



BUNCOMBE COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING



**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 percent. The occupancy rate among affordable rentals such as tax credit and government-subsidized housing remains near 100 percent with high demand and long wait lists. Median rent in the 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, poor credit or a criminal history. Of the 2,197 eviction filings in Buncombe County in 2016, 80 percent were related to nonpayment of rent. Fifty percent of Section 8 Housing vouchers expire because due to lack of available rental units. In addition, the County experiences disparities in homeownership as 65 percent of white people are homeowners in comparison to the African-American community's 41 percent. Homelessness is also an ongoing challenge – in 2017, the County has an estimated 562 homeless people, 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 the County through partnership with the Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Initiative.

