



PRIORITY: Ensure comprehensive opportunities for affordable and safe housing as a foundation for healthy and thriving families and neighborhoods

BACKGROUND: There is a limited supply of housing in Buncombe County, as indicated by an overall multifamily rental supply occupancy rate for 2017 of more than 97%. The occupancy rate among affordable rentals such as tax credit and government-subsidized housing remains near 100% with high demand and long wait lists. Median rent in Buncombe County was among the highest in North Carolina in 2015 – Combined with stagnant wages, this causes an overburden on housing costs. Many people face barriers to housing, such as low wages and credit or criminal history. Of the 2,197 eviction filings in Buncombe County in 2016, 80% were related to nonpayment of rent. Subsidized housing options are limited, usually with long waiting lists, and subsidy is difficult to use. 50% of Section 8 Housing vouchers expire because lack of available rental units. In addition, Buncombe County experiences disparities in housing with 65% of people who are white that own a home in comparison with 41% of people who are black. Homelessness is also an ongoing challenge - an estimated 562 people are homeless in Buncombe County in 2017, including 167 people who are chronically homeless.

GOALS:

- Preserve and increase the stock of affordable housing including rental developments
- Reduce substandard housing and expand opportunities for home repair
- Support home ownership initiatives, including savings and credit building
- Address the issues of homelessness in Buncombe County through partnership with the Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Initiative

LEAD DEPARTMENTS: Health and Human Services; Planning and Development; Strategic Partnerships

ACTIONS: The following is a summary of activities and investments by Buncombe County Government in support of the goals listed above.





	<i>Completed/Ongoing</i>	<i>Proposed/Upcoming</i>
<i>Affordable Housing Options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buncombe County Affordable Housing Services Program assistance for construction of new housing, residential conversions, and affordable rental housing HOME Investment Partnership federal loan program through area wide Housing Consortium, Buncombe County matches federal funds annually Buncombe County Zoning Ordinance includes affordable housing incentives for community oriented developments Buncombe County Housing Needs Assessment, 2014 report and 2017 update 2015-2019 Consolidated Strategic Housing & Community Development Plan Nonprofit funding for home repairs, affordable rental housing and Self Help homeownership Williams-Baldwin Teacher Campus, Asheville-Buncombe teacher housing Sponsorship of Affordable Housing Summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed support for Lee Walker Heights mixed-income redevelopment project Committed support for Eagle Market Place Committed support for Simpson Street rental units through Swannanoa Bend, LLC Committed support of East Haven rental units in Swannanoa Committed support for Jon Kraus Way in Arden, which in process through Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity with County funding assistance Committed support for Tenant Based Rental Assistance through Eblen Charities Committed support for Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity Curry Court Project Buncombe County Housing Needs Assessment, 2019 for update to be presented 2020 2020-2025 Consolidated Strategic Housing & Community Development Plan
<i>Housing Quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for home repairs Promote information about the North Carolina Fair Housing Act Nonprofit funding to enable free access to housing related legal services for low-income people, including for substandard housing or housing discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize minimum housing standards model in partnership with Pisgah Legal Services Committed support for Emergency Repair Programs through Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity and Mountain Housing Opportunities
<i>Home Ownership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for Self-Help Home Ownership and single-family home construction projects through partnerships with non-profits and other housing developers Buncombe County Employee Housing Trust Fund home buying assistance Senior/Disability Property Tax Relief programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed support for Self-Help Homeownership houses, down payment assistance, and permit fee rebate program
<i>Homelessness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless Initiative strategic plan for 2017-2022 focusing on housing, case management, health care, education, employment, transportation, and prevention/diversion. Funding for Coordinated Assessment, Housing Case Management, and “Hard to House” for formerly chronically homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner for expanded housing options for “Hard to House” chronically homeless population

