



Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery

August 21, 2026

10:00 am – 11:30 am

Today's Agenda

Call to Order, Introductory Remarks | *Mayor Esther Manheimer, Co-Chair*

Renew NC Program Updates | *Stephanie McGarrah, Deputy Secretary of Community Revitalization, NC Department of Commerce*

Remarks | *Governor Josh Stein*

Renew NC Program Updates, cont'd

Economic Indicators for Western North Carolina | *Andrew Berger-Gross, Senior Economist, Labor & Economic Analysis Division, NC Department of Commerce*

USDA Rural Development Recovery Programs | *Robert Hosford, Director of State Operations for Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Recovery Updates | *Matt Calabria & Emily Gangi, GROW NC*

Wrap Up & Next Steps | *Matt Calabria, GROW NC*

Adjourn





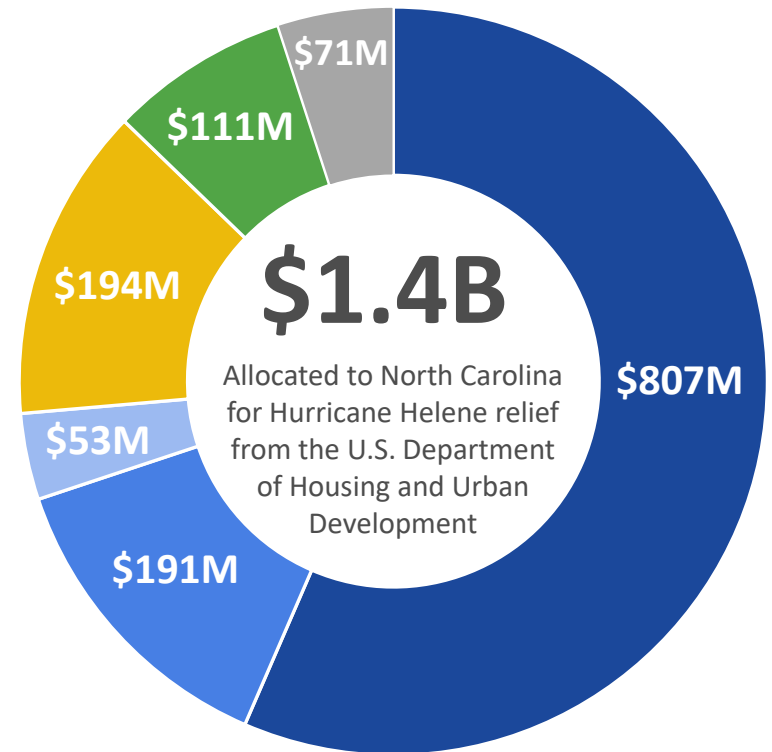
Renew NC Program Updates

Stephanie McGarrah, NC Department of Commerce



Overview of CDBG-DR Program

- **\$807M:** Single-Family Housing Program
- **\$191M:** Multi-Family Housing Program
 - 3 segments: small; large LIHTC; large, non-LIHTC
- **\$53M:** Workforce Housing for Ownership
- **\$194M:** Community Infrastructure Program
- **\$111M:** Commercial District Revitalization Program
- **\$71M:** Administration





Renew NC Single-Family Housing Dashboard

8/19/2026 11:22:37 AM

Latest Data Refresh

Applications in Progress But Not Submitted	Total Applications Submitted	Total Active Applications	Inactive or Ineligible Applications
2,189	7,924	2,393 	5,531 

Application Submission Deadline

January 31, 2026

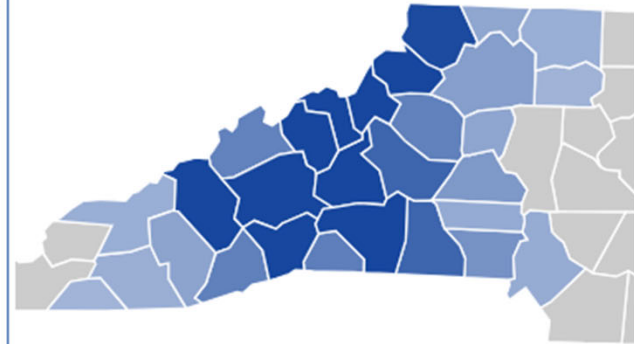
Verified Eligible Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Total
Phase 1	1,221	189	97	15	1,522
Phase 2	181	63	11	6	261
Phase 3	161	6	N/A	N/A	167
Phase 4	389	12	N/A	N/A	401

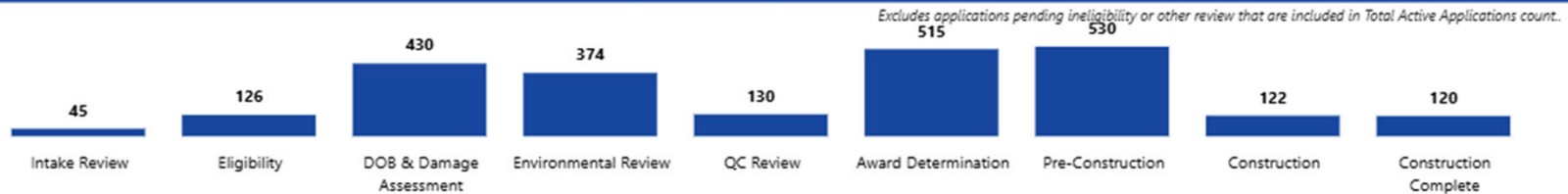
Hover over the information bubble for Phase and Priority definitions.

Applications will be processed beginning with Phase 1, followed by Phase 2, etc.

Applications by County



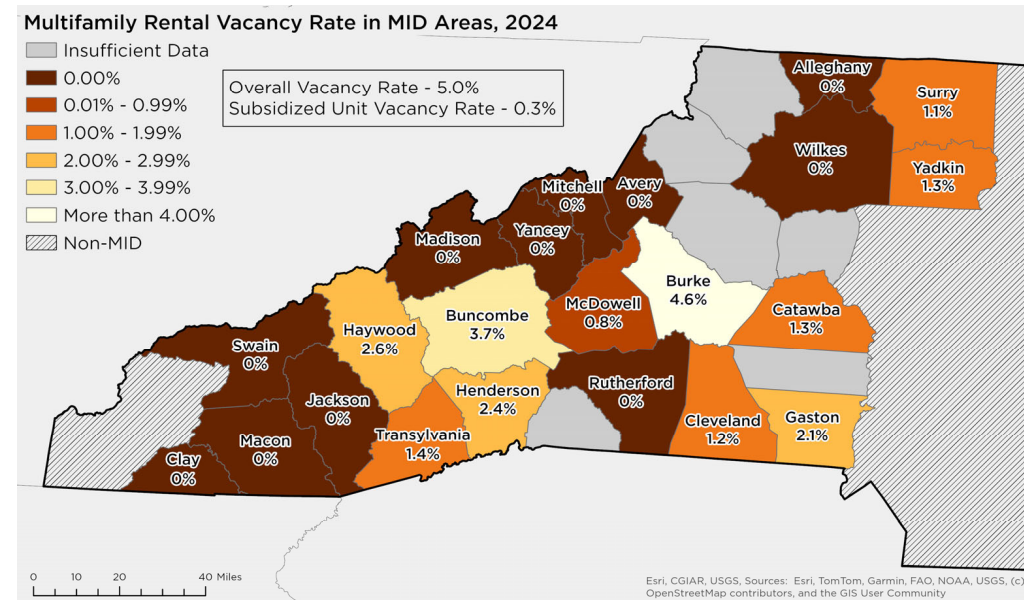
Active Applications by Workflow Status



Dashboard located at <https://www.commercerecovery.nc.gov>

Temporary Relocation Assistance (TRA)

- 638 applicants have been approved for TRA
- Lack of temporary housing options for Renew NC Single Family applicants was a significant chokepoint from "Pre-Construction" to "Construction."
- \$40 million TRA program was approved by the NC General Assembly to provide short term housing for an estimated 1,800 applicants <80% AMI with a demonstrated hardship.
 - Applicants don't move out until they have a notice-to-proceed for construction.
 - Builders handle funds and work with their assigned applicants to find appropriate housing.
 - DCR will pay builders a hotel nightly rate plus taxes and overhead for a maximum number of nights based on the project type. Builders are responsible for overages.
- DCR works with non-profit partners to find related assistance for applicants



*Data map from Bowen National Research

Small Rental Housing Program

\$48.3M in grant funding to repair and/or replace affordable rental units using state-contracted builders.

Application Window

- Dec 15, 2025 – July 10, 2026

Award Range

- \$250K - \$1.5M

Applicants

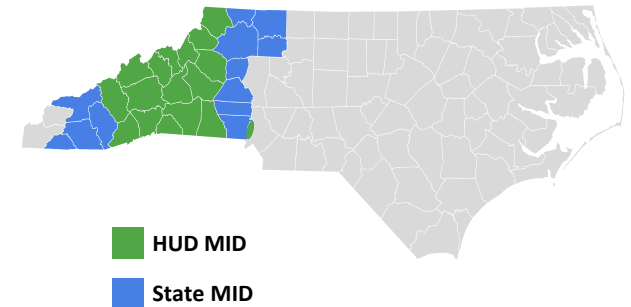
- Owners of small rental units (1-4 units with damage or destruction from Helene)

Requirements

- ✓ Program repairs or rebuilds properties with 1 to 4 rental units
- ✓ Properties must be vacant at time of application
- ✓ Landlords agree that properties will be kept affordable for 10 years for 80% or less Area Median Income (AMI) tenants

Locations

- HUD and State MID Areas





Renew NC Small Rental Housing Dashboard

8/19/2026 9:22:47 AM

Latest Data Refresh

Total Applications Submitted

161

Total Number of Units

190

Total Active Applications

95

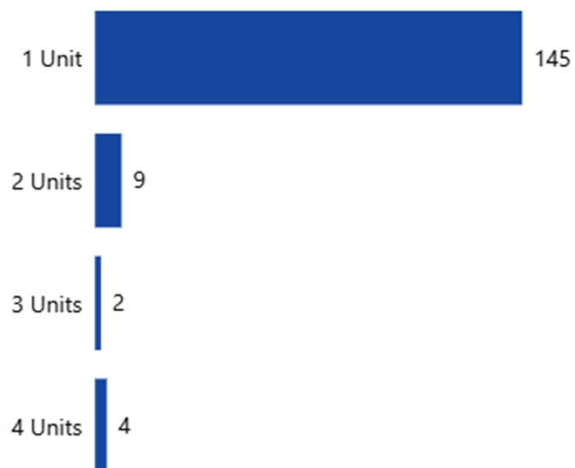


Inactive or Ineligible Applications

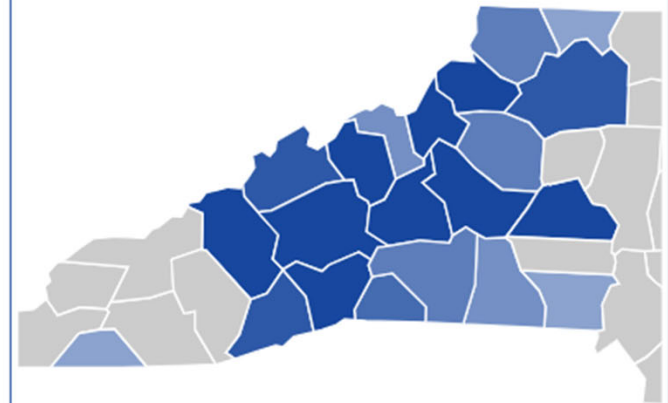
66



Applications by Number of Units



Applications by County



Active Applications by Workflow Status



Multi-Family Housing Construction and Repair Program: Non-LIHTC

\$70M in competitive grant or loan funding to support reconstruction, rehabilitation or construction of affordable rental housing

Application Window

- June 25 – Nov 2, 2026

Award Range

- \$500K - \$15M

Applicants

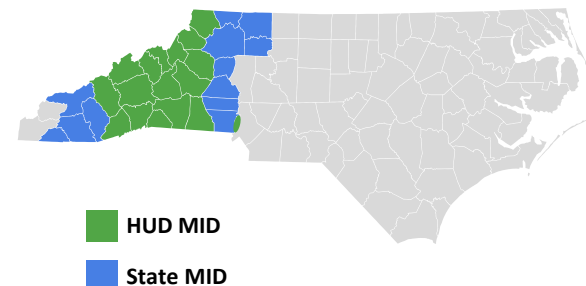
- Local governments
- Public, private or nonprofit organizations; and
- CHDOs/CBDOs

Eligible Activities

- ✓ Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and New Construction of Housing;
- ✓ Acquisition and clearance activities;
- ✓ Housing Services
- ✓ Universal relocation assistance

Locations

- HUD and State MID Areas



Multi-Family Housing Construction and Repair Program: Non-LIHTC

- Prescreening launched on June 1; technical assistance available for free to all interested applicants
- 51 prescreens underway
- 21 applications in progress
- Includes repairs from Helene damage as well as new construction

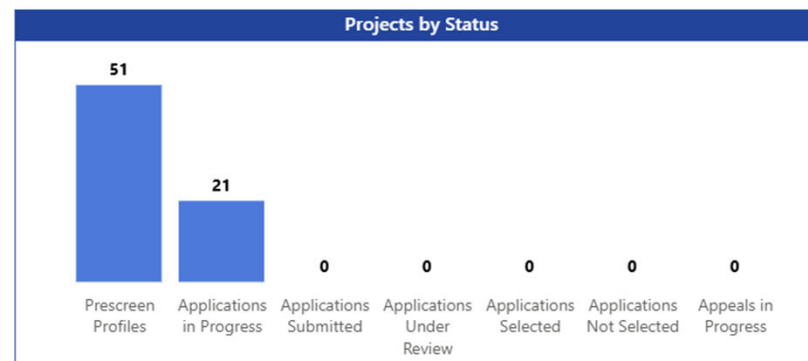
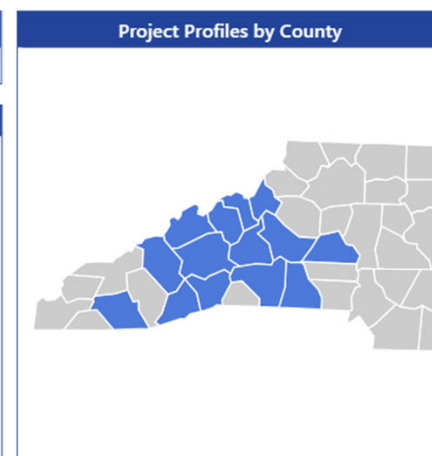


Renew NC Multi-Family Construction and Repair Dashboard

Last Updated: 08.14.2026

Total Count
72

Round 1 Application Submission Deadline
November 2, 2026



Multi-Family Housing Program: LIHTC

\$69.1M in competitive grant or loan funding to support reconstruction, rehabilitation, or construction of affordable rental housing

Application Window

- Calendar year 2026; rolling

Award Range

- \$500K - \$15M

Applicants

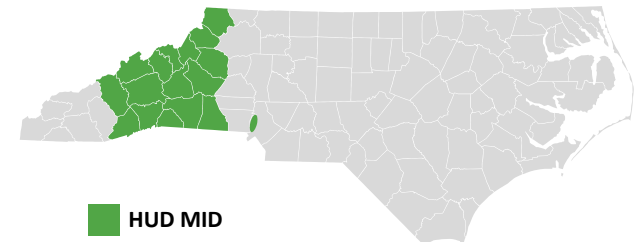
- Local governments
- Public, private or nonprofit organizations; and
- CHDOs/CBDOs

Program Description

- ✓ Administered by NC Housing Finance Agency in conjunction with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (9% and 4% credits)
- ✓ CDBG-DR used to fill gaps in funding stack for viable applications

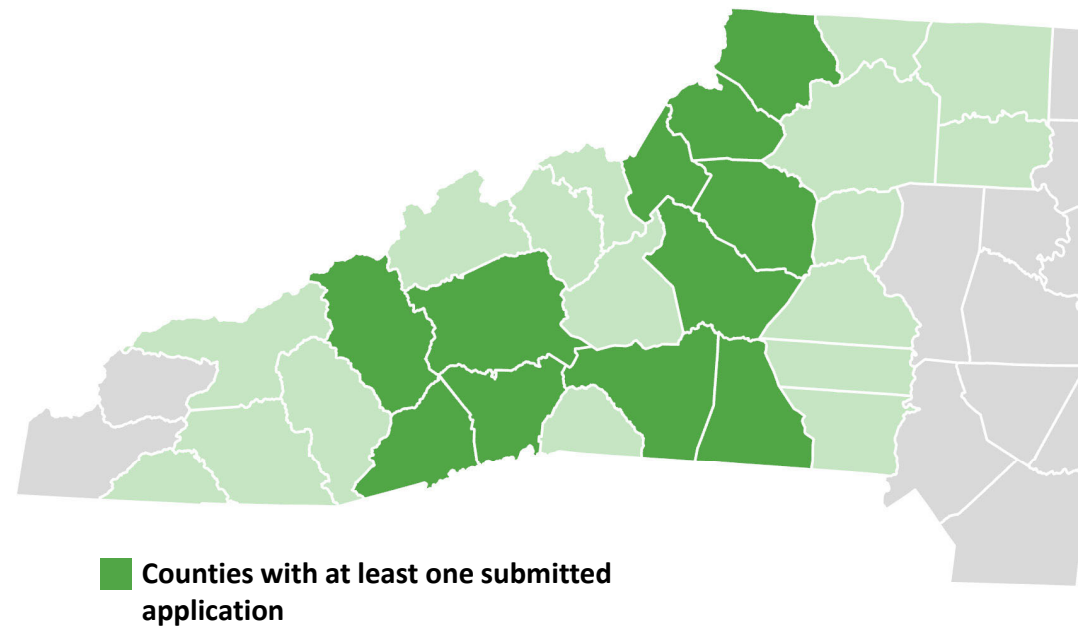
Locations

- HUD MID Areas



Multi-Family Housing Program: LIHTC

- NCHFA received final applications for 9% and 4% low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC); more CDBG-DR requested than funds available
- Developers in 11 of the 16 HUD MID counties submitted applications; applications per county ranged from 1-12
- NCHFA was able to use CDBG-DR funds to provide gap funding for one project in each of the 10 HUD MID counties with completed applications
- All new construction of over 800 units
- Awards made in August 2026



Workforce Housing for Ownership Program

\$53M in competitive grant funding for development and construction of units for purchase by LMI (low to moderate income) households with less than 80% AMI.

Application Window

- Aug 25 – Dec 14, 2026

Award Range

- \$2M - \$5M

Applicants

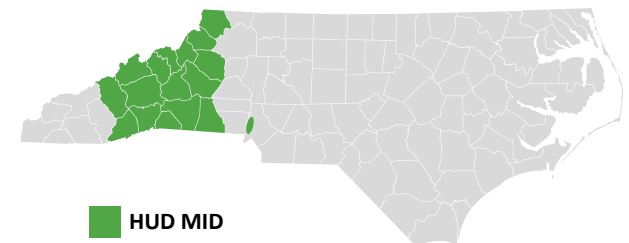
- Local governments;
- Public, private or nonprofit organizations; and
- CHDOs/CBDOs

Eligible Activities

- ✓ Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and New Construction of Housing;
- ✓ Acquisition and clearance activities;
- ✓ Housing Services, like direct assistance for homeownership activities.

Locations

- HUD MID Only



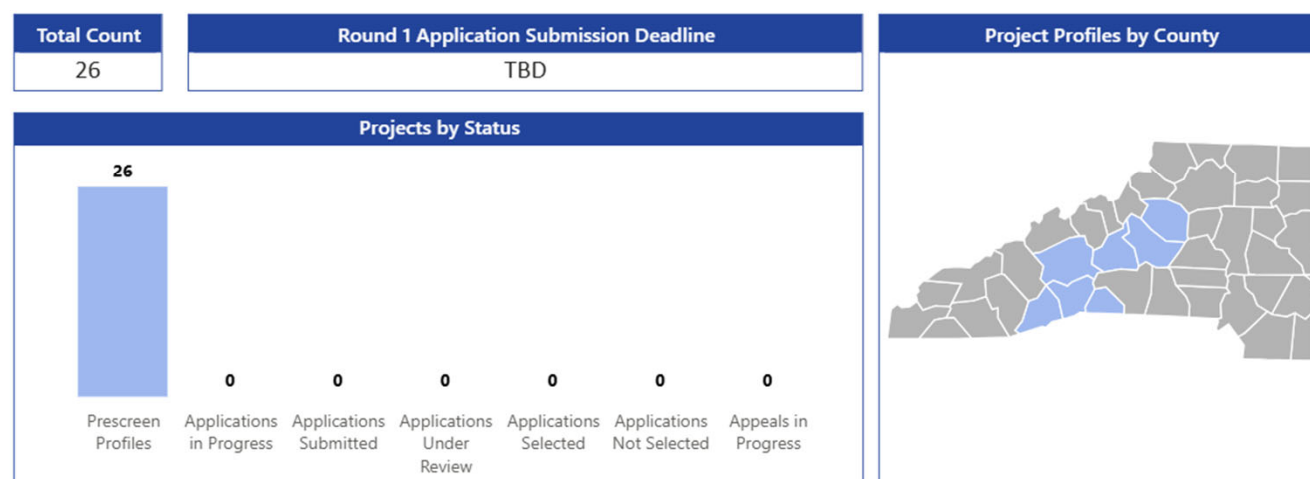
Workforce Housing for Ownership Program

- Prescreening opened July 20, 2026; technical assistance available for free to all interested applicants
- 26 prescreen profiles underway
- Rules allow a wide variety of approaches to provide subsidized housing to fit the needs of the communities and developers
(e.g., right to recapture/silent second mortgage/first lien priority model with no deed restrictions to full deed restrictions for land trusts)



Renew NC Workforce Housing for Ownership Dashboard

Last Updated: 08.14.2026



Commercial District Revitalization Program

\$111M in grant funding to support revitalization activities (e.g., rehabilitation of commercial structures, small business locations) in impacted commercial areas.

Application Rounds

- Round 1: April 6 – Aug 4, 2026 (\$40M available)
- Round 2: Q4 2026 (\$71M available)

Award Range

- \$500K - \$10M

Applicants

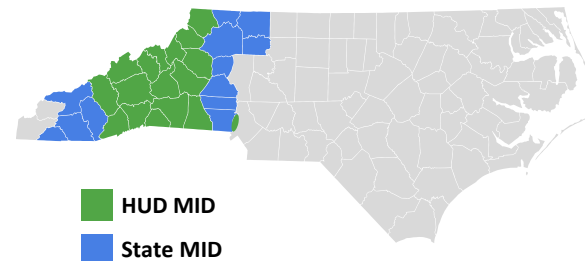
- Local Governments
- Nonprofit Organizations

Eligible Activities

- ✓ Acquisition, demolition, site preparation, or rehabilitation and physical improvements of commercial structures;
- ✓ Streetscape projects;
- ✓ Facade improvements to private or public structures in commercial areas;
- ✓ Mixed-use projects.

Locations

- HUD and State MID Areas



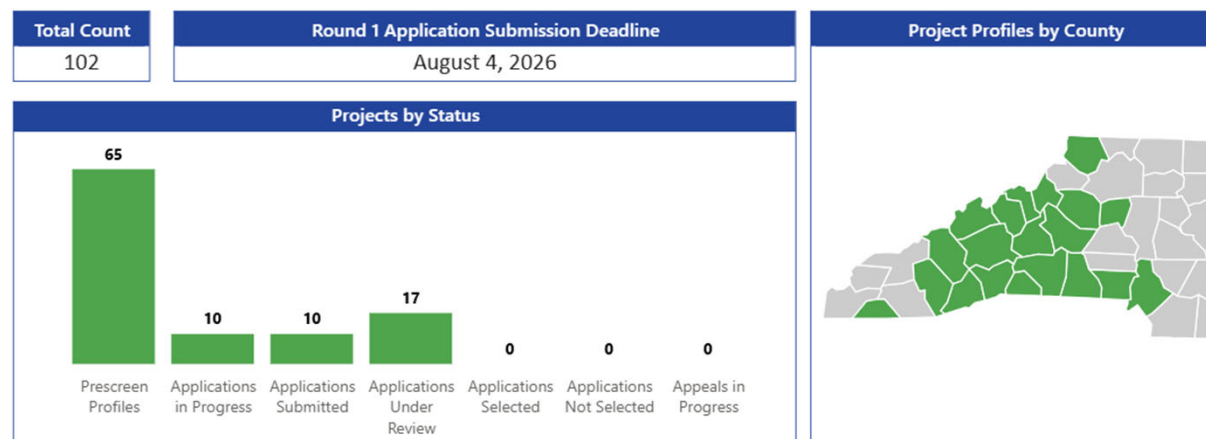
Commercial District Revitalization Program

- Prescreen for Round 1 opened on February 9, 2026; technical assistance available for free to all interested applicants
- 27 applications submitted; \$153M requested for \$40M available in Round 1
- 65 prescreen profiles underway; 10 applications in progress (can be considered in Round 2)
- Review of first round applications underway; award announcements anticipated in late September/early October



Renew NC Commercial District Revitalization Dashboard

Last Updated: 08.14.2026



Community Infrastructure Program

\$194M in competitive grant funding for infrastructure projects that will help Helene-impacted communities become more resilient to natural hazards.

Application Rounds

- Round 1: July 6 – Sep 16, 2026 (\$55M available)
- Round 2: Q4 2026 (\$139M available)

Award Range

- \$500K - \$15M

Applicants

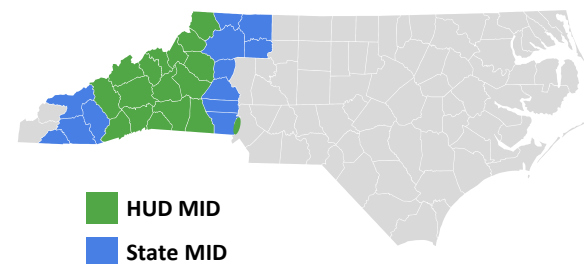
- Local Governments

Eligible Activities

- ✓ Flood control and stormwater management systems;
- ✓ Restoration of infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, streets, bridges);
- ✓ Restoration of public spaces, including parks and community centers.

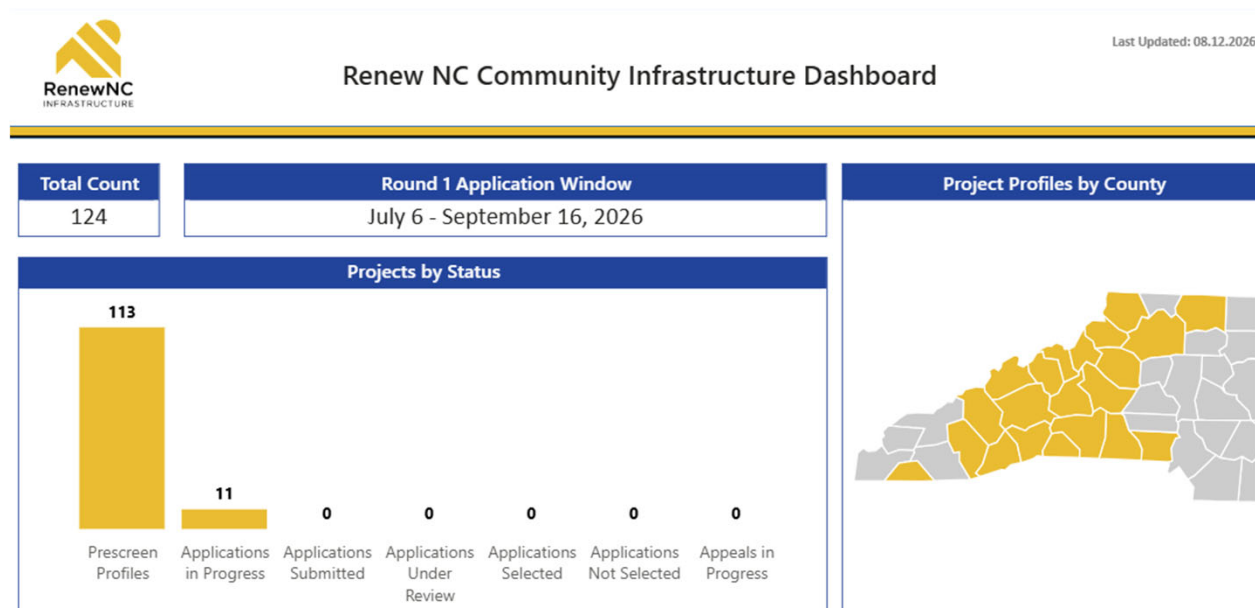
Locations

- HUD and State MID Areas



Community Infrastructure Program

- Prescreen for Round 1 opened in February; technical assistance available for free to all interested applicants
- 113 prescreen profiles underway
- 11 applications in progress





Remarks

Governor Josh Stein





Economic Indicators for Western North Carolina

Andrew Berger-Gross, NC Department of Commerce



Dec 2024 storm damage assumption: Business impact expected to ease by end of 2024

2024 →

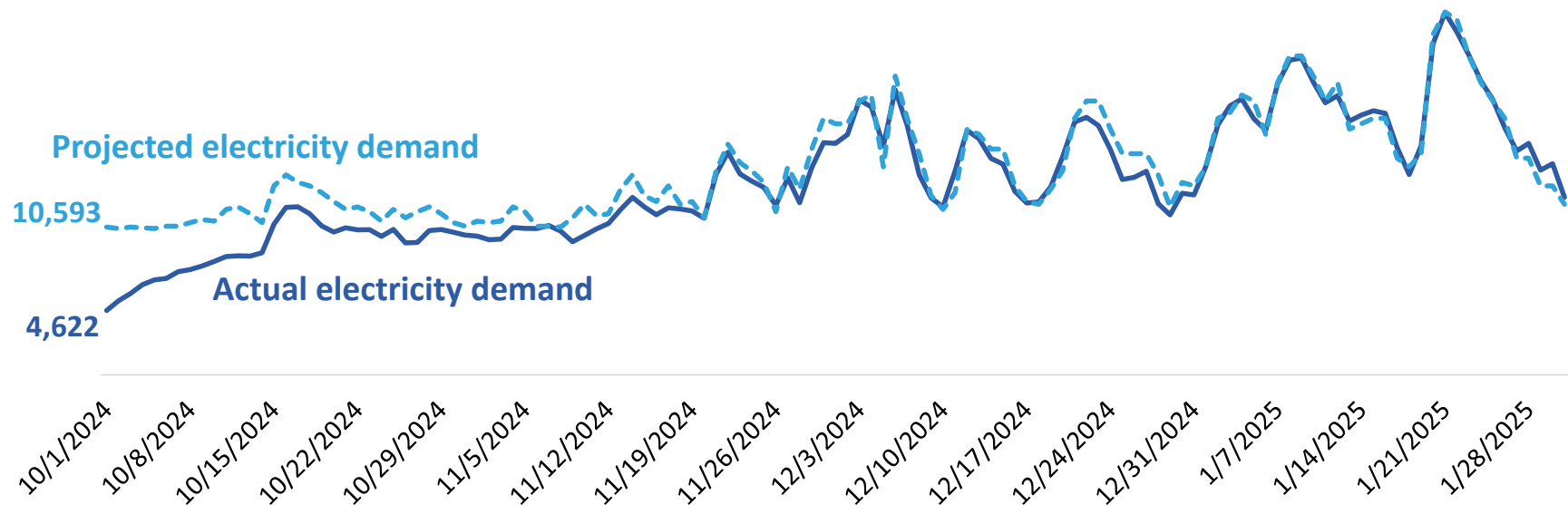
Business Disruption Assumptions											
Period Start (Incl.)	9/26	9/28	10/1	10/6	10/11	10/16	10/21	10/31	12/1	12/31	
Period End (Excl.)	9/28	10/1	10/6	10/11	10/16	10/21	10/31	12/1	12/31	9/27	
Days	2	3	5	5	5	5	10	31	30	270	
Weekdays	2	1	4	4	3	3	8	22	21	194	
County Impact Categories	<u>Share of Business Activity Permanently Disrupted</u>										Disruption Factor (Days)
<u>Critical</u>	50%	90%	75%	50%	35%	15%	10%	8%	5%	<u>1%</u>	19.53
High	50%	50%	30%	15%	5%	3%	2%	1%	0%	0%	5.59
Moderate	30%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.29
Low	15%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.44
Minimal	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.07

Source: analysis of data from US Energy Information Administration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

A rapid recovery in business activity

Electricity demand recovered quickly

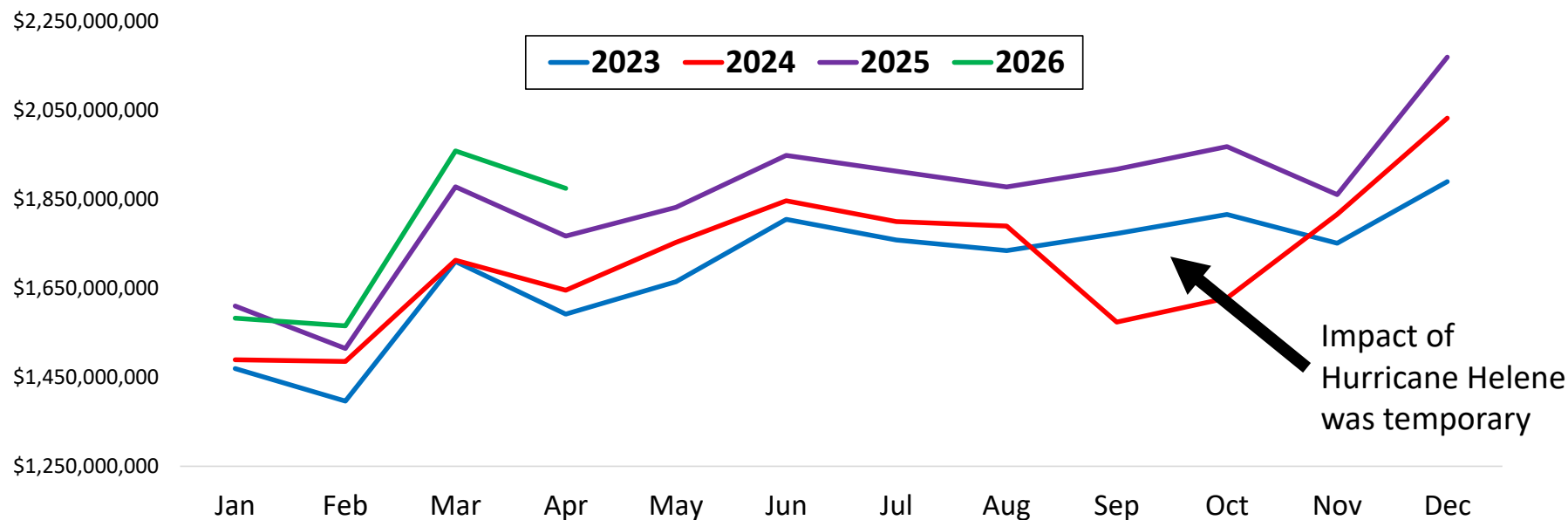
Electricity demand (mWh) in Duke Energy Progress West region
(Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Haywood, Jackson, McDowell, Yancey, Mitchell, Avery)



A rapid recovery in business activity

Taxable sales recovered quickly

Taxable sales and purchases in Hurricane Helene HUD MID counties
By estimated month of sale

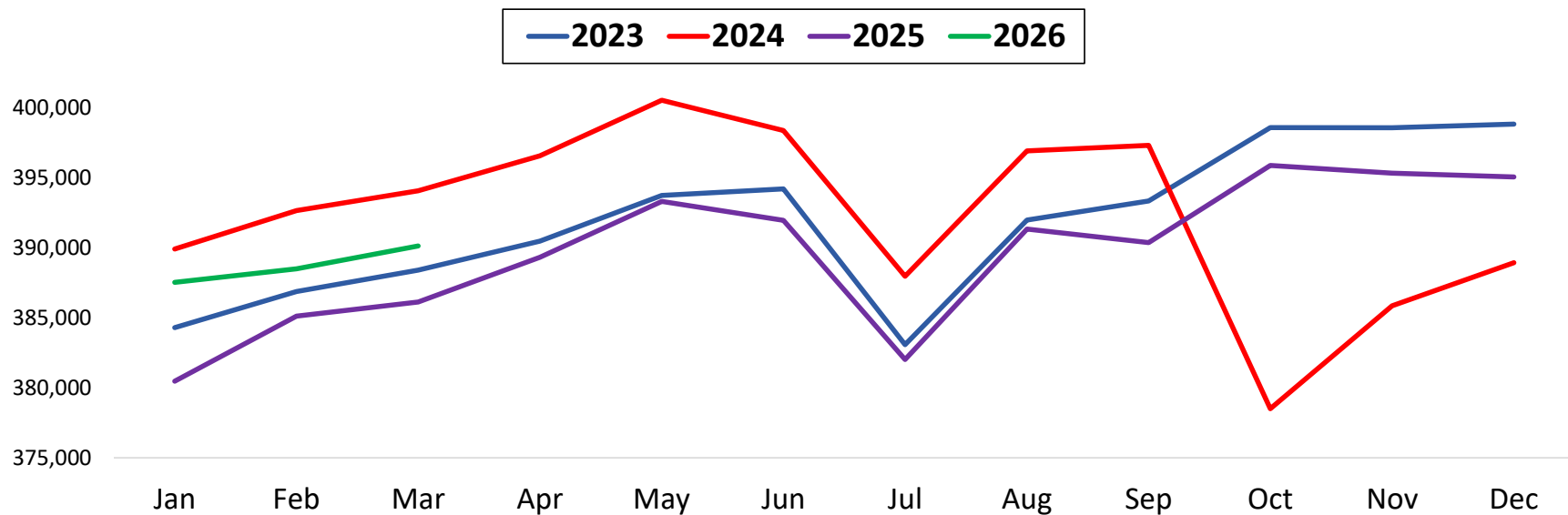


Impact of Hurricane Helene was temporary

An *incomplete* jobs recovery

Employment remains below pre-Helene levels

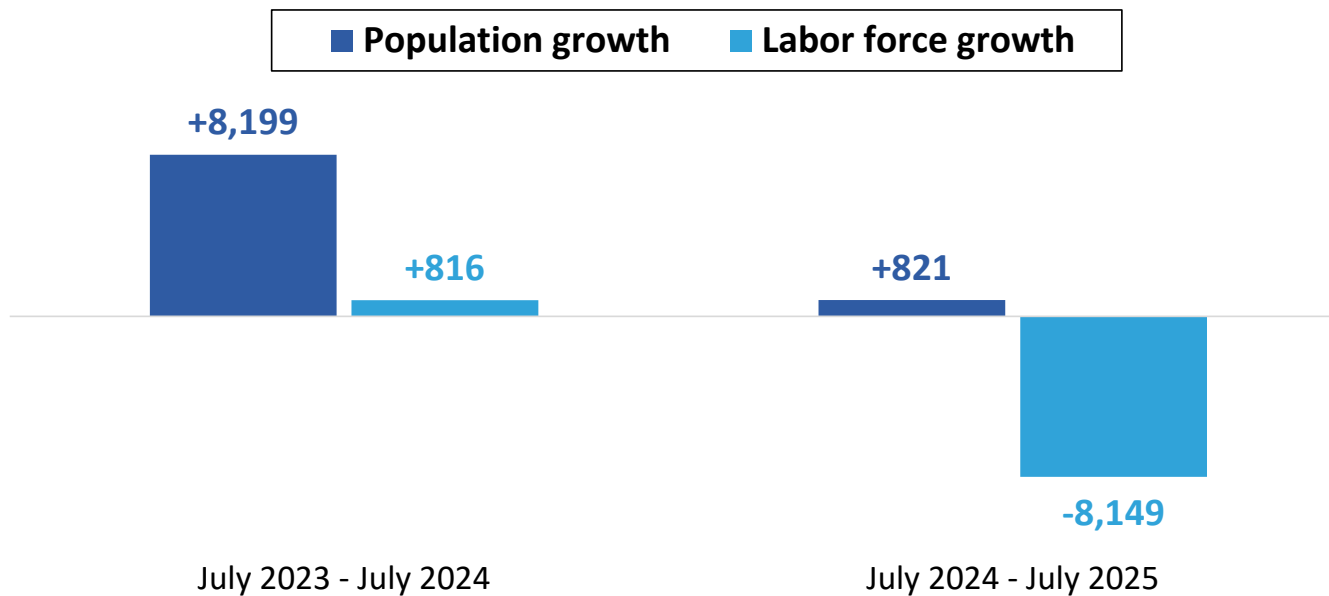
Total employment in Hurricane Helene HUD MID counties



Where are the workers?

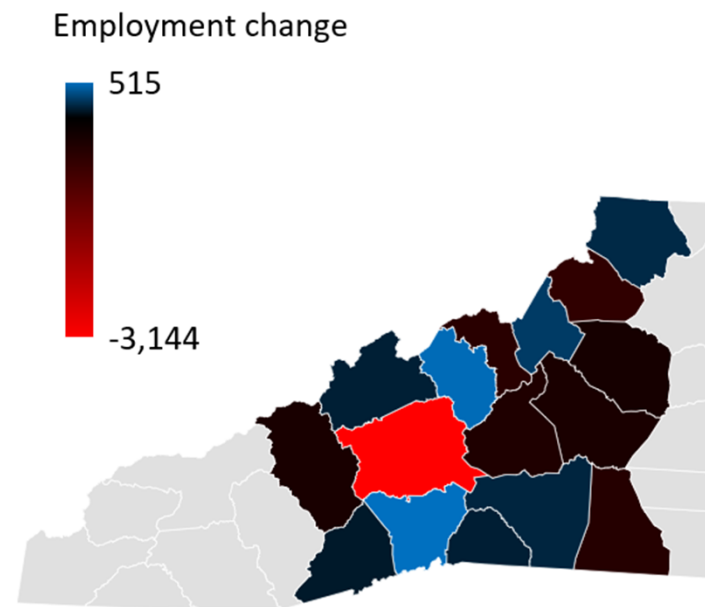
Losing population? Or exiting the labor force?

Population and labor force trends in Hurricane Helene HUD MID counties



Job losses have been overwhelmingly concentrated in Buncombe County

Two-year # change in employment in Hurricane Helene HUD MID counties
Mar 2024 – Mar 2026



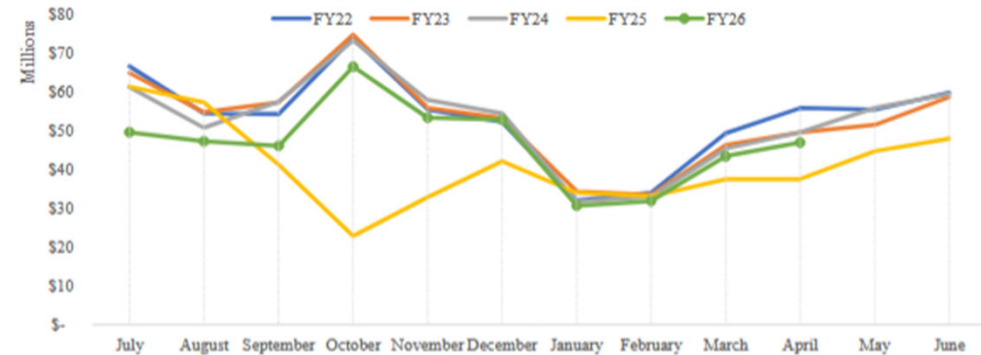
Buncombe County's employment shortfall is concentrated in accommodation/food services

Two-year # change in employment in Buncombe County
Mar 2024 – Mar 2026



As of April,
Buncombe County
lodging sales
remained
5% below
their 2024 level

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
History of Total Sales by Month
Shown by Month of Sale, Year-to-Date
May 31, 2026 Preliminary



	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Month of lodging sales:					
July	\$ 66,470,974	\$ 64,793,944	\$ 61,219,909	\$ 61,243,882	\$ 49,541,936
August	54,412,470	54,692,346	50,707,039	57,261,659	47,220,783
September	54,237,200	57,239,527	57,412,669	41,191,598	46,024,098
October	73,749,252	74,593,066	73,129,570	22,855,683	66,426,057
November	55,390,208	55,872,110	57,854,888	32,870,782	53,251,188
December	52,189,677	53,230,055	54,367,930	42,079,002	52,768,720
January	32,037,713	34,345,428	31,686,610	33,945,979	30,621,209
February	33,992,055	33,351,492	32,974,242	33,013,586	31,866,474
March	49,237,522	46,284,344	45,265,721	37,418,500	43,341,390
April	55,710,656	49,468,357	49,562,507	37,479,566	46,943,600
May	55,347,208	51,397,053	55,872,496	44,628,584	-
June	59,772,742	58,605,482	59,411,674	47,844,986	-
Total lodging sales	\$ 642,547,677	\$ 633,873,203	\$ 629,465,256	\$ 491,833,806	\$ 468,005,453

Conclusion

As expected, Helene-impacted counties saw a **rapid recovery in business activity**.

Thus far, however, the region's **employment** recovery has been **slow** and **incomplete**.

The **loss of labor supply** following the storm represents one potential barrier to hiring.

The **loss of tourist activity** following the storm may also be contributing to the employment shortfall.

Appendix #1

Taxable sales and purchases

	Apr-2024	Apr-2026	# change	% change
Ashe	\$34,354,121	\$43,324,945	\$8,970,824	26%
Avery	\$34,450,746	\$41,275,024	\$6,824,278	20%
Buncombe	\$628,662,259	\$677,792,043	\$49,129,784	8%
Burke	\$94,081,656	\$102,505,495	\$8,423,840	9%
Caldwell	\$78,342,735	\$95,891,205	\$17,548,470	22%
Cleveland	\$129,463,135	\$167,536,161	\$38,073,026	29%
Haywood	\$97,957,978	\$117,086,455	\$19,128,477	20%
Henderson	\$179,393,499	\$207,171,726	\$27,778,227	15%
Madison	\$23,308,303	\$24,368,650	\$1,060,347	5%
McDowell	\$50,178,690	\$54,618,891	\$4,440,201	9%
Mitchell	\$20,210,279	\$19,158,675	-\$1,051,604	-5%
Polk	\$21,702,167	\$27,417,850	\$5,715,683	26%
Rutherford	\$83,424,607	\$95,106,289	\$11,681,681	14%
Transylvania	\$48,956,693	\$57,817,217	\$8,860,524	18%
Watauga	\$103,086,796	\$120,618,757	\$17,531,962	17%
Yancey	\$17,837,448	\$22,810,506	\$4,973,058	28%

Appendix #2

Total employment

	Mar-2024	Mar-2026	# change	% change
Ashe	7,451	7,639	188	3%
Avery	6,895	7,165	270	4%
Buncombe	138,262	135,118	-3,144	-2%
Burke	29,877	29,556	-321	-1%
Caldwell	25,822	25,553	-269	-1%
Cleveland	36,333	35,878	-455	-1%
Haywood	17,457	17,146	-311	-2%
Henderson	44,065	44,580	515	1%
Madison	4,225	4,368	143	3%
McDowell	15,490	15,112	-378	-2%
*Mitchell	5,165	4,664	-501	-10%
Polk	5,449	5,589	140	3%
Rutherford	18,139	18,309	170	1%
Transylvania	9,575	9,688	113	1%
Watauga	25,238	24,648	-590	-2%
Yancey	4,645	5,135	490	11%

Note:
*Mitchell County's
 employment data
 was impacted by a
 reporting change
 in 2025*

Appendix #3

Population

	Jul-2024	Jul-2025	# change	% change
Ashe	27,378	27,514	136	0.5%
Avery	18,103	18,110	7	0.0%
Buncombe	279,227	277,417	-1,810	-0.6%
Burke	88,569	88,655	86	0.1%
Caldwell	80,854	81,105	251	0.3%
Cleveland	102,506	103,325	819	0.8%
Haywood	63,233	63,369	136	0.2%
Henderson	121,286	122,375	1,089	0.9%
Madison	45,298	45,198	-100	-0.2%
McDowell	22,466	22,553	87	0.4%
Mitchell	15,142	15,062	-80	-0.5%
Polk	20,388	20,533	145	0.7%
Rutherford	65,579	65,745	166	0.3%
Transylvania	34,209	34,211	2	0.0%
Watauga	54,921	54,786	-135	-0.2%
Yancey	19,062	19,084	22	0.1%

Appendix #4

Labor force

Note:
*Mitchell County's
 labor force data
 was impacted by a
 reporting change
 in 2025*

	Jul-2024	Jul-2025	# change	% change
Ashe	12,394	12,182	-212	-1.7%
Avery	8,088	7,989	-99	-1.2%
Buncombe	143,620	140,880	-2,740	-1.9%
Burke	39,904	39,606	-298	-0.7%
Caldwell	36,697	36,303	-394	-1.1%
Cleveland	44,329	43,861	-468	-1.1%
Haywood	29,010	28,386	-624	-2.2%
Henderson	59,164	57,387	-1,777	-3.0%
Madison	10,926	10,719	-207	-1.9%
McDowell	18,806	18,383	-423	-2.2%
Mitchell	6,776	6,340	-436	-6.4%
Polk	9,396	9,372	-24	-0.3%
Rutherford	26,710	26,216	-494	-1.8%
Transylvania	15,126	14,641	-485	-3.2%
Watauga	28,641	27,979	-662	-2.3%
Yancey	8,326	8,427	101	1.2%



USDA Rural Development Recovery Programs

Robert Hosford, U.S. Department of Agriculture





USDA Rural Development

Assistance to Rebuild in the
Wake of Hurricane Helene

Director of State Operations
Robert Hosford

robert.hosford@usda.gov

Single Family Housing Program



Program Director William Kenney
William.kenney@usda.gov



USDA Rural Development offers qualifying individuals and families the opportunity to purchase or build a new single family home with no money down, to repair their existing home, or to refinance their current mortgage under certain qualifying circumstances. There are also programs to assist non-profit entities in their efforts to provide new homes or home repair to qualifying individuals and families.

Single Family Housing Program

Disaster Funding

We have assisted 29 households in western North Carolina with \$767,362.00 in Disaster Home Repair funds.

We have over 10 pending applications in the process.

We currently have \$2.2 million available to assist additional households.

Single Family Housing

Disaster Funding

County	Number Obligated	Dollars Obligated	Number in Process	Dollars in Process
Alleghany	2	\$57,620.00	2	\$43,420.00
Ashe	16	\$518,596.00	5	\$150,154.00
Avery	1	\$10,783.00	0	\$0.00
Buncombe	1	\$8,621.00	1	\$10,000.00
Caldwell	2	\$28,622.00	0	\$0.00
Graham	1	\$32,420.00	0	\$0.00
Haywood	0	\$0.00	1	\$32,420.00
Henderson	2	\$14,220.00	1	\$8,350.00
Macon	1	\$11,660.00	1	\$32,420.00
Mecklenburg	1	\$43,961.00	0	\$0.00
McDowell	2	\$40,859.00	0	\$0.00
TOTAL	29	\$767,362.00	11	\$276,764.00

Business and Industry Program

Program Director Garland Burnette
garland.burnette@usda.gov

This program offers loan guarantees to
lenders for their loans to rural businesses.

For-profit or non-profit businesses.

Cooperatives.

Federally-recognized Tribes.

Public bodies.

Individuals engaged or proposing to engage
in a business.

Disaster Assistance Funding for VAPG and RBDG		
Value Added Producer Grants (VBAPG)		
Fiscal Year	Recipient Name	Funding
2025		
	AAA Therapeutic Solutions	\$ 10,500.00
	Carson Family Farms LLC	\$ 248,500.00
	Flavor Full Slices LLC	\$ 231,750.00
2026		
	Addison Farms	\$ 200,000.00
	Beam Family Farm	\$ 25,000.00
	Happy Duck Farm	\$ 49,500.00
	Kinked Hose Farm	\$ 16,500.00
	Blue Skies Farm LLC	\$ 43,263.00
	Green Grain & Cattle Co.	\$ 174,987.00
	Ttotal	\$ 1,000,000.00
Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)		
Fiscal year	Recipient Name	Funding
2025		
	UNC Chapel Hill (NC Growth)	\$ 199,950.00
	The Industrial Commons	\$ 100,050.00
	Smokey Jmountain Community Theater	\$ 65,454.00
2026	Carolina Small Business	\$ 134,546.00
	Total	\$ 500,000.00

Business and Industry Program

Rural Development invested \$1,000,000 of Value-Added Producer Grant disaster funds as well as \$500,000 of Rural Business Enterprise Grant disaster funds to businesses in effected areas.

Business and Industry Program



Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program



The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant programs provide funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas.



USDA provides grants to local utility organizations which use the funding to establish Revolving Loan Funds. Loans are made from the revolving loan fund to projects that will create or retain rural jobs. When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to USDA.

Business and Industry Program

- Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program
- Disaster Recovery Funding

- Blue Ridge Energy
Ashe County Rescue
ambulance remount
\$100,833

- Blue Ridge Energy
Sawmills Volunteer Fire & Rescue
new pumper
\$300,000

- Blue Ridge Energy
Caldwell County
shell building
\$300,000

Total used

\$700,833

Business Industry Program

- Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program Non-Disaster Funding

- 2025

Valmead FD		\$250,000 Grant
Yadkin Valley FD		\$300,000 Grant
Warrensville Fire and Rescue		\$300,000 Grant
Grace Chapel FD	\$1 million Loan	\$300,000 Grant

- 2026

City of Lenoir	\$1 million Loan	\$150,000 Grant
Alleghany County	\$1 million Loan	\$300,000 Grant
Caldwell County	\$1 million Loan	\$300,000 Grant
Sawmills Vol. Fire & Rescue	\$510,340 Loan	\$300,000 Grant

\$4,510,340 Loans + \$2,200,000 Grants Totals \$6,710,340



Community Facilities Program



- Program Director Garland Burnette
garland.burnette@usda.gov
 - Community Facilities Programs offer direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants for public service buildings to improve the quality of life, develop, and sustain rural America. USDA's financial support enhances the competitiveness of our rural communities to attract and retain businesses that provide employment and services for residents.
- 

Community Facilities Program

Disaster Funding

Entity	Project	Application Status	Proposed DAF Grant	Obligated DAF Grant
Town of Boiling Springs	Sewer Tanker Truck, ATV, Trash Truck	Obligated - 05/06/2026	0	\$337,000
Lake Lure Comm Ed Foundation	Bus & Sewer Lift Station Reimbursements	Obligated - 06/12/2026	0	\$149,155
Town of Crossnore	Work Truck Replacement	Obligated - 07/16/2026		\$76,900
Town of Hot Springs	Public Works - Police & Administration Equipment Replacements	Obligated - 06/10/2026		\$127,888
Town of Rutherfordton	Brush Truck Replacement	Obligated - 06/18/2026		\$223,700
Town of Black Mountain	Police Cars (17 where damaged from Helene)	Obligated - 06/30/2026		\$548,400
Town of Clyde	Water Line - Insulation - Application Received/Processing	Obligated - 08/14/2026		\$40,000
Town of Mars Hill	Generator (350kW) at WW Treatment Plant	08/14/2026 - Sent File to SO Requesting Processing Continuation	\$250,000	
City of Morganton	Knuckleboom Truck Replacement	08/13/2026 - Authorized to Deliver - Will Notify Applicant Once Funds Received	\$200,000	
Town of Laural Park	2 Generator (Town Hall & Miscellaneous building)	Obligated - 08/14/2026		\$31,200
Town of Laurel Park	New Roof	Obligated - 08/14/2026		\$14,900
			\$450,000	\$1,549,143

Community Facilities Program

- Non-Disaster Funding

- 2025

Graham County (CDS)
\$80,000 Grant

Brevard Academy
\$2.5 million Loan

St. Lukes Hospital (CDS)
\$2.8 million Grant

- 2026

Cleveland County (CDS)
\$750,000 Grant

\$2,500,000.00 Loans + \$3,630,000 Grants
Totals **\$6,130,000**



Water and Environmental Program

- Program Director Julia Johnson
Julia.johnson@usda.gov
 - Through Rural Utilities Service Water and Environmental Programs, rural communities obtain the technical assistance and financing necessary to develop drinking water and waste disposal systems. Safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal systems are vital not only to public health, but also to the economic vitality of rural America. Rural Development is a leader in helping rural America improve the quality of life and increase the economic opportunities for rural people.
- 

Water and Environmental Program

1 active cost overrun subsequent application with the town of Crossnore for \$303,000 which is in process and being underwritten for National Office review and funding.

1 potential application with the town of Marshall for approximately \$300,000 covering the gap in funding for a new WWTP land purchase and facility construction in conjunction with FEMA and State Budget dollars.

1 potential application with the town of Blowing Rock for approximately \$1,000,000 to cover the expected cost overrun for the USDA Rural Development Water & Sewer Improvements project.

Based upon the above and as reflected within the attached spreadsheet, WEP NC expects the utilization of \$303,000 by EOY (September 30, 2026) for the town of Crossnore as well as potentially \$1.3 million by calendar year end (December 31, 2026) for the town of Marshall and the town of Blowing Rock combined.



Recovery Updates

Matt Calabria & Emily Gangi, GROW NC



U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Announces Nearly \$35M in Grants for WNC

EDA, through its 2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program, recently announced \$34.2 million in grants for projects that will help expand economic opportunity and support long-term recovery across WNC.

A-B Tech and Buncombe County (\$29.2 million) - New advanced manufacturing workforce/innovation hub

Town of Murphy (\$2.1 million) - New sewer lift station

Western Carolina University: (\$1.2 million) - Infrastructure improvements at WCU-Cullowhee Dam

Land of Sky Council of Governments (\$500,000) - Additional capacity, support recovery for hard-hit communities in Madison, Buncombe, and Henderson counties

Western Piedmont Council of Governments (\$500,000) - New regional disaster recovery coordinator

Centralina Economic Development Commission, Inc. (\$400,000) - Strategic analysis and regional engagement strategy development, determine major employers and critical facilities, support resilience

Ashe County (\$267,080) - Design, engineering, and permitting of 3 shell buildings, Ashe Industrial Park

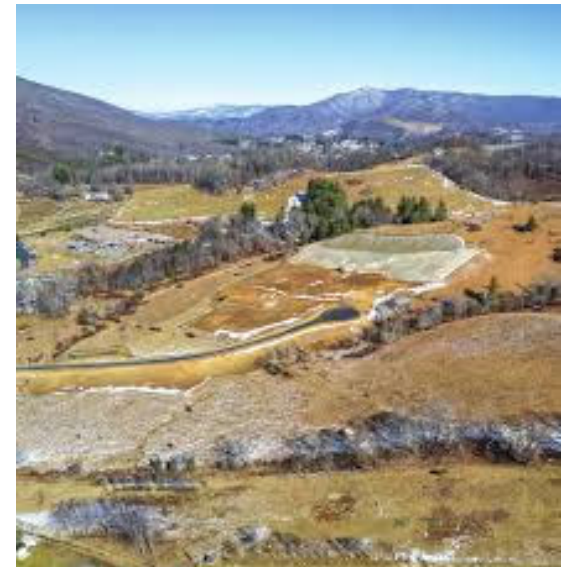


Photo: Ashe County Economic Development

Hurricane Helene Cashflow Loan Program 2026 Round – Applications Due By August 31

The North Carolina General Assembly appropriated **\$20 million** in additional funds for Hurricane Helene cashflow loans in the 2026 Appropriations Act. Eligible local governments affected by Helene may apply for this funding (the “2026 Round”).

Important Differences Between 2026 Round Funding and Previous Funding Rounds

- **Repayment of the 2026 Round funding will be due on the earlier of:**
 - The unit’s receipt of FEMA reimbursement for the project(s) for which the 2026 Round cashflow loan was provided; or
 - June 30, 2030.
- **Funding awards will no longer be made on a pro rata basis.** Instead, awards will be based on demonstrated need, as determined by the Department of State Treasurer.

To apply for 2026 Round funding, complete the application: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/zd1m1BPsdX>

For more information: <https://bit.ly/cashflow-loans-2026>

Status of Blue Ridge Parkway Repairs

The Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) sustained more than 200 linear miles of damage to roads plus facilities (and 58 landslides) due to Hurricane Helene. The National Park Service (NPS) has three relevant workstreams underway. All projects are on track or ahead of schedule.

Great American Outdoor Act Repairs: Funded pre-Helene; timelines shifted due to Helene. Work to be completed prior to fall 2026 tourism season.

Helene Recovery Projects: Planned in three phases (see below). Still on track for completion by the end of 2026.

- PHASE 1 – **COMPLETE**, unlocking access to Phase II and III projects.
- PHASE 2 – **UNDERWAY**. Projects will repair 21 landslide areas in the area south of Linville Falls. Work expected to be complete by fall of 2026.
- PHASE 3 – **PLANNING & CONTRACT AWARDING UNDERWAY**. Projects address repairs to 24+ sites between Little Switzerland and Mt. Mitchell. Target completion, pending contracting and construction timelines, is late 2026.

Wildfire Mitigation Program: NPS to implement a hazardous fuel debris removal project in areas of significant blowdown that were identified through wildfire-risk modeling as presenting elevated wildfire risk. **July status update.**



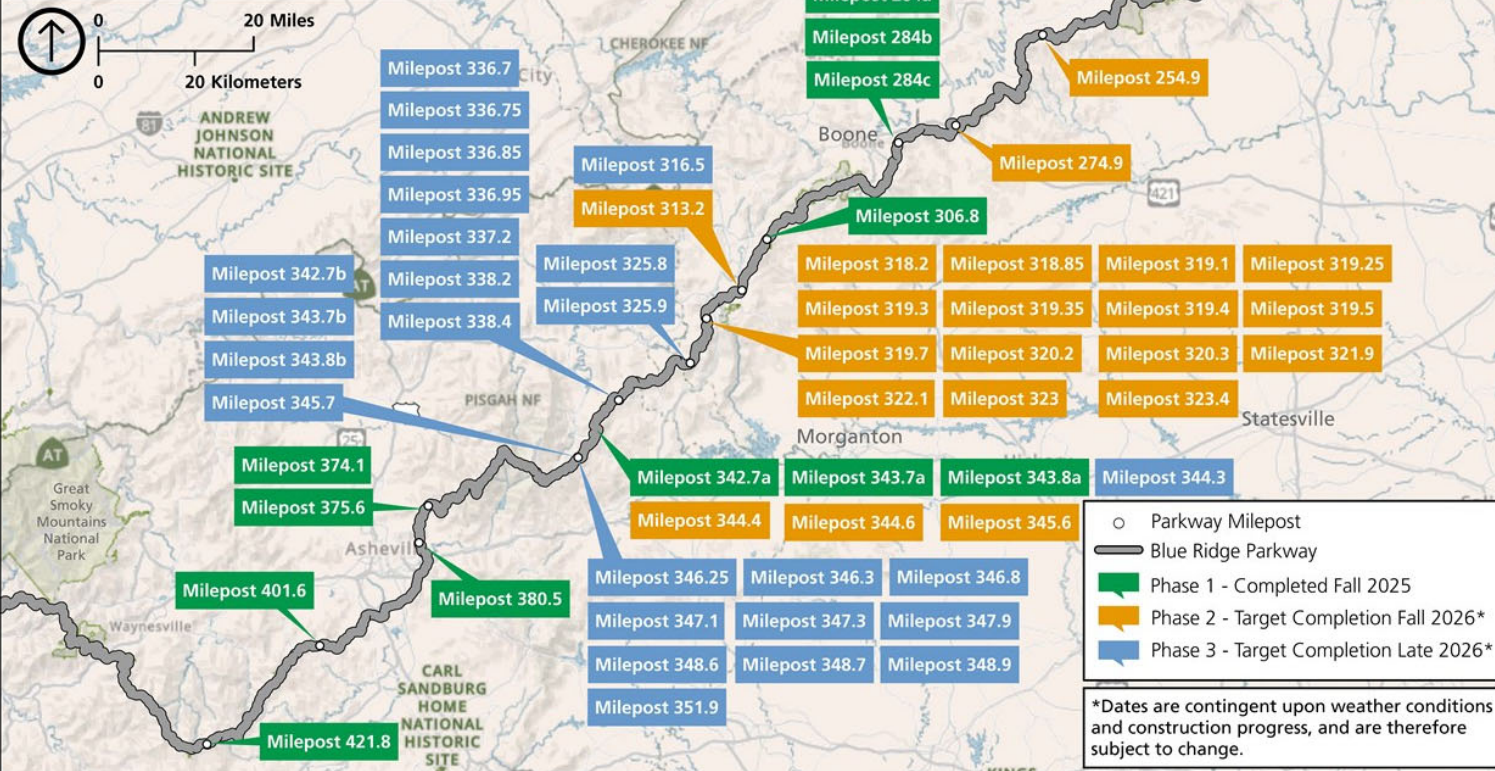
For status reports & maps: <https://bit.ly/BRP-at-a-glance>

Hurricane Helene - Mainline Roadway Repair Project Phases

Blue Ridge Parkway
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



This map reflects initial locations along the Parkway in NC where emergency repair and recovery work is underway. It does not represent all affected areas where damage occurred. As recovery efforts continue, this map will be revised.



Produced by: Blue Ridge Parkway GIS
Data Provided by: NPS

February 2026

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Local governments and NCEM began processing and submitting HMGP applications within months after Helene, with the first voluntary property acquisition application submitted to FEMA in February 2025. FEMA approved the first voluntary acquisition in January 2026.

After FEMA approves an HMGP application, state officials must procure vendors to perform the work. Once vendors are procured for voluntary home acquisitions, NCEM will contact homeowners to schedule a kickoff meeting, where the future management of the project will be outlined and timelines for work will be shared.

As of July 2026, NCEM submitted the following to FEMA:

- 835 properties for voluntary acquisition, with 446 approved by FEMA
- 466 properties for voluntary elevation, with zero properties approved by FEMA
- 86 infrastructure applications, with zero projects approved by FEMA

Acquisitions have been approved by FEMA so far in Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Catawba, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Transylvania, Watauga, and Yancey counties.

Counties still awaiting their first FEMA-approved acquisitions include McDowell, Rutherford, Cleveland, and Mecklenburg.

For updates on the status of applications submitted to FEMA: <https://bit.ly/HMGP-updates>

Applications Open – Helene Debris Recovery Disposal Grant

DEQ received \$18M in grant funding from the EPA to help communities shorten timeframes and/or fund remaining Helene solid waste disaster debris clean-up and removal projects that are not covered by FEMA or other funding sources. **Max award per applicant: \$3M.**

Eligible applicants: Local governments (counties, municipalities, councils of government) and non-governmental organizations

Eligible project types:

- Solid waste debris collection, storage, reduction, and final disposal (if not covered by FEMA)
- Non-hazardous waste collection and disposal
- Clearing, management, and disposal of non-hazardous waste from shorelines, floodplains, farmland, animal mortality sites, compost management sites, residential clean-up sites, state and local park lands

Application deadline: September 14, 2026



For more information: bit.ly/44g2twO

Applications Open: Small Business Infrastructure Grants

More than \$25M remains of the \$55M appropriation from the NC General Assembly to assist small businesses by expediting infrastructure repairs impacting the operation and patronage of small businesses in the affected area. There is a max award per project of \$1M.

Eligibility: Local governments impacted by Hurricane Helene and designated under a major disaster declaration from Helene. Special consideration given to local governments in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Counties.

Timeline: Applications accepted on a rolling basis; awards announced:

- June 30, 2025 – \$7.3m announced
- November 12, 2025 – \$13.8m announced
- March 20, 2026 – \$8.5m announced



For more information: commerce.nc.gov/SmBIZ

Provide Feedback for the WNC Creative Arts Economy Strategic Plan

The NC Department of Commerce and NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources are partnering to develop the Western North Carolina Creative Economy Strategic Plan. The plan will identify strategies to strengthen the region's creative economy as a driver of economic growth, entrepreneurship, workforce development, tourism, downtown revitalization, and community development.

Survey responses will help inform priorities, opportunities, partnerships, and investments to support a strong, resilience creative economy in the region.

Provide feedback by completing the Western NC Creative Economy Survey by August 31.



Share your perspective: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W8B6LG7>

NC Disaster Case Management: Aug. 31 Deadline to Enroll

The NC Department of Public Safety recently announced extension of the Helene Disaster Case Management (DCM) Program through January 22, 2027.

To allow case managers to prioritize ongoing case work and prepare for a responsible transition, the program will close enrollment for full case management on August 31, 2026.

DCM will continue to provide general information, resources, and referrals to Helene-related resources through the DCM Contact Center after August 31.

Call (844) 746-2326 to reach the DCM Contact Center.



For more information about the Helene DCM Program: www.ncdps.gov/helene/dcm

GROW NC Dashboards Offer Data on Recovery Progress and Spending

The Governor's Recovery Office for Western North Carolina (GROW NC) tracks recovery progress and spending, offering the latest numbers as reported by state agencies involved in recovery work.

The GROW NC Recovery Funding Dashboard offers a Recovery Funding Summary and two additional tabs that offer detail specific to state funding and federal funding.

The Recovery Dashboard is organized into four tabs to measure efforts for:

- Rebuilding Safe Housing
- Restoring Infrastructure
- Revitalizing Our Economy and Communities
- Supporting Children and Families



The Rebuilding Safe Housing tab offers a link to the data dashboard for the **Renew NC Single-Family Housing Program** and the Restoring Infrastructure tab offers links to two data dashboards tracking infrastructure recovery and road reopenings, as offered by the **NC Department of Transportation**.

Stay connected with these data dashboards for an accurate view of western North Carolina recovery over time.

For more information: www.wncrecovery.nc.gov (recovery overview)



Wrap Up and Next Steps

Matt Calabria, GROW NC

Next meeting: **Friday, September 25**, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
(Mars Hill University)



Stay Connected

GROW NC is sharing recovery news, resources, progress metrics, and more.

