

# How Counties Can Help State Accelerate Economic Recovery

By Governor Henry McMaster

**S**outh Carolina was on a roll, breaking economic records, and then the virus came. Like other governors, I implemented measures in South Carolina to slow the rise in COVID-19 infections. From the beginning, relying on the advice of health professionals and business leaders, we have attempted to vigorously protect the public while doing the minimum amount of economic damage to what was just months ago one of the most thriving economies we've ever seen.

As public health experts tell us, the limited and carefully targeted measures we implemented are working. As a result, we are now in the process of incrementally and intelligently relaxing these restrictions. We are working to accelerate South Carolina's economic recovery—and counties play a critical role in that effort.

Last month, I announced “accelerateSC,” a coordinated economic revitalization effort involving business leaders, healthcare professionals, educators—and county and municipal officials. The effort consists of four primary components of analysis and effort: Response, Protection, Resources, and Governance. All will be critical in promoting recovery at the county level.

Counties are positioned to help our state respond by identifying challenges related to workforce capacity and critical industries within their jurisdictions.

Counties provide insights for protecting their populations by conducting



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outreach to vulnerable citizens, including senior adults, residents in rural communities, minority communities and persons with chronic diseases and weakened immune systems.

As counties communicate their needs, state authorities work vigorously to assist in getting necessary resources

to them.

Most importantly, counties are uniquely situated to help us identify challenges so that we, as an entire state, may learn from each other and implement good governance strategies.

Counties will be prime movers of our statewide economic revitalization. Various statewide policy decisions will flow from Columbia, but they will be based on information received from the counties—the experiences, successes, failures and needs they demonstrate.

At the same time, counties face decisions based on their particular sets of circumstances. Like other entities throughout the state, counties are facing budgetary shortfalls and uncertainties due to declining tax revenues. Further, the economic stressors demonstrated in this pandemic are giving new insights for reform.

Potential solutions include suspending fees and late payment penalties, reducing taxes on businesses, and passing a previous year's budget with options to amend later once the economic impacts of COVID-19 become clear. Meanwhile, on the state level—with ideas from accelerateSC—we hope to offer regulatory relief so that counties may have flexibility in the way they spend the dollars they collect.

Before the virus, South Carolina's economy was thriving, setting records every month, with the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. We are coming  
(See *Governor*, P. 4)



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## Purpose of the SCAC

- *To promote more efficient county governments*
- *To study, discuss and recommend improvements in government*
- *To investigate and provide means for the exchange of ideas and experiences between county officials*
- *To promote and encourage education of county officials*
- *To collect, analyze and distribute information about county government*
- *To cooperate with other organizations*
- *To promote legislation which supports efficient administration of local government in South Carolina*

✦ For more information about the SCAC, please contact:

**South Carolina  
Association of Counties**  
PO Box 8207  
1919 Thurmond Mall  
Columbia, SC 29202-8207  
803-252-7255  
[smorgan@scac.sc](mailto:smorgan@scac.sc)

[SCCounties.org](http://SCCounties.org)



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## Governor ...

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back, revitalized and restored, but we have many decisions to make and work to do. South Carolina is unique—we are like a family. I am confident that we can and will exceed all expectations!



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**SOUTH CAROLINA  
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

PO Box 8207  
Columbia, SC 29202-8207  
(803) 252-7255

E-mail: [smorgan@scac.sc](mailto:smorgan@scac.sc)

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