HELENE UPDATE

Board of Commissioners | June 17, 2025

Topics for Today

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Debris** – Dane Pedersen
- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** – Ryan Cole
- **Funding Reimbursement** – Matt Evans
- **Housing** – Jonathon Jones
- **State of Emergency** – Taylor Jones
- **Landslides** - Rafael Baptista

APPENDIX:

- **Data Updates by Recovery Support Function**

Debris Removal





- **Right of Way Debris Removal**: **Mission Complete**
  - 1,557,232 total cubic yards for the mission
  - Total Soil/Sediment/Silt: 151,198 Tons, 6,530 loads
- **PPDR (Private and Commercial Debris Removal): Mission Completion extended to August 1 2025**
  - 5,292 Active applications received
  - 5,282 Delivered to FEMA
  - 3,985 Sites cleaned up
  - PPDR complaints and concerns: debrismanagement@helene@buncombenc.gov
- **Waterway Debris Removal**: **Mission Completion extended to June 30th 2025**
  - 1,556,674 cubic yards as of 6-16-25

Right of Way Debris Removal

- Right of Way Debris Removal
  - Right of way debris removal has closed with Federal Partners and is no longer being collected.
  - Working with FEMA on debris removal projects
- Please help us with this debris removal task by refraining from placing additional debris in the right of way, including private contractors and volunteers that may be assisting with property clean up. This debris is no longer eligible for removal
  - Enforcement of illegal dumping fines may be necessary in the future
- We continue to collect data about any remaining debris piles in the right of way from our One Buncombe Call center 828-250-6100 #2
  - Hours of Operations: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (closed June 19 for Juneteenth holiday)

Residential & Commercial Demolition

- Demolition Timeline: August 31
  - Application window closed: total number of active applications received - 190
  - Demo packets are under SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) review.
  - Average review period is 6-9 weeks
  - Several demolition requests have historical impacts and will require the lengthy review prior to approval for demo
- FEMA and USACE have 107 Demolition Packets for review
  - Buncombe County (74), City of Asheville (23), Town of Black Mountain (10)
  - 10 have completed FEMA/USACE review and ready to move to contracting

Questions?

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Acquisition	Elevation	Land Stabilization	Mitigation Reconstruction	No App	Slope Stabilization
230	70	23	9	9	5

Total: 337 Applications, 9 Interests

Data as of June 6, 2025

HMGP Acquisitions Project Timeline

Day	Task
0	RFP process opens – Demo and removal
+30	RFP process closes
+7	NCEM reviews proposals and selects vendor
+14	Vendor award & Notice to Proceed
	NCEM-Vendor-County coordination meeting
	Property Owner Engagement Meeting
	Project Work Begins – Appraisal, Survey and Acquisition documents

HMGP Infrastructure, 5% Initiative and 7% Planning Projects

- **Infrastructure Mitigation Projects** (88% of HMGP funds)
  - Large-scale mitigation for public infrastructure and non-residential property
  - Must be cost-effective and reduce long-term risk to life, property, or critical services
- **5% Initiative Projects** (5% of HMGP funds)
  - Set-aside for innovative or hard-to-quantify mitigation activities
  - Do not require a formal cost-benefit analysis, but must show mitigation value
- **7% Planning Projects** (7% of HMGP funds)
  - Set aside to support hazard mitigation planning and data development

Understanding HMGP Submissions: Early Engagement & Timeline

- **Short Form Submission** (Due May 30, 2025)
  - Streamlined Letter of Interest (LOI): early, simplified format
  - Purpose: Assess project eligibility, provide guidance, opportunity to “pre-vet” projects
  - Not a full commitment or application, meant to save time/effort early in the process
- **Regular LOI Submission** (Due October 31, 2025, at 5 p.m.)
  - Required for projects to be officially considered for funding
  - Must include full technical details, benefit-cost analysis, and supporting documentation
  - Final LOIs can reflect adjustments based on NCEM feedback from short-form submissions

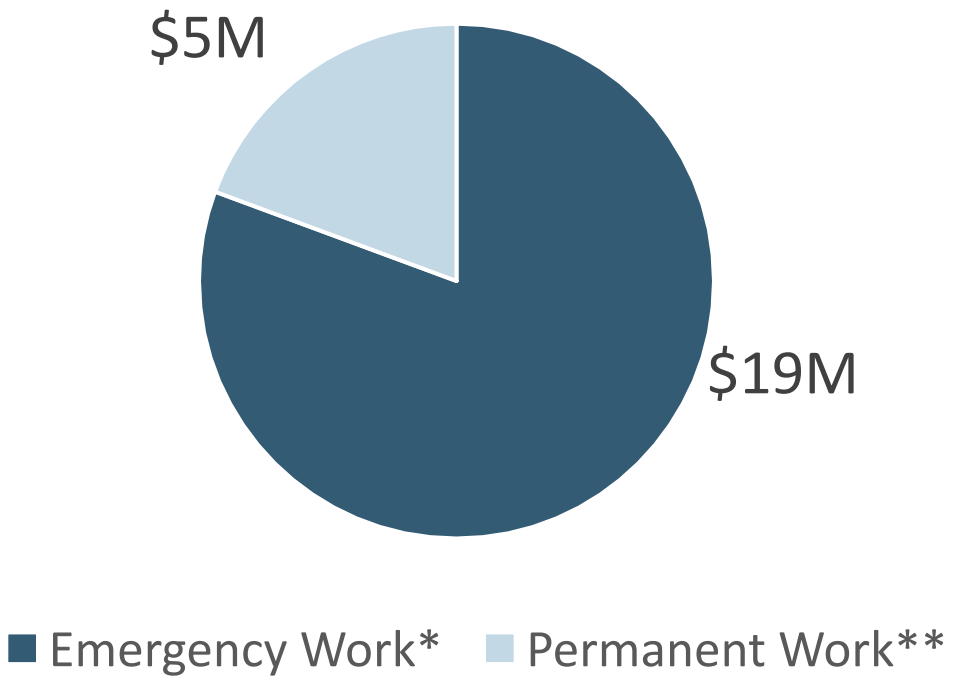
Submitted HMGP Project Concepts

Category	Total Projects	Estimated Cost
Land Stabilization / Erosion Control	4	$4.48M
Floodproof / Wind Hardening	6	$14.35M
Saferooms (for use as short term shelters)	8	$38.75M
Secondary Power Source	2	$25.78M
Wildfire Mitigation	2	$4.45M
5% Initiative Projects	5	$9.3M
7% Planning projects	2	$830,000
Total	**29**	**$97.94M**

Questions?

Current Helene Spending

- ~$24M in spending as of 6.17.25
- Pursuing FEMA Public Assistance for Emergency and Permanent Work
- Pursuing Insurance for Permanent Work
  - Reasonable assurance at this time that insurance will reimburse ~$3.6M in costs to date and Public Assistance will reimburse the rest



*Emergency Work includes ***reimbursable*** Debris Removal, Overtime and Benefits, Emergency Operations Center, Warehouses, Community Care Stations, Points of Distribution and other costs associated with the response

**Permanent Work includes County owned/maintained repairs to Communication Tower Access Roads, Buildings, Parks.

FEMA Public Assistance Projects

Type	Paid To BC as of 6.17.25	Submitted to FEMA	Currently In Development	Placeholder/To Be Submitted At a Later Date
Permanent Work*		15	1	
Emergency Work		3	4	14
Other**		2	2	26
Total	**0**	**20**	**7**	**40**

*Permanent Work projects take a different path in the FEMA grants process than Emergency Work projects and is an interactive process with FEMA after submission.

**Other includes emergency work projects addressing landslides and wildfire mitigation, where there have been no cost to reimburse

FEMA Public Assistance Projects

Status of Submitted Emergency Work Projects

Project	Is this paying the County back for money already spent?	Submitted Amount	Date Submitted	Status
Expedited Debris	Yes	$1,318,912	5/22/2025 (Amendment to right-size expedited funding)	Received Hard Request For Information (RFI) on 5/29/25 with 15 days to answer – all answers submitted and requirements met
A&E Pilot Project Landslide/Stabilization for Landfill and General Services	No	108,335	3/31/2025	Funding has been approved by FEMA (Obligated). Notified that NCEM has moved funding forward to Buncombe County.
A&E Landslide/Slope Stabilization - Grovemont / Sassafras Valley Rd	No	1,360,288	5/13/2025	Funding has been approved by FEMA (Obligated). Funding currently with the State.
Emergency Operations Center - Embassy Suites - 100% Cost Share	Yes	790,301	5/9/2025	We are working with FEMA to answer questions (not a hard RFI)
Buncombe County Detention Center - 100% Cost Share	Yes	1,061,866	5/9/2025	Currently with FEMA for review, FEMA verified costs 6.4.25
Total		**$4,639,703***		

*Includes $3.1M to pay Buncombe County back for expenses already incurred

FEMA Public Assistance Projects

Soon To Be Submitted Projects

Project	Is this paying the County back for money already spent?	Est. Amount To Be Submitted	Est. Priority of Submission and timing
Private Property Debris Removal (Cat B)	Yes	$4,237,602	1, Mid/Late June
1206 Flood Substantial Damage Work (Cat G)	Yes	889,318	2, Mid/Late June
ERC Broadband	Yes	480,000	3, Mid/Late June
Emergency Operations Center 100% Cost Share	Yes	1,330,406	4, Mid/Late June
Force Account Labor (Overtime/Benefits)	Yes	4,000,000	5, Late July
Total		**$10,937,326**	

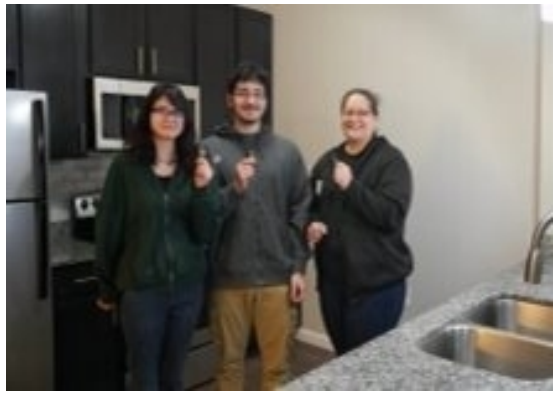
Questions?

FEMA Temporary Units

- 74 FEMA temporary units placed (manufactured homes and travel trailers)
- Units installed under emergency housing temporary permits
- Units not installed to meet building code (state implemented temporary rules)
- 50 FEMA temporary units remain occupied: (11 private sites, 39 parks)







FEMA Temporary Unit Sales Process

- Units are made available at a reduced price and sold “as is, where is”
- Households that elect to purchase temporary units must:
  - Be responsible for complying with land use and building code regulations (federal/state/local) and all costs necessary to bring the unit to code
  - Understand units may be required to be relocated within 30 days of the sale
  - Identify a new location for the unit and be responsible for transportation if the unit is in a commercial park and they cannot lease a space in the park
  - Acquire hazard insurance for unit and assume utility payments

FEMA Temporary Unit Sales Progress

26 survivor households noticed of eligibility to purchase units they occupy*

21 interested, 3 awaiting response, 2 declined

18 survivor household interviews completed

6 offer letters delivered

*Survivor households can only purchase units they occupy.

Cost as a Barrier to Permanence & Opportunities for Support

Estimated Costs

- Unit purchase: $4,000 - $23,000
- Transportation: $10,000
- Bring units up to State Building code: $10,000

Available Sources to Support Move to Permanence

- FEMA home repair/replacement assistance (max $42,500)
- Insurance proceeds

Additional Support May Be Needed—Opportunities:

- Local non-profits/the Long Term Recovery Group
- County Affordable Housing Services Program (AHSP) Home Repair Grant

County Communications Regarding FEMA Units for Sale

County Staff is focused on communicating information on County regulations and State Building Code to survivor households with this potential purchase opportunity. To that end:

- FEMA agreed to send letters connecting the 24 survivor households to County staff to discuss County regulations and State Building Code
- Amending the data sharing agreement is in process so County staff can work directly with survivor households accepting the offer
- Survivor households considering the purchase of their FEMA unit are encouraged to call **One Buncombe Call Center** at **828-250-6100** to connect with County staff regarding compliance

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Overview

- **$860,734,000:** Amount designated for owner-occupied Helene-related home repairs under the North Carolina's CDBG-DR Action Plan
- **North Carolina Department of Commerce:** Department administering the program across 29 Helene-impacted counties (no direct county role)
- **Supported Activities:** Repairing, rebuilding or replacing eligible single-family homes, include stick-built and manufactured homes

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Eligibility

- Home damage must be due to Helene
- Applicant must have owned and occupied the home when Helene struck
- Applicant must be income qualified

Priority

Application priority is assigned based on income: below 60% / 60 - 80% / up to 120% of Area Median Income (AMI) and at least one of the following:

Households with seniors age 62 and older

Households with children under the age of 18

Households with individuals with disabilities

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Phase	Priority	MID Status	Percent of AMI	Is any member of the household: under 18, over 62, disabled, or has accessibility needs?
Phase 1	1	HUD	< 60%	Yes
	2	HUD	< 60%	No
	3	State	< 60%	Yes
	4	State	< 60%	No
Phase 2	1	HUD	60-80%	Yes
	2	HUD	60-80%	No
	3	State	60-80%	Yes
	4	State	60-80%	No
Phase 3	1	HUD	≤80% Reimbursement	No
	2	State	≤80% Reimbursement	No
Phase 4	1	HUD	80% - 120%	N/A
	2	State	80% - 120%	N/A

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Process

Step 1

Application Submission and Eligibility Review

Homeowner submits application. Case Manager conducts eligibility review of application.

Step 2

Site Eligibility

Site visit to collect data to develop a damage assessment and prepare environmental reports.

Step 3

Award and Contract Signing

Homeowner is notified of award detailing project type. Grant agreement signed by applicant.

Step 4

Preconstruction and Construction

Homeowner moveout coordination with contractor, permitting, utility disconnects, construction, and key turnover.

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Structure

- **Reimbursements:** Survivor households may be reimbursed for repairs made to their homes, provided certain conditions are met
- **Contractor Selection:** Survivor households may NOT select their contractors and will NOT contract directly with selected builders
- **Survivor Household Requirements:**
  - Expected to remain in the repaired home for 3 years
  - Must sign a 3 year unsecured, forgivable loan

RenewNC Single-Family Housing Program

Application is Currently Open

- **Open Date:** June 16, 2025
- **How to Apply:**
  - **Online:** https://www.RenewNC.org/
  - **Mobile App:** ‘Renew NC Housing Program’
  - **Phone:** (888) 791-0207
  - **In-Person:**
    Helene Resource Center, 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville

Questions?

State of Emergency

- Originally declared on September 25, 2024
- Extended on September 29, 2024
- Active emergency activities, including activation of County Emergency Operations Center
- Deactivated Emergency Operations Center on June 4, 2025
- Termination of County State of Emergency to align with State expiration on June 30, 2025 - Request for Board Action – BOCC Regular Meeting – 6/17

Questions?

Landslides – The Path Forward

County / Public Property

FEMA Public Assistance

Individual Properties / Sides

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Multiple Properties / Large, Complex Sides

Strategy In Development



What is a complex slide

- Large slide that impacts at least two parcels with residential structures and will require substantial work across multiple private properties

- Two distinct projects to each landslide
  - Project 1: Engineering and Design Study
  - Project 2: Based on engineering and design study, begin construction of stabilization solution

Pilot Grovemont Slide Process

FEMA Site Inspection *(Complete)*

Initial FEMA Engineering Project Scoping/ Cost Estimate *(Complete)*

FEMA Obligates Funding to NCEM *(Complete)*

Define Advanced Funding Process with NCEM and document in an agreement *(In Progress)*

County releases RFQ for engineering work *(Being developed)*

NCEM advances project funding to Buncombe County *(Process being developed)*

County manages contractor to complete engineering design

NCEM sends remaining project funding to Buncombe County upon work being completed

Assessment of Landslide Remediation Options and Funding Strategy

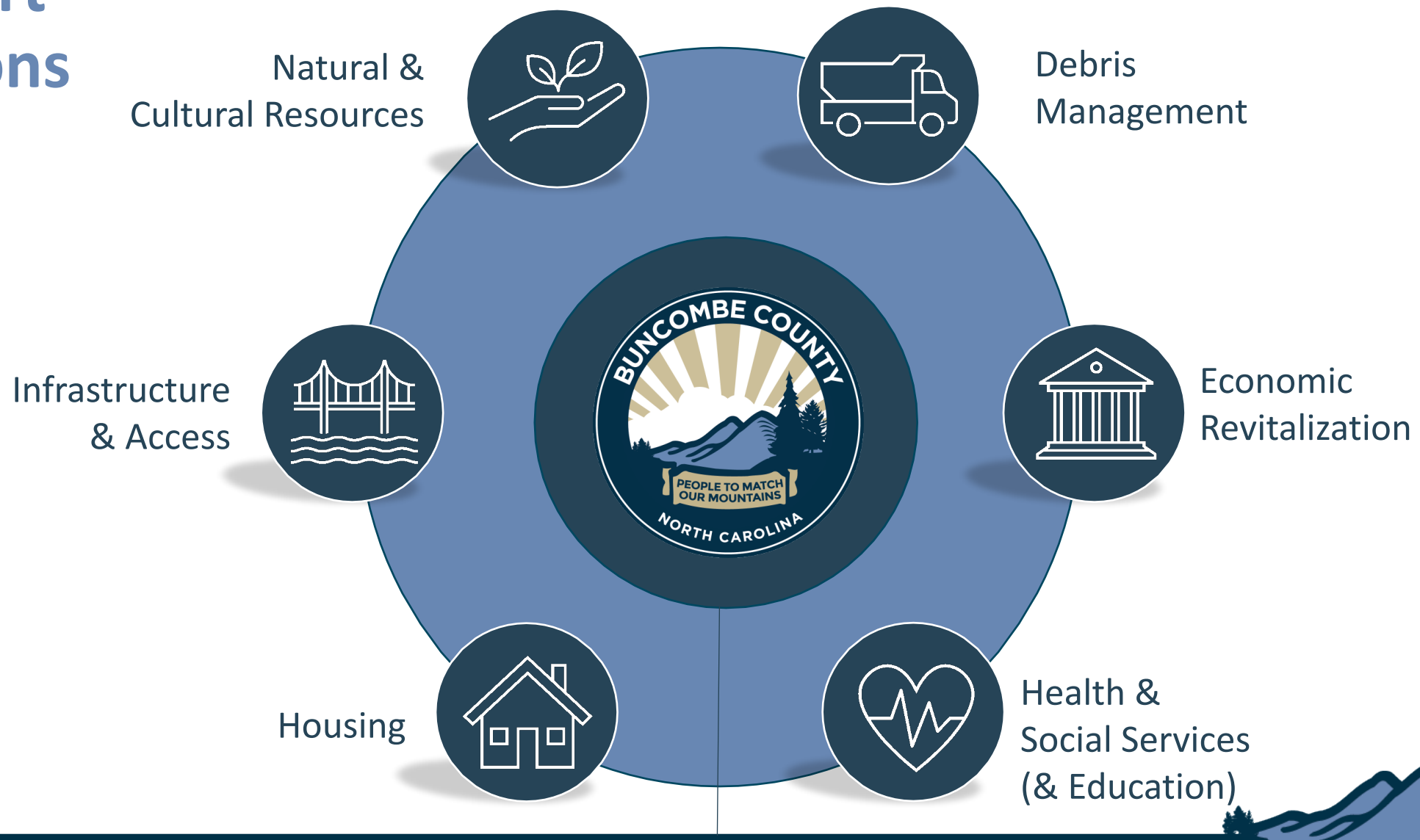
Questions?

End of Presentation

APPENDIX – DATA UPDATES

Reference Data by Recovery Support Function

Recovery Support Functions



DEBRIS MANAGEMENT



Focused on storm debris, including solutions for debris removal on public and private property and waterways, managing specialized debris types, evaluating hazardous materials considerations, coordinating disposal, and exploring sustainable re-use of debris.

DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

- Cubic yards of debris collected (right of way): 1,554,232 (<1% increase over last update)
- Cubic yards of debris collected (waterway): 1,556,675 (11% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications received: 6,074 (<1% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications submitted to USACE for action: 5,282 (new measure as of 6/17)
- PPDR Parcels completed & closed out by USACE: 3,985 (new measure as of 6/17)
- Number of title property cleared: 25 (new measure as of 6/17)
- Demolition applications received: 323 (new measure as of 6/17)
- Demolition applications verified, permitted, & sent to FEMA (new measure as of 6/17)

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION



Focused on stimulating economic recovery, supporting local businesses, responding to workforce needs, and ensuring the long-term economic stability and prosperity of the area with a focus on revitalization of critical economic sectors

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

- Asheville-Buncombe "Rebuilding Together" Business Grant www.mountainbizworks.org/helene/fund/
  - 843 applications received totaling more than $18M (no change compared to prior update)
  - Buncombe County Only
    - 137 small businesses awarded grants, totaling $1,567,480 (no change compared to prior update)

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Small Business Association Loans*				
	Home Loans	**For Profit Business Loans**	**Nonprofit Business Loans**	**Total**
Number of Applications	3,485 (0% increase)	6,757 (0% increase)	232 (0% increase)	10,474(0% increase)
Number of Loans Disbursed	606 (0% increase)	1,944 (0% increase)	4 (0% increase)	2,554 (0% increase)
$ Amount of Loans Disbursed	$28,544 (0% increase)	$124,653,413 (0% increase)	$163,000 (0% increase)	$153,360,463 (0% increase)

*No new data since 5/20/25 update

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Unemployment Estimates: Reported February 2025, Revised January 2025 and December 2024 (Last updated 5/19/2025)

	Reported May 2025	Reported Feb 2025	Revised Jan 2025*	Revised Dec 2024*
Buncombe County	5.3%	6.2%	6.8%	6.0%
Asheville Metro**	No update	5.5%	6.0%	5.3%

*Revised unemployment did not change in January or December

**Asheville Metro includes Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison counties

Helene Impact on County Unemployment Rankings December 2024 (Last updated as of 4/9/2025)

County	Labor Force*	Unemployment **	Rate	Rank
Buncombe	143,725	8,956	6.2	96
Tyrell	1,269	82	6.5	97
Mitchell	7,134	470	6.6	98
Dare	17,393	1,248	7.2	99
Hyde	1,608	139	8.6	100

*Number of people working and number of people unemployed combined

** Number of people unemployed

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES



Focused on ensuring the health and well-being of residents with attention to the social determinants of health, including consideration of medical, behavioral, educational, and environmental health concerns and social service recovery needs

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

- NC DHHS Disaster Energy Assistance: $2,236,867
- NC DHHS Disaster Adult Service Assistance: $113,540
- NC DHHS Disaster Child Welfare Assistance: $480,679
- NC DHHS Disaster Rental Assistance: $199,296

EDUCATION*

**6/17 will be final update for the 2024-2025 School Year*

- The number of homeless (unhoused) students identified under the McKinney-Vento Act:
  - Asheville City Schools – 294 (<1% increase over previous update)
    - **80 of these cases are due to Helene** (<1% increase over previous update)
  - Buncombe County School **-** 1476 (<1% increase over previous update)
    - **982 of these cases are due to Helene** (<1% change over previous update)
- 100% of **Buncombe County Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results
- 100% of **Asheville City Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results

HOUSING



Focused on supporting people in moving toward housing permanence through home repair, removing barriers to temporary housing units, connecting survivors to short- and long-term rental, and coordinating rental and mortgage assistance for survivor households with economic impacts

HOUSING

**No new data/updates since the 5/20 briefing*

- Residential units destroyed: 372 (no change compared to prior update)
- Residential units with major damage: 734 (no change compared to prior update)
- Residential units with habitability repairs: 11,133 (no change compared to prior update)
- Total residential units damaged: 12,239 (no change compared to prior update)
- Households currently in TSA: 0 (no change from prior update)
- Households approved for FEMA direct housing: 70 (no change compared to prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units complete: 72 (no change compared to prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units in-progress: 0 (no change compared to prior update)
- Households approved for rental assistance: 1523 (3% increase over prior update)

INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS



Focused on restoring and enhancing essential public infrastructure and accessibility to private property, including comprehensive damage assessments, coordination of repairs/restoration, and mitigation of future hazards such as floods and landslides

INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS

- 337 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applications have been submitted to NCEM (2% increase compared to last update)
    - 230 for acquisition; 70 for elevation/reconstruction; 28 for slope stabilization
- Helene related building permit apps filed across 1,515 unique locations (3% increase over last update)
- Helene related building inspections conducted at 1,256 unique locations (3% increase over last update)
- State has stood up a private bridge and road repair program with 1018 county residents applying for help
- 100+ landslides impacting residential properties identified for FEMA assessments
- 49% of assessments completed of properties in flood plain

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES



Focused on the restoration and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, including capabilities to maintain, conserve, renew, and rehabilitate resources such as parks, farmland, watersheds and streambanks in alignment with environmental and historical preservation laws

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES*

**No new data/updates since the 5/20 briefing*

- Emergency watershed protection potential applicants identified: 325 (14% decrease compared to prior update)
- Emergency watershed protection Field Visits Completed: 235 (new data point since 3/3 update)
- Emergency watershed protection applications approved: 25 (new data point since 3/3 update)
- 7 County parks open to the public (no update compared to prior update)
- 12 County libraries open to the public (no update compared to prior update)

FOUNDATIONAL

Focused on coordinating the resources needed for an effective recovery for and linking recovery with organizational operations –such as grants & funding, data sharing, county property damage, staffing considerations, communications, funding, facilities, fleet, human capital and technology

FOUNDATIONAL

- $ 23.6 M expended for Helene; $5.2 M committed
- FEMA Public Assistance:
  - Emergency work - claims submitted: $4.6 M
  - Emergency work - $ amount reimbursed: $0 M
  - Permanent work - claims submitted: $413.9 M
  - Permanent work - $ amount reimbursed: $0 M
- Insurance claim for County-owned assets:
  - Claims submitted: $4.2M (<1% increase over prior update)
  - Claim received: $1.99 M (no change compared to prior update)
- Recovery-related grant funding:
  - Awarded: $6.4 M (88% increase compared to prior update)