

Executive Director Reflections

- 1) What are the “key ingredients” for a successful EDD-EDA partnership?
- 2) Share the story of one EDA-funded project you are particularly proud of for its impact on your region.
- 3) Give one piece of advice for 1) EDA staff and 2) EDD staff for how to best position EDDs for success in the future.



Michelle Jordan

Executive Director

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments



EDA and EDDs: Partners in Strengthening Regional Economic Development

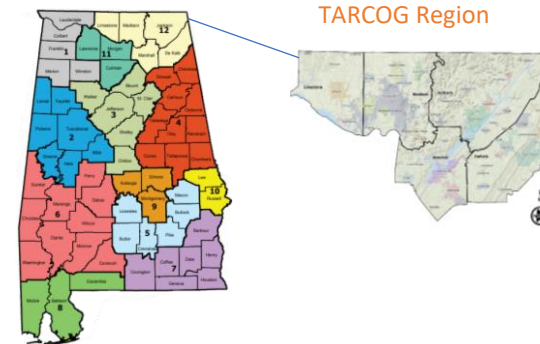
NADO/DDAA Washington Policy Conference

A Little About the TARCOG Region



- The TARCOG Region is home to 47 municipalities located in five counties (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison and Marshall) in Northeast Alabama, and is home to more than 713,000 Alabamians
- TARCOG's largest city, and the largest city in Alabama, is Huntsville, Alabama - one of the most dynamic metropolitan areas in the country. In 2022, *U.S. News & World Report* named Huntsville the **#1 Best Place to Live**. *Forbes* has named Huntsville **one of the Top 20 Leading Metros for Business** and *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* has named Huntsville **one of the country's Top 10 Cities for Raising Families**
- The TARCOG Region is home to:
 - The highest percentage of Engineers in the Southeast
 - Redstone Arsenal
 - NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center
 - Army Material Command
 - Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)
 - Missile Defense Command
 - The FUTURE home of Space Command

Alabama Association of Regional Councils



- Three Four-Year Colleges (Alabama A&M University, Oakwood University and UAH), and Four Community Colleges
- More State Parks than any other Region in Alabama

Key Ingredients for a Successful EDD-EDA Partnership



- EDA's **Availability, Flexibility, and Openness** to our EDD staff has been our Key Ingredient in dreaming big in our Region
- **Access** to EDA Staff has allowed us to structure programs that meet both EDA's requirements and the needs of our Region
- EDA not only wants to help EDDs develop meaningful projects that will have lasting impacts in our Regions, they want to **make resources available** for these projects
- EDA Staff possesses a **diversity of experiences and expertise** that is a direct benefit to EDD staff – this is extremely important when developing innovative projects

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing Grade Separation Grant



- EDA Provided \$4.1 Million Dollars in funding for a grade separation project related to the construction of a \$2.3 Billion joint venture project in Huntsville, Alabama in 2019
 - MTM is the first of its kind of joint venture between Mazda and Toyota automakers
 - MTM will employ 4,000 direct employees, and create up to 10,000 more Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) jobs throughout the Region
 - TARCOG Economic Development and Planning staff wrote the grant secured the funding needed for this needed infrastructure project
 - As a result of this successful project, TARCOG is seen as a relevant and resourceful economic development partner throughout our Region and the State of Alabama
 - We, and all of the other AARC COGs, are seen as problem solvers as a result of this, and many other EDA funded programs throughout Alabama

EDA Staff and EDD Staff Advice...



- **EDA Staff Advice – More Training for EDDs**

- As EDD staff transitions throughout the country, there is a GREAT opportunity for EDA staff to train and prepare the next generation of Regional Planners and Economic Development professionals working in councils of governments/regional planning agencies. This new generation of professional's desires technical assistance/training and best practice examples from across the country from EDA staff!

- **EDD Staff Advice – Take Advantage of EDA Webinars**

- One of the few silver linings from the pandemic has been our ability to connect and learn in virtual settings. NADO has taken advantage of technology and has offered incredible webinars for our EDD staff. One example of this programming is the “*Communities of Practice*” webinar series, which was funded by EDA. These kinds of webinars allows staff that might not be able to travel to still benefit from quality training. We have a national organization and federal partner that are willing to think outside of the box – EDD staff has to be committed to taking advantage of every opportunity that they provide to learn and grow professionally.