



# Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

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March 18, 2025

Deputy Secretary Stephanie McGarrah  
Division of Community Revitalization  
North Carolina Department of Commerce  
301 N. Wilmington St  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

RE: Public Comment on Draft CDBG-DR Plan

Deputy Secretary McGarrah,

On September 27, 2024, Tropical Storm Helene and the floods associated with the storm wreaked havoc on Western North Carolina, with extraordinary devastation in Buncombe County. As indicated in your draft Action Plan, Buncombe County and the City of Asheville were the “most hard-hit jurisdictions” with over 87,000 FEMA Individual Assistance applications, 360+ homes destroyed, and a peak unemployment of 10.4% in Buncombe County alone.

As the North Carolina Department of Commerce prepares to administer its \$1.4 billion direct allocation for the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR), Buncombe County Commissioners want to express our gratitude for the tremendous effort in quickly producing a draft Action Plan and the opportunity to provide our comments. This Action Plan will help to address the unmet needs in our communities as we continue recovering from Helene. Based on our review of the plan, we have identified the below primary areas of consideration. Additionally, we have attached a detailed list of questions and comments.

- **Support Renters:** Additional funding for new rental construction and rental assistance. 50% of Buncombe County’s impacted residents are renters.
- **Improve Preparedness:** Flexible infrastructure funding that can be used for emergency preparedness, mitigation and resilience.
- **Focus on Unmet Needs:** Allocation of funds based on disaster impact and specifically loss of housing. Buncombe County represents 32% of IA applications across the state.

Buncombe County remains committed to working with the state to ensure the recovery from Hurricane Helene continues without pause. We look forward to continuing our shared work in Western North Carolina’s recovery from Hurricane Helene and to receiving your responses to our comments and questions, shared below.

Sincerely,

Amanda Edwards  
Chair  
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

