Hurricane Helene Local Government Capital Grant Program Application

Organization Name

- Town of Boone

Organization Type

- Municipality

Organization Municipality

- Town

Point of Contact Information

- Laney Wise, Grants Coordinator
- Laney.wise@boonenc.gov
- (828) 268-6206

FEMA Status and Other Project Funding:

- Did you apply for FEMA PA in any FEMA Category?
    a. No

FEMA Response:

- Project is Not Eligible for FEMA PA

Not Eligible for FEMA PA - Brief Description:

Provide a brief description why the project is not eligible for FEMA PA. If you are attaching a denial letter, or other documentation from FEMA, you must outline those attachments here.

- The Town of Boone has not submitted this project for FEMA Public Assistance (PA). The proposed project involves the construction of a new Public Works Complex and the relocation of existing operations to a more resilient site, rather than the repair or restoration of infrastructure physically damaged by Hurricane Helene. Although Hurricane Helene exposed significant operational and facility vulnerabilities, the existing Public Works facility was not destroyed. The project is intended to proactively mitigate these vulnerabilities, strengthen continuity of essential municipal services, and improve the Town's ability to respond to future disasters. Based on the nature and scope of the proposed work, the Town is not pursuing FEMA PA funding for this project.

FEMA Category: Can Choose Multiple

Which FEMA Public Assistance Categories describe this damage and subsequent repair needs?

- Category E: Public buildings and equipment

Other Funding- Type

Has the applicant received, applied for, or intend to apply for other funding (federal, state, or private) to support this project?

- Yes

Non-FEMA Funding- Other

- The Town of Boone has committed $5 million from its Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund toward construction of the proposed Public Works Complex. Additionally, the Town anticipates receiving approximately $5 million from the sale of the Bolick Property, a previously owned Town property, which will also be committed to the project upon completion of the sale.

  The Town has also submitted an $8 million Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request through the U.S. Senate. The request has advanced to the next stage of the approval process, and the Town is optimistic about securing this funding. Additional funding opportunities are being explored to complete the project's financing, including potential borrowing through the Local Government Commission (LGC) and the USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program. The Town remains committed to identifying and securing the necessary resources to complete this critical infrastructure investment.

Have you been awarded a grant from this program?

- Yes

OSBM Helene Local Government - Previous Awards

- $339,500

<u>Damage Incurred by Helene</u>

Direct Damage to Project Site

Describe damage to the project site for the project you are applying for that is a result of Hurricane Helene. 1-2 paragraphs.

- Hurricane Helene exposed significant vulnerabilities in the Town of Boone's existing Public Works facility and its ability to support essential municipal operations during a major disaster. Although the facility was not destroyed by the storm, the impacts of Hurricane Helene demonstrated that its existing location, configuration, and limited capacity were inadequate to support prolonged emergency operations. During the storm, Public Works employees worked around the clock responding to widespread infrastructure damage, including multiple water main breaks, fallen trees, and debris-clogged culverts. With telecommunications services completely disrupted, employees faced significant challenges coordinating operations and maintaining communication with their families. Many employees were unable to return home during the first week following the storm and were forced to sleep in their vehicles or available office space due to the facility's limited accommodations. The storm also demonstrated the importance of having dedicated, resilient space to support emergency coordination, public information activities, and continuity of municipal operations when primary communications and coordination infrastructure are disrupted. These circumstances highlighted the need for a facility capable of supporting extended emergency operations, accommodating additional personnel and equipment, and maintaining continuity of essential services during future disasters.

  The proposed project addresses these vulnerabilities by relocating Public Works operations to a more resilient site elevated above the floodplain and floodway on the eastern-most boundary of the Town of Boone on Highway 421. The existing facility's limited space, inadequate equipment storage, and inability to accommodate expanding staffing and operational needs further hinder the Town's ability to respond effectively to severe weather events. Hurricane Helene demonstrated the importance of maintaining reliable access to critical equipment, adequate employee accommodations, backup power, fuel storage, and dedicated emergency coordination space. The relocation and construction of a new facility are therefore intended to mitigate the vulnerabilities exposed by Hurricane Helene, rather than replace a facility that was destroyed. By investing in a strategically located, resilient facility, the Town will strengthen its ability to

maintain essential services, respond to future disasters, and protect critical municipal infrastructure.

Related or Broader Damager

Describe any related or broader damage you think is relevant to the application or helps to provide a better understanding of the direct site damage. 1-2 paragraphs.

- Hurricane Helene caused widespread damage throughout the Town of Boone and the surrounding High Country, placing significant strain on essential public infrastructure and the departments responsible for restoring services. Within Boone, multiple water main breaks resulted in an extended Boil Water Advisory for all Town residents. Hundreds of trees fell throughout the community, and culverts became obstructed with storm debris, requiring Public Works employees to work continuously to restore safe and accessible roadways and maintain critical infrastructure. The widespread loss of telecommunications services further complicated response and recovery efforts, limiting the Town's ability to coordinate operations during the immediate aftermath of the storm. These impacts demonstrated the interconnected nature of Boone's infrastructure and the importance of maintaining adequate facilities, equipment, staffing, and emergency response capabilities to support community-wide recovery.

  The impacts of Hurricane Helene also extended beyond Boone's municipal boundaries, as neighboring communities throughout the High Country faced significant infrastructure challenges. The Town deployed Public Works personnel to assist the Town of Jefferson in Ashe County with locating a water leak that was reducing its capacity to provide water to residents. Additionally, the storm reinforced the vulnerability of Boone's stormwater infrastructure, particularly given the South Fork of the New River and its tributaries that run throughout the community. The existing Public Works department lacked the dedicated staffing, equipment, and facility capacity necessary to adequately address these growing stormwater management demands. Collectively, the broader impacts of Hurricane Helene demonstrated the need for increased regional infrastructure resilience and a modernized Public Works facility capable of supporting disaster response, infrastructure restoration, and long-term mitigation efforts. The widespread disruption of communications and

essential services during Hurricane Helene also highlighted the need for stronger coordination between municipal and county emergency response operations. The proposed facility will provide additional emergency coordination capacity for the Town and an opportunity to strengthen coordination with Watauga County through its proximity to the new County Emergency Services building.

Proposed Project - Details and Location

Proposed Project - Project Title

- Town of Boone Public Works Complex

Please limit the description to 1–2 paragraphs. Include details on whether the project involves repair, renovation, or replacement of damaged infrastructure.

- The proposed project involves the construction of a new Public Works facility and the relocation of the Town of Boone's existing Public Works operations to a more resilient site. The project is not intended to repair or renovate the existing facility, nor is it a replacement of infrastructure that was destroyed by Hurricane Helene. Rather, the new construction addresses significant operational and facility deficiencies that were exposed during the storm, including inadequate space for personnel and equipment, limited emergency response accommodations, and insufficient capacity to support expanded municipal services. Abandoning the current facility is crucial for resiliency toward future storm and emergency events.

  The new facility will more than double the existing facility's square footage, increasing from approximately 20,000 to 49,652 square feet. The project includes administrative and operational space, enclosed vehicle garages, expanded equipment storage, a detached fleet maintenance garage, a salt storage facility, and dedicated space for a future stormwater department. In addition to supporting daily Public Works operations, the facility will incorporate dedicated emergency coordination space and be equipped to serve as a backup Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC) when needed. Reliable backup power, fuel storage, secure IT infrastructure, and additional personnel accommodations will allow the facility to support extended emergency

operations and maintain continuity of essential municipal services during major disasters. The facility's location near the new Watauga County Emergency Services building will also provide an opportunity for closer coordination between municipal and county emergency response operations. Located outside the floodplain and floodway, the new facility is designed to strengthen the Town's operational resilience and ability to respond to future emergencies.

Proposed Project Coordinates

- -81.6137909, 36.2232781

Proposed Project Street Address or Cross Roads

- Approximately Highway 421 South/Maple Fern Trail

Proposed Project City, County, and Zip Code

- Boone, NC, 28607

<u>Proposed Project - Dates and Cost</u>

Start Date:

- 12/01/2026

End Date:

- 12/31/2028

Proposed Project - Total Cost

Total Cost of the full project over all years, not considering any particular source of funding

- $25,000,000

Grant Amount Requested

Total Requested from this program

- $4,800,000