Academy  
\$450,000

### MISSOURI

Community Partnership of Southeast Missouri  
\$440,331

East Missouri Action Agency  
\$450,000

Ranken Technical College  
\$450,000

### TENNESSEE

NextOp  
\$449,980

The Collective Blueprint  
\$447,600



# WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, more than \$21 million in grants was awarded in FY 2024 under the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Initiative to support workforce training and education in rural communities across the Delta. See the snapshot below:

WORC RECIPIENTS	STATE	AMOUNT
REID STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE	AL	\$1,500,000
ARKANSAS RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP	AR	\$1,200,000
SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION INC.	CT	\$1,482,460
FLOOR COVERING EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.	GA	\$1,499,700
NEXTOP INC.	LA	\$1,499,891
ST. LANDRY PARISH GOVERNMENT	LA	\$1,500,000
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE	LA	\$1,499,784
ELECTRICAL TRAINING ALLIANCE	MD	\$1,499,993
DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE INC.	MS	\$1,499,999
TUNICA COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS DEPARTMENT	MS	\$1,074,000
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OF SOUTHEAST MISSOURI	MO	\$1,438,344
THE GRADUS PROJECT	TN	\$1,134,709
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER	TN	\$1,500,000
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH	TN	\$1,498,559
SHRM FOUNDATION INC.	TN	\$1,497,561
TOTAL AWARDED		\$21,325,000



# DELTA DOCTORS

In partnership with the U.S. Department of State, DRA's Delta Doctors program helps address the health disparities and high levels of health professional shortages in the region by granting J-1 visa waivers for physicians who are willing to provide medical services in DRA communities. Delta Doctors allows foreign physicians who are trained in the United States to work in medically underserved areas for three years, but most doctors placed in the program continue to serve their communities beyond their three-year commitment. Physicians participating in the program do not take jobs away from local physicians but instead provide services in areas where there would otherwise be a shortage of physicians, increasing access to affordable and quality health care.

The impact of Delta Doctors in the region can be realized by the access to quality, affordable health care and the economic benefit the doctors bring to the communities in which they reside and practice. On average, each Delta Doctor is estimated to create five full-time jobs within their clinics and offices and an additional 3.4 full- and part-time jobs within the communities where they work.

In FY 2024, DRA provided 64 J-1 Visa recommendations. See the snapshot below:

ILLINOIS	7	MISSISSIPPI	11
KENTUCKY	6	MISSOURI	4
LOUISIANA	14	TENNESSEE	22



# DELTA REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS PROGRAM

DRA, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration, implements the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development – Technical Assistance Program (DRCHSD) to enhance health care delivery in the Delta region. Through intensive technical assistance, health care providers in select rural communities receive help to identify and address health care needs while strengthening the local health care system.

The following five health care facilities were selected for the DRCHSD Cohort 2024 (to begin the program in 2025):

**Arkansas**

- Mid-Delta Health Systems, Clarendon, AR, a federally qualified health center serving Monroe and Arkansas counties

**Illinois**

- Ferrell Hospital, Eldorado, IL, a critical access hospital serving Saline County

**Louisiana**

- Michael Brooks Family Clinic, Ruston, LA, a rural health clinic serving Lincoln Parish
- Riverside Medical Center, Franklinton, LA, a critical access hospital serving Washington Parish
- Plaquemines Medical Center, Port Sulphur, LA, a federally qualified health center serving Plaquemines Parish



# INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

DRA partners with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. military reserve forces to host Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) medical missions, bringing medical, dental and optical care to Delta residents in need of quality health care at no cost to patients. IRT is a DOD military training program that delivers joint training opportunities to increase deployment readiness while simultaneously providing key health care services with lasting benefits for Delta communities. By utilizing their extensive resources, the military is able to meet some of the region’s most urgent health care needs. Among the services provided during IRT missions are basic medical and wellness exams; vision exams and single lens glasses; dental exams and extractions; and veterinary care.

The Green River Area Wellness IRT Mission was held in Henderson, Kentucky, in June 2024. Basic medical, dental, vision and veterinary services were provided.

Fair Market Value of services provided is estimated at

**\$998,931**

**1,642**  
patients treated



**34,161**  
procedures performed



**917**  
eyeglasses fabricated and/or distributed







# DELTA LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Delta Leadership Institute (DLI) Executive Academy, an extensive, nine-month executive leadership development program, celebrated the graduation of its 20th class in September 2024. This milestone marks nearly 700 fellows who have successfully completed the program since its inception, reinforcing DLI’s long-term investment in equipping leaders across the Delta region to drive community and economic transformation.

The 2024 cohort included 29 fellows representing all 8 DRA states, spanning elected officials, nonprofit executives, higher education leaders and economic development professionals. This year’s class included 3 fellows from Alabama, 5 from Arkansas, 3 from Illinois, 2 from Kentucky, 5 from Louisiana, 4 from Mississippi, 3 from Missouri and 4 from Tennessee. Collectively, this cohort serves communities totaling more than 1.2 million residents across the region.



# CAPACITY BUILDING

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRAM

Communities across DRA’s 8-state region lack the capacity and resources to strategically plan. This program gives public entities access to strategic planning funds to address long-standing issues and to develop a roadmap for economic growth and opportunity. Applicants for this program have the autonomy to apply for a plan that fits the unique needs and challenges in their community. Eligible plans include, but are not limited to, economic development plans, utility rate studies, transportation plans, workforce development plans and broadband deployment plans.

The Strategic Planning Program awarded more than \$2.3 million in FY 2024 to 19 recipients across seven of the eight DRA states. Funded plans in FY 2024 included comprehensive economic development plans, feasibility studies, master plans, preliminary engineering reports and workforce development plans.

### ILLINOIS

- City of Johnson City  
\$68,250
- City of West Frankfort  
\$132,500
- Illinois New Harmony Bridge Authority  
\$150,000
- Southern Illinois Now  
\$129,197

### KENTUCKY

- City of Fulton  
\$124,000
- City of Hickman  
\$25,000
- Fulton County Fiscal Court  
\$149,000
- Princeton Water and Wastewater Commission  
\$130,000

### LOUISIANA

- City of Kenner  
\$133,350
- Tensas Water Distribution Association  
\$150,000

### MISSISSIPPI

- Hazlehurst Chamber of Commerce  
\$68,250
- Jackson Public Schools  
\$136,925
- Tougaloo College  
\$150,000

### MISSOURI

- Bootheel Healthcare Foundation  
\$150,000
- Southeast Missouri Regional Economic Development, Inc.  
\$136,925

### TENNESSEE

- City of Brownsville  
\$121,587
- Everett Stewart Regional Airport  
\$128,086
- University of Memphis  
\$149,999





# ACCOUNTABILITY AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

DRA is committed to being a good steward of taxpayers' dollars, and it recognizes its institutional focus to be fiscally responsible and effective in making investments into economic and community development projects while working to help create jobs, build communities, and improve lives in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions.

DRA conducts annual audits with a certified audit firm to ensure compliance and accountability. DRA will continue to ensure strong accountability, transparency and operational excellence.

# THANK YOU

We deeply appreciate your steadfast support for the DRA. In continuing our mission, we are passionate about advancing our accomplishments and reinforcing our dedication to Delta communities. Our focus on strategic investments, place-based initiatives, and innovative programs drives our commitment to creating opportunities and catalyzing positive transformations for our residents.

Through collaborative efforts with partners, stakeholders and governmental bodies at all levels, we remain unwavering in our pursuit of bolstering economic prosperity, fostering community progress and improving the lives of individuals in the Delta region. Your support fuels our resolve in making a meaningful impact

Dr. Corey Wiggins





# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

CREATING JOBS. BUILDING  
COMMUNITIES. IMPROVING LIVES.

[DRA.GOV](https://dra.gov)

