Avril M. Pinder, CPA, ICMA-CM
County Manager

Buncombe County Government
Commissioner Briefing
July 15, 2025
3:00 PM
Commissioner's Chambers, 3rd Floor

I.	Meeting Called to Order		Chair Edwards
II.	Review Meeting Agenda		Chair Edwards
III.	Staff Updates		
	a. FCC Update	20 mins	FCC Represenatives, Dane Pedersen
	b. Helene Update	30 mins	Avril Pinder
	c. Code Enforcement Team	20 mins	Jason Rogers
	d. Healthy Opportunities Pilot - Letter to NC General Assembly	10 mins	Chair Edwards; , Commissioner Horton, Commissioner Wells
IV.	Open Discussion		All

[MEET_FOOT]

Buncombe County Update

07/15/2025





Environmental Services

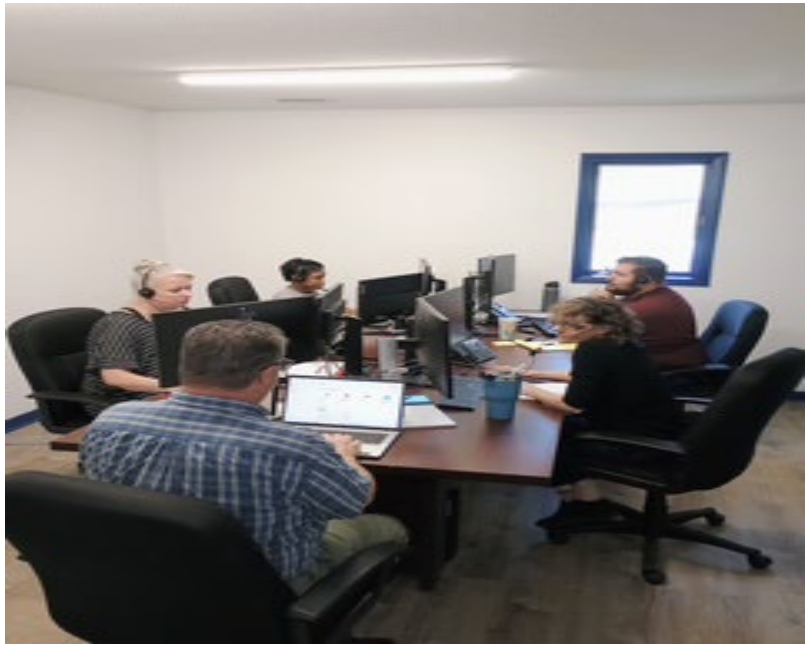
Partnering for a more sustainable future

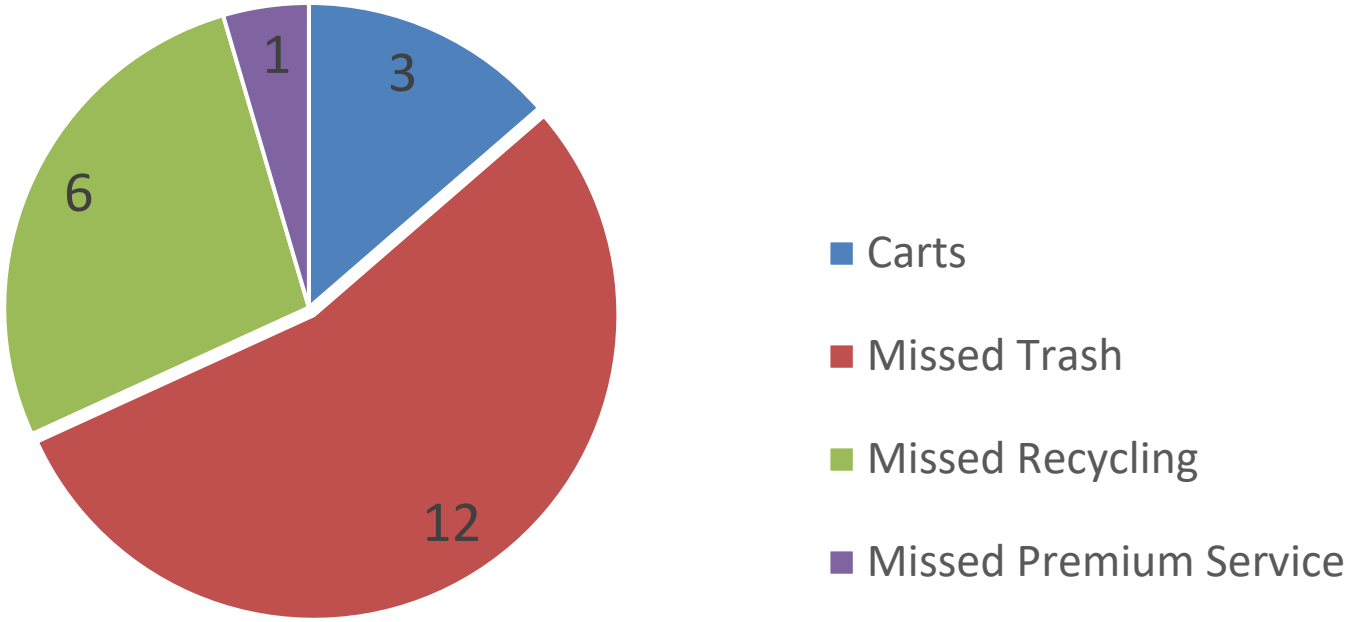
Buncombe County Updates: 07-15-2025

1. Call Center Update
2. Route Collection %
3. Service Improvements
4. Recycling
5. Community Outreach

Missed Service Reports/Cart Requests

- ***June 2025 averaged - 22 calls per day***





***Premium Service** = Back Door Collection, Disabled*

Reported Missed Collections

2025 Residential Weekly

	MAY-11	MAY-18	MAY-25	JUN-01	JUN-08	JUN-15	JUN-22	JUN-29	
Buncombe County, North Carolina	136	80	90	106	71	85	136	50	-63%



Customer Service Calls

- *As of July 1st, all calls are being answered at the local site.*
- *5 additional on-site Customer Service Representatives*
- *4 dispatchers and 1 onsite billing agent already in place*

Current FCC Subscribers

FCC currently serves 38,233 subscribers for trash and recycling services, surpassing previous haulers 36,483 customers.

This number continues to grow each week as more residents sign up for the service.

Service Improvements

- *Continue to adjust routes as more customers sign up to be sure we have the capacity on the truck and that we are routing it to the correct type of vehicle.*
- *Fully staffed and now have the Swing drivers available to cover absences and or assist if a route gets behind.*
- *Morning crew out, all drivers are given a copy of any escalation from prior missed customer along with a list of any new additions to the route and they sequence them, so they are not missed the next service day.*
- *Evening check in dispatch verifies route completion through the tablets and 3rd Eye camera and GPS system.*

Recycling Tonnage Comparison

- *FCC: January – June 2025*
- *1096.4 tons*

- *Previous hauler January – June 2024*
- *849 tons*

- *247.4 tons more recycled in January - June 2025 compared to same period in 2024*

Community Outreach

- *June 26th - Town Hall meeting in the Weaverville area*
- *July 24th –Town Hall at Ferguson Auditorium at A-B Tech*
- *August 7th - Town Hall meeting at the Koontz Intermediate School cafeteria*

1st of 4 Required Community Outreach Events









Questions?



Thank you

www.fccenvironmental.com

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

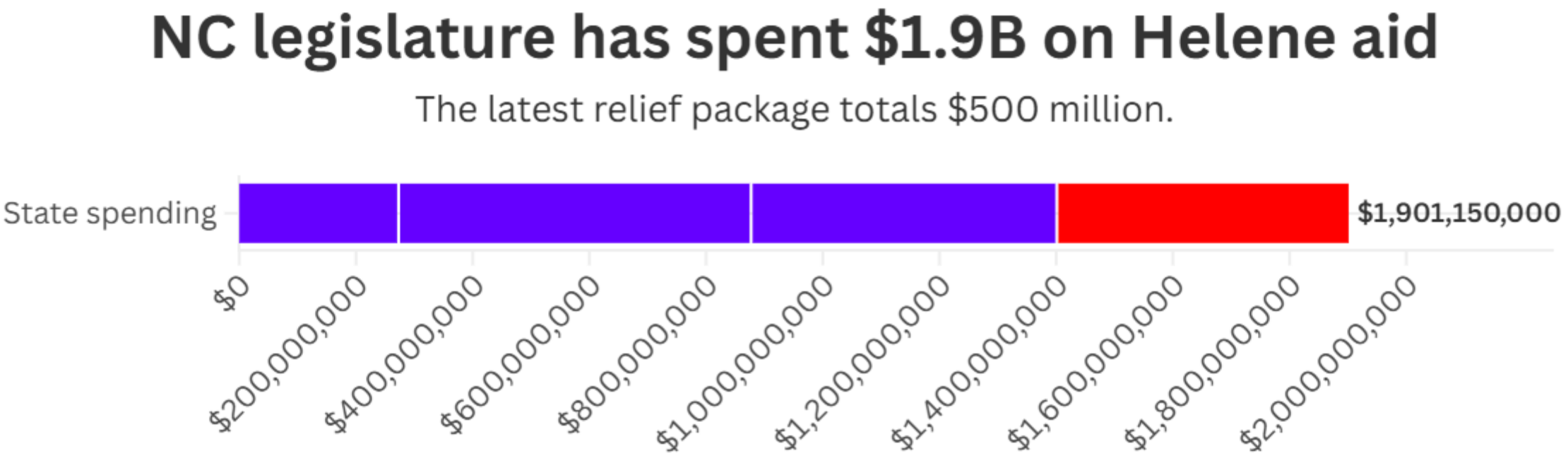
Debris Removal & Processing

- 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/

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

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

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

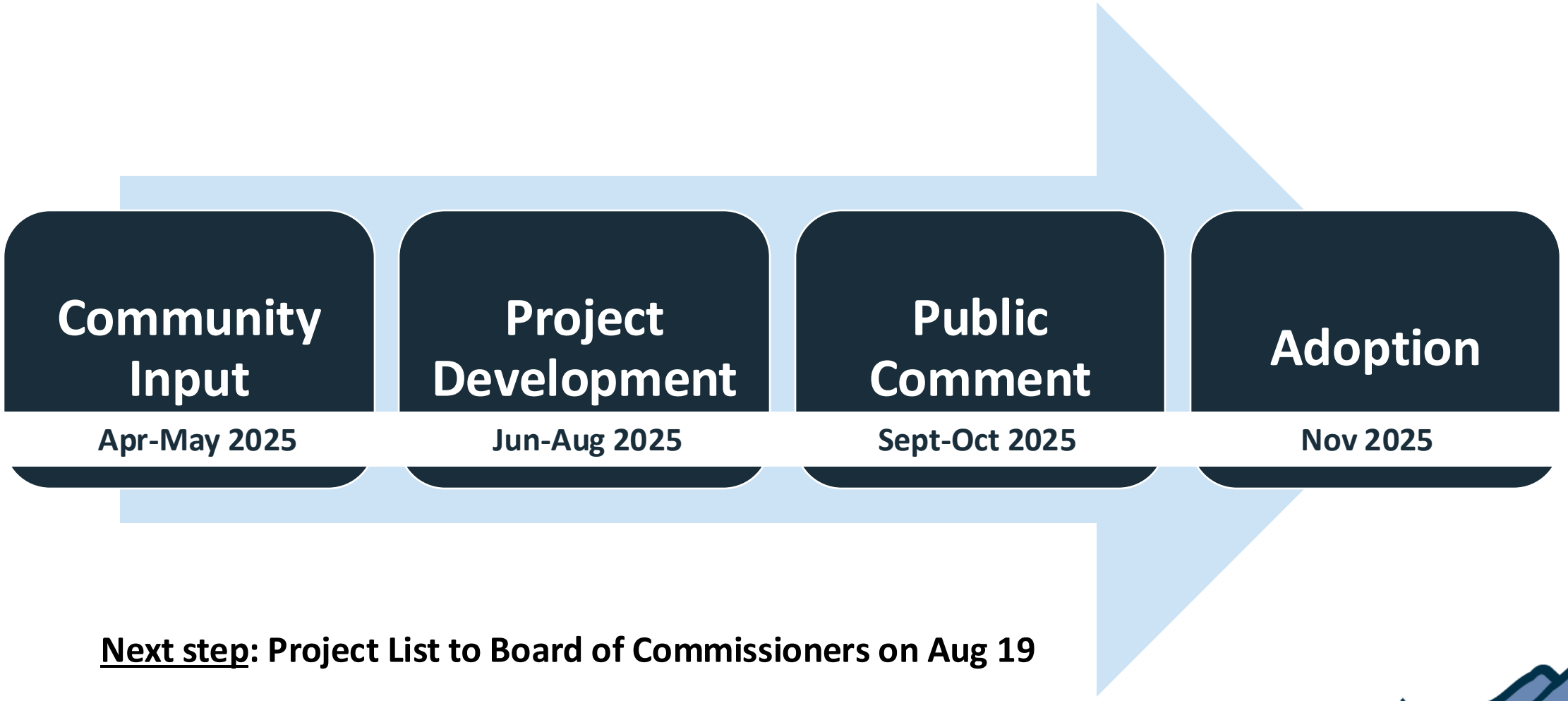
Recovery Officer:

- 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

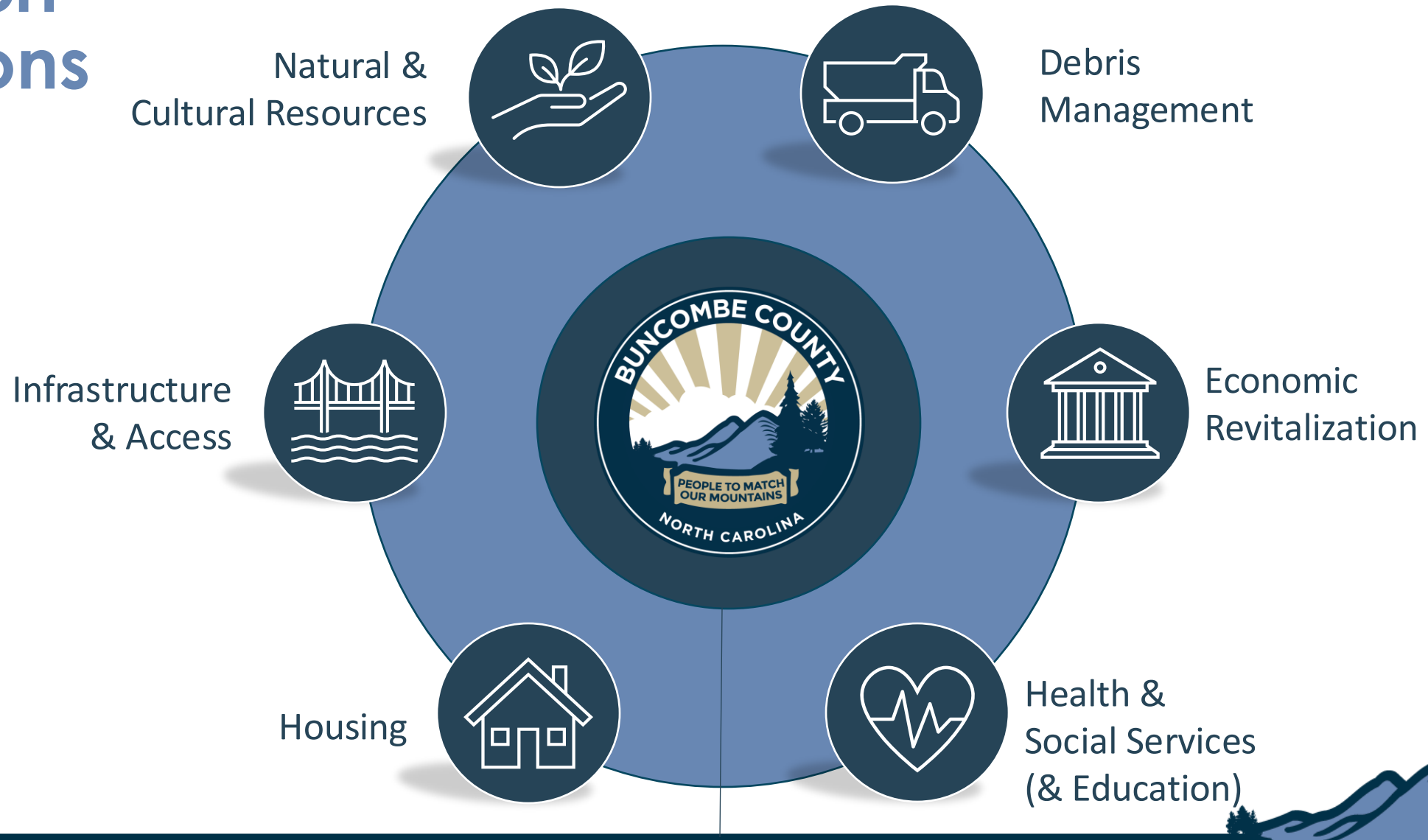
Questions?

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)

Code Enforcement Team

Presented by

Jason Rogers, Assistant Director

Permits & Inspections Department

Commissioner Briefing

July 15, 2025

Outline

- Overview & Purpose
- Team Membership
- Complaint Process
- Successes & Challenges
- Opportunities

Overview & Purpose

- Established to manage multi-departmental nuisance cases in a consistent and collaborative manner
- Leverage varied expertise to develop creative, trauma informed solutions to complex compliance issues
- Coordinate with Outside Agencies (DEQ, NCDOT, MSD, etc.)
- Once a complaint is levied, it becomes an internal staff process until the complaint is resolved - Restrict involvement in resident complaints to compliance staff to maintain the fidelity of the process
- Standing meeting for review & feedback – Ensure timely on-site visits and meet with owner/ occupiers for compliance

Overview & Purpose
Violation Types

- Buildings and Building Regulations
- Air Quality - Illegal burning
- Environmental Health – Wastewater
- Fire Prevention and Protection
- Solid Waste – Junk and Trash
- Zoning/Development Ordinances – Junkyards, Erosion Control, Junk Vehicles

Standing Members

One member from each area of compliance expertise:

- Air Quality
- County Legal
- Environmental Health
- Fire Marshal
- Permits and Inspections
- Planning and Development
- Solid Waste - Environmental Control

Support Members

Case specific wrap around support:

- DHHS
- Homelessness Coordination
- Sheriff’s Office

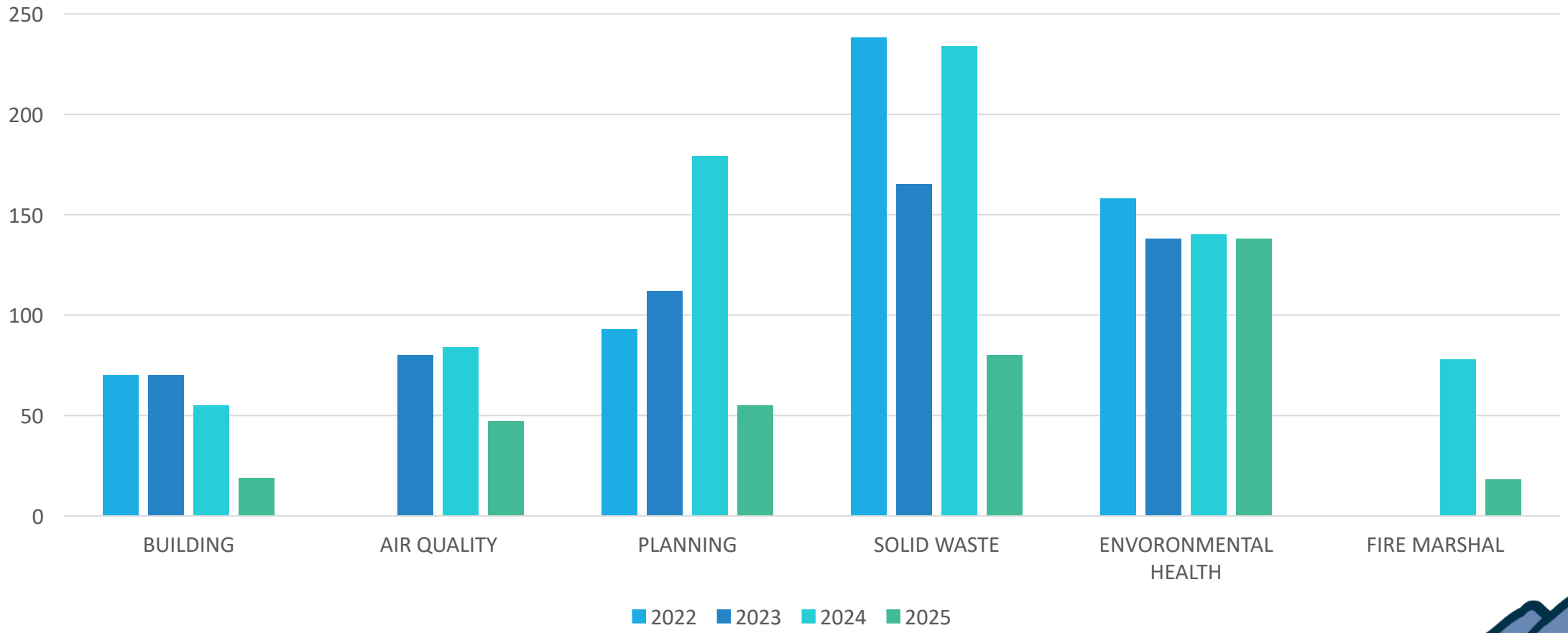
Current Process

- Individual complaint process defined by department

- Receiving department investigates complaint:
  - Observe site for other possible code violations
  - Report alleged violations to enforcing department (s)
  - If more than 2 violation types are identified, the property is added to next Code Enforcement Team meeting agenda
  - Prior to meeting, impacted inspectors make site visits

- Each complaint is reviewed individually during the meeting for best approach to compliance

COMPLAINT CASE COUNTS BY DEPARTMENT



Code Enforcement Team Review Activity

- 2,192 complaint cases for all departments 2022 to date
- 107 Properties have met the criteria of 2 or more violations and have been reviewed by the Code Enforcement Team
- 9 properties with major issues are currently in review by the team:
  - Zoning violations-RV parks, junk vehicles
  - Solid waste-junk, trash and debris
  - Illegal burning-fire marshal structure fire
  - Building condemnation
  - Environmental health-sewage issues

Successes


BARNARDSVILLE HWY
1599 BARNARDSVILLE HWY
1603 BARNARDSVILLE HWY
977545560900000
977545567700000


BARNARDSVILLE HWY
1599 BARNARDSVILLE HWY
1603 BARNARDSVILLE HWY
977545560900000
977545567700000

Successes





Successes





Challenges

- Properties that come into compliance, may still need monitoring to sustain
- Complex issues (various disciplines) that take time to remedy
- Poverty, substance abuse, homelessness and other social issues have compounded the problem
- Occupants of property often violators, not property owners
- Familial relations make property owners reluctant or unwilling to hold others accountable
- Potential legislative changes
- Resource intensive – staff time and follow up
- Funds are often needed to bring effective remedy – homeowner or County

Opportunities

- Comprehensive review of team processes and full execution of updated Standard Operating Procedures
- Evaluation of the current County Ordinances that are outdated or need refinement for enforcement purposes
- Identify and fill procedural gaps to increase efficiency, enhance customer service and achieve intended outcomes
- Move forward with completion of Acella Implementation
- Continue and increase opportunities for collaboration across departments and community partners to achieve and maintain compliance once it has been achieved

Discussion

July 15, 2025

The Honorable [LEGISLATOR NAME]
[TITLE - Representative/Senator]
North Carolina [House/Senate]
[ADDRESS]
Raleigh, NC [ZIP CODE]

Dear [Representative/Senator]

As the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners representing the residents of Buncombe County, we are writing to urge your support for continued state funding of the Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP) program in the 2025-2027 biennial budget. This innovative, first-in-the-nation program has proven its value to our community and deserves continued investment from the state.

Local Impact in Buncombe County

The HOP program has directly benefited Buncombe County residents as part of the 18-county Western North Carolina region served by Impact Health. Our local partners can keep offering vital services that address everyday factors, like housing, transportation, and food access, that affect people's health. Key Buncombe County organizations participating in HOP include:

- Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM)
- Bounty & Soul
- Eblen Charities
- Elida Homes
- Homeward Bound
- MANNA FoodBank
- Western North Carolina Community Health Services (WNCCHS)

Through Impact Health's network of over 60 human service organizations, HOP has delivered more than 280,000 services to eligible community members across Western North Carolina, with a significant portion benefiting Buncombe County residents. These services address housing instability, food insecurity, transportation barriers, and interpersonal safety concerns—all critical needs in our community.

Real Impact Stories from Our Community

DRAFT

ABCCM, one of our key HOP partners, has served over 30,000 people in Buncombe County since 1956. Through HOP, they've been able to help families like Erica's—a mother who was separated from her teenage daughter due to housing instability. HOP housing navigation services helped reunite this family in time for Christmas, demonstrating the program's life-changing impact on our neighbors.

Demonstrated Return on Investment

The independent evaluation by UNC's Sheps Center demonstrates that HOP is saving money while improving health outcomes and significantly lowering emergency department utilization.

With total medicaid spend reduced by $1,020 per participant annually, this program is fiscally responsible and aligns with our shared goals of efficient government spending and improved constituent services. Impact Health has successfully helped network organizations invoice $13.2 million for pilot services while resolving more than $335,000 in disputed claims, proving the program's operational effectiveness.

Economic Benefits to Our Community

As you know, communities across North Carolina face ongoing economic challenges. The HOP program has provided a sustainable revenue stream for our local organizations, allowing them to expand services while contributing to our local economy, including the creation of more than 300 direct jobs in Western North Carolina, as well as supporting more than 400 farms. With a broader economic impact, HOP has invested $36M in local wages and supported nearly 900 jobs across a wide range of industries and service sections. Specifically, the total economic impact of the food program is $74M, comprising more than 500 jobs and $22M in labor income.

Eliminating this program would force these organizations to reduce services at a time when need remains high, particularly following Hurricane Helene. The disaster significantly increased demand for HOP services as families lost jobs, housing, and stability, making this program even more critical for our community's recovery.

Federal Partnership at Risk

The HOP program leverages significant federal matching funds through our approved Medicaid 1115 waiver. North Carolina has become a national model, with this program garnering attention from health policy leaders across the country. Eliminating state funding means losing these federal dollars and abandoning a program that has brought national recognition to North Carolina's innovative approach to healthcare.

Request for Action

We respectfully request that you:

1. Advocate for HOP funding during budget conference committee negotiations
2. Work with leadership in your chamber to prioritize this program
3. Consider the devastating impact on communities across Buncombe County and Western North Carolina if this program is eliminated

DRAFT

4. Recognize that this program represents North Carolina leadership in innovative healthcare policy

Partnership Opportunity

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further and arrange for you to meet with local HOP providers and participants to see firsthand the program's impact. Organizations like ABCCM, MANNA FoodBank, and Impact Health stand ready to provide additional information and support your advocacy efforts. Our county staff and community partners are prepared to share specific data and success stories from Buncombe County.

The residents of Buncombe County are counting on your leadership to preserve this vital program. Community members across Western North Carolina benefit from HOP services, and you have seen firsthand how social determinants affect health outcomes in our community. We hope we can count on your support to ensure HOP funding is included in the final state budget.

Thank you for your service to our state and your consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,
[SIGNATURE]
[PRINTED NAME]
County Commissioner
Buncombe County

DRAFT