



Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery

July 14, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Today's Agenda

Call to Order | *Sen. Kevin Corbin, Co-Chair*

Welcome | *Chancellor Kimberly van Noort*

Remarks | *Governor Josh Stein*

WNC Recovery Updates | *Matt Calabria, GROW NC*

Renew NC Housing Program Updates | *Stephanie McGarrah, NC Department of Commerce*

Long-Term Economic Recovery Planning for WNC | *Sharon Decker, GROW NC and Dan Gerlach, Consultant*

Building a More Resilient WNC | *Marlena Byrne, NC Department of Environmental Quality*

Next Steps | *Matt Calabria, GROW NC*

Adjourn



Welcome

Chancellor Kimberly van Noort, UNC Asheville

Remarks

Governor Josh Stein

Updates from the Governor's Recovery Office for Western North Carolina

Director Matt Calabria & Chief Deputy Emily Gangi

Major recovery efforts underway

Rebuilding Safe Housing

- Residents received \$475M+ in FEMA Individual Assistance
- 6,800+ households received temporary housing
- \$1.4 billion HUD action plan approved, unlocking funding for housing and other projects
- 326 homes repaired by volunteer organizations such as Baptists on Mission and Habitat for Humanity with state funds

Restoring our Infrastructure

- 7.7m+ cubic yards of right-of-way debris removed
- 6.3m+ cubic yards of waterway debris removed
- 97% of Helene-impacted public roads are accessible
- More than 4,000 site assessments completed in State's Private Roads & Bridges Program
- \$23.9M in FEMA funds disbursed for private roads and bridges

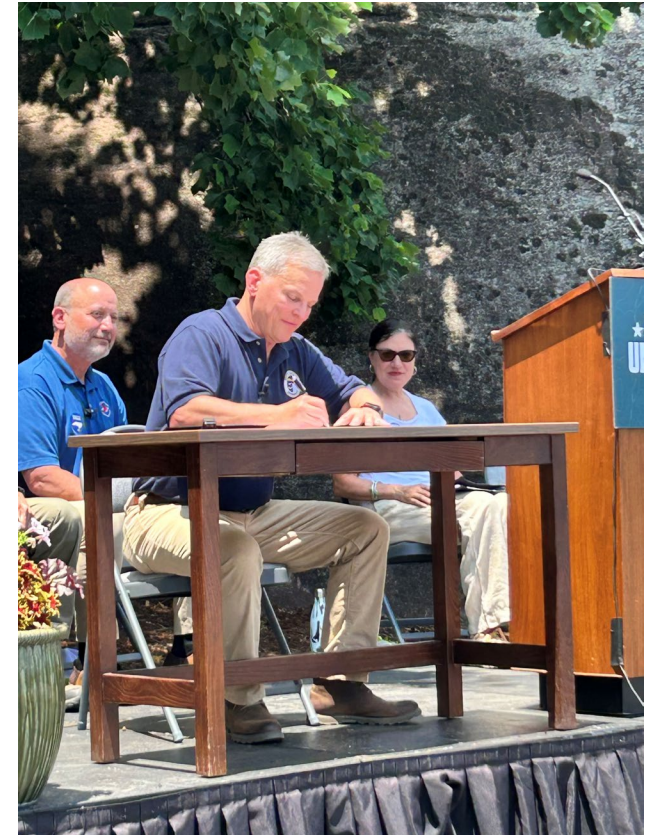
Revitalizing our Economy and Communities

- \$55M in state and philanthropically funded small business grants fully disbursed, with more than 2,100 recipients
- \$386M+ in SBA loans offered
- \$37.8M+ in disaster unemployment assistance distributed
- \$59M+ in loans to 47 local governments

Governor Stein Signs Helene Relief Package Part II on June 27

Selected highlights:

- \$24M to support economic recovery by boosting the WNC tourism industry, supporting local and regional economic development sites, and rebuilding local parks
- \$292M to strengthen critical infrastructure by supporting local govts, repairing state parks, providing additional funding to rebuild private roads and bridges, rebuilding transportation infrastructure, and safeguarding against future disasters
- \$23M to advance housing recovery
- \$81M to rehabilitate waterways and land used by farmers; funding wildfire prevention and response
- \$80M for repairs to area public schools, universities, and community colleges
- \$378M for required state matching of federal disaster programs and existing requirements not funded by state or federal dollars



Helene Recovery State Appropriations by Category

\$2.5 Billion

■ HB 1012 - Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 Part II

■ Appropriations & Reallocations Prior to HB 1012

Disaster Response and Recovery

\$80M

\$375M

Families and Children

\$79M

\$197M

Farmers and Forests

\$81M

\$237M

Strengthened Infrastructure

\$590M

\$556M

Safe Places to Live

\$23M

\$150M

Strong Economy

\$24M

\$115M

\$- \$100,000,000 \$200,000,000 \$300,000,000 \$400,000,000 \$500,000,000 \$600,000,000 \$700,000,000



WNC Recovery
POWERED BY GROWNC

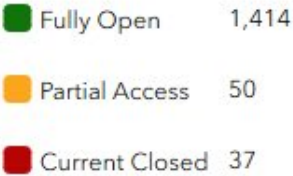
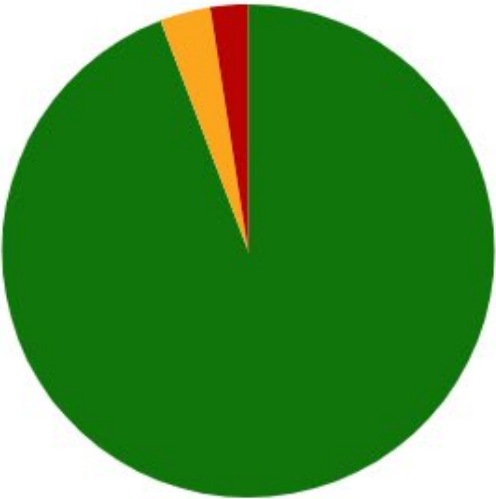
Selected Program Updates



NC Department of Transportation has reopened 97% of state roads (94.2% fully reopened, 3.3% partially reopened)

Total Incidents
1,501
since beginning of Storm

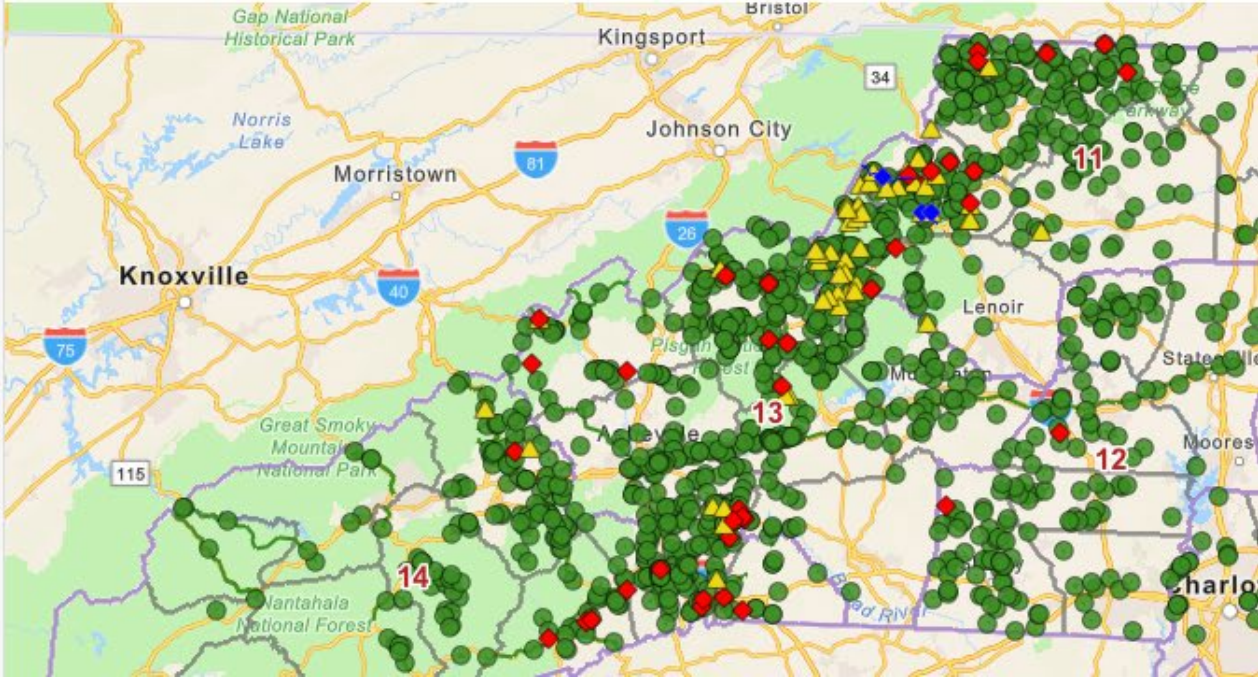
Total Closures
1,451
since beginning of Storm



1,414
Fully Open

37
Current Closed

50
Partial Access



North Carolina Emergency Management continues to accept interest forms for assistance with private roads and bridges

State source of funding:

- NCGA Appropriations: \$100m with requirement that NCEM seek federal reimbursement when possible

Program details:

- Works to make robust use of federal dollars
- Prioritizes repairs to private roads / bridges that are the sole access for emergency services to residential properties occupied by the property owner for over six months of the calendar year
- Prioritizes repairs to private roads / bridges providing access to multiple residential homes, recreation or commercial facilities



Residents can apply for NCEM's program at:
<https://www.ncdps.gov/Helene/PRB>

NC Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program

\$55M allocated in SL2025-2, \$47.7M remaining

Purpose: "to assist small businesses by providing grants to local governments to expedite infrastructure repairs impacting the operation and patronage of small businesses in the affected area"

Status: The Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) of the Department of Commerce announced the launch of the program on April 29.

Timeline for Awards: There will be a continuously open grant window; awards will be announced on or before the following dates:

- June 30, 2025 – *\$7.3m in awards announced for the Village of Chimney Rock, Town of Clyde, Town of Gamewell, and City of Morganton*
- October 31, 2025
- February 28, 2026
- June 30, 2026

Eligibility: local governments impacted by Hurricane Helene and designated under a major disaster declaration as a result of Hurricane Helene. Special consideration will be given to local governments in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Counties.

Max Grant Award: \$1M

More information: commerce.nc.gov/SmBIZ

NC Agriculture Disaster Crop Loss Program

One-time assistance program for agricultural producers who suffered verifiable losses from any declared agricultural disaster in 2024. Of the \$311M appropriated for the program, \$200M is for losses from Hurricane Helene in the affected area.

- 1,100+ applications were received from eligible counties with verifiable Hurricane Helene damage.
- 550+ of the applications include agricultural infrastructure damage.
- The NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is nearing completion of application verification for crops, horticulture, and aquaculture.
- NCDA&CS staff will be contacting infrastructure applicants in the coming weeks.
- The first round of payments to producers/applicants is expected mid-summer.

USDA Supplemental Disaster Assistance for Agricultural Producers

[2023/2024 Supplemental Disaster Assistance | Farm Service Agency](#)

General Block Grant to NC (1 of 14 states)

- NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services submitted initial proposal for more than \$500 million to USDA and meets weekly to negotiate with them.

Programs for which producers must apply directly:

- [Emergency Commodity Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#) provides economic loss assistance for covered commodities based on 2024 planted and prevented planted acres.

Deadline: August 15, 2025

- [Supplemental Disaster Relief Program \(SDRP\)](#)
 - Stage 1 for producers with crop insurance coverage (opened July 10)
 - Stage 2 for producers without insurance coverage (expected Sept/Oct)
- Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for Flooding

Target date for sign-up to begin: August 18, 2025



EDA Announces \$1.45B in Economic Recovery Funds

Funds open to all 2023 & 2024 federally-declared disaster zones

- First come, first served – EDA encourages applicants to work with their local Economic Development Representatives to submit competitive bids ASAP
- 80% EDA funded / 20% cost share from applicant
- Eligible Entities include units of government, economic development districts, institutions of higher education, and nonprofits working with local government.
- GROWNC seeking to increase number of proposals from NC
 - Working directly with communities to develop projects and encourage timely applications
 - Additional \$6M in State Helene aid for local government capacity to assist with EDA and other applications
 - EDA is hosting "how to apply" workshop at the end of August to walk eligible applicants through the process

Questions can be directed to:

Hillary Sherman, EDA NC Economic Development Representative
828-707-2748 | hsherman@eda.gov

Three Funding Pathways

- Readiness Path – Capacity building and strategic planning projects that set the stage for future investment
 - Max award: \$500,000
 - No application deadline
- Implementation Path – Standalone construction and non-construction projects that help communities recover from natural disasters and advance recovery and growth
 - Max award: \$20m
 - No application deadline
- Industry Transformation Path – Coalition-led, multi-project portfolios that transform regional economies through targeted industry development
 - Max award: \$50m
 - Application deadline: March 3, 2026

Creation of Advisory Committee Subcommittees

Opportunity for Advisory Committee members to engage more substantively on one or more more recovery topics. Participation on a subcommittee is optional.

Initial subcommittee topics:

- Long-Term Economic Recovery Planning for WNC
- Resilience

Subcommittees will:

- Have representatives from the Advisory Committee, GROW NC, and relevant agencies
- Meet virtually
- Provide regular/occasional report outs

In the meeting follow-up, we will ask you to email Eliza to express your interest in serving on a subcommittee and to share your ideas for other potential subcommittee topics. She will share the compiled interest with the co-chairs for committee assignments.

RenewNC Housing Program Updates

Stephanie McGarrah, Deputy Secretary, Division of Community Revitalization, NC Department of Commerce

Overview

I. Eligibility

- a. Income
- b. HUD and State geographies

II. Updated Damage Assessment


III. Program Operations

- a. Locations and Outreach
- b. Applications to date

IV. Next Steps




The proposed breakdown of CDBG-DR funding allocates the majority to housing, with \$807M for owner-occupied unit reconstruction and rehabilitation



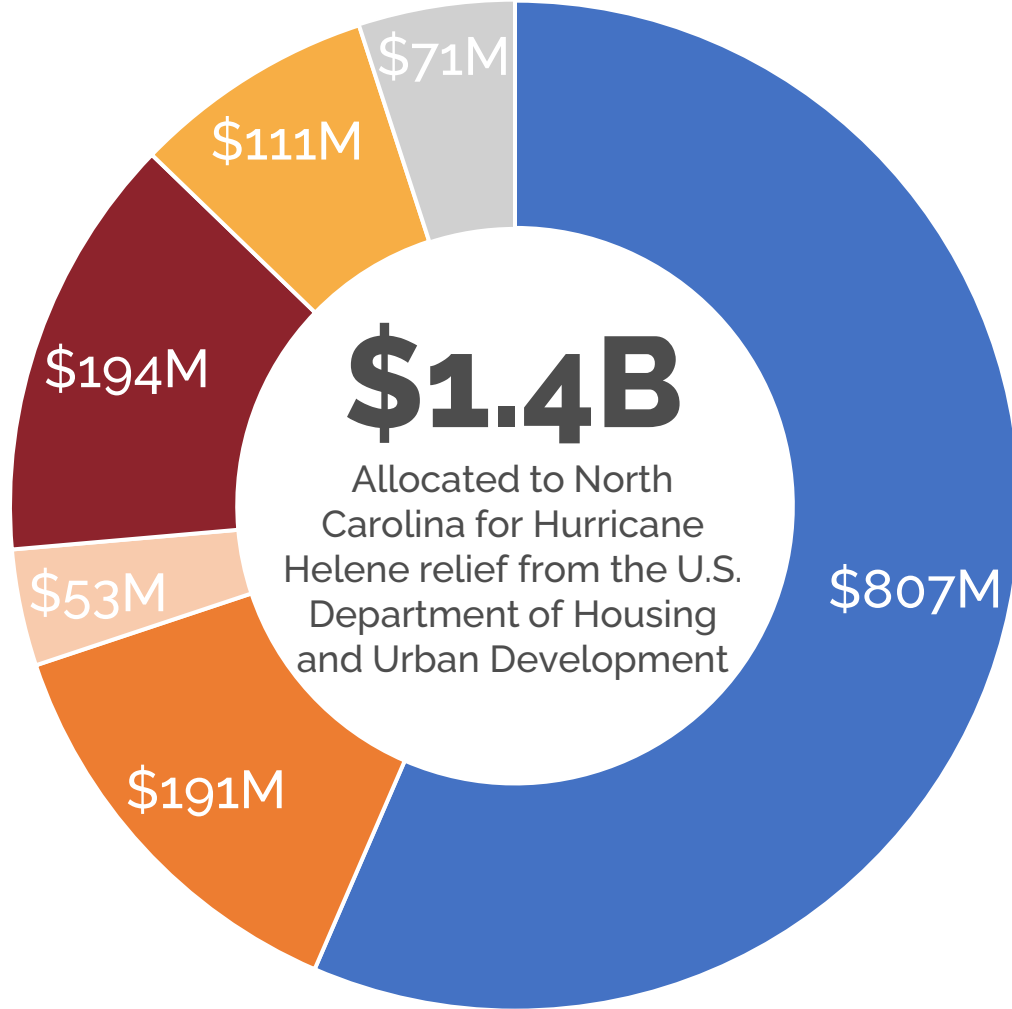
Revitalizing
our economy

\$111M: Commercial
District Revitalization



Restoring our
infrastructure

\$194M: Community
Infrastructure Program






Rebuilding safe
and stable
housing

\$807M: Reconstruction
and Rehabilitation for
Owner-Occupied Units

\$191M: Multifamily
Construction Program

\$53M: Workforce Housing
for Ownership



Administration

\$71M: Administration

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding

HUD Requirements for Eligibility

- ✓ HUD identifies Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) areas for the grantees & requires that at least 80% of the CDBG-DR funds are spent in these areas
- ✓ HUD requires that at least 70% of CDBG-DR funds must benefit Low to Moderate Income (LMI) households and communities
- ✓ An action plan **outlines the proposed use** of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds
- ✓ Grantee must comply with federal laws – procurement, environmental, housing, etc.

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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



Source DCR HUD Action Plan



Defining and Identifying Households in Need

Data on damages available from 4 sources:

- Small Business Administration loans
- FEMA individual assistance
- County tax assessment
- National Flood Insurance Program

This data is also used to complete Duplication of Benefits checks as required by HUD

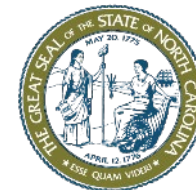


Damaged Property Numbers

- FEMA
 - 31,947 residential properties with a damage designation
 - Minor
 - Major
 - Destroyed
- SBA
 - 2,358 residential properties with non-zero verified real estate damage
- County data
 - 7,532 residential properties with non-zero estimated damage

FEMA Data: Counties with Most Damaged Households

County	Total Households Damaged	Total Households Designated LMI by Income or Tract	Percent LMI	Damaged Households Per 1,000 Residents
Buncombe	11,128	6,148	55%	40
Henderson	5,002	2,678	54%	41
Haywood	2,356	1,425	60%	37
Yancey	2,319	1,225	53%	122
Watauga	2,070	1,558	75%	38



FEMA Data: Damage Severity

Damage Severity	All Households	LMI Households	Percent LMI
Destroyed	1,076	681	63%
Major Damage	2,772	1,552	56%
Moderate Damage	34,439	19,172	56%
Total	38,287	21,405	56%



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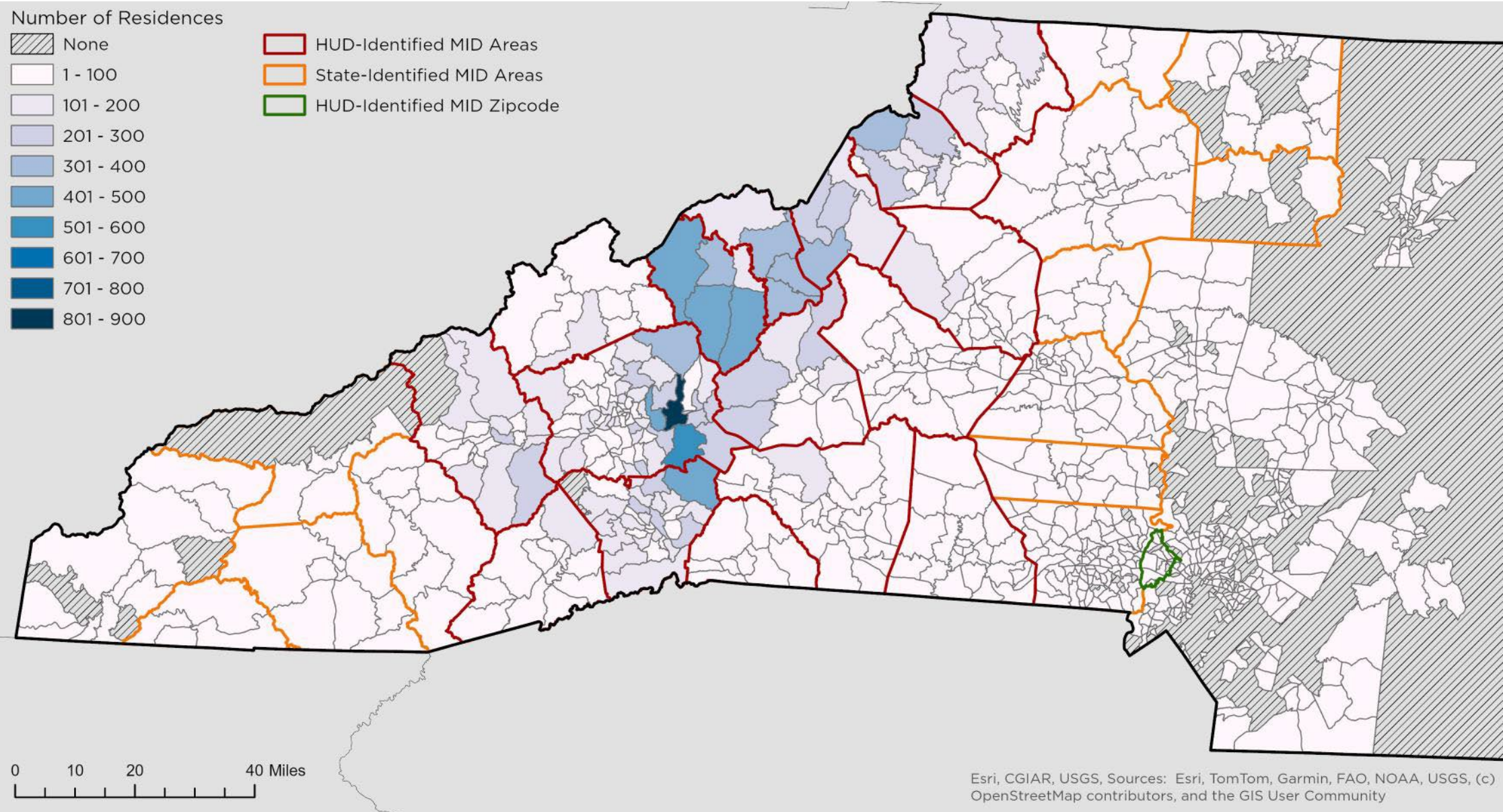
FEMA Data: Coverage Gap

Damage Severity	Average Real Property FEMA Verified Loss	Average FEMA Repair and/or Replacement Award	Average Percentage Gap in Coverage
Destroyed	\$120,808	\$26,711	78%
Major Damage	\$27,751	\$18,876	32%
Moderate Damage	\$4,773	\$3,528	26%

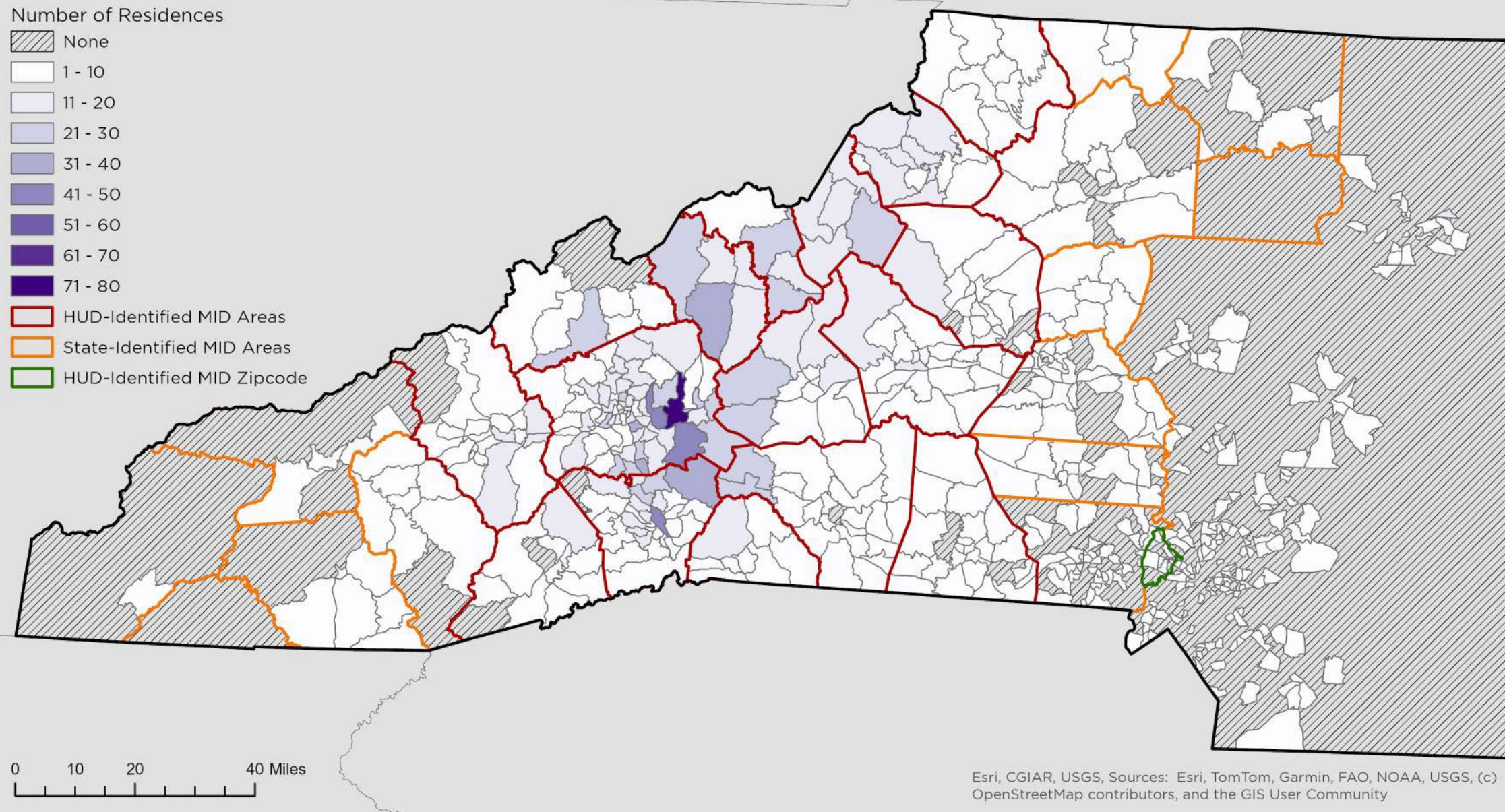


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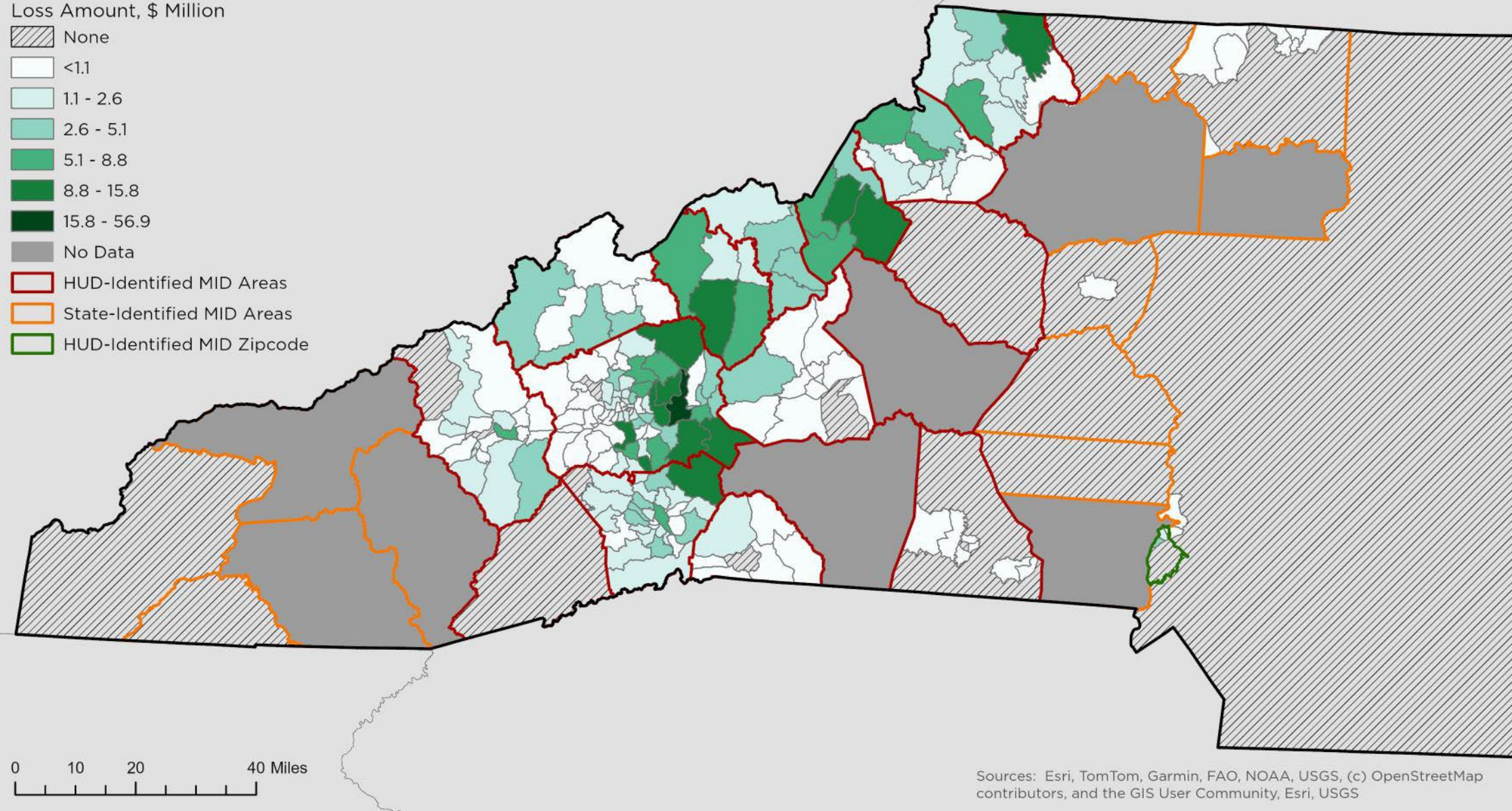
Residences with FEMA-Assessed Damage (Minor/Major/Destroyed)



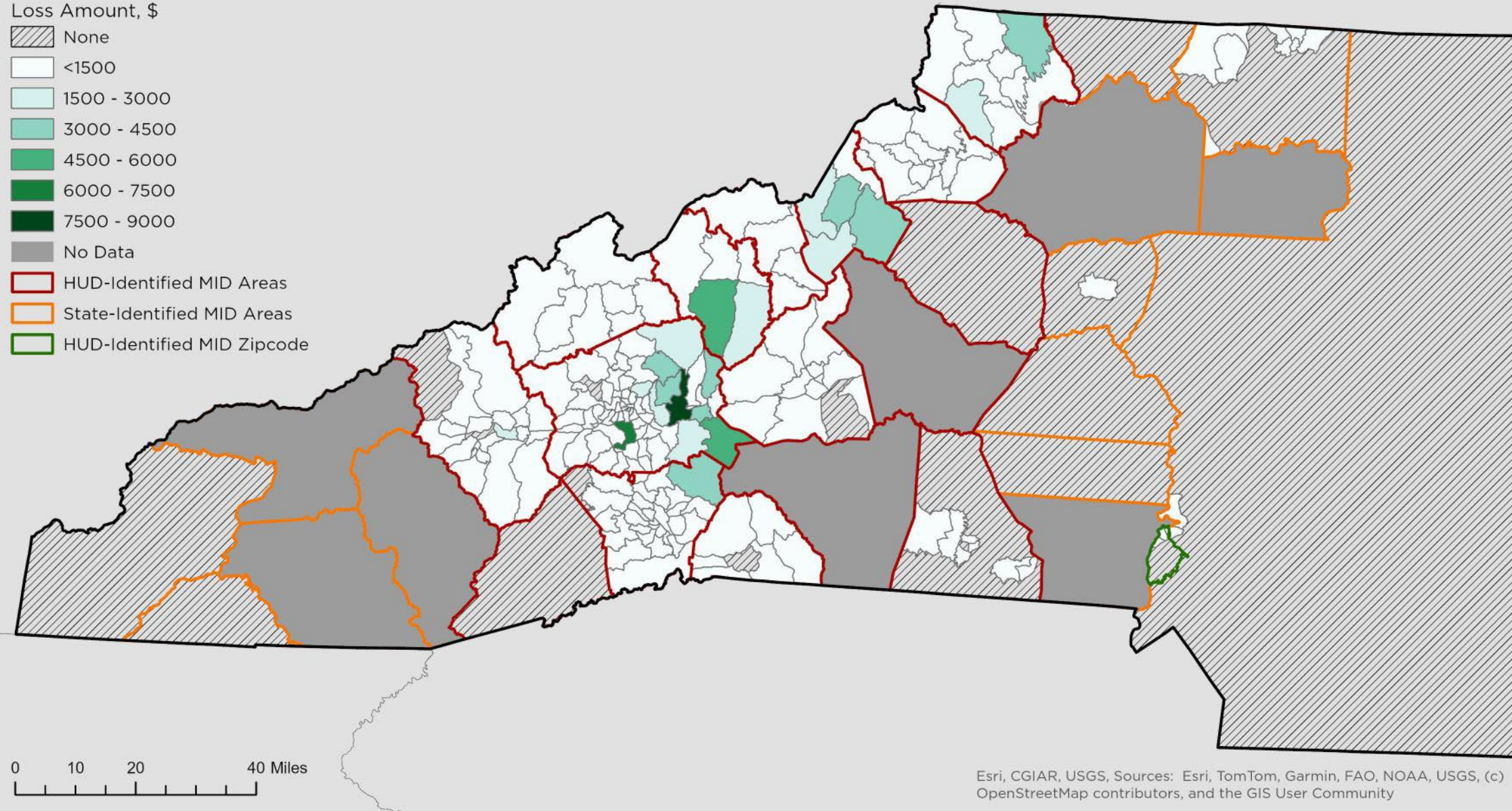
Residences with SBA-Assessed Damage



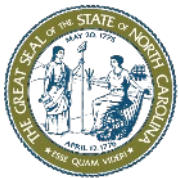
Residential Property Losses, County Data, Total



Residential Property Losses, County Data, Per Capita



Renew NC Single-Family Housing Program

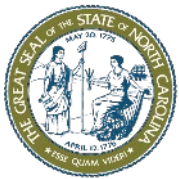


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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

- Application Launch Date: **Monday June 16, 2025**
- Website: **RenewNC.org**
- Phone Number: **1-888-791-0207**
- In-person Program Service Centers:
 - **Marion:** 364 US HWY 70, Suite 3, Marion, NC 28752
 - **Asheville:** 128 Bingham Rd., Suite 875, Asheville, NC 28806
 - **Boone:** 379 New Market Blvd., Suite 1, Boone, NC, 28607
- Other **mobile application intake opportunities** will be available.
 - More information is available on the website.



Renew NC Single-Family Housing Program



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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Applicant Eligibility Criteria:

- Owned the damaged property at the time of the storm, and currently own it
- Occupied the damaged property as their primary residence at the time of the storm
- Have a combined income of no more than 120% AMI
 - Applicants with lower incomes are prioritized
- Be current on mortgage and/or taxes, as applicable

Property Eligibility Criteria:

- Located in a MID county
- Damaged by Helene
- Be a single-family home, manufactured housing unit, or other eligible structure type



Incomplete Applications

395

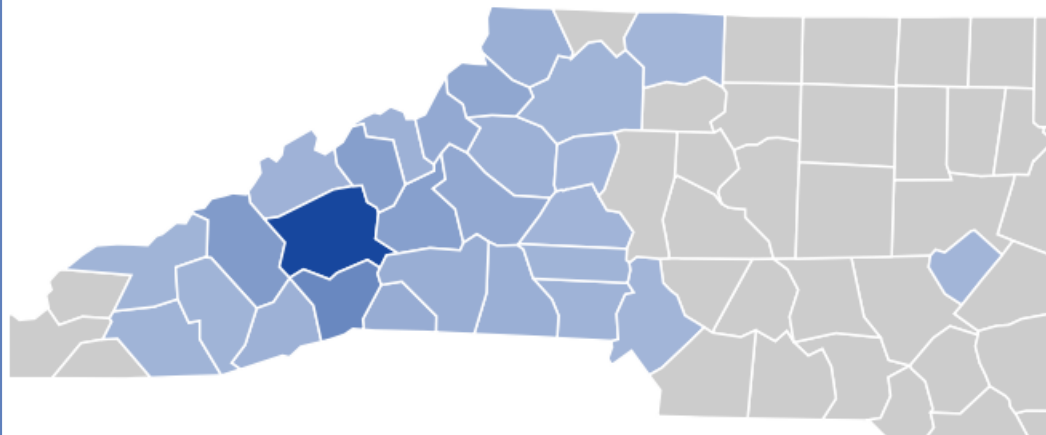
Total Applications Submitted

515

Total Active Applications

509

Applicants by County



Date

6/16/2025

7/9/2025

StateSenateDistrict

All

USCongressionalDistrict

All

StateHouseDistrict

All

Self Reported Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Under Review	Total
Phase 1	219	51	11	6	0	287
Phase 2	42	8	3	0	0	53
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 4	56	0	0	0	0	56
Under Review	0	0	0	0	50	50

In Review

385

Eligible

119

Ineligible

5

Inactive

6

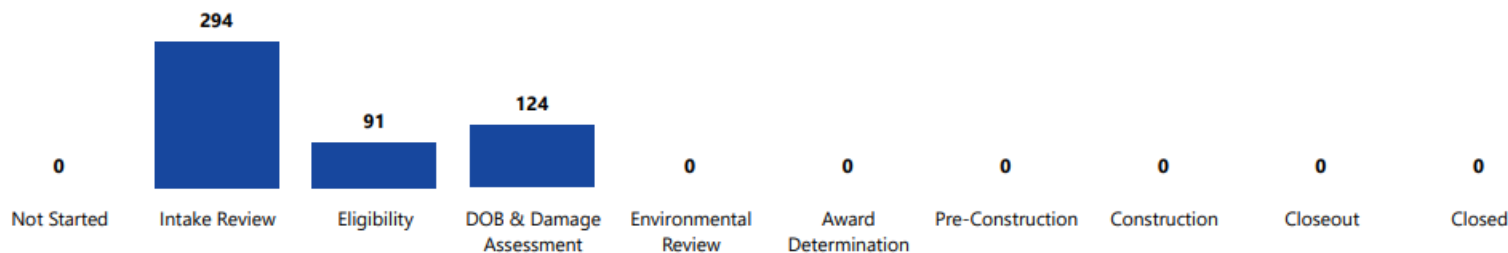
Program Days

23

Verified Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority Pending	Not Eligible	Total
Phase 1	96	29	3	3	0	0	131
Phase 2	18	5	0	0	0	0	23
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 4	38	0	0	0	0	0	38
Phase Pending	0	0	0	0	321	0	321
Not Eligible	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

Active Cases by Workflow Status



Verified Eligible Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Total
Phase 1	61	12	1	3	77
Phase 2	12	4	0	0	16
Phase 4	26	0	0	0	26

Total Applications Submitted

41

Total Active Applications

41

In Review

41

Eligible

12

Ineligible

0

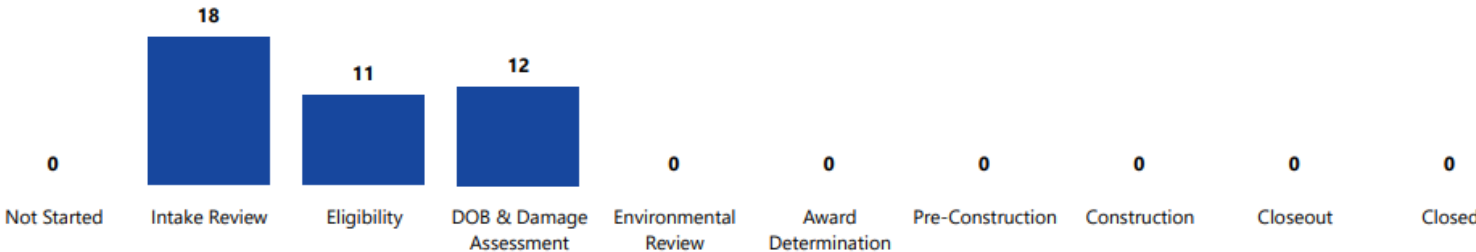
Inactive

0

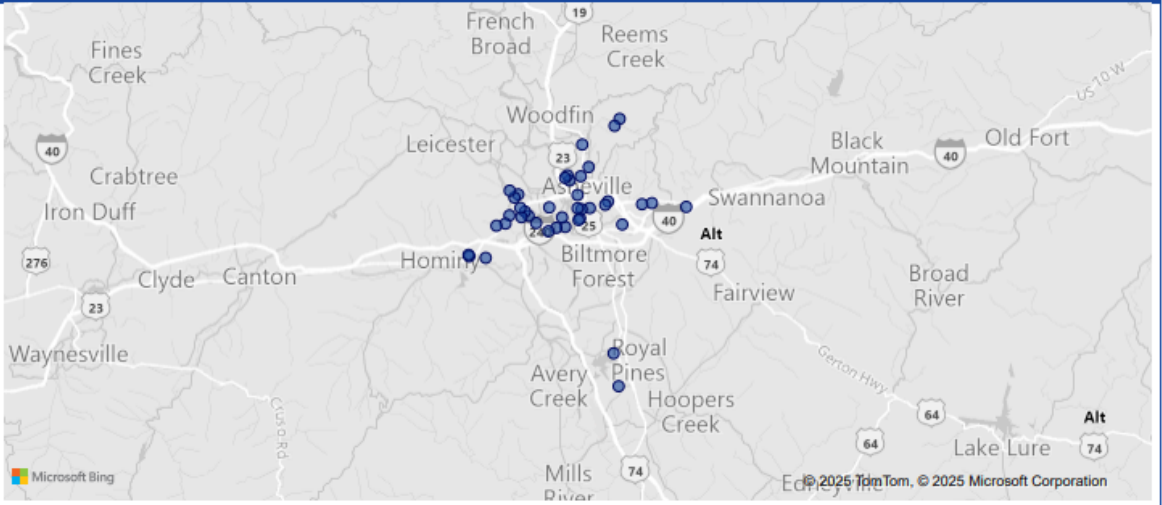
Program Days

23

Active Cases by Workflow Status



Applicants by Location



Date

6/16/2025

7/9/2025

StateSenateDistrict

All

USCongressionalDistrict

All

StateHouseDistrict

All

Self Reported Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Under Review	Total
Phase 1	17	9	0	0	0	26
Phase 2	2	3	0	0	0	5
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 4	4	0	0	0	0	4
Under Review	0	0	0	0	3	3

Verified Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority Pending	Total
Phase 1	10	6	0	0	0	16
Phase 2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 4	4	0	0	0	0	4
Phase Pending	0	0	0	0	18	18

Verified Eligible Phase and Priority

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Total
Phase 1	6	2	0	0	8
Phase 2	0	1	0	0	1
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 4	3	0	0	0	3

Outreach

County	Cases	Owner Occupied Households	% Applied
Alexander	2	11,348	0.02%
Alleghany	1	3,891	0.03%
Ashe	10	9,405	0.11%
Avery	20	5,245	0.38%
Buncombe	169	66,159	0.26%
Burke	20	26,823	0.07%
Caldwell	7	24,251	0.03%
Catawba	2	47,414	0.00%
Cleveland	10	26,296	0.04%
Gaston	5	60,745	0.01%
Haywood	45	20,083	0.22%
Henderson	72	37,421	0.19%
Jackson	3	11,370	0.03%
Lee	1	16,263	0.01%
Lincoln	3	27,998	0.01%
Macon	3	13,811	0.02%
Madison	6	6,546	0.09%
McDowell	33	13,657	0.24%
Mecklenburg	2	252,815	0.00%
Mitchell	10	4,973	0.20%
Polk	15	6,689	0.22%
Rutherford	14	19,699	0.07%
Surry	1	21,534	0.00%
Swain	3	4,276	0.07%
Transylvania	7	10,961	0.06%
Union	1	67,303	0.00%
Watauga	22	12,962	0.17%
wilkes	3	19,941	0.02%
Yancey	34	6,324	0.54%
Total	524	2,778,672	0.02%

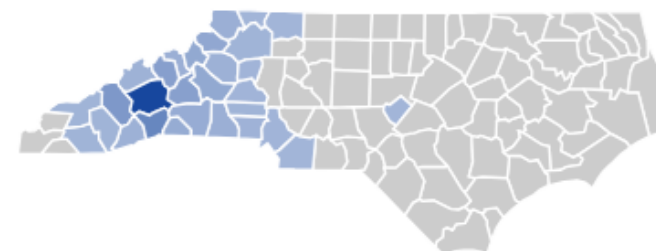
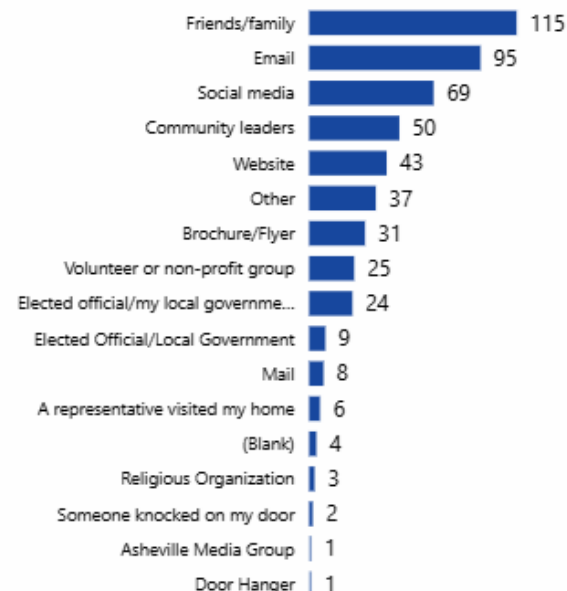
CaseSubmitDate

6/16/2025 7/9/2025

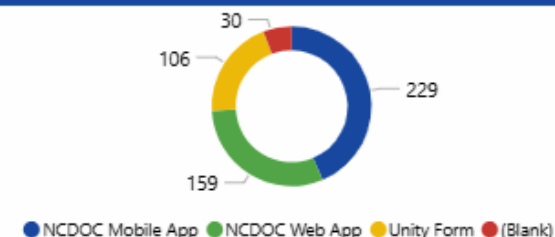
County

All

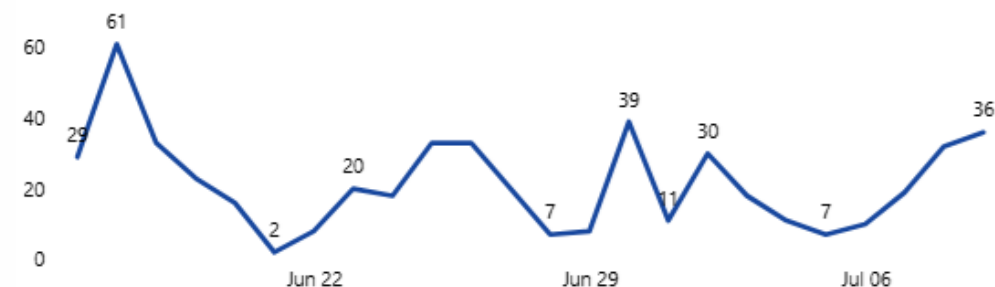
Referral Type



Origin of Applications



Cases Submitted by Day



Next Steps

- ✓ DCR Created
- ✓ 90% of Staff Hired
- ✓ Action Plan Submitted to HUD
- ✓ Action Plan Approved by HUD
- ✓ Implementation Vendor Selected
- ✓ Application Launched
- ✓ HUD Financial Certification

- ☐ Builder Selection
- ☐ Tier 1 Environmental Reviews and FEMA Programmatic Agreement
- ☐ HUD Grant Agreement
- ☐ Additional Procurements – Grants Management IT, Monitoring, Staff Augmentation, Environmental
- ☐ **Swing Hammers!**
- ☐ Develop Additional Programs (Multi-Family, Infrastructure, Workforce Housing, Economic Revitalization) and Launch



Long-Term Economic Recovery Planning for Western North Carolina

Sharon Decker

Senior Advisor for Long-Term Recovery

July 14, 2025

Long Term Recovery Planning Timeline

Phase 1

June 6 – July 25, 2025

- Data Collection
- Begin communication of process
- Engage Advisory Committee
- Grassroots discovery visits by planning team members
- Engagement with Cabinet Secretaries and Legislative Leaders
- Identification of existing economic clusters with EDPNC
- Identification of 6-8 Accelerant Project Opportunities

Phase 2

July 28 – August 29, 2025

- Data Analysis
- Early Assessments/assumptions
- Rough cut analysis documents

September 1 – 30, 2025

- Field sessions to test and challenge assumptions

October 1 – 31, 2025

- Information review
- Begin drafting

Phase 3

November 3 – 30, 2025

- Refine Plan
- Snicker Test with strategic stakeholders

December 1 – 31, 2025

- Finalize Plan
- Roll out final plan

Long Term Recovery Planning Matrix

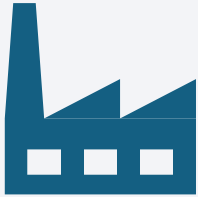
Tenets of Strong Economic Health

Key Players and Funding Sources

	Healthcare	Infrastructure	Housing	Arts/ Culture	Econ Dev	Education	Natural Resources	Agriculture
Business - Public - Private								
Non-Profits								
Education - Public K-12 - Private K-12 - Higher Ed - Universities (Public & Private) - Community Colleges								
Government - State - Local - Federal								
Philanthropy								

[illegible]

How to Define Business Loss



Physical Capital – loss of buildings, equipment, inventory



Financial Capital – loss of revenue, additional costs imposed by Helene



Human Capital – loss of jobs and loss of labor force

Economic Damage

Estimate \$1.757 billion in lost Gross Domestic Product in 4th quarter 2024 – 92 percent in hardest hit counties

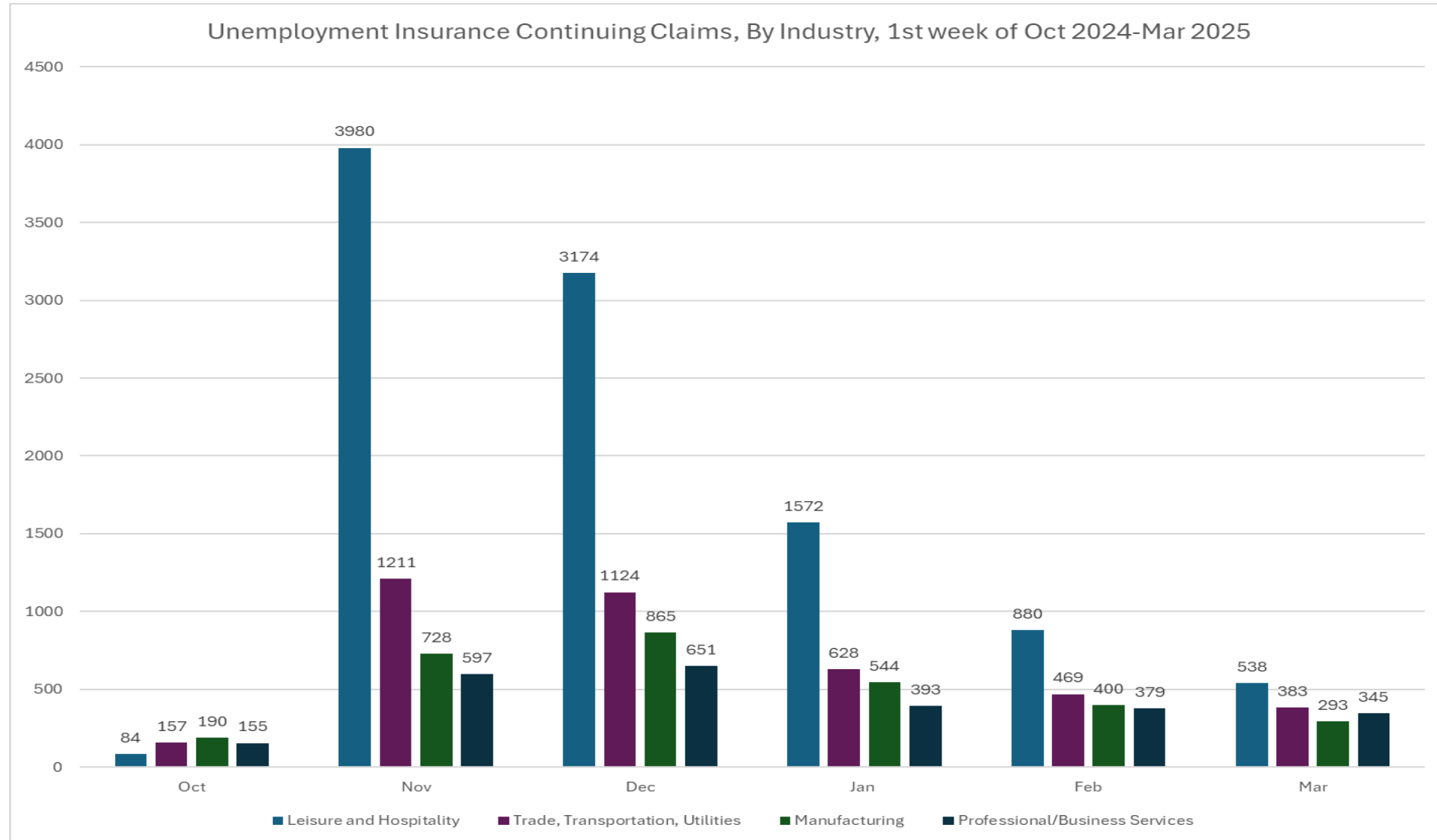
Damage was not uniform across economic sectors – retail, leisure and hospitality hurt hardest

Buncombe County had largest decline in employment among the 357 largest counties in the U.S. by a factor of two

More Detail on the Economic Hit

Month of DOR Report	Decline from Trend (3-4% increase from 2023)	Estimated Total Economic Impact
October	(\$119 mm)	(\$321 million)
November	(\$189 mm)	(\$503 million)
December	(\$32 mm)	(\$86 million)
January & February	At or Above Trend	None ascribed
March	Below Trend	State Was Also Below
Total	(\$340 million)	(\$1.757 billion)

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Effects on Jobs and Wages

4Q 2023 to 4Q 2024

State/County	Change in Jobs	Change in Wages
North Carolina	0.7%	6.5%
Buncombe County	-7.6%	0.3%
Avery County	-7.3%	1.9%
Mitchell County	-4.5%	1.0%
Polk County	-3.5%	9.2%
McDowell County	-3.4%	4.6%
Burke County	-3.1%	4.6%
Watauga County	-2.9%	3.5%
Madison County	-2.7%	7.1%
Caldwell County	-2.4%	1.2%
Rutherford County	-2.4%	5.4%
Transylvania County	-1.4%	4.6%
Yancey County	-0.8%	10.7%
Ashe County	-0.6%	5.2%
Cleveland County	0.0%	5.6%
Haywood County	0.5%	6.7%
Henderson County	1.0%	7.1%

Zoom In: The Region and Business Sectors

County	2023 Emp % of Region	2024 Emp % of Region		Largest Sector	2nd Largest Sector
Ashe	1.7%	1.8%		Retail Trade	Health Care
Avery	1.7%	1.6%		Retail Trade	Hotel/Food
Buncombe	36.0%	34.6%		Health Care	Retail Trade
Burke	7.7%	7.7%		Health Care	Manufacturing
Caldwell	5.9%	6.0%		Manufacturing	Health Care
Cleveland	9.5%	9.9%		Manufacturing	Health Care
Haywood	4.4%	4.6%		Retail Trade	Hotel/Food
Henderson	10.8%	11.4%		Health Care	Manufacturing
Madison	0.9%	0.9%		Health Care	Retail Trade
McDowell	4.0%	4.0%		Manufacturing	Retail Trade
Mitchell	1.3%	1.3%		Health Care	Retail Trade
Polk	1.4%	1.4%		Health Care	Educational
Rutherford	4.6%	4.7%		Retail Trade	Manufacturing
Transylvania	2.5%	2.5%		Retail Trade	Health Care
Watauga	6.5%	6.6%		Educational	Hotel/Food
Yancey	1.0%	0.9%		Manufacturing	Health Care
	100.0%	100.0%			

Closer Look at Buncombe

Change from 2019 and 2023 to 2024 (4Q)

Area Name	Industry	% Change 2023-24	% Change 2019-24
Buncombe County	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-3%	12%
Buncombe County	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-2%	43%
Buncombe County	Utilities	28%	27%
Buncombe County	Construction	-2%	-2%
Buncombe County	Manufacturing	-9%	-11%
Buncombe County	Wholesale Trade	-5%	9%
Buncombe County	Retail Trade	-6%	-3%
Buncombe County	Transportation and Warehousing	0%	10%
Buncombe County	Information	6%	36%
Buncombe County	Finance and Insurance	-8%	-3%
Buncombe County	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-7%	15%
Buncombe County	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	-1%	21%
Buncombe County	Management of Companies and Enterprises	-1%	28%
Buncombe County	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	-8%	-2%
Buncombe County	Educational Services	-6%	0%
Buncombe County	Health Care and Social Assistance	-1%	-5%
Buncombe County	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-24%	-25%
Buncombe County	Accommodation and Food Services	-25%	-27%
Buncombe County	Other Services (except Public Administration)	-13%	-1%
Buncombe County	Public Administration	2%	-3%
	TOTAL	-8%	-5%

Closer Look at Burke

Change from 2019 and 2023 to 2024 (4Q)

Area Name	Industry	% Change 2023-24	% Change 2019-24
Burke County	Utilities	-2%	-4%
Burke County	Construction	-13%	14%
Burke County	Manufacturing	-3%	-2%
Burke County	Wholesale Trade	-10%	47%
Burke County	Retail Trade	1%	8%
Burke County	Transportation and Warehousing	10%	-14%
Burke County	Information	39%	49%
Burke County	Finance and Insurance	-5%	-1%
Burke County	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-13%	1%
Burke County	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2%	8%
Burke County	Management of Companies and Enterprises	-16%	-25%
Burke County	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	-26%	-12%
Burke County	Educational Services	0%	2%
Burke County	Health Care and Social Assistance	-1%	-15%
Burke County	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1%	60%
Burke County	Accommodation and Food Services	-3%	0%
Burke County	Other Services (except Public Administration)	-4%	6%
Burke County	Public Administration	0%	-2%
	TOTAL	-3%	-3%

Closer Look at Watauga

Change from 2019 and 2023 to 2024 (4Q)

Area Name	Industry	2019 4 Q	2023 4Q	2024 4Q		Chg 2019- 2023	Chg 2023-24	Chg 2019-24		% Chg 2019- 23	% Chg 2023- 24	% Chg 2019- 24
Watauga County	Construction	938	1,119	1,089		181	-30	151		19%	-3%	16%
Watauga County	Manufacturing	636	478	466		-158	-12	-170		-25%	-3%	-27%
Watauga County	Wholesale Trade	481	528	523		47	-5	42		10%	-1%	9%
Watauga County	Retail Trade	4,040	3,715	3,543		-325	-172	-497		-8%	-5%	-12%
Watauga County	Transportation and Warehousing	365	381	372		16	-9	7		4%	-2%	2%
Watauga County	Information	238	238	238		0	0	0		0%	0%	0%
Watauga County	Finance and Insurance	347	306	296		-41	-10	-51		-12%	-3%	-15%
Watauga County	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	648	796	736		148	-60	88		23%	-8%	14%
Watauga County	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	687	922	920		235	-2	233		34%	0%	34%
Watauga County	Management of Companies and Enterprises	321	319	301		-2	-18	-20		-1%	-6%	-6%
Watauga County	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	860	875	788		15	-87	-72		2%	-10%	-8%
Watauga County	Educational Services	4,900	4,901	4,908		1	7	8		0%	0%	0%
Watauga County	Health Care and Social Assistance	3,602	3,949	4,080		347	131	478		10%	3%	13%
Watauga County	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	701	941	852		240	-89	151		34%	-9%	22%
Watauga County	Accommodation and Food Services	4,694	4,529	4,147		-165	-382	-547		-4%	-8%	-12%
Watauga County	Other Services (except Public Administration)	552	663	663		111	0	111		20%	0%	20%
Watauga County	Public Administration	833	950	973		117	23	140		14%	2%	17%
	TOTAL	24,843	25,610	24,895		767	-715	52		3%	-3%	0%

Resilience in Recovery

Presentation to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery

July 14, 2025

Marlena Gutiérrez Byrne

Acting Chief Resilience Officer

State Resilience Office

Department of Environmental Quality

Presentation Overview

- What Do We Mean by "Resilience?"
- Key Considerations for Building Greater Resilience After Hurricane Helene
- Examples of Work Already Underway Across State Agencies
- Next Steps
 - Convening a Standing Subcommittee on Resilience in Recovery

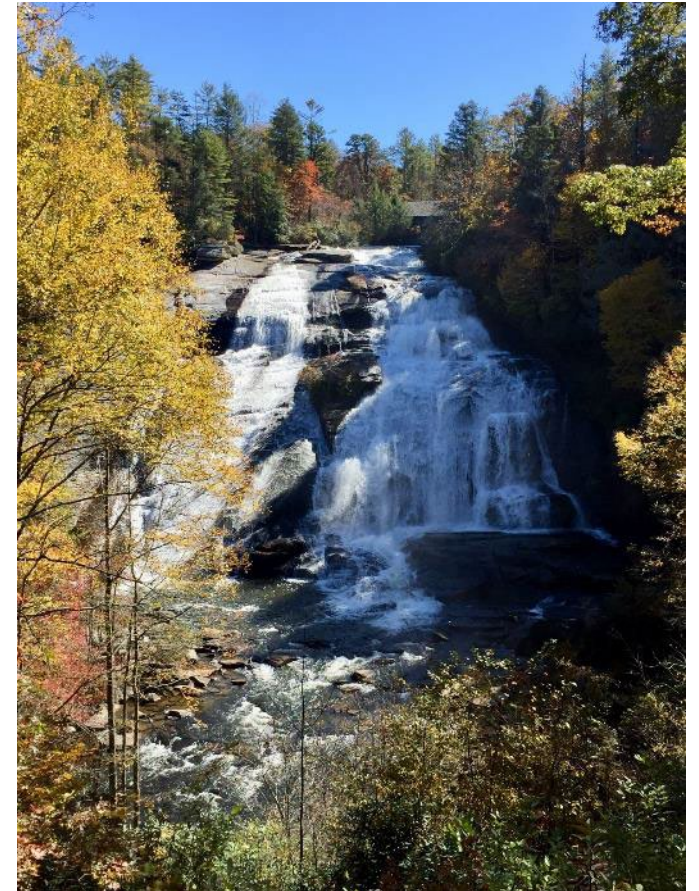
A Resilient North Carolina

A state where our communities, economies, and ecosystems are better able to rebound, positively adapt to, and thrive amid changing conditions and challenges, including disasters and climate change.

2020 North Carolina Climate Risk Assessment
and Resilience Plan

Resilient North Carolina Guiding Principles

- Reduce the most harmful impacts of natural hazards and extreme weather - flooding, drought, landslides, and wildfires
- Invest in safe, affordable, and connected communities
- Strengthen local and regional economies
- Support healthy communities, local identity, and access to nature

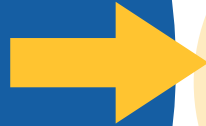


Recovery

Assess damage
and impacts across sectors

Address needs of
affected populations and
sectors

Prioritize projects to restore
critical community services,
assets and functions



**Resilient
Recovery**



Resilience

Assess natural hazard
and extreme weather risks
and vulnerabilities

Determine populations
at risk from current and
future hazards and
extreme weather impacts

Prioritize projects
to reduce future risks

Why Resilient Recovery?

Because Resilience is Good Development

- Well-designed resilience projects have multiple benefits
 - **Avoided losses** - protection against future hazards
 - **Economic benefits** - e.g., economic growth, steady tax-base, reduced maintenance, tourism
 - **Social and environmental benefits** – e.g., health benefits, improvements in water and air quality, outdoor recreation
- Each \$1 invested in resilience and preparedness saves \$13 in economic costs, damages, and cleanup.* (US Chamber of Commerce)
- Because the average value of economic, social, and environmental benefits often exceeds the value of avoided losses, the return on many resilience investments does not depend on a future disaster occurring.**



20-27%

average return on investment**



\$13

In benefits for every \$1 spent on adaptation*



Benefits do not depend on whether another disaster occurs**

*"The Preparedness Payoff: The Economic Benefits of Investing in Climate Resilience," US Chamber of Commerce et al., 2024

**"Strengthening the Investment Case for Climate Adaptation: A Triple Dividend Approach," World Resources Institute, 2024

Information and Data to Support Resilience

Objective: Up-to-date data and modeling of hazards and risks to inform evidence-based and cost-effective rebuilding and future projects.

Key Considerations

- Hurricane Helene changed the landscape of WNC. NC needs updated maps for landslide risk, flood risk, and other natural hazards like wildfire.
- Increased rainfall intensity, duration, and frequency must be included in updated modeling to understand future risk of both flood and drought.
- What do we need to get this information to those who need it most -- state and local decisionmakers, planners, and building professionals?

Highlights of Work Underway

- Landslide mapping - new inventory published weekly
 - 90% of landslide susceptibility and debris flow runout models will be completed within 2 years
 - WNC structural vulnerability and risk assessment completed within 3 years
- Effort underway to update advisory flood maps
- Probable Maximum Precipitation (PMP) study and evaluation tool - May 2025. First NC update since 1978. Used for engineering, including dam safety.
- NC Resilience Exchange-
resilienceexchange.nc.gov

Building and Housing Resilience

Objective: Rebuilt and reconstructed public facilities, homes and other structures should be safer and more resilient to future storms and other natural hazards like wildfire.

Key Considerations

- Public facilities often provide emergency services, including shelter, and must function during and after an event.
- Three factors must be balanced as we rebuild housing:
 - Returning residents to their homes as quickly as possible
 - Efficient use of funding to help the most residents
 - Improving the ability of these homes to withstand the next storm (or wildfire) so that we spend public money once
- It may not be safe to rebuild in the same location. How do we support homeowners and other property owners who wish to relocate?

Highlights of Work Underway

- Recently adopted updates to the state's requirements for construction on state lands limit new construction in the floodplain and update siting and construction requirements for areas at risk for flooding.
 - These new requirements also include guidance for implementing nature-based solutions/green infrastructure to reduce stormwater run-off and protect downstream property from flooding.
 - See NC Uniform Floodplain Management Policy, 2024 update.
- RenewNC is working to incorporate resilient building materials into homes constructed through the Helene CDBG-DR program while balancing cost.

Transportation Resilience

Objective: Rebuild the state's roads and bridges to better withstand future storms, providing safe, reliable and efficient transportation infrastructure, including evacuation routes.

Key Considerations

- To manage risks and strengthen transportation system resilience, rebuilding must:
 - Be based on the most up-to-date science;
 - Implement risk-based asset management and design approaches to identify threats and assess vulnerabilities;
 - Incorporate better planning to reduce disaster losses;
 - Include processes to avoid or minimize consequences to transportation assets and the people of North Carolina.*

***NCDOT Resilience Policy, F.35.0102**

Highlights of Work Underway

- Prior to Helene's arrival in WNC, NCDOT was able to predict where I-40 would flood and close the road ahead of the storm.
- NCDOT is rebuilding with resilient design by using:
 - A "risk-based" approach that considers trends in extreme events
 - Up-to-date 2D modeling ("rain on grid") approach
- Bridges and roads built to modern standards performed well during Helene. Rebuilding efforts are using those designs and making them even more resilient.

Infrastructure and Energy Resilience

Objective: Spend federal/state money once, rather than spending it again when the next flood hits.

Key Considerations

- Systems must include redundancies and backup systems for critical facilities and communications systems.
 - Distributed energy systems such as community solar, batteries, and microgrids can provide critical backup when the larger energy grid is impacted by a storm.
- Have service needs changed since Hurricane Helene?
- Will local communities and utilities have the ongoing financial capacity not only for construction, but also for operation?
- Sharing soft resources like financial management and administration can increase capacity.

Highlights of Work Underway

- State agencies coordinating to maximize eligibility under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for infrastructure projects.
 - Critical given the termination of FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which impacted over \$180 million in grants for NC.
- DEQ awarded \$6M to Land of Sky Regional Council to purchase back-up solar and battery storage systems.

Next Steps

The Advisory Committee convenes a Resilience Subcommittee comprised of committee members, state agency program staff, external experts, and stakeholders with interest and expertise specific to resilience.

This subcommittee will

- Help ensure resilience is embedded into Helene recovery thoughtfully and intentionally, with input from both resilience experts and community members who understand the impacts of this event and the needs of their communities.
- Help identify short-, medium-, and long-term recovery and resilience priorities to ensure WNC communities are protected from future storms and other extreme weather events, landslides, and other hazards like wildfires.
- Serve as a conduit for information and resources to flow between the impacted communities and state decisionmakers.

If you are interested in joining the Resilience Subcommittee, please reach out to Eliza Edwards, who will coordinate with the Committee Chairs.

Thank you!

Marlena Byrne

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State Resilience Office
Department of Environmental Quality

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Next Steps and Wrap Up

Director Matt Calabria

Stay Connected WNC Recovery

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



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