Southwest Tennessee Development District: Building A Stronger Region

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We have worked closely with our state and federal partners to provide services to aid our communities and citizens during these unprecedented times. Our AAAD staff served more “at home” meals than ever before in our eight counties and partnered with local small businesses to provide these meals. This partnership not only provided much needed meals, but also gave an income stream to these small businesses.

Sometimes, with challenges come opportunities. We have worked closely with our state and federal partners to provide services to aid our communities and citizens during these unprecedented times. Our AAAD staff served more “at home” meals than ever before in our eight counties and partnered with local small businesses to provide these meals. This partnership not only provided much needed meals, but also gave an income stream to these small businesses. The “My Ride” program transitioned from a personal transportation service to a delivery service for those that needed essentials from groceries to medications. Our employees continued to serve the elderly and low income in a timely and compassionate manner.

Our ECD staff worked with local elected officials to offer technical assistance and much needed grant writing and administration services. The pandemic caused new revenue sources to be established to assist our local communities. More funds were available for grants to job creation projects. Many of these grants required a smaller match rate from our local communities to allow them to retain more of their local funds and implement disaster mitigation and recovery strategic plans.

Hopefully, this plan will strengthen our region as we identify areas of opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

As we are all well aware, the 2019/2020 fiscal year has been anything but “normal.” The second half of the fiscal year was impacted by the worst pandemic to hit our country in over 100 years. The terms “social distancing”, “wear face coverings”, and “wash hands frequently” have entered into every facet of our lives. SWTDD was not immune to the many changes that were necessary to adapt our business model to the changes in the work from home model became part of everyday business as we continued to stay in close communications with our elected officials and the citizens we serve. Our staff did a wonderful job in adapting and serving and I am proud to say that SWTDD has never closed even one day due to the pandemic.

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Yes, this has been a year like no other we have ever seen, but we remain optimistic about the future of Southwest Tennessee and look forward to continuing our commitment to excellence to the citizens we serve!
Southwest Tennessee Development District was created by the Tennessee General Assembly under the Tennessee Development District Act of 1965. Like all development districts, SWTDD provides comprehensive planning and promotes economic, community, and human resource development in a defined geographic area.

As a public non-profit association of local governments, SWTDD serves Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, McNairy and Madison counties. The SWTDD Executive Director & Board of Directors (including member government officials, state representatives, minority representatives, and industrial representatives) manage SWTDD. Its 24-member Executive Committee meets six times per year to set policy and conduct business. The full Board of Directors, which includes all county and city mayors in our region, meets once each fiscal year – typically at the Annual Meeting – which is held each fall.

Organized in 1971, SWTDD is staffed by about 34 full-time people with expertise in district management, economic development, community development, housing, environmental planning, regional planning, aging assistance, social work, nursing, grant writing, and public guardianship. Financial support is provided from EDA; THDA; Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development; Tennessee Department of Transportation; TACIR; Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability; TennCare; Delta Regional Authority; USDA Rural Development and others.

Funds received from the Commission on Aging & Disability are distributed through contracts to senior centers and regional service provider agencies. SWTDD also receives fees for grant administration/management services rendered for member governments and income from its small business loan program. SWTDD is designated as a regional clearinghouse for projects under Executive Order 12372 and acts as the Regional Affiliate Data Center for the Bureau of the Census.

The Southwest Area Agency on Aging & Disability (AAA) serves consumers age 60 and older, as well as, adults 18 and older with a physical disability. The service area includes Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy Counties. Services are targeted to persons who have the greatest economic need with particular attention to low-income older individuals (including low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas).

Services & Programs for the Aging & Disabled

- Options for Community Living
- Caregiver Support
- Nutrition Services
- Public Guardianship
- Senior Centers
- TennCare CHOICES
- MyRide West TN
- SNAP
- CREVAA
- Ombudsman
- Senior Volunteer Transportation Network
- Nutrition Services
- CREVAA
- Ombudsman
- Nutrition Services
- Public Guardianship
- Senior Centers
- TennCare CHOICES
- MyRide West TN
- SNAP

[Image from top] (SWTDD) MyRide West Tennessee was honored with a 2019 Aging Achievement Award by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). Volunteers gathered at Northside Church for the first annual Volunteer Fair, which brought together organizations needing help with individuals wanting to volunteer.

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The AAAD operates under contract with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability to administer state and federal programs and with the Bureau of TennCare to administer the CHOICES in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) program. The AAAD also receives funds awarded from the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Settlement in the Chancery Court of Davidson County. That contract is also administered by the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability.

During FY20, The AAAD worked to complete goals as outlined in its Area Plan. Benchmarks were set by the AAAD Director based upon review of data from the past three fiscal years. Progress towards meeting these benchmarks are monitored monthly by the management staff and reviewed with all AAAD employees. All proposed activities for FY20 were completed. COVID-19 brought significant changes to the daily operations of the Agency and to its programs and services. These changes are outlined per program, below.

Information and Assistance (I&A):
The AAAD completed over 300 outreach and education activities based upon its annual Outreach and Education Plans. These plans target low-income, minority, rural, and limited English proficiency individuals. The Plans are developed as a collaborative effort between the Agency Director and Department Managers. All outreach activities completed over the past three years are reviewed to determine which parts of the service area have received adequate information and adequate which parts have not. Identified gaps determine the focus for the next year’s Plan.

The Agency continued to provide information to consumers and family caregivers through its I&A phone line, in-person, and at local health fairs, conferences, and professional staff-in-service meetings. Additionally, the I&A Department produced its monthly newsletter, “The Information Connection”, for digital distribution throughout the region. The newsletter is targeted to be utilized in an effort to provide timely information to consumers and family caregivers. Total number of consumers who received I&A services was 1,244.

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The AAAD also promotes nutrition services at each of its outreach events.

Nutrition Services:
Nutrition services play a vital role in staying healthy and independent. The AAAD’s Nutrition Program works to reduce food insecurity among the older adult population as well as to combat isolation. Older adults who are frail and homebound are eligible to receive meals, delivered at home, through the Senior Nutrition Program. The Public Guardianship Program provides service for persons age sixty and older who are no longer able to make decision for themselves. The Public Guardian may be either appointed as conservator of person and/or property by the court, or serve as power of attorney in some cases. The Program served 29 consumers during FY20. The quality of the meals is measured via satisfaction surveys. SWAAAD completes surveys during the fiscal year to ensure quality, variety, and service. The AAAD satisfies the rate of satisfaction with home-delivered meals to be 90%. Nutrition Site Managers provide very detailed feedback to the Central Kitchen in order to ensure that meals meet or exceed quality expectations. Nutrition services are provided to the entire region. The State and Federal programs and with the Bureau of TennCare to administer the CHOICES in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) program. The AAAD also receives funds awarded from the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Settlement in the Chancery Court of Davidson County. That contract is also administered by the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability.

Public Guardianship:
The Public Guardianship Program provides services for a person who is old and unable to make decision for themselves. The Public Guardian works to reduce food insecurity among the older adult population as well as to combat isolation. Older adults who are frail and homebound are eligible to receive meals, delivered at home, through the Senior Nutrition Program. The Public Guardianship Program provides service for persons age sixty and older who are no longer able to make decision for themselves. The Public Guardian may be either appointed as conservator of person and/or property by the court, or serve as power of attorney in some cases. The Program served 29 consumers during FY20. The quality of the meals is measured via satisfaction surveys. SWAAAD completes surveys during the fiscal year to ensure quality, variety, and service. The AAAD satisfies the rate of satisfaction with home-delivered meals to be 90%. Nutrition Site Managers provide very detailed feedback to the Central Kitchen in order to ensure that meals meet or exceed quality expectations. Nutrition services are provided to the entire region. The State and Federal programs and with the Bureau of TennCare to administer the CHOICES in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) program. The AAAD also receives funds awarded from the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Settlement in the Chancery Court of Davidson County. That contract is also administered by the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability.
These trips were provided to 1,116 older adults. Five new programs were launched during the time period. Volunteer transportation programs across the state in three years. In year two of the grant, the SVTN program provided 26,271 trips and utilized 546 volunteers statewide. The creation of a statewide network of senior volunteer transportation providers to unite in purpose, education, and mission. Further, the grant seeks to build thirty new senior transportation programs. The SVTN Program is a product of the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Grant awarded by the Chancery Court of Davidson County. This Grant, awarded to SWTDD in 2018, funded the Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN): a volunteer-based transportation program for persons needing extra assistance. During FY20, the program utilized a total of 81 volunteers who drove 25,039 miles and committed 1,666 hours to serving riders. MyRide West Tennessee: In FY20, the MyRide West Tennessee Program provided 1,153 trips to 84 older adults in Madison County and 647 trips to 36 older adults in Henderson County. The MyRide West Tennessee program was developed in collaboration with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability and is a volunteer-based transportation program for persons needing extra assistance. During FY20, the program utilized a total of 81 volunteers who drove 25,039 miles and committed 1,666 hours to serving riders. Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN): The SVTN Program is a product of the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Grant awarded by the Chancery Court of Davidson County. This Grant, awarded to SVTN in 2018, funded the creation of a statewide network of senior volunteer transportation providers to unite in purpose, education, and mission. Further, the grant seeks to build thirty new senior volunteer transportation programs across the state in three years. In year two of the grant, the SVTN program provided 26,271 trips and utilized 546 volunteers statewide. These trips were provided to 1,116 older adults. Five new programs were launched during the time period. 

**Legal Assistance:** During FY20, 182 individuals received legal assistance using $26,435 Title III dollars. The assistance resulted in $39,024 in economic benefits for clients. West Tennessee legal services (WTLs) is the AAAD’s contract provider for legal services. WTLS referred an additional 265 senior clients to other WTLS programs for additional services, including our Fair Housing unit, Tennessee Senior Law Alliance project, and Victim of Crime Assistance projects. During FY20, the Tennessee Senior Law Alliance project conducted 29 legal presentations at various senior centers and service providers in the SWAAAD coverage area. These presentations highlighted the importance of legal issues affecting West Tennessee seniors and increased requests for legal assistance to WTLS. 

**MyRide West Tennessee:** In FY20, the MyRide West Tennessee Program provided 1,153 trips to 84 older adults in Madison County and 647 trips to 36 older adults in Henderson County. The MyRide West Tennessee program was developed in collaboration with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability and is a volunteer-based transportation program for persons needing extra assistance. During FY20, the program utilized a total of 81 volunteers who drove 25,039 miles and committed 1,666 hours to serving riders. 

**Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN):** The SVTN Program is a product of the Senior Trust/Elder Trust Grant awarded by the Chancery Court of Davidson County. This Grant, awarded to SVTN in 2018, funded the creation of a statewide network of senior volunteer transportation providers to unite in purpose, education, and mission. Further, the grant seeks to build thirty new senior volunteer transportation programs across the state in three years. In year two of the grant, the SVTN program provided 26,271 trips and utilized 546 volunteers statewide. These trips were provided to 1,116 older adults. Five new programs were launched during the time period.
The SWTDD Economic & Community Development team works with our regional governments to improve the quality of life for citizens in the area. Our ECD services are free-of-charge to our area governments—except planning services and solid waste assistance, which are provided on a contractual basis with participating communities. Below are brief explanations of some ECD services.

Grant Writing & Grant Administration:
SWTDD has a both a grant writer and a grant administrator on staff. All grant writing services are completely free to our member governments. SWTDD receives an administration fee only when a grant is funded.

Types of Grants Written by SWTDD:
EDA, Fasttrack Infrastructure, Site Development Grants, CDBG, CDBG Facade, DERA, S&WTEA, WIA, Assistance to Firefighters, Governor's Highway Safety Office, TDOT, THDA, Solid Waste, Byrnes, Broadband, and Disaster.

TACR/Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations:
SWTDD surveyed 74 School Infrastructure projects and 562 General Infrastructure projects (including the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s bridge projects) throughout our eight county region for a total project count of 626 projects. All projects were submitted to TACR through the Public Infrastructure Needs Inventory database (PINI). The inventory projects surveyed include active and conceptual projects for the next 20 years.

Regional Planning Services (provided on a contractual basis):
SWTDD’s regional planners provide customized services to planning commissions and local governments with the development of a comprehensive long range plan including land use and transportation plans, community facility plans, development protocols including land use and transportation plans, subdivision regulations that are compatible with local values and provide development process, design review guidelines, zoning ordinances/resolutions, plan including land use and transportation plans, community facility plans,

Small Business Loans:
SWTDD is an enterprise that provides loans for small businesses.

Solid Waste/Materials Management Technical Assistance:
SWTDD contracts with interested communities in our eight county region to provide solid waste services in designing, implementing, upgrading, and maintaining solid waste plans, programs and facilities; providing assistance in the formation or dissolution of planning regions; preparing local waste audits; providing technical assistance to solid waste boards to achieve the Local Government Management Act goals; and providing assistance within the region to prepare and submit the required Annual Progress Report.

Our Specialists Assist Local & State Governments

Economic & Community Development Programs

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The City of Henderson received a FastTrack grant for site improvements and an expansion at its facility in the Industrial Park. This project will have its secondary location in the Henderson Arvin Sango, also located in the City of Henderson. The project received a FastTrack grant for site improvements and an expansion at its facility. Arvin Sango received a FastTrack grant for site improvements and an expansion at its facility. The City of Henderson utilized a $448,200 grant for tree clearing and property grading on an industrial site. The City of Henderson also received a FastTrack grant for site improvements for drainage and erosion prevention. This project will create 153 jobs in the next five years.

The Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) provides grants to eligible local governments for the purchase of lands for parks, natural areas, and greenways. SWTDD administers AFGs and works closely with community partners to implement projects that benefit communities and the environment. SWTDD is the lead agency for the Community Development Block Grant Program and administers AFGs.

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Tennessee Historic Commission Technical Assistance Grant: SWTDD wrote and was awarded a $38,000 grant from the Tennessee Historic Commission to continue the community development component of the program. This program helps communities develop and implement comprehensive plans to improve their communities. It is important to note that these efforts require ongoing funding and support to be successful.

Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Grants: The City of Lexington was awarded $137,000 to improve the water system. The City will use these funds for the replacement of meters, deteriorating water lines, and hydrants and to begin a sewer system rehabilitation.

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation: SWTDD wrote and was awarded a $38,000 grant from the Tennessee Historic Commission to continue the community development component of the program. This program helps communities develop and implement comprehensive plans to improve their communities. It is important to note that these efforts require ongoing funding and support to be successful.

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FY 2019/2020: ECD Accomplishments

Regional Planning:
Regional Planning services are provided by SWTDD on a contractual basis. During FY2020, planning services were provided to Bolivar, Brownsville, Henderson, Leitchfield, Stanton and McKenzie and to the counties of Chester, Hardeman, and Haywood. As a result, SWTDD planners attended 80 planning commission meetings, four Board of Zoning appeals, and three design review commission meetings.

The SWTDD regional planners had the following major accomplishments during the FY2020. Assisted with the Chester County Mayor Road Plan; prepared two Amendment Execution Plan packets for the City of Bolivar and one Amendment Execution Plan Packet for the City of Brownsville; updated Brownsville’s Municipal Zoning Ordinance; created a Zoning Resolution, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations for Chester County; amended Leitchfield’s Regional Subdivision Regulations; updated Stanton’s Zoning Ordinances; prepared Zoning Map amendments for Bolivar, prepared Zoning Resolution for Haywood County; and attended more than 160 meetings.

Community Transportation Grants/RPO Services:
Several transportation-related grants were awarded in the Southwest Tennessee region during FY2020. TDOT awarded the City of Bolivar and Hardeman County with Community Transportation Planning Grants. The cities of Brownsville and Savannah were awarded Traffic Signalization Grants. SWTDD’s RPO coordinator also worked on the Region of Influence Area for Saltillo; provided to Bolivar, Brownsville, Henderson, Lexington, Saltillo, Stanton and McKenzie and to the counties of Chester, Henderson, and Haywood. As a result, SWTDD planners attended 60 planning commission meetings, four Board of Zoning appeals, and three design review commission meetings.

Management of Human Resources & Financial Matters:
Communications assists the Memphis Regional Megasite Authority by coordinating meetings, keeping minutes, and assisting as needed. Additionally, SWTDD hosts communications of monthly newsletters, Facebook pages, and media outlets – as well as helping create brochures/flyers and providing publicity for events in the SWTDD region.

Communication:
Program criteria, administration planned monthly challenges to encourage healthier behaviors and scheduled health-related education sessions each quarter.

Health & Wellness:
SWTDD encourages each employee to manage his or her health by continuing to be an active part of the “Working for a Healthier Tennessee” initiative during the past year, and again, qualified as a “Healthier Tennessee Workplace” for 2020. SWTDD has been a “Healthier Tennessee Workplace” for six consecutive years. The Healthier Tennessee program officially ended December 2020. To meet this program criteria, administration planned monthly challenges to encourage healthier behaviors and scheduled health-related education sessions each quarter.

Management of Human Resources & Financial Matters:
The ultimate responsibility of the Development District’s finance department is to protect assets of the District, assist in financial planning, prepare and manage the District’s annual operating budget, and assist as needed. Additionally, SWTDD’s Administrative Staff meetings for federal, state and local partners including facility bookings and assisting with meetings, as needed, for our partnering organizations.

Facilities Management:
Communications:
THIS option allows our finance department to upload an authorized listing of check numbers, issue date, and amount paid to vendors. BancorpSouth then matches the authorized listing or an exception is noted and a check is paid from district funds, all information must match the authorized listing against checks presented for payment. Before a check is paid from district funds, all information must match the authorized listing or an exception is noted and a check is paid from district funds, all information must match the authorized listing against checks presented for payment.

Operating Budget:
FY 2020 - Operating Budget $6,111,468.50
Pass Through Budget $1,777,791.71
Total Assets & Liabilities [Govt.-Wide] Audited FY19 $1,580,785.00
Full-Time Staff Members  -  34
Part-Time Staff Members  -  3
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Full-Time Staff Members  -  34
Part-Time Staff Members  -  3
Southwest Tennessee Development District Staff Directory

**REA AGENCY ON AGING & DISABILITY:**
- Shelley Hale, Director  - 731.668.6403; shale@swtdd.org
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**ADMINISTRATION:**
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- Carolyn Ross, Human Resources & Office Manager  - 731.668.6400; cross@swtdd.org
- Kim Essary, Financial Director  - 731.668.6407; kessay@swtdd.org
- Kim Hampton, Fiscal Assistant  - 731.668.6449; khampton@swtdd.org
- Cheasley Brown, IT & Facility Manager  - 731.668.6402; cbrown@swtdd.org
- Debbie Dunaway, PO & Executive Assistant  - 731.668.6410; ddunaway@swtdd.org

**ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**
- Melissa Davis, Community Development Specialist I  - 731.668.6417; mdavis@swtdd.org
- Casey Smith, Community Development Specialist II  - 731.668.6418; csmith@swtdd.org
- Kaye Mathis, Disaster Recovery Specialist  - 731.668.6417; kmathis@swtdd.org
- Shelton Alien, Regional Planner & PO Coordinator  - 731.668.6440; samilen@swtdd.org
- Teresa Sanders, Loans & Environmental Program Coordinator  - 731.668.6420; tsanders@swtdd.org
- Tom Sheehan, Housing Preservation & Regional Planner  - 731.668.6401; tosheehan@swtdd.org

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