HELENE UPDATE

Board of Commissioners | July 15, 2025

Topics for Today

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Debris** – Dane Pedersen
- **Helene Legislation & State Programs** – Tim Love
- **Funding** – Samantha Bowers
- **Recovery Office** – Rachael Sawyer

APPENDIX:

- **Data Updates by Recovery Support Function**

Debris Removal Total: 3,315,783 CY





- **Right of Way Debris Removal: Mission Complete**
  - 1,557,232 total cubic yards of debris removed
- **PPDR (Private and Commercial Debris Removal): Mission Completion extended to August 1, 2025**
  - FEMA and Army Corp have all applications for review and delivery to the debris removal contractor, AshBritt. Upon receipt of the application, AshBritt will assign a crew and place the property on the schedule. Applicants should receive a notification prior to any work being done by AshBritt on their property.
  - 4,647 Sites cleaned up, less than 466 properties remain
  - 161,258 cubic yards of debris removed
  - PPDR complaints and concerns: debrismanagement@helene@buncombenc.gov
- **Waterway Debris Removal: Mission extended to July 15th, 2025 (substantially complete)**
  - 1,597,293 cubic yards as of 7-9-25

Residential & Commercial Demolition

- Demolition is still under review by Federal & State Partners
  - Timeline for demolition to begin is unknown due to funding issues at the federal level
  - All demolition applications are still actively in the review stage with FEMA and USACE
  - Several demolition requests have historical/environmental impacts and will require the lengthy review prior to approval for demo

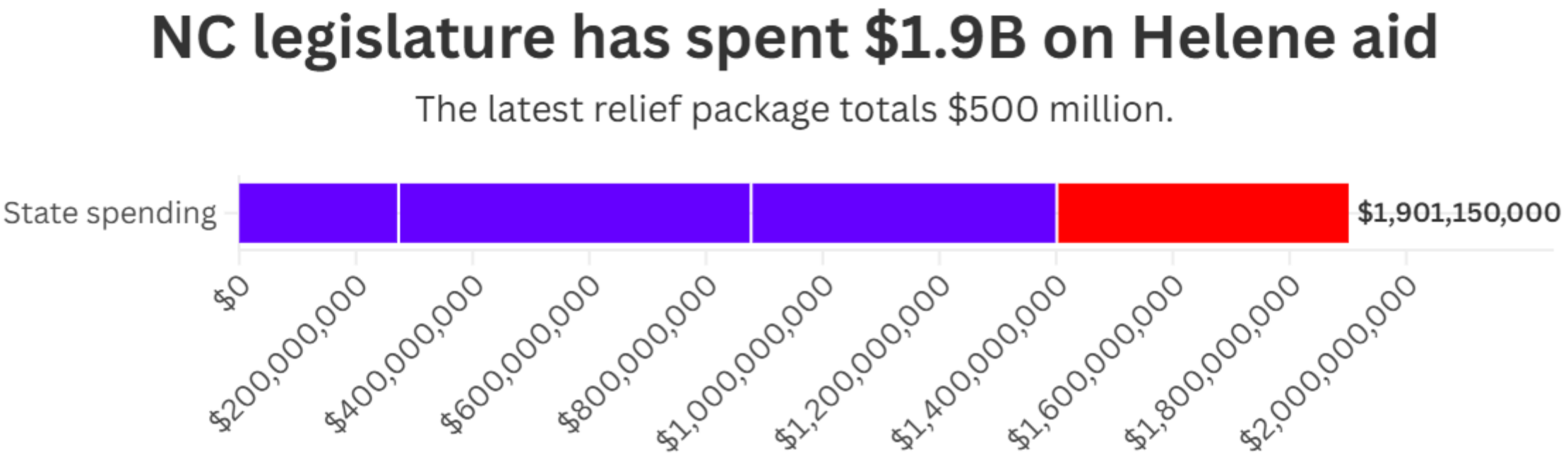
Debris Removal & Processing

- Temporary Debris Sites
  - Major milestone for Hurricane Helene Recovery-All temporary debris sites will be closing out July 30th except for Enka
- Vegetative Debris Processing Opportunities
  - Biochar
    - Site visit to Haywood County for Demo of their Tigercat Carbonizer
    - > $1,000,000 to purchase
    - Requires 7 full time staff to operate
    - Requires 240 gallons of water per hour
  - Biomass Powerplants use hog fuel-a type of wood waste that can be used as fuel
  - Firewood programs in partnership with area nonprofits



Questions?

Helene Legislation



State Disaster Relief (HB1012)

- Signed into law June 26, 2025
- Allocated $700 million into the Helene Relief Fund and appropriated $500 million for direct recovery efforts, leaving the other $200 million for future relief
- Includes: water & wastewater treatment; for privates roads & bridges; matching funds for FEMA programs; crop loss program; support for volunteer organizations actively working on Helene Recovery; funding to help address wildfires; dam safety & rehabilitation; and tourism promotion for Western North Carolina
- Does not include: small business relief; local government revenue replacement

Active State Helene Relief Programs

- **NC Disaster Case Management**: ncdps.gov/helene/dcm

- **RenewNC** Hurricane Helene Recovery Single-Family Housing Program: renewnc.org/

- **Tropical Storm Helene Private Road & Bridge Program** (NC-PRB): ncdps.gov/Helene/PRB

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Questions?

Helene Funding Approach

- Maximize external funding sources for local recovery projects - including federal, state & private grants, & financing options
- Incorporate project management & fund administration to the greatest extent possible
- Prioritize accountability to both outcomes & compliance requirements
- Coordinate within the Grants & Funding team within Foundational Recovery Support Function (extension of existing internal Grant Governance Team)
- Partner with community-based organizations in their efforts to secure recovery funding

Grants & Loans Supporting Helene Recovery

113
Prospective Funding Opportunities

26
Applications in Process

7
Awards Secured

$20.4 M
Total Funding Secured
(other than PA below)

FEMA Public Assistance

68
Total Projects

3
Obligated Projects

$1.4 M
Total Amount Received

Funding Received so Far

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Declared Disaster Recovery Fund (DDRF) – $788,000
- CDBG Recovery Housing Program (RHP) – $2,800,000
- North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS) Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery Fund – $2,200,000
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) – $657,000
- Green Growth Small Area Plan – $10,000
- North Carolina Cashflow Loans - $13,975,310

Potential Funding on the Horizon

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery (DR) – City & State
- Congressional Community Project Funding
- Dogwood Health Trust Leverage Fund
- Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Swift Current
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- North Carolina SmBiz
- North Carolina Cashflow Loan

Questions?

Helene Recovery Office

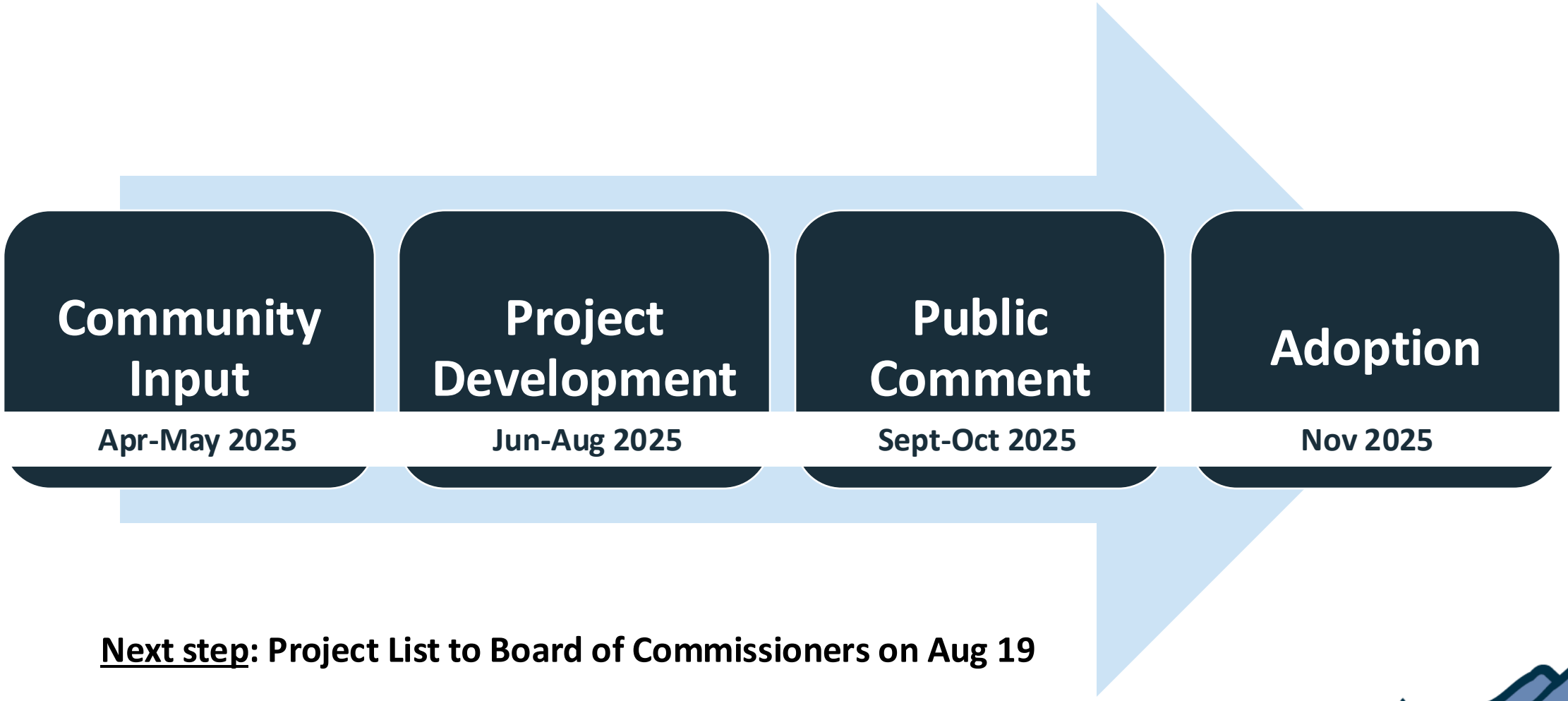
Recovery Officer:

- Oversee Buncombe County's Tropical Storm Helene disaster recovery efforts
- Organize, coordinate, and advance local recovery initiatives by facilitating collaboration among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders to implement recovery strategies
- Align efforts, and drive progress toward County recovery goals to ensure a unified and effective response

Recovery Office Project Managers: (Grant Funded)

- Manage and coordinate the implementation of projects in the Helene Recovery Plan

Helene Recovery Plan



<u>Next step</u>: Project List to Board of Commissioners on Aug 19

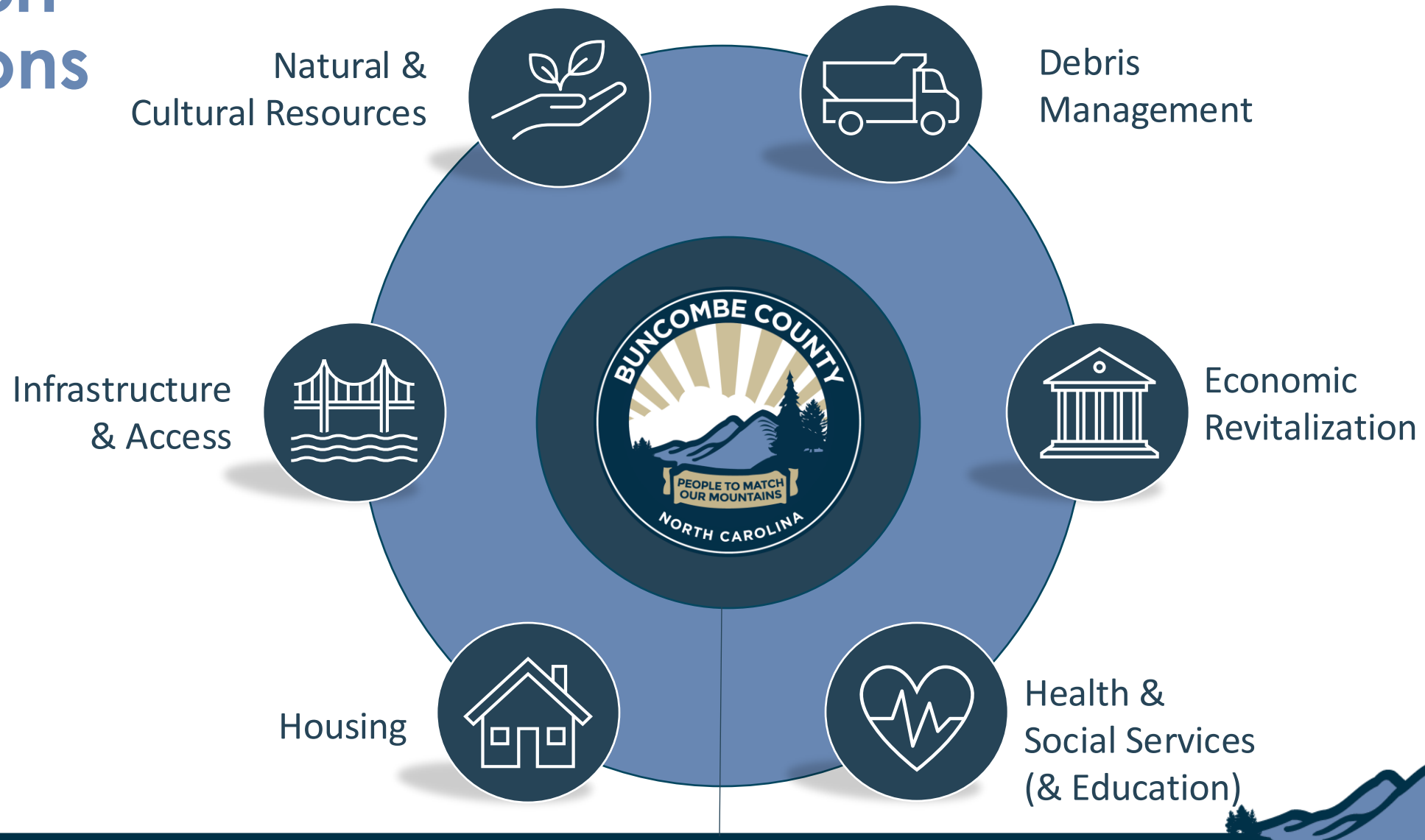
Questions?

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): 1,557,232 (no change compared to last update)
- Cubic yards of debris collected (waterway): 1,597,293 (3% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications received: 6,074 (no change compared to last update)
- PPDR applications submitted to USACE for action: 5,290 (8 additional app's over last update)
- PPDR Parcels completed & closed out by USACE: 4,647 (14% increase over last update)
- Number of title property cleared: 36 (31% increase over last update)
- Demolition applications received: 323 (no change compared to last update)
- Demolition applications verified, permitted, & sent to FEMA: 117 (2% increase over last update)

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	3,721 (7% increase)	7,365 (9% increase)	155 (33% decrease)	11,241 (7% increase)
Number of Loans Disbursed	685 (13% increase)	2,319 (19% increase)	7 (75% increase)	3,011 (18% increase)
$ Amount of Loans Disbursed	$34,31146 (20% increase)	$244,583,403 (96% increase)	$413,000 (153% increase)	$279,307,868 (7% increase)

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Unemployment Data			
Month	**Unemployment Rank* - Buncombe County**	**Unemployment Rate – Buncombe County**	**Unemployment Rate – Asheville Metro****
September 2024	1	2.5%	NA
October 2024	100	10.4%	NA
February 2025	96	6.2%	5.5%
May 2025 *(reported in July)*	83	4.5%	4.10%

*A Rank of 1 indicates the county with the lowest unemployment rate in NC; a rank of 100 indicates the highest unemployment rate in NC

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

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: $2,269,631
- NC DHHS Disaster Adult Service Assistance: $115,800
- NC DHHS Disaster Child Welfare Assistance: $497,056
- NC DHHS Disaster Rental Assistance: $199,296
- Septic assessments complete - 132
- Septic assessments - # found to be in “red zone” – 29
- Septic assessments - # found to be in "yellow zone" – 50

EDUCATION*

**6/17 was the final update for the 2024-2025 School Year. No new data at this time*

- The number of homeless (unhoused) students identified under the McKinney-Vento Act:
  - Asheville City Schools – 294
    - 80 of these cases are due to Helene
  - Buncombe County School - 1476
    - 982 of these cases are due to Helene
- 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 (no change compared to 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 (no change compared to last update)
  - 230 for acquisition; 70 for elevation/reconstruction; 28 for slope stabilization
- State has stood up a private bridge and road repair program with 1,127 county residents applying for help (11% increase compared to prior update)
- 53 landslide inspections completed (150% increase compared to prior update)
- 406 Substantially Damaged Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)

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*

- Emergency watershed protection potential applicants identified: 664 (1% increase compared to prior update)
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program:
  - Field Visits Completed: 470 (5% increase compared to prior update)
  - Applications submitted: 191 (10% increase compared to prior update)
  - Applications approved: 128 (500%+ increase compared to prior update)
  - $ Amount of funding approved: $19,850,162 ($16.9M increase compared to prior update)
- 7 County parks open to the public (no change compared to prior update)
- 12 County libraries open to the public (no change 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

- $ 24.8 M expended for Helene; $4.1 M committed
- FEMA Public Assistance:
  - Emergency work - claims submitted: $10.2 M (120% increase over prior update)
  - Emergency work - $ amount reimbursed: $0 M (6% increase over prior update)
  - Permanent work - claims submitted: $14.8 M
  - Permanent work - $ amount reimbursed: $0 M
- Insurance claim for County-owned assets:
  - Claims submitted: $4.3 M (2% increase over prior update)
  - Claim received: $2.2 M (10% increase over prior update)
- Recovery-related grant funding:
  - Awarded: $6.4 M (no change compared to prior update)
- Helene Recovery Center:
  - Average visitors per day (6/30-7/4): 13 (new measure for 7/15)
  - Total visitors since opening: 795 (new measure for 7/15)