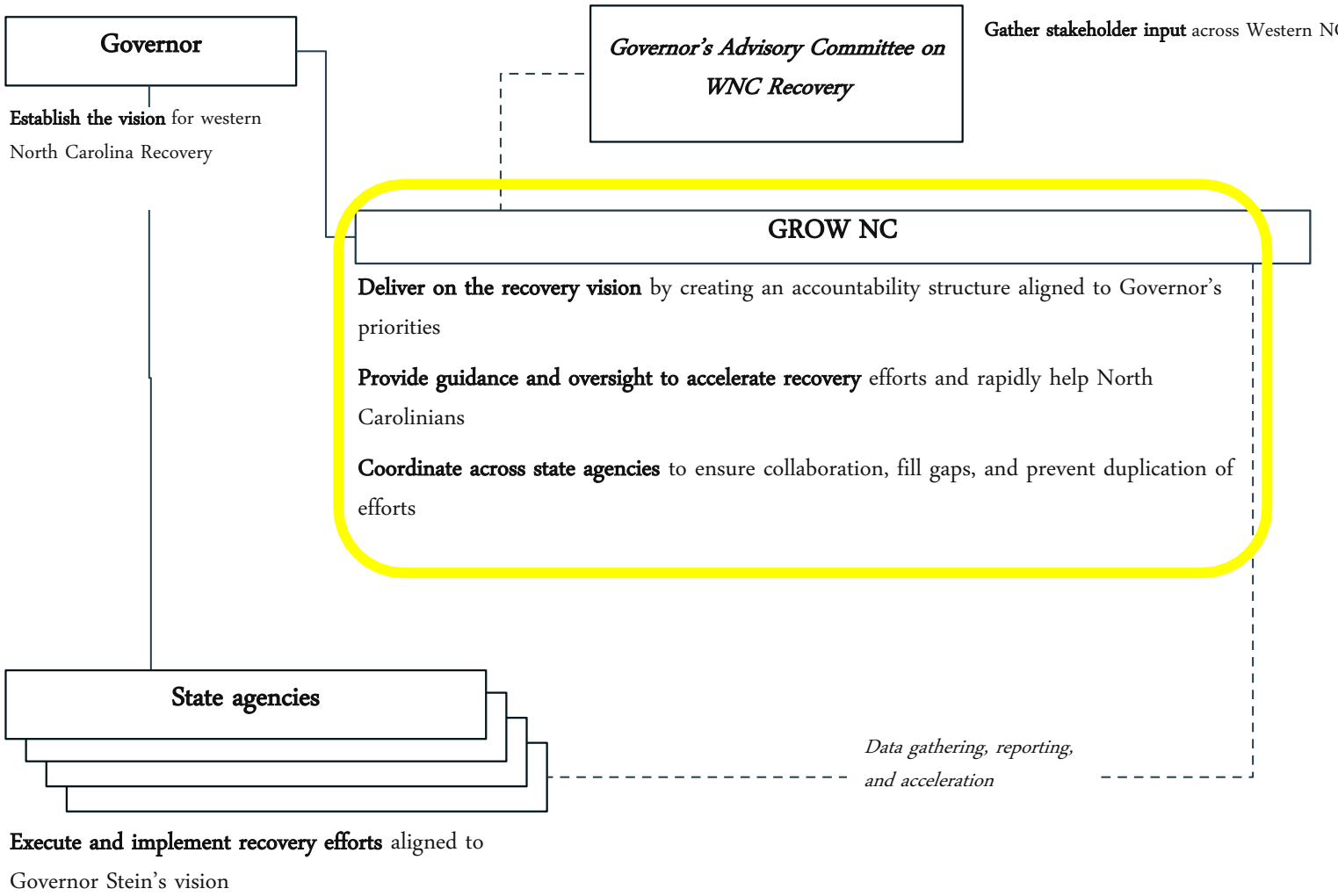
Helene Recovery Updates

Drew Christy, Associate Director of Government Relations
Governor’s Recovery Office for Western North Carolina (GROW NC)

August 19, 2025

The Governor's Recovery Office of Western North Carolina (GROW NC) will deliver on the Governor's vision by accelerating and overseeing the effort

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION



GROW NC's mission is...

...to... *accelerate recovery in western North Carolina through home rebuilding, business revitalization, and infrastructure restoration*

...by... *securing and deploying federal, state, and philanthropic resources quickly, effectively, and transparently*

...so... *communities in western North Carolina can come back safer and stronger than ever before*

WNC Recovery
POWERED BY GROWNC

The pillars of our recovery efforts:

- Rebuilding safe **housing**
- Restoring our **infrastructure**
- Revitalizing our **economy**
- Supporting **children and families**
- Supporting our **farmers**

Major recovery efforts underway

Rebuilding Safe Housing

- Residents received $489.5M+ in FEMA Individual Assistance
- 6,800+ households received temporary housing
- Over 920 applications received for HUD single-family housing program
- 398 homes repaired by volunteer organizations such as Baptists on Mission and Habitat for Humanity with state funds

Restoring our Infrastructure

- 7.9m+ cubic yards of right-of-way debris removed
- 6.8m+ cubic yards of waterway debris removed
- More than 3,200 project estimates completed in State's Private Roads & Bridges Program
- $24.6M 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
- $394M+ in SBA loans offered
- $37.8M+ in disaster unemployment assistance distributed
- $89M+ in loans offered to 90 local governments

OSBM certified $575 million in new funding appropriated by HB 1012, which was signed into law on June 27

- **$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 by supporting nonprofits engaged in housing repair and reconstruction
- **$81M** to rehabilitate waterways and land used by farmers, as well as bolster 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



Selected State Program Updates



Restoring our Infrastructure

- More than 14 million cubic yards of debris have been removed from rights-of-way, waterways, and private property.
  - The right-of-way debris removal mission is substantially complete, while waterway and private property debris removal are ongoing.
  - Right-of-way and waterway debris removal are on track to be substantially complete by September 27, 2025.
- Private roads and bridges
  - Nearly $24 million in FEMA Individual Assistance has supported the repair or replacement of about 9,400 private roads and bridges.
  - Separately, the state's private roads and bridges repair and replacement program, run by NC Emergency Management (NCEM) **will close on August 31, 2025**. NCEM is processing the more than 5,402 applications received for road and bridge repairs and will bring to bear $175 million in state funds earmarked for this purpose.

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

Private Road and Bridge Program

August 31 Deadline

August 31 is the deadline for western North Carolina residents in Helene disaster-declared counties to submit project interest forms through the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management Private Road and Bridge Program (NC-PRB).

The NC-PRB program will initiate a formal application process for newly authorized reimbursements **totaling $25 million** for Helene private road and bridge repairs that have already been performed. That process will open in September. Reimbursements will be permitted to cover up to **50 percent** of a project's total cost.

NC Department of Transportation has reopened nearly 98% of state roads (95% fully reopened, 2.7% partially reopened)

Total Incidents

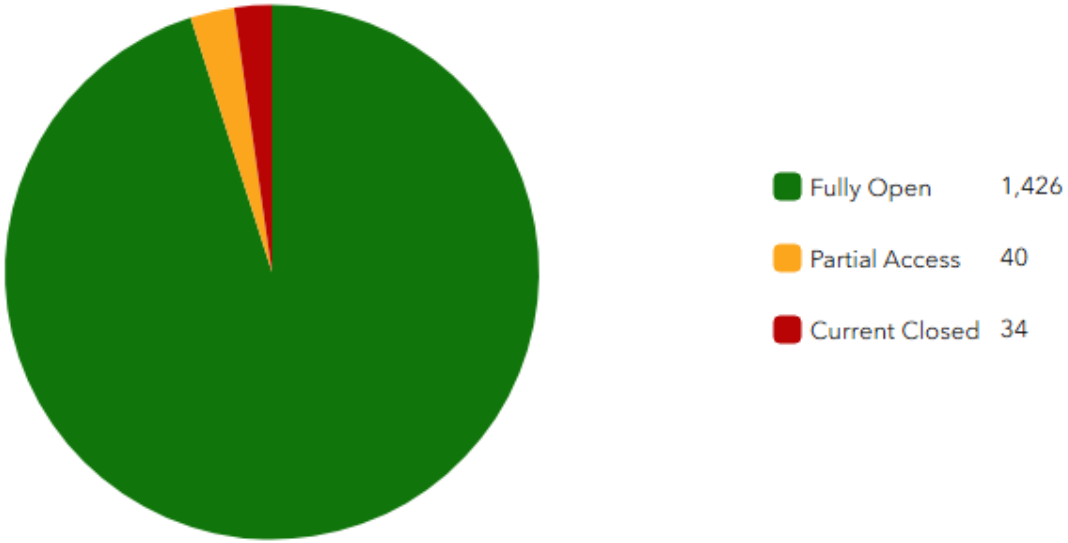
1,500

since beginning of Storm

Total Closures

1,460

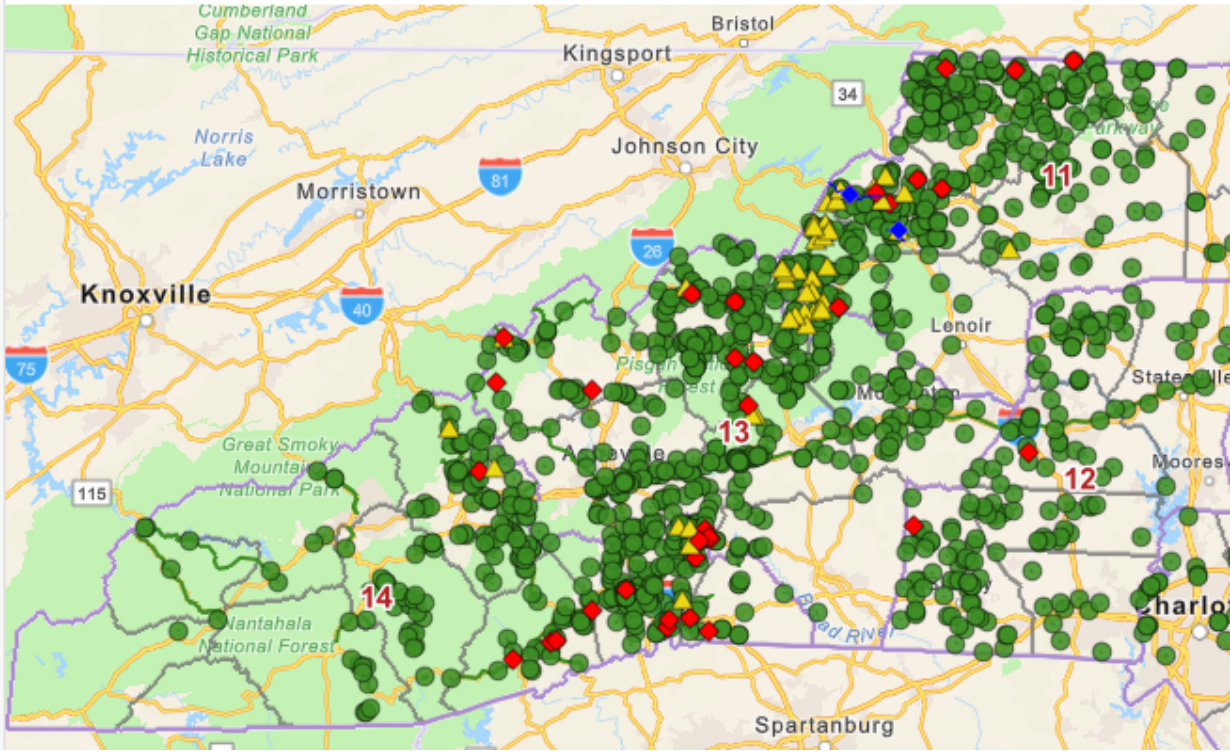
since beginning of Storm



1,426
Fully Open

34
Current Closed

40
Partial Access



More Than $11 Million Awarded for Great Trails Projects in WNC

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources awarded more than $100 million authorized by the General Assembly in grants to communities and nonprofits in western North Carolina from the Great Trails State Program funding.

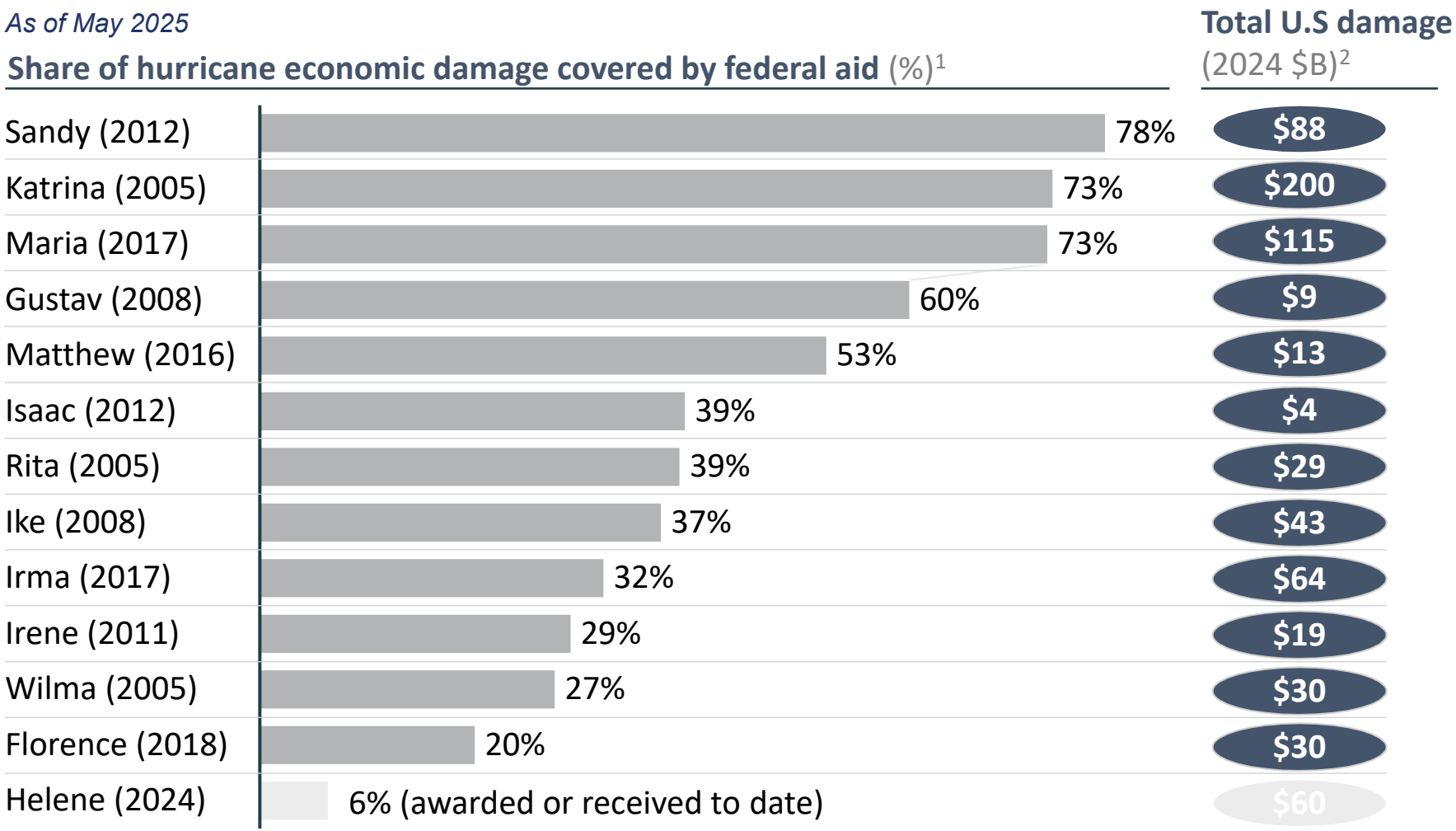
The program offers matching grants to North Carolina local governments, public authorities, regional council of governments, and nonprofit organizations.



Selected Federal Program Updates

North Carolina has requested federal funding to cover 48% of Helene's damage, and so far, it has received or been awarded federal funds covering 6% of total damages.

As of May 2025



1. Where available, federal aid is estimated using actuals from CBO and FEMA. In all other cases, FEMA actuals for Individual Assistance (IA), Public Assistance (PA), and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) were utilized, and non-FEMA federal aid was estimated based on the typical share of federal aid represented by FEMA funding, based on historical data.
2. Damage estimated by NOAA, including both insured and uninsured losses.

Source: Governor Stein's Federal Funding Request (2/20/2025)

Applications open for $685M in Disaster Water & Sewer Funding

Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds

- **Principal forgiveness** and **low-interest loans** for Helene-impacted communities:
  - **$254M** for sewer projects
  - **$23M** for decentralized sewer systems
  - **$409M** for water projects
- Disaster funding applications accepted on rolling basis
- DEQ and EPA staff working to prepare strong applications from impacted local governments



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**:
  - State, local, and Tribal governments
  - Economic Development Districts
  - Institutions of higher education
  - Economic development organizations
  - Public and private non-profits working with local government
  - Public-private partnerships for public infrastructure
  - Not open to individuals or for-profit entities

https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/disaster-recovery/supplemental/2025

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

Looking Forward

- As we continue to move from response to recovery, **some eligibility-based federal funding streams are winding down**. (*E.g.*, FEMA Individual Assistance, SBA loans)
- Signed by Governor Stein on June 27, 2025, SL 2025-26 appropriates or reallocates more than $850 million in additional hurricane relief. **Agencies can move quickly to put new state funds into action.**
- There is an ongoing **scarcity of key personnel in recovery-related fields**: inspectors, nurses, skilled tradespeople, counselors, etc.
- Some **federal funding streams remain uncertain or have been slow** to arrive.
- Former NC Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker is leading the development of a **long-term economic and community recovery strategy** for western North Carolina.

Partnering with GROW NC

- Please let us know if we can assist in accelerating the release of Helene-related federal funds, facilitating local connections, or coordinating with various stakeholders.

- Help us identify gaps where unmet needs exist, or where additional state or philanthropic funds might be useful.

- Help us demonstrate progress.

Stay Connected WNC Recovery

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



Website: wncrecovery.nc.gov

Social Media: @wncrecovery

Monthly Newsletter: bit.ly/GROW-NC-news

WNC Recovery
POWERED BY GROWNC

Thank you!

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